



Farmville United Methodist Church

*P.O. Box 64 High Street
Farmville, Virginia 23901
www.farmvilleumc.org
434-392-4686*

February 28, 2019

My dear friends,

This week the United Methodist Church moved through deeply emotional and divisive waters at a special, off-cycle, Called General Conference in St. Louis. The conference was held to seek a way forward from our impasse on whether persons who identify as LGBTQI can be married or ordained within the UMC. In the wake of this four-day event, I have spent my time deeply engaged in conversation and prayer with many who have frank questions. We have members, friends, and neighbors who are in confusion and shock, as well as those who wonder why this is even being discussed. People are uncertain about where the UMC is going, and whether they can go forward with “the church” or this congregation.

First, let me affirm that God is love (1 John 4:16, please go read the whole chapter); and God was the same yesterday, today and forever. Whatever the imperfections of us as God’s children, or the brokenness of the Body of Christ called the Church, God is still God, and God is still our hope.

I love you, too; whatever your views on these topics, I promise to love you, because God does. We do not always agree. But we are called to love, as Christ has loved us. He gave his life for us, even when we rejected him. Indeed, even then, Christ did not give up on us, but returned to show us truly what forgiveness and hope look like.

When it comes down to it, “the church” is not bricks and mortar, or a denominational title, it is you and me. We live each day, responding to the grace of Jesus Christ and striving to share his love with each other and the world. And so, I pledge to continue my efforts daily to Worship, Connect and Serve as I seek to be a disciple of Jesus and make disciples who live to see God’s grace transform the world.

Some points to know as we face the weeks ahead:

1 – Conservative supporters of the Traditionalist Plan gained a majority of votes, but the plan has numerous, unresolved constitutional flaws that will be reviewed by our Judicial Council (supreme court of UMC) on April 23-24. Some are still meeting in St. Louis today (Feb 27-28), considering an exit from the denomination, and had previously reserved dates (Apr 25-26) for a convening conference, prepared to do just that.