



Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



For Immediate Release

Friday, December 28, 2018

COUNCIL OF BISHOPS' LETTER TO THE GLOBAL LGBTQ COMMUNITY

To the People of the United Methodist Church:

Grace and Peace to you in these days of Christmas, and at the conclusion of a calendar year.

At the fall meeting of the Council of Bishops at St. Simon's Island, Georgia, bishops approved a motion to send a pastoral letter to the Global LGBTQ community. A writing team, composed of a bishop from each central conference and jurisdiction, completed this task, on behalf of the Council. The letter is attached.

We share this letter with you as an expression of our desire to strengthen the body of Christ. We confess our participation in the harm we have done to one another and to the LGBTQ community. In offering this letter we bear witness to the light of Jesus Christ, which enlightens everyone and is coming into the world (John 1: 9). And we pray that in the days ahead we will, with him, grow and become strong, that we will be filled with wisdom, and that the favor of God will rest upon us (Luke 2: 40).

The peace of the Lord,

+Ken Carter
Resident Bishop, Florida Conference
President, Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church



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To our Global LGBTQ Kin in Christ,

The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church recognizes the ways in which the convening of the Special Session of General Conference creates a time and space of harm for you and members of your family. To be the focus of attention, discussion and debate is hurtful.

Demeaning and dehumanizing comments and attacks on LGBTQ persons in conversations related to the upcoming February Conference are a great tragedy and do violence to hearts, minds, and spirits. When you suffer, the whole body of Christ suffers. Together, we need to work to resist hate, violence, and oppression of persons. In these attitudes and actions, great harm is done throughout the community, to the offended and the offender.

As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12: We cannot say to a part of the body, “I have no need of you.” We belong to each other. In our Baptism, we are incorporated into the Church, the body of Christ, and made one in Christ. The Church pledges to every baptized member: “Your joy, your pain, your gain, your loss, are ours, for you are one of us.” (*The UMC Book of Worship*, pg. 83). Our Book of Discipline clearly states that all people are of sacred worth.

As leaders of the church, we are brokenhearted by conversations that dishonor, objectify and dehumanize. We confess, as Bishops of The United Methodist Church and as we attempt to honor our convictions, that our actions and words have not always been life-giving or honoring of the LGBTQ community. Amid our sorrow, we seek to learn and grow in grace. To that end, we commit ourselves to helping people who disagree with each other to have conversations that include, honor, and respect people with different convictions. We are a diverse group of leaders—conservative, centrist, progressive—however, we are unified in our commitment to work together in ways that will give you and all God’s children strength, comfort and hope for better and more merciful tomorrows.

As the Special Session of General Conference approaches, we pray that the Holy Spirit will draw us together. May we see the image of God in one another, treat one another with tenderness, and love one another fiercely. Bearing Christ’s love in these ways, we pray to be God’s faithful witnesses.

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