



## THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings in the name of the Savior who is our healer and hope, our guardian and guide!

Two days ago I was asked to serve as your interim Bishop for six months as Bishop Sharma Lewis moves through a journey of surgery and recovery. We thank God for her spiritual leadership and continue to pray for her health and wholeness.

Yesterday and today, I have been meeting with our excellent Cabinet and fine Conference staff, as we team together to serve you and the world "God so loved".

In this short time, I have been listening and learning. I have learned of the special gifts of spiritual vitality, mission, diversity, commitment to justice, and compassion that are a part of your witness. I have also felt the anxiety and pain that is being experienced by many in the wake of our recent General Conference. I have been listening to the questions we are asking, the harm that LGBTQ sisters and brothers are feeling and hearing the prayers of the faithful of all perspectives for Christ-like love as we move forward together.

I will look forward to hearing from you as we seek to follow God's lead. When we worshipped and prayed in the Cabinet meeting today we shared our deep concerns and our hopeful longings. Find a place and persons with whom you can share also. And then we prayed for the fruit of Spirit: "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." May the Spirit lead us all in living this prayer.

Grace and Peace,

Pete Weaver