



The United Methodist Church
The Philadelphia Area Episcopal Office

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Reflections on General Conference 2019:

I bid you grace and peace from the Lord Jesus Christ.

During the Monday night worship service at General Conference this week we read the following version of the Wesley Covenant Prayer:

The church is not ours but Yours, O God.

Use it however You desire, rank it however You inspire.

Activate it, allow it to struggle.

Use it to demonstrate Your glory,

or let it be diminished so that You alone are praised,

Lift it up or bring it low,

whatever is more useful to Your mission of salvation.

Let the church be full, let it be empty.

Let it have it all, let it have nothing.

We freely and heartily yield the church to You

To enjoy what is Yours or to change what is Yours.

Open Your church to the fresh breezes of Your Spirit

Baptize Your church afresh with the rushing waters of Your Spirit

Renew, Revive, Renovate, Revitalize Your church,

Blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I lead with this as I write to you now that the 2019 Special Session of General Conference has ended. We voted to keep the traditional tenants of our current Book of Discipline that prohibit LGBTQIA+ ordination and church marriage ceremonies. The "Traditional Plan" in its entirety did not pass because it has a number of unconstitutional petitions. The Judicial Council at their April meeting will further refine this. The "One Church Plan" (the more progressive option) did not pass and the margin of the vote was close.

I am deeply aware of the hurt and pain that this has brought upon the LGBTQIA+ community, their families and friends. I regret this pain and suffering and call us to minister grace and healing to this part of our church family. Everyone is of sacred worth and all are indispensable for the up-building of the church.

The mission and ministry of Jesus Christ is still our mission and vision. Nothing can separate us from that love of God. Let us continue this work in the strength of the Spirit.

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson