

The Bishop's E-Lumination

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*****CORRECTION: The section about the Pastor's day off was missed in the original email. That new section is highlighted in blue.*****

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June 1, 2020



Dear Friends,

From God's word: *"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven"* (Matthew 5:13-16)

Welcome to the second edition of E-Lumination. As I shared a month ago, I would like to use this vehicle of communication to share some timely information, inspiration, ideas, and news with you in a quick and simple format. This edition has a word of faith and inspiration from our Conference Lay Leader, Laurie Lineberry. Here is what Laurie and I want to share with you. . .

A WORD OF FAITH FROM OUR CONFERENCE LAY LEADER: INVITE A FRIEND TO CHURCH

The Covid-19 Pandemic has challenged our churches to redefine how we 'do church.' While it has been challenging to reshape church, the Pandemic has also provided opportunities for outreach. How so, you ask? Never before have so many UMC sermons been available on-line to share with others. This is the least confrontational time in the last 40 years to invite a friend to church! Think back...when was the last time you invited someone to church? If it has been longer than three months, it is time to get inviting! And it is so easy now! No stress for your friend about showing up on time to a new place, no awkward interactions with 'church people' that you don't know, no one hauling you into an uncomfortable 'fellowship hour'. This is the perfect time to invite a friend to church! Scour the internet and find the best sermon for a non-church goer and share the link with them. No pressure. No expectations. No excuses. Now is the time to bring Christ into the life of a friend. Start by inviting one friend each week. Give them a lifeline of hope in the world. We are all called to do this outreach. It is time to share the gift of Jesus Christ with others. If each of us invited one friend each week, thousands of non-churched folks would be exposed to the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Use this time wisely. On-line sermons- a gift for such a time as this.

IS YOUR PASTOR TAKING HER/HIS DAY OFF? HOW ABOUT VACATION?: Your pastor or pastors have been working diligently to provide excellent leadership for your congregation in these times of experiment, adaptation, and change. For many, this leadership has come with significant time devoted to new, creative work in ministry. For some, this has meant working without taking adequate time for quality self-care, sabbath, and spiritual renewal. Some have missed their vacation time and may not be able to take their vacation this conference year. Please be

caring and generous in ensuring that your pastor is taking regular days off and by allowing your pastor to schedule vacation time especially as safety restrictions and travel are relaxed.

GENERAL CONFERENCE DATES: The dates for the postponed General Conference 2020 have been set and announced. This global conference which is the only official policy-making body that can speak and act for the United Methodist denomination was postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. After significant delay because of the complexities of rescheduling, the official announced dates for the postponed General Conference 2020 are August 29 – September 7, 2021. The General Conference will take place in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

WESTERN JURISDICTION CONFERENCE DATES: It is at the Jurisdictional Conferences that new bishops are elected and consecrated and assigned. These jurisdictional conferences are usually held every four years after the General Conference. Since General Conference 2020 was postponed, so also was the 2020 Western Jurisdictional Conference, which was to have been held in July of this year. The new dates for the postponed 2020 Western Jurisdictional Conference will be November 10-12, 2021. The location for this rescheduled WJ Conference has not yet been announced.

EPISCOPAL RETIREMENTS: Bishops in our United Methodist Church enter mandatory retirement status according to the provisions in the Book of Discipline which determines the date of retirement based on the date of Jurisdictional Conference. Many of you know that I had intended to retire in accordance with that paragraph on September 1 of this year after the Jurisdictional Conference which was scheduled to take place this July. Greta and I have been planning on this and we were enthusiastically looking forward to it. With the postponement of Jurisdictional Conference, the timing of my mandatory retirement has shifted. Again, following the Book of Discipline, my mandatory retirement now is determined by the new dates of the Western Jurisdictional Conference. It has been announced that the dates for the postponed 2020 Western Jurisdictional Conference is November 10-12, 2021. Although the exact date that I will retire has not been set, it will be sometime after the Jurisdictional Conference. Greta and I have done a great deal of thinking and prayerful conversations about this. She fully supports this new wrinkle in our timeline. I feel God's call in this decision and ask for your prayers as we travel together in this adventure, for a bit longer, hopefully forging a dynamic future for our Desert Southwest Conference and The United Methodist Church. (<https://mailchi.mp/westernjurisdictionumc/update-on-western-jurisdiction-episcopal-coverage?e=1e3d019d5b>)

RESOURCES FOR COVID-19: With thanks to our Connectional Ministries staff, resources for your use are on our conference website, dscumc.org. Please get to work constituting a Team and working with them. Please review and utilize the resource "Ministry in the Season of Covid-10 and Beyond" to assist you as you look forward with anticipation to a time when we will begin to relax the suspension of in-person worship and gatherings of all types, including small groups to produce worship. That resource is part of a larger body of resources you will find at: <https://dscumc.org/church-opening-guidelines/>.

VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2020: Please go to the Conference website for the information and reports that you will need for our 2020 Annual Conference, which will be held online. Clergy session and Laity session on Friday, June 12, and plenary session for both laity and clergy on Saturday, June 13. (<https://dscumc.org/annual-conference/documents/>)

Please stay well, and please keep safe!

Blessings,
Bishop Bob