

A Word from Woody. . .
“The Times They Have Changed—and We Are New!”

A couple of months ago I did an article entitled “The Times They Are A’changing”. Well, we should consider it a *fait accompli*.

As of July 1st, Lake Vista United Methodist Church is no longer. We are now known as Lighthouse for Christ Church, complete with a new website and logo! (Please check us out at Lighthouseforchristchurch.org or Lighthousefcc.org.) We are presently an independent, theologically orthodox church, not affiliated with any denomination. Also, as of this very date I am now an ordained Elder in the Global Methodist Church, the conservative denomination the Wesleyan Covenant Association launched on May 1st. While recent months have brought these changes which have affected us directly, there were other changes which were indirect, but no less substantive.

Two in particular come to mind, both courtesy of the U.S. Supreme Court. The first arrived on June 24th, the bombshell announcement that Roe v Wade has now been deemed unconstitutional. We are still feeling the reverberations from this decision. Despite the rage of the Left this has brought, one can be thankful that it seems to have cured their amnesia as to what a woman is. In the midst of unhinged media and political commentary on this decision, one must keep in mind what it did not do. It did not make abortion itself illegal throughout the U.S. Now democracy can be unleashed in each state to consider whether, and to what degree, abortion should be allowed. As your pastor, I would like to share with you that I rejoice and praise our Lord that we have lived to see the overturning of Roe v Wade. I pray abortion, and the conditions which people believe an abortion is necessary, would vanish. I concur with what we have written in our bylaws as Lighthouse for Christ Church: “abortion cannot be affirmed as an acceptable means of birth control; as a means of gender selection or eugenics; and should only be considered when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is available”. I have also concluded that Christians should play a key role in ministering to women who are tempted to consider an abortion. Indeed, the Christian Church, to her credit, has already been in such ministry long before Roe.

Having just left The UMC, we do well to inquire, how have the UM leaders reacted to the overturning of Roe? There was an article on June 27 provided by the United Methodist New Service with a title that says it all: “Bishops Bemoan Supreme Court’s Abortion Ruling”. Mark Tooley, writing for the conservative Institute on Religion & Democracy, observed that the bemoaning of UM leaders was not just from the Council of Bishops, but also the UM’s General Board of Church and Society, UM women’s group, General Commission on Women in Society, and General Board of Global Ministries (“Abortion & Methodist Split”, June 28, 2022). Tooley correctly concludes that the UM’s theological Left’s “postmodern view of the church does not conceive a timeless and boundaryless Body of Christ but rather a discordant collection of willful and self-actualized individuals, each of whom decides what is best. It’s not a very appealing vision. But this different version of the church is what is splitting United Methodism, not sexuality per se.”

The second substantive ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court concerned the prayer of a public high school football coach’s post-game kneeling for prayer at the 50-yard line. Many joined the coach for this prayer time, and it should be noted with no coercion or manipulation from him. The coach, Joseph Kennedy, was fired for it after seven years of his post-game ritual. Kennedy believed he was exercising his First Amendment right to the exercise of free speech, but his dismissal was based on the view that his act was a violation of the First Amendment’s warning to “make no law respecting an establishment of religion”. The Court, correctly, decided in favor of Kennedy. Again, the reverberations of the Court’s stance are still being felt, and the consequences could be wide-ranging. Syndicated columnist George Will provided an opinion well worth heeding: “In ‘Notes on the State of Virginia’ (1785), [Thomas] Jefferson had written, ‘It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.’ The court’s decision for the football coach should cause timorous adults, and the fragile young people they shape, to stop fueling today’s cancel culture and the demand for ‘safe spaces.’ Mere exposure to another’s belief does them no injury” (“Trying to Protect Students from a Coach’s Prayers Did Them No Favors”, *The Times-Picayune*, 7B, July 1, 2022).

We are witnesses. The times have changed, in beneficial ways by God’s grace, both for the church where we worship and for our nation. Nevertheless, as we go forward we do well to embrace the apostle Paul’s instruction to Timothy, “But

you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5, NIV).

Love,

Woody