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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ of Fairfield Glade UMC,

In this past week Christine and I have been in Texas helping our daughter's and son-in-law's family move to Tennessee; however, in the midst of this family endeavor our hearts have been with you in Fairfield Glade. I have not yet heard the effect upon Fairfield Glade of the outpouring of rain in Tennessee and the resultant flooding. Our church may have some particular needs to address due to flooding.

I am aware that there has been another very difficult event that has occurred in this week that has touched us at Fairfield Glade UMC, and that is the completion of the Special General Conference of the UMC happening in St. Louis, Missouri. Our church has much to do to address the effects of that event upon the hearts, thoughts, spirit, faith, and fellowship of our Fairfield Glade UMC. If you have not heard the "traditional" plan, one of four plans before the General Conference passed by roughly 53% to 47%. The passage by a small margin speaks to the deep divide in our UMC. We are indeed a church who is not of one mind on these matters. Many persons left the Special Conference hurt or greatly disappointed, and some angry and some relieved. But from what I have read from those that were there is that all felt pain and grief arising from the heartrending nature of the work of the General Conference.

I will offer a more complete pastoral response and report when I return to Fairfield Glade, but I remind all of us that, just like the larger UMC, Fairfield Glade UMC, on the matters discussed at the Conference, are not of one mind. Some of us have loved ones and family members who identify with the LGBTQ community or perhaps self-identify. Even those with LGBTQ loved ones may not be of one mind as to perspective, understanding, or how to pray or minister to their loved ones. We at Fairfield Glade UMC all need to be gracious and understanding with those with whom we do not agree, but hold a common faith in our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus.

I would hope that all of us at Fairfield Glade UMC will be able to bear the grief and pains experienced by each other, as well as share our joy in our Lord who bears patiently in love with all His people.

Yours, in Christ,

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