



## *An Important Message From Your Pastor*

My friend Rev. Scott Dornbush passed away earlier this year while serving Kingwood UMC. He was appointed to Kingwood at the same time that I was appointed here in Longview. He was pastor at Van UMC when I was serving the latter portion of my time at the nearby Colfax Circuit while attending seminary at Perkins at SMU. He came to preach on several occasions at revivals and special services for me. He had an interesting way of ending his sermons and offering benedictions. One was like this: "May the grace of God and his message for you today make you UNCOMFORTABLE!" Another version went like this: "Go in peace and may the peace of God DISTURB you!" Scott had a unique way of calling people to appropriate discomfort and adequate disturbance for the transformative power of God to take hold in their lives.

I am mindful of this as I write this letter to you, my brothers and sisters in Christ at Longview FUMC. I feel God calling me to channel a Dornbush-like awakening as I write to you about what is on my heart as your pastor. There is so much to celebrate here and much cause for excitement in the many ways that God is moving and blessing our ministry together. I also feel there is much reason for us to be appropriately disturbed and uncomfortable for the cause of Christ.

God is doing amazing things at Longview FUMC. We have many new faces around this place. God is impacting each of us in powerful ways and our ministry is affecting many lives beyond our church. Our prayers for God to break through are being answered in powerful and transformative ways. I have seen it and felt it here in countless ways. I hope that you feel it, too.

Yet, we need to awaken to a new sense of faithfulness in our discipleship if we are to respond and go, as I believe God calls us to move. We too often exhibit inconsistency and apathy in our vows to uphold the church, particularly with our presence and our gifts. We continually struggle to support the financial needs of our ministry without last-second heroics. We too often fall into a false sense of comfort that someone else will respond or resources will come from elsewhere and will not require our personal support. We are too often lulled into a false sense that we are not missed when absent. We are the church! I believe that God is calling us in an exciting and appropriately disturbing way to be part of God's amazing action in our lives, in our church, and in our ministry to be **A BEACON OF HOPE FOR ALL**.

This month I want to challenge you to be present in worship and in the many other opportunities we offer for faithful discipleship...Sunday School, Bible Studies, small groups, and the many Wednesday evening opportunities. I want to challenge you to be an active part of a ministry of FUMC as we serve others in the name of Jesus Christ. Last of all, I want to challenge you to faithfully support our ministry financially now and in our pledges of support for next year. **You will receive a Discipleship Commitment Card by mail within the next 2 weeks. Our Commitment Consecration Sunday is October 28<sup>th</sup>. I hope to see you in church with faithful and prayerful commitments to the ministry of FUMC.**

Paul wrote in the 5<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Book of Romans about boasting in "our hope of sharing the glory of God" as well as in "our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." May these words disturb and encourage us as we respond in faithfulness.

Yours in Christ,