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Like so many in our community, I am angry, hurting, and feeling uncertain about the future.

As you likely know, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church met in St. Louis, and yesterday passed by a narrow margin (54 votes out of 800+ global delegates) the Traditional Plan. Tragically, this plan reinforces The Book of Discipline's discriminatory language against LGBTQ members of the body of Christ, and makes stricter the prohibitions against same-sex marriage and ordination for gay clergy in the UMC.

I need to be clear about where I and the staff and leadership of our Church stand. The heart of God's good news and the calling of Travis Park and every church and every Christ follower is to proclaim and embody and share God's unconditional love. Now more than ever, we must cultivate a community that shares God's love with and through people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. With and through not only words but action. We must continue to celebrate a fully open table "where all are welcome, and love is always the answer to hate." We all miss out on God's gifts when a broken and divided church fails to recognize and encourage the gifts of LGBTQ people, and so anything less than full and equal inclusion hurts God, hurts us, and hurts our witness.

Many of you, like me, are asking, "what happens now?" We don't yet know all the ramifications and implementation of the new plan. But we know that we won't just passively accept what's handed down to us. General Conference doesn't represent our vision of the church and we believe it falls short of God's vision. So we are committed to pray fervently and honestly. We are committed to thoughtfully exploring next steps for our congregation. It may yet be that even through the pain, Travis Park has the opportunity to become something fresh and new.

It is tempting in our despairing moments to give up, to walk away. Who could blame you, especially the LGBTQ siblings in our church family? But now is the time that we need to come together. We need to hear each other's pain and care for each other. We need to be there for those who are hurting now and are in less supportive faith communities. We need to prayerfully study and seek out a faithful response for our church together. We need to renew that our commitment is first and foremost to Jesus and the people of our local church community, not an institution or logo or brand. So please - I ask this especially of my LGBTQ siblings in Christ - please don't walk away just yet. We need you and your voice. Let's stay connected to one another and see where the Holy Spirit leads us.

We gather Sunday to remember that our God of love will go to any lengths, break down any walls, to invite us into abundant life together. I hope to see you - we need you there. We all need this reminder from God and each other: you are not alone. — Grateful to journey with you, - Pastor Eric