



# THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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To: Clergy and Lay Members of the Texas Annual Conference

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The Council of Bishops has just finished its special meeting to consider the work of the Commission on a Way Forward. I write to share with you some key convictions that you might consider as you prayerfully consider the future of our denomination.

- The Church is of God and will endure to the end of time for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers and the conversion of the world.
- We are praying about the way forward this week. Keep praying.
- Wesleyan Christianity has a great future in serving God's purposes all over the world.
- We need to find a new form of unity that allows progressive United Methodists to follow their consciences and supporters of our current language to maintain our church's current teachings and disciplines.
- The Commission's vision remains the same: "The Commission will design a way for being church that maximizes the presence of a United Methodist witness in as many places in the world as possible, that allows for as much contextual differentiation as possible, and that balances an approach to different theological understandings of human sexuality with a desire for as much unity as possible."
- After the General Conferences of 2019 and 2020, there will be a place for every United Methodist clergy person and every United Methodist congregation to continue serving Christ in a Wesleyan connection.
- Changes will be made in order to move toward a new form of unity.
- There will be many opportunities for conversation about how best to shape that new form of unity between now and May, 2020.

I love the Lord. I love the Wesleyan Movement. I love the United Methodist Church. I am certain that God has a purpose for us. There is a bright future for Wesleyan Christians once we emerge from the current difficult decisions facing us. Recognizing this, I urge you to tell your people:

1. It will be okay
2. God is in charge and our conference has good leaders
3. There will be change, and we will get through it with grace

Our job as leaders is partly to discern how best to serve Christ as Wesleyan Christians, and mostly to instill faith, hope and love among our people. Please work to lower the level of anxiety in our churches. Please focus on our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Please continue to pray for the Commission on a Way Forward, the Council of Bishops, and all delegates to the 2019 General Conference.

Grace and peace,

Scott J. Jones