



Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church



Dear fellow United Methodists:

I trust that your Advent journey has prepared you for the coming of Christ into your life once again. As we set our sights on the holiest of nights in Bethlehem, on behalf of the Council of Bishops I want to wish you a blessed season filled with joy, hope, wonder and peace.

Even with the constant pressure of daily routines and of the commercial enticements of secular activity, we must always remember to keep our immediate focus on the incredible significance and gift of that first Christmas. As Jesus was born into our world that night, so also was hope. Hope was born to a world that needed it just as we do today. Christ was born so that “we no more may die” says the Charles Wesley hymn, “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing.” Christ came as light to a world that lived in darkness and a tiny child was able to pierce through that darkness.

If you are like me, you use this time to reflect on the new hope and wonder of another Christmas season.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, racial unrest, hurricanes, tornadoes, job losses and the brokenness of our world, as people of faith we are still able to see glimpses of hope that serve as reminders of the blessing of family and friends, community and church who have all helped encourage us to experience the special love and fellowship of Christ throughout the year.

As I write this letter, it has been 19 months since I was given the gavel as president of the Council of Bishops, and I will forever be grateful for this trust and responsibility placed in me.



In the 19 months, much has happened. Although I have not had the privilege to travel due to the pandemic, I have followed your ministry through social media and other reports. You have modeled what it means to be the church as you have reached out to those in greatest need. You have been a witness to the world!

We have prayed for one another, and I have heard you share your commitment to help make a difference in our United Methodist Church so that God's perfect will might be experienced by all of God's children.

As we enter 2022, we will continue to make room for all to be welcome. Christ compels us to live creatively in the context of all the new possibilities that only a true gift of Christ can bring. We have more opportunities for us to be a living and more loving United Methodist Church as we experience Emmanuel, God with us!

Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

*Eternal God,
by the birth of Jesus Christ, you gave yourself to the world.
Grant that, being born in our hearts,
he may save us from all our sins,
and restore within us the image and likeness of our Creator,
to whom be everlasting praise and glory,
world without end. Amen.*

The Book of Hymns, 1966, alt. Lawrence Hull

Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey
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The United Methodist Church