

The Congregation of Fayetteville First UMC  
January 10, 2020

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I want to share pastoral guidance as we consider proposed legislation for the upcoming United Methodist General Conference in May.

First, I want to give you the link to the [press release from the United Methodist News Service](#) that came out last week. Various news outlets are reporting that the church split over the weekend. This is not the case. What was released is a proposal titled "Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation." It is one of many recommendations that is before General Conference for a vote in May. This recommendation is unique because it is proposed by very diverse groups from various geographic locations and theological opinions.

Second is [the actual proposal](#) as it is written and signed by those who were at the table when it was constructed.

Third is a link to [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) that you may have in light of the recent events.

Last is the [transcript of what I said Sunday, January 5, 2020 in the worship service regarding the breaking of this news](#). You can also find a [link to the audio file here](#).

I hope that in response to this information you will do these four things:

- 1) **Pray.** Pray for the church and pray for our church.
- 2) **Read** the information from the sources above as level-headed and rationally as possible. Then **re-read** them. As you **seek** out other information, ask yourself these questions: Who is the author? Who is the audience? Am I reading this to confirm my bias or suspicion or am I reading this with charity and love?
- 3) **Be present** in worship with us as we make our priority sharing the light of Christ through Fayetteville First UMC. When we worship together, we do not worship ourselves, but we worship in order to give glory to God.
- 4) **Reach out** to me to find a time to talk if you have questions. I am receiving this information on the same timeline as you and am dealing with the implications and emotions of what this entails while also sharing ministry with you at this wonderful congregation of the United Methodist Church. We will create space and time to talk through what this all means together.

Grace and Peace,



Rev. Dr. G. Thomas Martin, IV