



Re: Actions of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church

As many of us are aware, Tuesday concluded the called General Conference of the United Methodist Church on human sexuality. You can read more about the details here (www.vaumc.org/GC2019), but know that the delegates adopted a “Traditional Plan” that retains current restrictions against gay marriage in the church, and the prohibition on ordination of self-avowed, practicing, homosexuals. It also adds tighter accountability and discipline regarding violation of these restrictions. Questions remain as to whether the Traditional Plan is constitutional and what parts will go into effect. Unfortunately, we will not have answers to those questions until the Judicial Council meets again in late April.

In light of decisions made at General Conference, we want to be clear Franconia always has been and always will be welcoming and inclusive. We once again affirm in our vision statement “we welcome all and together respond to the challenges of daily life through worship, study, and fellowship.” We continue to be the church, to serve our community, and to be about the work of making disciples for the transformation of the world.

We encourage you now to be the church for one another. Remember that this is a time for us to be very, very gentle with one another. Some are pleased with the General Conference’s action. Others are very hurt. Remember that this is an issue that affects many deeply within our congregation and community. For those who are hurting: We see you. We love you. God loves you, and you are welcome here at Franconia.

There are several opportunities where you can find out more information. On Monday March 4th, Bishop Lewis will be giving a livestream “State of the Church” address at 10 am. On Wed, March 13, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm at Herndon United Methodist Church (701 Bennett St, Herndon, VA 20170) two leaders of our General Conference Delegation, Tom Berlin (clergy) and Martha Stokes (laity), will provide us with an update on the process and the decisions that were reached during the 2019 Called General Conference.

Please be patient, and wait for God’s timing to do God’s work. Be in prayer for our congregation, our denomination, and especially for those who are hurting. Recognize God’s power among us. We are a great church. We have done, are doing, and will do great ministry together in the name of Christ. The hungry are fed. Children are cared for and shaped by God through our ministries. Lives are transformed by the grace and love of Jesus through our shared ministry together. Most of all, remember the power of God’s love, which is for everyone.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)

-Rev. Melissa Porter-Miller, Pastor

-Barbara Lawrence, Lay Leader

-Jeff Sheldon, Church Council Chair