

To my Fairfield Grace sisters and brothers in Christ,

As you might hear or be informed already, delegates to the United Methodist Church's top lawmaking assembly approved at the special General Conference a plan that affirms present church policies on homosexuality and strengthens enforcement. It means that officiating same-sex union and ordaining gay/lesbian clergy are not allowed in the United Methodist Church. The vote was 438 to 384. Fully understandably, supporters of full inclusion for LGBTQI persons are very disappointed and hurt by the denomination's decision.

Now what? What shall we, Fairfield Grace, do now? How would this decision impact us? Some of us might be content with it. Some not, for sure. Let's hold all the question now and stay calm prayerfully. Know that this decision won't become church law until January 1, 2020. The next General Conference in May, 2020, in Minneapolis could reconsider the decision. And know that prior to the special General Conference, Bishop Bickerton, Resident Bishop of the New York Annual Conference, has called for a special Annual Conference on Saturday, March 16, from 10 am to 3 pm at Purchase College for the purpose of reviewing and discussing the results of the Special Called Session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church. This will be a time to hear from our Bishop and the delegation. All clergy and lay delegates to the Annual Conference are expected to be present. Charlene Braun-Schindler, our lay delegate to the Annual Conference, and I will attend and get ready to bring you a report.

At this time of uncertainty, I sense it timely and appropriate to read together "Gracious Uncertainty," written by Frederick Buechner, an American writer, preacher and theologian.

***"Our natural inclination is to be so precise— trying always to forecast accurately what will happen next— that we look upon uncertainty as a bad thing. We think that we must reach some predetermined goal, but that is not the nature of the spiritual life. The nature of the spiritual life is that we are certain in our uncertainty..... Certainty is the mark of the commonsense life— gracious uncertainty is the mark of the spiritual life. To be certain of God means that we are uncertain in all our ways, not knowing what tomorrow may bring. This is generally expressed with a sigh of sadness, but it should be an expression of breathless expectation. We are uncertain of the next step, but we are certain of God. As soon as we abandon ourselves to God and do the task He has placed closest to us, He begins to fill our lives with surprises. When we become simply a promoter or a defender of a particular belief, something within us dies. That is not believing God— it is only believing our belief about Him. Jesus said, "...unless you...become as little children..." (Matthew 18:3). The spiritual life is the life of a child. We are not uncertain of God, just uncertain of what He is going to do next. If our certainty is only in our beliefs, we develop a sense of self-righteousness, become overly critical, and are limited by the view that our beliefs are complete and settled. But when we have the right relationship with God, life is full of spontaneous, joyful uncertainty and expectancy. Jesus said, "...believe also in Me" (John 14:1), not, "Believe certain things about Me". Leave everything to Him and it will be gloriously and graciously uncertain how He will come in— but you can be certain that He will come. Remain faithful to Him."***

Amen. Amen. Let us be gloriously and graciously uncertain how God will come in and remain faithful to God.

Peace in Christ,

Kun Sam, your M&M partner