



**The United Methodist Church**

**Oklahoma Conference**

**Bishop James G. Nunn**

March 25, 2021

Greetings in the name of Christ.

On Sunday, we will gather for worship to celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. On that day, some 2,000 years ago, Jesus entered Jerusalem to face his own death. The events of that week have been remembered ever since. In many ways, the days we call Holy Week, are a reminder that uncertainty, betrayal and even death do not have the last word for followers of Christ. Resurrection and new life are!

These days there is much uncertainty and confusion in our beloved United Methodist Church. You may have recently heard that the United Methodist General Conference has been rescheduled from the fall of 2021 to the fall of 2022. In addition to that change, the Council of Bishops announced a special called General Conference for May and then, for many reasons, rescinded the call. And finally, at this time we are unclear as to when the next Jurisdictional Conference may be held. The news sometimes comes faster than imaginable.

I want to share a few thoughts about how you can make sense of this. First, until the General Conference meets in 2022, nothing in our church polity, doctrine or discipline will change. Recently many people have received communication pieces suggesting that substantive changes to our church law are expected and inviting United Methodists to align with one of two not yet formed churches before the meeting of the General Conference and any vote on proposed changes. While we support freedom of expression, it is important that you be aware that these communications have not been sent to you by, nor are they endorsed by, the Oklahoma Annual Conference of the UMC. You can expect that all communication regarding any decisions that will impact you, as a United Methodist or the United Methodist Church will come from our official email system and will be clearly identified with the conference logo.

We are also posting updated information and an FAQ (frequently asked questions) section at our website: <https://www.okumc.org/gc2020resources>. I will be meeting with the Oklahoma Conference delegation on April 9<sup>th</sup> to answer questions and explore with them what the future might hold. We will keep you informed as new developments occur.

Certainly, as is always the case, committed United Methodists will ask the General Conference to consider legislation they believe will improve the witness of our church. That has been a strength of our tradition. I invite you to join with me to prepare to discern God's will for the future of our denomination in these ways. Let us all covenant to pray – that our churches, conference, and denomination will

continue to be a beautiful witness to Christ Jesus and his redeeming grace. There is much good we can accomplish for the kingdom of God in this present moment. We know that people are hurting and we can respond with compassion and with the love of Christ.

I encourage you to utilize the conference website as well as United Methodist New Service (<https://www.umnews.org/en>) to keep up to date on official information regarding the General Conference and other denominational related matters.

Finally, we must remain focused on our mission – “To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” Focusing on your own church’s discipleship system, missional outreach, leadership development and spiritual formation will allow us to do the work we are called to do in our own contexts. We provide many resources to assist you and your church at our website: <https://www.okumc.org/discipleship>.

In the twelfth chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans, he writes, “Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers” (12:9-13). May these marks of our Christian life be our guideposts as we *journey together through* these days of uncertainty.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James Munn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Munn".