A Word from Pastor Darren About General Conference and This Sunday

Earlier this week the General Conference concluded its work by adopting the “Traditional Plan” that reinforces the church’s ban on same-sex unions and LGBTQ clergy, and adds new provisions for compliance throughout the denomination. It also includes a “gracious exit” for those who disagree. The details of this are complicated and the implications are still being sorted out.

First, I want to acknowledge the pain and anguish this news is causing many of our LGBTQ members. My prayers are with you and my door is always open to you.

Second, this news creates great uncertainty throughout the denomination. Decisions will have to be made at the annual conference and local church levels based on information that is still to come. I want to assure you that no immediate decisions must be made. In the coming months our board of directors will lead us in understanding the implications of the General Conference’s actions. I will give a presentation on General Conference on Tuesday, March 12 at 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. at North (the same presentation at both sessions).

Third, let me reaffirm what I said Sunday: “Regardless of what the denomination does, North will continue to be a witness for inclusion. We will continue to be a means of the Spirit confirming LGBTQ believers who have not felt the Spirit confirming them as our siblings in Christ.” You can hear the podcast of the entire service and the sermon on our website. Copies of the sermon are available upon request.

Finally, I want to encourage you to come to worship this Sunday. We will celebrate Holy Communion and I will give a summary of General Conference. I will preach about a vision for a new form of Methodism. The sermon is called “The Church of the Big Table” based on Acts 10:34-48. Now more than ever we need to gather at the table of grace.

For more information on General Conference see these articles by UM News:

“2019 General Conference Passes Traditional Plan”
“GC2019 Maps Uncertain Way Forward”

Do not be discouraged. Your witness for inclusion last Sunday was a blessing to many beyond our church. God is working in ways far beyond what we can imagine to bring hope to our church and the world.

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