



**The United Methodist Church
Ohio East Area**

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**Tracy S. Malone
Resident Bishop**

**Gary George
Assistant to the Bishop**

November 13, 2017

Dear Friends of Christ,

Greetings in the name of the Christ “who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.” (Jude 1:24-25 NIV)

Thank you for your prayers last week as the Council of Bishops met as colleagues from the U.S., Europe, Africa and Asia. The spirit of God was truly at work as we prayed together, worshipped together and engaged in meaningful dialogue.

The Council of Bishops received the [interim report of The Commission on a Way Forward](#), and the Commission shared with us the sketches of models contained in it with the understanding that we are not restricted to these models and that we remain open to learning, listening and improvements. The Commission did not express preference for any particular model, and the Council of Bishops neither voted to endorse any model for the future of the Church, nor eliminated any model from consideration.

We reflected together on the theology of unity and our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We resolved together that the Mission of God through Christ Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit is foundational to this work and guides every part of this process. We underscored the values of unity and contextualization for the sake of the mission as we continue to listen, share and lead.

Friends, we continue to be in a season of prayer, conversation, visioning and discernment. I encourage you to continue praying for The Commission on a Way Forward, and to register to participate in one of the [Conversations on a Way Forward](#) scheduled across the East Ohio Conference.

I invite you to read the [pastoral letter from the Council of Bishops](#), which reflects our covenant and commitment as we lead. I encourage you to remain faithful to carrying out the work of God’s kingdom ... being bearers of God’s light, love, justice and hope in the world.

This is a critical time in the life of our church, the nation and the world. Let us be vigilant in living and proclaiming God's perfect love that casts out all fear. I trust that God will continue to lead us forward as we strive to maintain the unity of the Church and expand our witness and mission in the world.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy S. Malone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tracy S. Malone
Resident Bishop