



# The United Methodist Church

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Dear Friends and Members of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference (NIC):

Blessings and peace to you all! I trust that you are able to enjoy these wonderful months of summer and have time for rest and relaxation!

As you remember, I was initially scheduled to retire on September 1, 2020, but with the onset of the coronavirus and its disruption of General Conference, Jurisdictional Conference (where bishops are elected), and our own Annual Conference, I delayed my retirement to be effective January 1, 2021. That way I can see through our virtual Annual Conference session, scheduled for November 14.

The North Central Jurisdictional Conference (NCJ) will be held November 10-12, 2021, at which time bishops will be appointed. A couple of months ago, the NCJ bishops—called the College of Bishops—began to meet and discuss how to provide coverage for the NIC during the 2021 year. In consultation with the NCJ Committee on Episcopacy, the NIC Committee on Episcopacy, and the NIC cabinet, a strong preference was made for a retired bishop to provide coverage.

The College of Bishops began to contact many retired bishops in both our jurisdiction and outside of our jurisdiction; men and women, bishops of color and white, and a variety of theological perspectives. With approval of the Council of Bishops, retired Bishop John Hopkins (former episcopal leader of Minnesota and East Ohio) was asked, and accepted, to become the interim bishop for the NIC.

You will be learning more about Bishop Hopkins and we hope to have him say a few words at our virtual Annual Conference session this fall. Due to other commitments, he will not be available, nor receiving calls or inquiries, until January 1, 2021, when he will begin. As an interim, he will not be doing all the things that a resident bishop does, but will focus on making sure that our strategic work through the Annual Conference Shepherding Team continues its momentum, provide episcopal leadership to the extended cabinet, and keep the commitments of this conference in relation to human sexuality as having been addressed and approved at the 2019 Annual Conference.

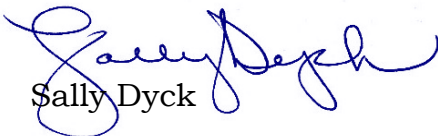


Bishop Hopkins' bio can be found at this [LINK](#). In response to his assignment to the NIC, he said, "I look forward to overseeing the good work Christ has already begun in Northern Illinois. In this time of COVID-19, racial injustice, and deep cultural divisions, I have faith in the power of God to transform the world through the witness of the church. I seek to serve you in the words of Ephesians 4 and 'lead a life worthy of the calling to which (I) have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'"

I am thankful for his willingness to accept this year-long interim and commend his leadership to you! Please keep him and his wife, Elaine, in your prayers as they prepare for this major change in their lives and you, as an annual conference, will be in my prayers when I depart at the end of December.

Blessings on you all!

Sincerely,

  
Sally Dyck

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