



The United Methodist Church

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The North Central Jurisdiction College of Bishops met January 22-24, 2019 and have issued this joint statement as we approach the Special General Conference 2019.

Please read below. ~ Bishop Sally Dyck

January 24, 2019

Dear Friends in Christ in the North Central Jurisdiction,

We, the bishops of the North Central Jurisdiction, greet you in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit. Together we all stand on the edge of the special called session of General Conference in St. Louis in February. We are grateful that you have been praying with us in the months and days leading up to this significant gathering of the people called United Methodist, and we remain grateful for your continuing prayers.

During the past months we each have written and shared about this General Conference and the work of the Commission on a Way Forward. We have traveled throughout our areas teaching and listening, responding to your questions, sharing information and perspectives, and standing with you in this time of uncertainty.

As we approach this General Conference we invite you to trust that God's Spirit will be at work. The God of Jesus Christ is a God at work "making all things new" (Revelation 21:5), and often in surprising ways. "The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). Pray that fresh winds of God's Spirit will be at work and trust that God will answer this prayer.



Know that whatever decisions the General Conference makes, the ministry to which we are called in our churches, making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, will continue. The day after General Conference there will still be hungry people needing food, those mired in poverty needing help, addicted people needing freedom, frayed relationships needing mending, broken lives needing healing, lost lives needing saving, injustices needing to be righted, and this work of God in Jesus Christ will still call to each of us and to our churches. If the decisions of General Conference lead to changing structures for engaging this ministry we commit ourselves to working with you to make grace-filled responses.

Finally, know that the entire Council of Bishops takes seriously the demands of presiding at General Conference. Bishops have undergone additional preparation so that we are better equipped to preside with the grace and acumen needed to help the General Conference do its work well.

As we approach General Conference we find ourselves in Epiphany, a season rooted in the story of magi who follow a star to find Jesus and when they do “they were overwhelmed with joy” (Matthew 2:10). May we each continue to see light that draws us closer to Jesus, and fills us with joy, so that we might share this joy with the world.

Grace and Peace,

Bishop David Alan Bard

President of the North Central Jurisdiction College of Bishop, on behalf of the College