



Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



April 23, 2019

To the People of The United Methodist Church

I invite the people of The United Methodist Church to be in prayer for the Judicial Council, which is in session this week. In particular, the Judicial Council is focusing on the constitutionality of matters related to the Special Session of the General Conference held in February.

As the Judicial Council members reflect on the disaffiliation of local churches, they will also be clarifying the meaning of our connection, within annual conferences and across the global church. And as they consider petitions related to accountability to and enforcement of the *Book of Discipline*, especially in relation to LGBTQ persons, the Judicial Council members will be interpreting matters related to due process, conscience, separation of powers and certification that is exclusive to one facet of the human condition.

Our polity disperses authority to lay and clergy delegates to General Conferences in writing legislation and to the Judicial Council in interpreting the constitutionality of that legislation. Bishops are in the role of providing spiritual and administrative leadership, which is to say putting in practice the discernments of these two bodies.

In our residential areas, in the midst of voices we have heard around these decisions and for the sake of the whole church, we lift these elected members of the Judicial Council in prayer, as the events of this week help us to take the next step as people who seek to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God (Micah 6. 8).

The Peace of the Lord,

+Kenneth H. Carter, Jr.
President, Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church