



Bishop Malone's Post General Conference Message

(View and download video of the message at <http://www.eocumc.com/eogc19/index.html>)

Dearly beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The General Conference has completed its work and by a majority vote, passed the traditional plan with some parts that were ruled unconstitutional. The delegates voted to refer it to the Judicial Council for review at their next meeting but as of now our existing Discipline language is maintained.

Now, some are pleased with the outcome of the special session and some are deeply hurt and disappointed. My heart weeps for the brokenness experienced within the body of Christ. We could not find a way forward of being church that would allow for the contextual differentiation that we were all hoping for and a way to keep as much unity as possible. Now, we need to take the time to process what has happened and the implications of the decisions that are critical for how we move forward.

Friends, please know, that any procedural changes that will have some effect will not take place until January 1, 2020. So, we have time. So, let us breathe.

What I love about our beloved United Methodist Church is our beautiful diversity and our global connection and witness. And as a global church, what is challenging is that we have differing views of human sexuality and understandings of our LGBTQi brothers and sisters.

But despite our differences, as a United Methodist Church we do believe that all persons are of sacred worth. Our doors are open to persons of all ages, races, nations, ethnicities, gender and sexual orientation. We are one church, one family, one in the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

So, here's what I am hopeful for, what I am asking of all clergy and lay:

1. As we prepare to begin this season of Lent, let us fast and pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us unite and heal our beloved United Methodist Church. Friends, this is all of our work to do.
2. I'm asking that we be calm, stay the course, do not yield to fear, doubt, despair. God is our refuge, a very present help in a time of trouble
3. Stay focused on the mission, because the mission is still yet alive. Let us keep the main thing the main thing, sharing the extravagant love, grace, hope and peace of Jesus Christ with all of God's beloved children.

4. I am asking that you stay connected with your brothers and sisters in Christ; love one another, care for one another, support one another.
5. I am also asking that you plan to attend one of the post General Conference gatherings that will take place across the annual conference on the weekend of March 9 and 10.
6. I am convinced that the God who has begun a good work in us will bring it to completion, because our God is faithful, and God's love, yes, it endures forever. And I know that there is a balm in Gilead that will heal, restore, and give us hope.
7. And I am convinced that by God's grace we will someday find a way to fully embrace the wideness of our beautiful diversity.

As your Bishop, by the grace of God, I will lead, shepherd and guide us through these challenging times and I humbly ask that you commit with me to trust where the Spirit of God will take us. Yes, us. Progressive, centrist, traditionalist, gay, straight, all of God's beloved. And as we go, together, to do Kingdom work, to do kindom work, the making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, God will be with us.

So, here is my prayer, and I invite you to pray with me. Lord, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we are all seated in the heavenly kingdom! So be it.

Amen