Delegate Reflection - Rev. Ronnie Bell

I’m a newly ordained United Methodist minister, serving at Cumberland UMC, the easternmost Methodist church in Marion County. I’ve also been elected by my clergy colleagues to serve as part of the delegation going to Minneapolis to help guide the decisions of our denomination on a way forward, particularly on the issue of human sexuality, but on many other issues and concerns as well.

When we had our first meeting, I had the opportunity to lead worship to kick off the day. I shared a message about communion.

One special thing about my current congregation of CUMC is that we have a practice of partaking in the Lord’s Supper every single week, as opposed to most churches taking communion every month. John Wesley in sermons like “On the Constant Duty of Communion” reminds us that we should take communion as often as we can.

The table is not only a means of God’s grace, but it is a helpful metaphor for my hopes for the church. Christ’s table is open to all, to receive God’s grace that will give them the strength and courage to change themselves, their families, their communities, and even their denominational structures for the better.

It’s no secret that I am more liberal or progressive than many of my colleagues and many of the laypeople who sit in our pews. I’m also younger, more black, and have more family living outside of the United States than most who sit in our UMC pews in Indiana (my wife is from Mexico and my parents are from Jamaica) I do however, believe in a God whose grace breaks down labels (Galatians 3:28) and calls us together in God’s name, to eat of bread, to drink of wine (or Welch’s grape juice) and to love each other like brother and sister.

It’s a sacred honor to love, listen and serve with others. Please keep our entire delegation in your prayers as we seek to do God’s work.

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