

## **A Great Day in the Kingdom – 3/31/23**

Next week we come together to celebrate Holy Week, one of the most exciting times in Christianity. It is something we Christians have celebrated for 2000 years. It is something we Christians have celebrated despite the politics of those anointed to lead.

The Christian religion has divided and subdivided and sub-subdivided itself into denominations and branches and splinters until it resembles cable TV. If you watch cable TV and scroll down the menu, you scroll and scroll and scroll. And what are you scrolling over? You scroll over all the unwatched channels.

The fact is, people are cutting the cord.

It is time for an update involving our plan for the future, as a family of God. An update as to our relationship, not with Jesus Christ, but the politics of those anointed to lead. The General Conference of the world-wide UMC is meeting next year, April 23-May 3, 2024. One of the items most certainly to be addressed is amending the Book of Discipline from its current language. Currently, the Book of Discipline prohibits same sex marriage. The debate had been and most likely will continue to mirror what we see every day in our civic politics, starting in Washington DC. That is to say, the debate is uneducational, as those in power wish to see us ill-informed, and is emotional, as those in power wish for us to not use our minds.

First, the General Conference can speak to the local Churches, but NOT for the local Churches. Secondly, NOTHING for Aledo has to change, with the rumor that we are required to vote to disaffiliate or not being false. There is no vote, unless we decide to do so. Unlike other churches that have jumped from the kettle into the fire, at this point, we have options. We can stay or go, at the time of our choosing to the place of our choice. Thirdly, as we have seen, Families of God systematically destroy themselves with votes of win or lose, we should take heed, as to the damage a vote can create. There are those who worship among us, who have experienced the destruction of a church vote, where one side wins and the other loses. When churches hold "open" meetings to voice opinions and vote, we have seen how it turns into shouting where people speak to drown out opposing views and no one can hear or wants to listen.

Aledo is not a small-town or county seat Church. Our Church family is respectful of varying viewpoints. Our theme at Aledo UMC encompasses Love and Respect for one another. Remember our invitation? "You won't find a better group of people who are Sinners, just trying to get in right." We have grown together in numerous ways, by following the guidance of God's Holy Spirit.

Aledo UMC is made up of Conservatives, Liberals and Moderates, as we worship together in mutual respect. Again, in spite of what you may or may not have been told, no one can change who we are and how we are. If you like who we are now, nothing needs to change. There are many of you who seek clarity and ask Where do we stand? We stand together, with Jesus Christ! Glen Lake Camp has never turned away a child for lack of finances. Sager-Browne has helped millions in natural disasters, both foreign and domestic. Methodist Children's Home in Waco has helped tens of thousands and there are many others our missions have supported. We have supported these wonderful ministries, along with dozens of others. You can hear the distress of ministries in the Houston area, when the Aledo UMC Missions team helps them to serve over 7 million people, who live in the flood plains of our Southern portion of Texas. Most of the churches who have voted and left no longer support them, as they are losing the much needed resources to aid flood victims. As those churches cut the cord to their communities, their communities will cut the cord to them.

The bottom line? If we can stay who we are and avoid a vote, our Family of Faith will be left intact for future generations. We all win, if no one wins and no one loses. As the Apostle Paul wrote in **Romans 14:19, Let us therefore make every effort to what leads to peace and mutual respect.**

**PRAYER: Heavenly Father, we ask that you help us to Love as Jesus Loved. Help us to see the world, through His eyes. As we hold differing opinions, keep us united in agreement on Christ, our Savior. Thank You for Loving Us! Lead us into Your will and not our own. In the name of the Risen Christ we Pray! AMEN!!!**