

Good morning and *Malo e lelei*,

This weekend was a weekend of change, challenge and renewed hope.

## FIRST THE CHALLENGE AND CHANGE...

As you may already know, Saturday was a called meeting of the Annual Conference (the regional leadership group within the UMC) in which we considered and approved 81 motions for congregations to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church within Central Texas. This represents roughly 30% of the number of churches in our conference (though not 30% of the people, as many of the congregations disaffiliating are quite small and rural). Only three of these churches are in Tarrant County.

As I have shared in worship, this season of separation grieves me because one of the hallmarks of the UMC at its best is that we remain deeply committed to following Jesus while being a community of the “middle way” or “via media.” Being a community of the middle way values diversity and seeks unity within that diversity rather than simply insisting upon unity through uniformity.

As John Wesley said “*Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may.*”

By choosing to leave, some of our brothers and sisters in Christ are choosing uniformity or unity within diversity. That being said, we will all still be partners in the Gospel, just as we are with all of the different denominations, and I invite you to join me in praying for all the churches in our conference in the midst of this, and that the denominational changes would not hamper our witness for Christ in our communities.

## SUNDAY BROUGHT WITH IT RENEWED HOPE.

As I shared online, “(Sunday) was a day I needed... 4 services in 3 languages requiring 2 sermons and 1 surprise “happy birthday” serenade.” I led worship at 8:30 and 11, preached for the DAAI Christian Church that meets on our campus at 1:30 and joined our Tongan community at the close of their 2pm service. What a day spent following Jesus in the midst of beautiful diversity and deep Christian unity.

As we move forward together, know that I am deeply thankful that we are a church that finds unity in our diversity, loves like family, serves in mission and above all is committed to Christ!

I'm proud to be your pastor.  
Pastor Daniel

PS – to hear the Bishop's healing and inspiring sermon from Saturday click [here](#).

