

#ResistHarm

January 1, 2020

Bishop _____
_____ Conference
United Methodist Church
Address

Dear Bishop _____,

We are passionate followers of Jesus Christ. We believe in the authority of Scripture. We are committed to a Wesleyan vision of Christianity anchored in scripture and informed by tradition, experience, and reason as we live a life of personal piety and social holiness.

We believe that the call of Christ to the Church is expressed in our baptismal vows to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. We take these vows seriously. It is because of those vows that we reject the Traditional Plan as a form of evil, injustice, and oppression as it seeks to not only continue LGBTQ criminalization in The UMC, but enhances already unjust punishments.

The Traditional Plan will inflict even more harm on our clergy and their ministry. Those who have already been charged are some of the most effective clergy serving The UMC, and losing their faithful witness is an incredible cost to these individuals. In addition to the harm done to those charged, every clergy person tried will cost the denomination \$50,000 - \$250,000, not to mention the cost to the witness and reputation of The UMC in the United States where a majority already support same-sex marriage (61% according to Pew Research Center).

The General Conference delegate elections at this year's annual conferences in the United States underscore the fact that our denomination is on the brink of a Holy Spirit-fueled turning point. The American Church is poised to undo decades of anti-LGBTQ discrimination if we are willing to lean into the direction where God is leading us.

Therefore, we implore you to offer grace-filled moratorium on processing complaints against LGBTQ clergy or clergy who officiate same-sex weddings. We are asking you to step up prophetically and pastorally to lead us through this season before a Church of justice can be birthed. We know it will not be simple or easy, but we need your leadership.

Throughout Scripture, we see that God is on the side of the oppressed. This is your opportunity to do that for the LGBTQ community that has been oppressed and harmed. This is your opportunity to speak God's words of grace.

We need a pastor. We need someone to minister to the wounded and speak words of encouragement to those who have become weary in the quest for justice and freedom. We need you to offer protection for those in your flock who have been hurt and mercy for those who have been unjustly accused.

In short, we need you to be our Bishop. While the calling is hard, God equips those who are called. We are praying for you!

Faithfully,