

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

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Siblings in Christ,

Grace and peace to you! The apostle Paul began his letters by offering all who read them this gift of grace and peace. Grace and peace are the powers from which we proceed, our mission, and the ways we live in the world. Thank you for being people of grace and peace. I write with an update for our current context.

The United Methodist Commission on the General Conference has announced that the 2020 General Conference is further postponed until May of 2024. The Commission on the General Conference provided the reasons for its decision to postpone the conference in its press release statement. It was noted that they will look to the Judicial Council for clarity regarding the processes for the General Conference in preparation for 2024. The Commission members made a difficult decision and I gratefully support the work that they did.

There are various entities within The United Methodist Church that are working collaboratively on how best to provide leadership and to steward our mission of making disciples for the transformation of the world. One of these entities is the Council of Bishops.

In their meeting Nov. 2-5, 2021, the Bishops reminded the church of our identity going forward knowing that if we know who we are, we know what our mission requires.

The bishops released a narrative that envisions a movement rooted in Scripture, centered in Christ and welcoming to all churchgoers — however they identify. “Our best witness is to love each other as Christ loves us, to show the world the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to bind us together despite our differences.” [“A Narrative for the Continuing United Methodist Church.”](#)

As a Korean bishop my heart is torn by the conflict in these days around disunity and disaffiliation, I believe Jesus calls us to a Kingdom of love and justice that is based on relationships that envision a kingdom of mutuality and interdependent good. We must continue the hard work of dismantling unjust systems in the church and in the world. We must continue to be a big tent church whose focus continues to be radical inclusion and racial justice. We must make our grace and peace bigger than our differences.

The Council of Bishops met yesterday, and we addressed the implications of the postponement and we have identified and clarified some pathways forward; however, additional work needs to be done. We’re looking at provisions that already exist in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016 related to jurisdictions, assignment of bishops, disaffiliation, and separation. We are working together to provide leadership to help sustain the worldwide witness and mission of The United Methodist Church.

Let me reassure you that:

- there are no decisions or actions that need to be made or taken now, not for clergy, congregations, or caucus groups.
- Your bishops are working to prepare fair processes for those who wish to pursue disaffiliation or discontinuance.

- We will continue to be rigorous stewards of the Trust Clause so that gifts from God can be used for mission and the Spirit's work can be our focus.
- Let me be clear: no one is being asked to leave of The United Methodist Church. We need everyone at the table to be able to make Christ known.

Please pray and consider your witness being one of grace and peace. Please pray that we think about the wholeness of salvation that Christ envisions, and if we are building or depleting God's shalom with our actions. The United Methodist Church sparkles with the giftedness of Korean-American leadership, please do not deprive of us of your presence. Thank you for your good stewardship of our mission.

Grace and peace to you.

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