

March 1, 2019

Dear Sisters in Christ,

As we create the new Mountain Sky Conference United Methodist Women, we have questions about other possible changes that might result from decisions of the special session of General Conference 2019.



We have been through change before, but at times it seems there may be too much change.

Since our January time together, the United Methodist Women Leadership Teams of the Rocky Mountain Legacy Conference and the Yellowstone Legacy Conference are meeting through video conferencing to revision direction and details of our unique Mountain Sky Conference United Methodist Women. Standing Rules are coming together, financial details are coming together, exciting ways of communicating are being explored, and programs and events are being developed. We are excited about the promise of our way forward!

We share with you the following letter from Harriett Jane Olson, General Secretary of United Methodist Women, regarding the impact of General Conference 2019 and our organization. With God's help, our National Office Leadership, the Board of Directors and Program Advisory Group will make decisions for us that remain true to our mission with women, children, and youth throughout our global community. We are United Methodist Women!

Your Sisters in Christ,

Ellie Young, President, Rocky Mountain Legacy Conference

Stacey King, President, Yellowstone Legacy Conference

February 27, 2019

Dear Sisters in Christ:

Thank you for your prayers for our beloved church and for those of us who were present, in various capacities, at the Special Session of the General Conference. I always thank God for you.

It was a difficult, emotional, complicated and painful experience for those of us in attendance and for many more who connected by live stream and various ways of tracking the proceedings. Having said that, let me quickly say that our sisters and brothers who are LGBTQ have been living with pain over the church's stance and how it has been debated at General Conference for decades. For these sisters and brothers, these past few days have been excruciating. Please reach out to your sisters and

express your support and love, no matter what you think the church's policies should be. United Methodist Women members know that we can be held together by bonds of love across deep differences in theology and opinion. Please demonstrate "supportive, creative fellowship" at this time.

I believe it is correct to say that no one left the session feeling satisfied with the results. The One Church, Connectional Conference and Simple Plans were all voted down. While most of the Traditional Plan was supported, large portions of it have been found unconstitutional. We will not know fully what can be enforced without a more detailed review. We will also receive another Judicial Council ruling on the Plan, as adopted, in the coming weeks.

The Conference did adopt one of the "exit strategies" that was proposed, describing a process for congregations to "disaffiliate" from the denomination and setting forth how financial obligations would be negotiated. As of this writing, I remain unsure of its constitutionality and of the final text because of the way it was presented to the delegates as a minority report.

I will do a further update with specifics.

What I want to address today is: What does this mean for United Methodist Women? Our Board was looking ahead at this question, and our directors were very clear that they were committed to finding ways for United Methodist Women to stay together. We share a common call to mission. Our passion for responding to God's love by working for and with women, children and youth around the world unites us. We can accomplish great things together. At the Board's meeting at the end of March, we will be working on ways to make it clear that all women who are members and leaders of United Methodist Women today can be members and leaders tomorrow, even if they leave the United Methodist Church, or their congregation decides to disaffiliate, etc.

Given all that I have just said about the challenges of serving at General Conference, this may seem like an odd time to encourage United Methodist Women members to stand for election as delegates. However, that is just what I am going to do. Our members who served in 2019, as delegates and various other areas made a difference. Please consider recruiting and supporting women from our membership who could make similar contributions in 2020. Staff and the experienced delegates among us will help and support you. Your wisdom, commitment and spirit are important to shaping the identity of the church. While some annual conferences will have closed the nomination process, in other places there is still time to be nominated, including through nominations from the floor. United Methodist Women, the church needs your expertise and commitment at the General Conference now as much as ever.

United Methodist Women, this is a time to build up our sisterhood, to hold each other close, and to recommit to the women, children and youth we are called to serve. We press on.

May God bless us and our beloved United Methodist Church.

Harriett Jane Olson
General Secretary
United Methodist Women



United
Methodist
Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION