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Kenmore United Methodist Church

Knowing Jesus Christ

Uniting a Community

Mentoring in Faith

Caring Through Compassionate Hands & Hearts



***Pastoral Letter Regarding Recent News of the
"Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation"
Of the United Methodist Church***

January 4, 2020

***Dear Precious Congregation of the
Kenmore United Methodist Church,***

May the Light of Christ shine brightly in the midst of this world of shadows and darkness, sunshine and rainbows!

As many of us heard in news releases, or read through social media, a diverse group of representatives from the UMC advocacy groups with varying viewpoints, have collaborated to create a resolution entitled, "Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation." At this point, this is one of many proposals which will be presented to the 2020 General Conference of the UMC meeting in May.

Having now read the actual resolution (<https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/files/websites/www/pdfs/signed+umc+mediation+protocol+statement+-2020.pdf>), the UM News Press Release (<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/diverse-leaders-group-offers-separation-plan>), and statements from several bishops and UM advocacy groups, I am hopeful!

As Sam Hodges states in the UM Press Release, "*The action comes amid heightened tensions in the church over conflicting views related to human sexuality after the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference failed to resolve differences among church members.*" At that Conference, the "Traditional Plan" was narrowly adopted, which

continues to deny clergy rights to LGBTQ persons, prohibits same-sex weddings, and increases penalties for defying these standards.

This resolution would create the opportunity for such "traditionalists" (conferences, churches, and clergy) to gracefully exit the United Methodist denomination to form a new denomination without loss of property and assets. Those remaining within the UM denomination would then have opportunity to delete all discriminatory language from our *Book of Discipline* and practice of ministry.

My statement here is just a snap-shot of the multi-faceted proposal. My intent is to make you aware of what is happening, and to share with you my hopeful response to this news. Kenmore UMC has already planned several forums in which we may discuss the theological issues related to sexuality, to learn more about expressions of faithful Christian discipleship, and to find out how our church family may take a stand. I anticipate that proposal will also be a topic of discussion in these and other settings.

May God guide our hearts and minds as we each discern a path to follow Christ today!

Rev. Beckie Sweet