



## **Bishop Leonard Fairley**

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Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Kentucky Annual Conference,

The church has done her work, and we give thanks for the gathering of delegates from all around the world who were called upon to make difficult decisions at General Conference. We pray these decisions will position The United Methodist Church to live into her mission of making disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world. This mission has taken a back seat to decades-old arguments over human sexuality.

As a part of our pivot to the church of the future, there are some things I want to make clear:

- While clergy and churches are now permitted to perform and host same-sex weddings, clergy do not have to officiate them and local churches do not have to host them. Local church trustees may develop wedding and building-use policies to reflect their theological interpretation.
- Ordination will be based on the qualifications of becoming a pastor such as faith, spiritual disciplines, Wesleyan theology, abiding by the Book of Discipline, and a commitment to leading the church. While the clergy executive session will continue to vote upon the moral character of each candidate for ordination, human sexuality will not be a barrier to becoming an ordained pastor in The United Methodist Church.
- A local church will not be required to receive a gay pastor. As we have always done with clergy appointments, there will continue to be extensive consultation with the local church, district superintendent and bishop.
- Your conference leadership is aware that the disaffiliation process outlined in Paragraph 2553 has not been renewed by the General Conference. Our leaders are examining how this impacts our conference.

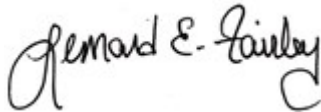
From the desk of  
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- In all things we will continue to abide by John Wesley's three simple rules: "Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God."

As I have spent time sharing with young people across our Annual Conference, I have been encouraged. There is deep desire within them to get on with the work of the risen Christ in new and exciting ways. I felt the same desire in the room at the General Conference. It's not that I agree with every decision, but I give thanks that the Holy Spirit has moved us forward. We are moving ahead, with great hope, to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ for a hurting world.

We will commit ourselves to focus on what we should have never forgotten – laying aside everything that would divide. I pray that what has been done at this General Conference will help us forget "what lies behind and [strain] forward to what lies ahead, [pressing] on toward the goal, toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13b – 14).

Grace & Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leonard E. Fairley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bishop Leonard Fairley  
Louisville Episcopal Area