

STATEMENT ON THE PROTOCOL OF RECONCILIATION AND GRACE THROUGH SEPARATION

Iowa Annual Conference District Gatherings – January 2020

Good morning/afternoon! It's so good to see all of you here. Before we begin our time together, I would like to mention the press release that was made public to The United Methodist Church on Friday, January 3. Over the past several months, a diverse group of United Methodists from across the globe, including people representing various constituency groups, has developed a proposal for the 2020 General Conference that will help our beloved church move forward around human sexuality.

The document, which is entitled, "Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation" acknowledges the great divide that has separated United Methodists around this one issue and develops a mutually supported path of separation. Among other things, the following.

- The Protocol anticipates the formation of a new traditionalist Methodist denomination, which would receive \$25 million to help the denomination get started.
- The Protocol also allocates \$39 million for support to our ethnic communities of faith, recognizing our long history of racism and marginalization of our ethnic churches.
- All local congregations could vote to separate from The UMC in order to affiliate with the traditionalist Methodist denomination or other Methodists denominations. They would retain their assets and liabilities.
- Under the Protocol, all administrative and judicial processes around human sexuality would be held in abeyance.
- We have printed a FAQ sheet that is available to take with you. It contains very helpful additional information.

It is important to note that if this "Protocol" is adopted at the 2020 General Conference in May in Minneapolis, another special General Conference will be held to create regional conferences in The UMC as well as remove the current disciplinary prohibitions against LGBTQ persons.

I share this with you for two reasons. First, it is important for all of us to know what is happening in our worldwide United Methodist Church. And second, if the Protocol is approved at General Conference, we anticipate that some of our local churches in Iowa and around the connection will choose to be a part of the Traditionalist Methodist denomination. That, of course, may affect the structure and finances of the Iowa Annual Conference as well of other annual conferences.

I have never been an advocate for division in The United Methodist. However, I have come to the realization that our differences are too deep to be bridged and therefore support the possibility of reconciliation and grace through separation. It will also set us free to focus on the mission and ministry to which God has called each one of us.