



Buffalo United Methodist Church

February 2020

1000 30th Street NE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402



A Letter from the Bishop

by Bishop Laurie Haller

Grace and peace! As we experience snow and bitter cold in Iowa, I am reminded of the graciousness and warmth of spirit that I witness in every corner of our state. In the midst of uncertainty and anxiety about the future of The United Methodist Church, you are engaged in transformative ministries in your local communities and around the world that are changing hearts and saving lives.

I'd like to share some thoughts about our Conference's Vision 2032 . . . as well as some observations about a proposal for the future of the UMC that will come before the General Conference in May.

Vision 2032

Dreaming ahead to the year 2032, I imagine a church where:

- Relationships will be more important than theological convictions
- Innovation, creativity, and imagination will be more important than stagnation, rigidity, sacred cows, and the status quo
- Our primary focus will be on the Great Commission and the Great Commandment: to go out into the world and make disciples of Jesus Christ and to love God and our neighbor in all that we do.

We have difficult decisions to make around restructuring, rightsizing our budget, but we will do it in light of the mission and vision of our conference.

Mission: *Inspire, equip, and connect communities of faith to cultivate world-changing disciples of Jesus Christ*

Vision: *God's hope for the world made real through faithful leaders, fruitful communities, and fire-filled people*

The Protocol

At the same time as we dream and plan for the future, United Methodists in Iowa are also looking ahead to the 2020 General Conference, where important votes will be taken in regard to human sexuality. I'd like to share my perspective on The Protocol, a new proposal to the General Conference 2020 that relates to human sexuality.

On January 3, 2020, The Council of Bishops issued a press release on behalf of a group of sixteen United Methodists, representing many parts of our worldwide connection as well as caucus groups representing various theological viewpoints. This group issued a document called Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation.

The group met throughout the fall of 2019 in order to help The United Methodist Church move past our impasse around human sexuality. I admit that I recoiled when I first saw the word "separation" in the title of the document. I have always believed we could find a way to honor our differences around human sexuality without separation. I love being part of a church that has varied convictions about matters of faith. However, in light of what seem to be un-solvable differences, I have come to see the wisdom of offering a way forward that undergirds separation with grace and reconciliation by all parties.

Primary features of The Protocol include:

- A "respectful and dignified" separation is proposed, with the possibility of continued cooperation around matters of shared interest.
- The Protocol provides a way for us to keep mission, outreach, and evangelism at the center of who we are.

- At the heart of the The Protocol is the formation of a new Methodist Traditionalist denomination. After separation, the current “post-Separation” United Methodist Church would still continue.
- Annual conferences, by a 57% majority, could vote to join a new Methodist denomination. If an Annual Conference does not take a vote on affiliation, it will remain part of the post-separation UMC.
- Central conferences [the 7 UMC conferences organized by geographical regions in Europe, Asia, and Africa] could vote to join a new Methodist denomination by a two-third majority vote.
- Local churches could choose to join a different denomination than the one their conference joins by either a simple majority or a two-third majority vote. They would retain their property assets, and liabilities. Not voting at all implies remaining in the post-Separation United Methodist Church.
- Local churches that choose to affiliate with a new denomination must maintain their connectional responsibilities until the separation is official.
- \$25 million would be paid over four years to a new traditionalist denomination with no further claims to UM assets.
- \$2 million would be reserved for other denominations that may be formed.
- \$39 million over eight years would be designated to support ethnic ministries worldwide as well as Africa University.
- Pension plans would remain in place for all clergy and lay employees regardless of where they affiliate.
- The Protocol requests that all judicial and administrative complaints around LGBTQ matters be held in abeyance.

General Conference legislation for The Protocol is currently being written. All of the proposals around human sexuality will be open for amendments at the 2020 General Conference.

I believe that The Protocol offers a viable way to move forward in vital ministry as we share the transformative love of Jesus Christ with the world. Written by United Methodists representing a variety of groups and US and Central Conferences, the proposal is an expression of grace and reconciliation that will allow United Methodists to more faithfully share God’s love and hope. . . .

If The Protocol is passed at the 2020 General Conference, we have scheduled a tentative date of Saturday, October 10, 2020 for the Iowa Annual

Conference to vote on whether to become a new Methodist traditionalist denomination or continue to be The United Methodist Church where all prohibitions are removed in regard to human sexuality. In the meantime, I have vowed to hold in abeyance all administrative and judicial processes related to LGBTQ prohibitions as we move through General Conference 2020.

I am asking you to do four things in the coming weeks and months.

- Pray for The United Methodist Church as General Conference approaches.
- Pray for our General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates who will be voting on many petitions, including human sexuality.
- Continue to find new and creative ways to share the good news of Jesus Christ through evangelism, mission, and outreach to your communities.
- Please make a diligent effort to stay current in your local church apportionments. The only way we can change the world is to be faithful in the ministry that we have committed to share together.

Thank you for the privilege of being your episcopal leader. I pray for our laity, clergy, and congregations continually. Together, may our God lead us into a future of hope, as we blanket the state of Iowa and our world with love, faithfulness, and compassion. I leave you with the words of Psalm 40, which was [a recent] lectionary passage:

*So I said, “Here I come!
I’m inscribed in the written scroll.
I want to do your will, my God.
Your Instruction is deep within me.”
I’ve told the good news of your righteousness
in the great assembly.
I didn’t hold anything back—
as you well know, Lord!
I didn’t keep your righteousness only to myself.
I declared your faithfulness and your salvation.
I didn’t hide your loyal love and trustworthiness
from the great assembly.
So now you, Lord—
don’t hold back any of your compassion from me.
Let your loyal love and faithfulness always protect me.*

More information on Vision 2032 and The Protocol proposal is on the UMC Connections page on the Buffalo website buffalounitedmethodist.weebly.com/.

February 2020

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them. <i>Gospel of Mark, 10:13-16</i>						1
2 Worship Service (8:45 am) Communion Sunday	3 Iowa Caucuses	4 Mission of Hope: Assist Bertram UMC with noon meal	5	6 First Nations Drumming (5:00 pm)	7 Popping Corn at Garfield	8
9 Worship Service (8:45 am) Conversation on Mark (10 am)	10 Spic 'n Span Church Cleaning (9:00 am)	11	12	13 Neighborhood Potluck (11:30 am)	14 Valentine's Day	15 Wedding Celebration, First Nations
16 Worship Service (8:45 am)	17 President's Day	18	19	20 UMW (9:30 am) First Nations Drumming (5:00 pm)	21	22 Private Birthday Party
23 Worship Service (8:45 am) Conversation on Mark (10 am)	24	25	26 Ash Wednesday	27	28	29

February Birthdays

3 – Mary Lou Stepanek
 4 - Luke Kelley
 6 – Margie Marrs
 10 – Marlene Himes
 11 – Christine Gochenouer
 11 – Marilyn (Marlee) Carpenter
 17 – Carla Lindball
 19 - Becky Durand
 29 – Nancy Carter

Report on Buffalo's Administrative Board Meeting: January 15, 2020

Issues addressed at the Board Meeting included the following:

- Judy Hackney led Board members in a discussion of our church expenditures in 2019. The Board approved the proposed 2020 budget, which will involve only a few minor changes from our 2019 budget.
- The Board discussed problems with the church's telephone. Board members agreed that the church should have a working land line. Marlene Himes and Gary Hackney volunteered to work on resolving this issue.
- Because of unpredictable weather, the Board decided to cancel this year's Valentine caroling.
- Board members discussed problems with the worship area sound system. Bob Marrs volunteered to consult with professionals who could assess the current sound system and recommend either an appropriate upgrade or replacement of our equipment.
- The Board voted to adopt a schedule of meeting every other month. The next Administrative Board meeting will be the third Wednesday in March.
- The board agreed to donate the \$100 check received from Western Fraternal Life Hawkeye Lodge 423 (Joyce and Larry Hartmann, members) to the Community Free Health Clinic.

Thanks to the ladies who served lunch at the funeral of Pauline Hall (Faye Reynold's sister). The salads and desserts were greatly appreciated.

Buffalo Calendar Upcoming Events

- February 9: Conversation on Mark, Chapters 6-10
(10-11 am)
February 10: Spic 'n Span Church Cleaning (9 am)
February 13: Neighborhood Potluck (11:30 am)
February 20: United Methodist Women (9:30 am)
Chris Gochenouer will provide the lesson from
the UMW Program Book and the treats.
February 23: Conversation on Mark, Chapters 11-16
(10-11 am)
March 3: World Day of Prayer (9:30 am)
March 26: Lenten Taizé Service (7:00 pm)
March 28: Pancake Breakfast
June 11 & 12: Annual Rummage Sale
July 25: Ice Cream Social

In Memoriam

Barbara L. Newhall (1921-2020)

"The world is changed
because she is no longer here."

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World Day of Prayer

We will be celebrating the World Day of Prayer at Buffalo on Friday, March 6, beginning at 9:30 am. A continental breakfast will be followed by a program featuring the country of Zimbabwe. The World Day of Prayer is an international ecumenical Christian laywomen's initiative committed to the motto *Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action*. This event is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March. Please join us and bring a friend.

February Special Offering

Disability Awareness Sunday on Feb. 9 celebrates "the gifts and graces of persons with disabilities" and calls the Church and society to full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community.

Garfield Elementary School

Valentine Treat Bags

We will pack 110 treat bags for Garfield students on Sunday, February 2. Suggested items to donate for the bags are pencils, wrapped candies, snack packets, fruit, granola bars, and of course Valentine cards.

