

WISCONSIN CLERGYWOMAN WILL SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER AT UPCOMING TRIAL BY THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

“People want to hear that decency and courage make sense...something must be risked in the struggle against dirty tricks.” These are the words of Vaclav Havel, Czech human rights leader and recipient of the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom. Havel was both gentle and kind but above all else a man of high moral purpose and character.

On June 21, in a small Wisconsin town, one more gentle, tough person with high moral purpose and character will risk speaking truth to power and will do so with decency and courage. Amy DeLong is determined to live and serve openly as she was created: a lesbian woman called by God to ordained ministry. She has been in a loving, committed relationship with her partner for 15 years. Last year she accepted an invitation to officiate at a same-sex union.

DeLong, 44, has been ordained by The United Methodist Church since 1977. She served local churches for 8 years. In 2006 she was appointed Executive Director of Kairos CoMotion, an education and advocacy group supported by nationally known theologians. DeLong is the co-editor of *The Loyal Opposition: Struggling with the Church on Homosexuality*.

Now the same church that ordained her has charged her with disobedience to its law. The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church claims that who she is and what she has done are both chargeable offenses. Her trial will be at Peace United Methodist Church in Kaukauna, Wisconsin, a small town hidden from the eyes of the public and near the birthplace of the infamous Joe McCarthy, the blacklisting U.S. senator of the ‘50s.

Most mainline Protestant denominations have changed their exclusionary rules and now welcome lesbian and gay clergy. The Defense of Marriage Act has been dismantled and Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell no longer exists in the military. On June 1, Illinois will join many other states in making same-sex unions legal. Given this dissatisfaction with homophobic law, perhaps this church trial will be the last. It is the 6th clergy trial since 1987, costing The United Methodist Church approximately \$800,000.

Persons interested in supporting Amy are urged to attend the trial. Details about trial events and further information can be found on www.kairoscomotion.org.

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