



4434 Boonsboro Road, Lynchburg, VA 24503

434.384.2791 [www.peaklandumc.org](http://www.peaklandumc.org)

February 28, 2019

Dear Peakland Members and Friends,

By now you may have become aware that the special called session of the United Methodist General Conference has met, concluded its stated purpose, and we as a community of faith are dealing with some residue.

By a slim majority (53% - 47%) the 800+ delegates consisting of United Methodists from across the globe approved the "Traditional Plan." This plan retains the current language in the United Methodist Book of Discipline about homosexuality as the official stance of the denomination, affirms that same-gender weddings may not be performed either by UM Clergy or in UM Church Facilities, strengthens the ramifications for clergy who do so in violation, and continues the ban on ordination in the UMC for LGBTQ folk. For legislative reasons, parts of the Traditional Plan are being studied by our denominational Judicial Council because several of the accountability and "chargeable-offense" parts of the plan may be in violation of our constitution because of their punitive nature and the role our Bishops will be expected to play in enforcement.

What it means is while some things have been re-affirmed we still do not know what the future of the church looks like.

What it means is there are people receiving this news in our congregation who affirm the denomination's current attitude toward homosexuality, some who lament a change did not occur, and some who live in bewilderment and confusion about all of it.

What it means is Peakland United Methodist Church will continue to exist in this community as the special place of love, acceptance, and diversity that makes us who we are. As your pastor, I assure you that the timbre of love and community that defines us and is the foundation upon which we strive to live as Jesus calls us to live will not change. Peakland will continue to be Peakland!

On Monday, March 4 at 10:00 am Bishop Sharma Lewis, Episcopal Leader for the Virginia Conference will give a "State of the Church Report" via livestream and archived for later viewing. If you

wish to see the livestream please go to [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org) a few minutes before 10:00 am and follow the prompts.

On Sunday, March 31, 7:00 pm Peakland Church will hold a “Peakland Café” in the Fellowship Hall. Co-sponsored by the Lynchburg District, the Reverend Jason Stanley, who was present at the General Conference as an alternate delegate will share with us his understanding of the experience and what the future may look like. Jason is a dear friend of PUMC, having served on staff for 4 years.

Beloved of God, we live in a broken world where people are hurting and the love of God through Jesus Christ needs to be affirmed and shared. I ask for the best from all of us. The Body of Christ never has been formed by legislative fiat. The Body of Christ exists wherever 2 or three gather in the name of Jesus and strive together to love as Jesus loves.

That is who we are here at Peakland Church.

That is who we will continue to be.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor John