

† Pastor's Letter †

Dear Beloved in Christ

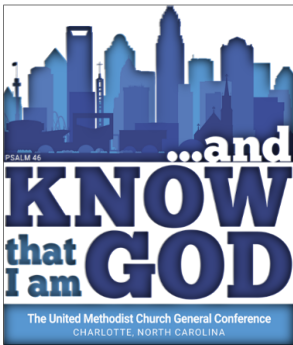
April 2024

HAPPY EASTER! The Risen Lord is with us! He came back for us so we can have a resurrection life too – a life with the Risen Lord, with His strength and with extra Hope in Him. We are not alone in any circumstance. Thanks be to God!

I hope and pray that our United Methodist Church can find a new hope for the future. 2024 General Conference of U.M.C. is about to begin. General Conference is the only body that can set official policy and speak for the international denomination. It brings together lay and clergy delegates from four continents whose decisions will affect how millions of United Methodists do church for years to come.

From April 23 to May 3, United Methodists from around the world will gather in Charlotte, North Carolina for General Conference. The theme comes from Psalm 46:9-10a: “He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

Be still and know that I am God!”



General Conference is expected to attract between 5,500-7,500 people. That includes 862 voting delegates—55.9% from the U.S., 32% from Africa, 6% from the Philippines, 4.6% from Europe, and the remainder from concordat churches that have close ties to The United Methodist Church.

A group of delegates (about 300) who are concerned about the inclusivity of UMC has publicized an appeal letter on March 28th, 2024. They propose 3 Rs to happen during this General Conference as follows:

Regionalization: We support ... to create distinct regional governing bodies in Africa, Europe, the Philippines, and the U.S. These proposed changes would expand the ability of regions outside the U.S. to adapt portions of the UM Book of

Discipline, and, for the first time, would give the U.S. the same authority. We support this legislation because we are committed to greater self-determination and self-governance. We also believe that expanding regional decision-making will allow annual conferences within each region to thrive.

Revise Social Principles: We support the adoption of the revised Social Principles as a much-needed restatement of our fundamental moral and social commitments as United Methodists... the newly revised Social Principles fulfill their mandates to be more globally relevant, theologically, and biblically grounded, and succinct. The revised Social Principles provide a timely opportunity for reaffirming who we are as United Methodists.

Removal of Exclusionary Policies: We support the removal of all provisions in the UM Book of Discipline regarding the participation of gays and lesbians in The United Methodist Church. Added more than fifty years ago to address issues primarily affecting the U.S. Church, the current prohibitions have led to years of disagreement, conflict, and harm to those they have impacted. Removing the current language will create a new starting place for dialogue and learning. It will also remove a significant stumbling block to engaging all people in the ministries of the Church, particularly for local congregations and annual conferences ready to welcome LGBTQ+ people as full church members.

It looks like the special session will be live-streamed. I'd like to ask all of you to pray for our denomination that we may continue to bless one another no matter what happens this year and that we may become more like Christ through all the work and conversation we have.

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you!” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Your Pastor, Hyesung Lee