

Polly's Pondering

By the time you are reading this newsletter Carty, Deborah, and I will have returned from annual conference. You can watch the recorded sessions at the Texas Conference Website: Our Bishop gives his address on the Sunday Evening Session. His message starts at the 1hour, 5minute point into the session. [BISHOP JONES' ADDRESS](#)

During his remarks on the conference directive To Love All God's Children, the bishop again reemphasized the need for this directive and the impact it has on a hurting world. This has been the emphasis for the last five years. I am extremely proud of the way this church is living that direction out. We are into our 39th year of ministry to children in the community through the preschool ministry called FUMP. We have completed the first year of the ASK program which is working to improve the reading skills of 12 children in first and second grade, who have been identified as benefiting from this individual and intentional mentoring program. We have also started the Blast program that has ministered to 20 children with emphasis on scripture, fellowship, and fun. In September and October, we distributed jackets one more time to every elementary school age child in need of a new jacket. These are just some of the ways we are continuing to fulfill our directive to love all children. I encourage you to continue to seek new and innovative ways to meet the needs of children in our mission field of Franklin Texas. We are fortunate to be a part of a loving church and we know that our church has much more love to give. So, it is our desire to broaden our reach in the community in order, to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Bishop Jones shared how he was drawn back into the church which he was absent from after high school. And how a truck driver drew him back into the church. He has been a part of this church with its Wesley heritage ever since. Even as our denomination has continued to dwindle in membership every year since 1968, Bishop Jones has worked to restore the Wesleyan understanding of our faith because its emphasis on grace is needed in this world and the power it has to change lives through Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We have long followed the Wesleyan understanding of our faith. Its emphasis on a personal and a social gospel, faithful to scripture as the authoritative standard for our faith, and our responsibility to work so that everyone would know the saving grace of Jesus Christ that gives us life abundant free from the fear of sin, death, and hell.

With a grieving heart, Bishop Jones, stated that the coming split of the United Methodist Church was a result of the inability for the extreme center to hold together two completely different expressions of Methodism. He then went on to share with us the three options available to each church. The first is, in his opinion and mine, not viable as it leaves the church with little accountability and little protection as they seek to become a single independent entity. The second and third options are to choose from the two different expressions of Methodism that are being formed. The newly formed GMC (Global Methodist Church) and the newly continuing United Methodist Church. The Global Methodist Church will be most closely aligned to the traditional expression of Methodism that our church has held since its formation. Their Book of Discipline will look very familiar to us. There will be some changes made to streamline the administration and to limit apportionment cost, as well as remove the trust clause. The continuing United Methodist Church will seek to move their people in an increasingly progressive manner. They will remove many of the traditional wordings from the Book of Discipline. As the Bishop said how fast and how far they move in a progressive manner is yet to be seen. Bishop Jones has reminded us that there is a place for each of these expressions of Methodism. Each pastor and each Church body will need to choose to align with the form that best fits their beliefs and understandings of Methodism.

In 2017, having already foreseen the split that has indeed come to pass, our administrative council made clear that we will be seeking to align with the traditional body of Methodist. This means that the Administration council believes that the body of the church will want to hold to the Wesleyan understanding that holds that Scripture as the authoritative standard for our faith. That we hold to the discipline and doctrine of the traditional expression of Methodism that we have served under since we joined the United Methodist Church, and even before that when we were part of the Methodist Episcopal expression of our faith. This includes the traditional understanding of Human Sexuality and Marriage between one man and one woman *and* holds to the understanding that *all* individuals are persons of sacred worth, created in the image of God, in need of the ministry of the church, forgiveness of God and the Grace of God, and available to be loved by *both* the church and their families.

Ultimately the decision to leave the UMC and join with the GMC is a decision for the whole body of the church. We will have several opportunities for questions (6/8 & 6/22 at 6pm) or you can schedule an independent meeting with me and then we will hold a Called Church Conference to vote on disaffiliation from the UMC and to join the GMC on June 26 immediately following the worship service. Our new District Superintendent will be on hand to officiate the meeting. We will also have a vote on the financial steps and legal procedures to make that happen.