



A big thank you to our
Family Ministry Volunteers! *(not all are pictured).*

*If you are looking for a place to serve the Church and
community, join the team! Contact Dana, DYCE.*

JESUS IS RISEN!

When Jesus' disciples saw that the stone was rolled away from his tomb, they knew he had risen. Make a moveable tomb to celebrate Easter.

What you need:

- 4 pieces of paper (brown, blue, black, yellow)
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Glue stick
- Brad fastener
- Marker



What you do:

1. Fold the brown paper in half, short side to short side. Cut along the fold. On one half, draw and cut out a large half-circle (the tomb). On the other, draw and cut out a palm-sized circle (the stone).
2. Glue the brown tomb onto the blue paper.
3. Cut a black circle (the inside of the tomb) the same size as the brown stone and glue it onto the brown tomb.
4. Place the brown stone over the black half-circle; this is the entrance. Push the brad through one edge so the stone can move from side to side.
5. Cut out a cross from the yellow paper and glue it by the tomb.
6. Write "Jesus is risen!" atop the blue paper.

General Conference Thoughts

It would be impossible to sum up the General Conference in just a few words, but I did want to share a few things that were on my heart. The legislation that was passed will be going before the Judicial Council (our Supreme Court) for their judgement on the constitutionality of the petitions. Much of it has already been before the Judicial Council for their opinions and rulings, so it is likely that those areas that were constitutional before will be found constitutional at their April meeting, but only God knows at this point. None of what was done will take effect until January of 2020, but I want to share with you a list that I shared with the choir of some of the things we *believe* were accomplished in St. Louis last month. I have used the word we, to take some ownership in the GC actions.

We maintained the current Biblical position around Human sexuality and gave it some accountability. We passed the Traditional Plan, but because of parliamentary shenanigans and unfriendly Presiding Bishops, we were not given the chance to amend it to be constitutional in many places. The Modified Traditional Plan was not put before us. It was sent to a subcommittee and never again saw the light of day or a vote by the Plenary session. We tightened the definition of a self-avowed practicing homosexual to include those in a same-sex marriage or partnership, removing many loopholes Bishops have been using to avoid accountability.

We limited the Bishops ability to dismiss legitimate complaints and tightened the just resolution language, making sure the complainant is included in the process of just resolutions.

We set mandatory penalties for those who perform same-sex marriage of a 1-year suspension the first time and removal the second. We strengthened the right of appeal when church law is not followed.

We required a full examination of all candidates for Ministry through Ordination and Commissioning, and require Bishops to affirm that members appointed to the Board of Ordained ministry will uphold the entire Book of Discipline.

We voted in a gracious exit policy for churches and pastors who cannot live with the decisions made at this General Conference. I do not believe that this plan will make it through the Judicial review unscathed, but stranger things have happened. And, we fixed pension policies for those pastors and churches who may choose to leave or close.

Overall, it was a difficult and painful few days that in some ways accomplished little and in other ways accomplished much. All of the places where we tried to hold Bishops accountable to their covenants were removed by the Judicial Council (at the Bishops request), and we were not given a chance to correct those and many other constitutional concerns. *I celebrate that we continue to be a church that follows the scripture and the Biblical understanding of sexuality and marriage.* This is really huge. This outcome was a surprise to many, particularly our Bishops.

This was not a clean or easy time for anyone. There were protests, stalling tactics, and downright mean speeches by many people who were not getting their way and felt angry and hurt. The process was manipulated by the Bishops and the Conference leadership (my opinion), but in the end we have stayed a church that I can be proud of, standing strong in the faith (at least till GC 2020). I am very glad it is over and glad to be home. Please don't be afraid to ask us about the week, we will be happy to share more fully with you. Blessings in Christ. Rev. Mike

Special Meetings with the Bishop

Bishop Tracy Malone hosted three meetings to talk about the called 2019 General Conference, held in February in St Louis. The final meeting was simulcast and available online to watch at www.eocumc.org. Several delegates shared about the results of the General Conference and the Bishops shared her thoughts. If you watch this and would like to talk, please give me a call and we can set up a time to do so. Mike