

**Statement - "Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation"
DAUMC, 01/05/2020**

The United Methodist Council of Bishops Office announced on Friday, January 3 that a group of United Methodist traditionalists, centrists, progressives, and bishops have signed a proposed agreement on the separation of the United Methodist Church. The agreement, entitled the "Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation," is supported by representatives associated with diverse groups within the UMC through a mediation process, working with a renowned, but pro bono mediator to bring forward this proposal.

Those who cannot live in a church that welcomes and affirms the gifts of all people, including people who identify as GLBTQIA+, will be free to pursue another route, outlined in the Protocol. The rest of us will find our way forward together through prayer, collaboration, and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. We will be able to continue our Methodist tradition that practices a vibrant personal holiness and powerful social holiness in the context God has placed us. This is nothing new for Douglas Avenue United Methodist Church, and we will continue to be a faith community that both welcomes and affirms the gifts of all people. All people. No exceptions.

In spite of headlines you may have read, the United Methodist Church has NOT split or separated or even decided to do so. What *has* happened is the initial work and the crafting of the Protocol. Legislation to implement it continues to be developed for presentation at General Conference, our world-wide decision making body for the United Methodist Church, meeting this May in Minneapolis.

We continue to hold our world-wide United Methodist Church in prayer, for our leaders and our congregations to live out Jesus's commission to make disciples for the transformation of the world. And our work to do the same continues every day at Douglas Avenue United Methodist Church.

- Rev. Meredith Manning Brown, lead pastor