

For the last 11 years I have served Kingwood UMC as Licensed Local Pastor. Over those many years we have called this church home. This community has wrapped your arms around me and my family with endless warmth, love, support and encouragement. That is who you are as people, and has created the identity of KUMC as a loving and welcoming community of Christ. This is not the result of the United Methodist logo, or the book of discipline. It is because you have been formed by Christ and his love and grace overflow in your missional outpouring and welcoming spirit.

I have been asked many times, “what are you going to do at the end of the vote?” After 11 years of ministry here, though I am grieved on the deepest level what is happening within the denomination, my primary focus lies on the local church. While I support a move to the GMC, regardless of the outcome of the vote on September 25th, I have chosen to remain at the table here at KUMC. I am dedicated to you, the people of KUMC, because it is you that creates the culture and identity of a church. I am dedicated to walk alongside and be present with those on both side of the vote as I call you brothers and sisters. As we have been in the past, we ought to remain a people that invites opposition to the table. We are better when we have a diversity of perspective, and for the last 11 years I have experienced the beauty of worshipping alongside those with differing beliefs. I do not believe that just because we vote differently, that we have to part ways. In the coming months and more importantly, years, I believe that this church will be defined by the courage and voice of those who remain at the table to engage in ongoing dialog.

With that said, I believe that voting to Stay in the UMC means that we are actively taking a progressive theological stance that is incongruent with the historically traditional theological identity of KUMC. The effects of staying in a Progressive moving denomination may not be felt in the next 5 or 10 years, though it could be felt immediately, but progressive theology in our seminaries will impact our future pastors, and progressive denominational leadership will affect the pastoral placements, which will inevitably begin to turn the ship. It will gradually change the trajectory of the church that your kids and grandkids will experience.

I believe that voting to disaffiliate, positions us to continue to thrive as the loving and welcoming missional church that we have each experienced. There are many denominational advantages in the GMC (of which Jeremy highlighted in his letter), but ultimately I believe that this allows KUMC to continue to be who we are. It allows us to remain a people of love and grace, humility and trust. The idea that we will overnight become an exclusive country club church that does not welcome all, is unfounded. That is not who the people of KUMC are.

Regardless of the vote, I know that we remain a voice for the marginalized. I know that we will be a voice that champions unbridled love for our brothers and sisters, regardless of their orientation or theological beliefs. This does not mean we must celebrate every area of someone’s life or agree with them or their lifestyle. I do not believe, that the real Jesus kind of love requires blanket acceptance of every part of a person’s life. Agape love calls us to greater holiness and further into the presence of God. Our role is to love and welcome into fellowship and to help our neighbors connect to a God who loves and transforms hearts and minds.

Church, as we go through this process, I want to tell you that it is ok to say “I don’t know.” In fact, it is healthy to wrestle with that. I have spoken those words many times in this process and when I end at “I don’t know,” I lean on scripture, and respond with love, grace, humility and trust. What I do know, is that at the end of this whole process we ought to be a church where the transgender couple is equally as loved and welcomed into fellowship as the heterosexual, Lacoste wearing nuclear family. The same goes for all shapes, colors and demographics. It is not our role to decide who is in and who is out and sometimes we ought to say “I don’t know, but I love You the person, because Jesus does.” What the Holy Spirit does in loving community is exponentially more powerful than from a place of man-made social and spiritual exile.

With that said, I urge you, as I have decided, stay at the table. Even if you disagree, stay at the table. Though the denomination is divorcing, it does not mean that the local church has to. Your voice is necessary, your presence is welcomed, and your gifts and passions will be formative as we seek to be a light in the world around us. We need healthy discourse and opposition to help hold us to the “Gospel Center” where party lines fail to speak. This is my hope and my desire for the community of faith that I have served and loved for the last 11 years. May we continue to thrive as a beacon of light, love, grace and humility for generations to come. I would love to discuss this further with you regardless of which side you land on. I promise to do a lot of listening.

Rev. Clint Wyllie

Child of God

Follower of Jesus

Husband

Father

Pastor at Kingwood UMC