

***Bishop John L. Hopkins***

***Northern Illinois Annual Conference***

***July 16, 2021***

***“Jesus Makes a Way”***



# Celebrate our Strengths in the Northern Illinois Conference

- Gifted and dedicated clergy and laity
- Strong stand for equity and justice—full inclusion of everyone
- Commitment to celebrate diversity
- Devotion to missions (*Mission Links: Living the Beatitudes*)
- Effective advocacy ministry for immigrants (NIJFON)
- New structure is working – Conference events well attended
- Local churches are doing front line mission and ministry



# Challenges Facing the Northern Illinois Conference

- Financial challenges
- Concerns about division in the church and full inclusion
- Need to increase capacity of clergy and laity to address changing communities
- Need to Develop a pipeline of diverse clergy
- Low clergy morale
- Lack of respect between progressive and conservative for opposing viewpoints
- Lack of support for our connectional system
- Need to close or “right-size” some churches



## Four Priorities from ACST for 2021:

1. Guiding the NIC in the event of a significant shift in the denomination or jurisdictional realignment of conferences
2. Facilitating communication and healthy relationships between districts, NIC leadership, staff, committees, and ministries
3. Focusing NIC resources to equip local churches and ministry settings to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world
4. Advocating, monitoring, and celebrating diversity at every level of leadership throughout the NIC





*"We may come from different  
cultures, but we are all in  
the same boat now!"*



*"You cannot rock the  
boat and row it at the  
same time!"*





***"Pray to God – Row to Shore"***





