



The United Methodist Church

CHICAGO AREA EPISCOPAL OFFICE

77 West Washington Street • Suite 1820 • Chicago, Illinois 60602

Office: (312) 346-9766 x 702 • Fax: (312) 214-9031

Sally Dyck

Bishop

E-mail: bishop.dyck@umcnic.org

Rev. Arlene W. Christopherson

Assistant to Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministries

E mail: achristo@umcnic.org

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Dear Friends and Members of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference:

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

The much-anticipated rulings by the Judicial Council were released on Friday, April 28. Bishop Karen Oliveto remains a bishop in good standing. We are most thankful for that, and support all that she is doing.

However, the [Judicial Council ruled](#) that her consecration violates church law and as a part of its ruling, the Judicial Council directed the use of the existing administrative or judicial processes (known as the complaint process). Therefore, the next steps in addressing the bishop's status will be handled in the Western Jurisdiction, in accordance with additional requirements for actions and reporting detailed in the Judicial Council's ruling.

Please keep Bishop Oliveto and the Mountain Sky Area in your prayers during this time of challenge. (If you want to know more about this Judicial Council decision, [click here](#). Also, the President of the Council of Bishops statement can be [found here](#).)

In a separate [Judicial Council ruling](#) affecting the Northern Illinois Annual Conference, the Board of Ordained Ministry was directed to make full examination of all candidates in light of the disciplinary questions in "scope and breadth" that would "deal with issues of race, gender, sexuality, integrity, indebtedness, etc. ¶¶ 304.2, 305, 306, 310. Candidates for licensed or ordained ministry in the United Methodist Church should be treated fairly and denial of entry must be based upon the evidence received from the results of the full examination."

In the months ahead, I will be in discussion with the Board of Ordained Ministry to address these specific findings and requirements. I expect and have confidence that the Northern Illinois Board of Ordained Ministry has and will continue to respectfully examine candidates fully for effectiveness as well as these other questions of living up to the highest Christian standards. I will continue to work collaboratively with them according to our respective roles. Thank you, Board of Ordained Ministry, for your dedicated service.

The divide in our views about how the church deals with matters concerning human sexuality are profound and will require continuing prayerful and careful attention. But I am deeply concerned that elements within The United Methodist Church continue to obsess on human sexuality while our communities and world around us are in such great need. I am convinced that a persistent focus on our differences regarding how we view LGBTQ persons does not communicate the “highest ideals of Christian living” to a skeptical and fractured world nor bear evidence of our abiding love for and embrace of all people both within and beyond the church.

These decisions cause me to recommit to be the Bishop of all the people and congregations of this Annual Conference. We are very diverse and I celebrate the gift of diversity as a missional opportunity to provide entry to all people into a life of Christian community.

I appeal to the people of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference to keep focused on the mission of Jesus Christ. We can and will work through our differences and find ways to honor one another and live with integrity, tolerance and grace. Let's all pray for and await the report of the Commission on the Way Forward to the Council of Bishops, and participate in the discernment and work of organizing our life together that will follow. Let's stand in faith and anticipation to see what God can do with our church's brokenness as a sign of hope to others who are also broken in their own lives and communities. Let us encourage each other with hope, joy (yes, even joy), kindness and mutual respect. Let us give witness to the faith that is within us and show compassion and patience toward each other and our neighbors.

Let us pray for one another and the church that "the God of hope fill (us) with all joy and peace in believing, so that (we) may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Sincerely,



Sally Dyck