



UNIVERSAL LIFE CHURCH MINISTRIES SUES TENNESSEE TO PROTECT ONLINE ORDINATION

The Universal Life Church Ministries, on June 21, 2019 filed a lawsuit against four Tennessee county clerks and the State's Attorney General, to block a recently-passed law that would bar ministers who received their ordination online from solemnizing weddings after July 1 of this year.

The ULCM has thousands of active ministers and members across the State of Tennessee, individuals whose Constitutional and spiritual rights have been denied them by Tennessee lawmakers without good reason. These individuals perform hundreds of beautiful, personal weddings in Tennessee every year for those who embrace the ULCM's ideals of love and freedom. Marriage is indeed a sacred institution, and Tennessee's cruel decision limits who may solemnize a marriage to a select few. The Universal Life Church Ministries' legal challenge aims to halt and reverse this discriminatory law and restore and protect the rights of all ministers of all faiths in The Volunteer State.

The overarching guiding message of the Universal Life Church Ministries is that we are all children of the same universe. Daily, the Church and its members and ministers work faithfully to deliver this message across the globe. To that end, the Universal Life Church Ministries will not be a silent witness to the disenfranchisement of any group. The ULCM will not rest until its ministers and members are able to enjoy the rights and freedoms guaranteed to all citizens, not just in Tennessee but around the world.

The lawsuit, which was brought by the ULCM and three of its ministers in the State, names specifically Lisa Duke Crowell (Clerk of Rutherford County, TN), William K Knowles (Clerk of Hamilton County, TN), Wayne Nabors (Clerk of Putnam County, TN), Elaine Anderson (Clerk of Williamson County, TN), and Herbert H. Slatery III (Attorney General of the State of Tennessee) in their official capacities. It asserts that certain provisions of Tennessee Code § 36-3-301 as amended by Tennessee Public Chapter No. 415 are in direct violation of the First and Fourteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution in addition to Article 1, Section 3 of the Tennessee Constitution.

America was founded largely on the idea that people should feel free to worship as they see fit, and Tennessee's attempt to curtail these rights for ULCM ministers simply because they became ordained and congregate via the internet is illegal and unconscionable. Clearly, the Tennessee lawmakers who supported this bill continue to hold a, outdated, narrow view of religious worship – and we look forward to the opportunity to usher them into the 21st century.

The ULCM has been disheartened by the short-sighted response of some other organizations who have leapt gleefully into the laps of Tennessee lawmakers and begun offering in-person ordinations in order to appease them. Rather than acquiesce to Tennessee's demands and compromise its religious freedom, the Universal Life Church Ministries wholeheartedly rejects this outdated notion of religion and fully intends to proudly defend its open model.

In the year 1454, Johannes Gutenberg – after years of painstaking work and near financial ruin – changed the world forever when he utilized his brilliant new printing press to successfully print the Bible. This Earth-shattering technological innovation arguably marked one of the first steps in a long chain of events that would bring about the Protestant movement, and for the first time in centuries return the power of religion to common women and men. People were finally free to pray, read, learn, commune, and question in a manner of their choosing – and the world is better off for it.

Much like Johannes Gutenberg, the Universal Life Church Ministries has always embraced the remarkable power of technology to bring people together in a global spiritual community and to push the conversation forward in pursuit of ever-higher levels of enlightenment.

The future of faith is free, fast, and full-bodied – and it's here.



WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF THE SAME UNIVERSE