

Date: February 3, 2023  
To: Members of the Alaska United Methodist Conference  
From: Bishop Cedrick D. Bridgeforth  
Re: Call for Annual Conference Session 2023

United Methodist Followers of Christ in the Alaska United Methodist Annual Conference,

With this letter, I call the regular 2023 session of the Alaska United Methodist Annual Conference to meet on the dates listed within to attend to its regular business, gather in worship and explore impactful service opportunities.

This year's theme for the Annual Conference Sessions held across the Greater Northwest Area will be "Go and do likewise," centered on the familiar story of "The Good Samaritan." In this parable (Luke 10:30-37), we find characters who exhibit attributes of servanthood, piety, mercy, and grace. Their intent and impact make a difference, especially considering the religious and historical context and societal norms present when Jesus first shared this story. These characters hold up mirrors for us to see ourselves more clearly and open windows to possibilities beyond our imagination.

As we come together this year, we continue our quest to find ways of gathering that will support our need to tend to our spirits, be in community, conduct business, and honor the space we may need between us at times. The world is changing. We must be nimble and attentive as we live within the parameters of our new realities. To this end, we will host AC2023 in person, with hybrid options available for those who choose to join online. All voting members will have the same access and privilege of participating regardless of the member's choice to be in-person or online.

#### DATES and LOCATIONS

Our Area-Wide Conference will begin with the Bishop's Installation and Opening Session at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Juneau, Alaska, which will be livestreamed on Saturday, May 20th. The closing session for the area will be on Thursday, June 15, 2023, in the evening. The closing session will be livestreamed.

#### ALASKA CONFERENCE

June 4-6 at Fairbanks First United Methodist Church in Fairbanks, Alaska. We will gather on Sunday morning with worship, followed by the Clergy and Laity Sessions, a brief business session, and dinner. Monday will include reports, legislation, awards, and celebrations, and conclude with the Memorial Service. Tuesday morning, we will conclude any business, have the reading of appointments, and close with the Service of Commissioning. Prior to these dates, there will be an online Clergy Session with interpretation on May 25. All Alaska Annual Conference details will be posted and

updated on [www.alaskaumc.org/ac](http://www.alaskaumc.org/ac) when they are available. Annual Conference members will be receiving regular email communication.

Registration will be sent to members along with more information at a later date. Registration will be required to receive voting credentials, and the deadline will be firm because it is essential as we prepare for a new model of conferencing. Guests will be able to watch the proceedings livestreamed via each conference's YouTube channel. As your new bishop, I am grateful to have this opportunity to serve with you in what will be my first regular session of conference.

#### SPECIAL SESSION

There will be a Special Session on May 6 for the sole purpose of voting on the approval of churches that wish to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church. That is a painful reality, but it is their choice to do so. We will work diligently and faithfully with each of those faith communities and our conference trustees to ensure they complete their due diligence in advance of the Special Session. We will release a separate call letter and registration information for this session with more information closer to the scheduled date.

When we gather, it is possible that there will be several disaffiliating congregations unable to complete the process this Spring. That may necessitate another session in the Fall to allow all others who are ready to complete their process and leave The United Methodist Church before December 31, 2023, when the special provision in the Discipline allowing their departure expires.

#### PREPARATION

As you might imagine, we have many details to work out between now and when we meet in Special and Regular Sessions. I solicit your prayers and your patience. I also hope you will consider how you and those in your ministry setting view yourselves (mirror) and look into your communities (window) as you live out the teachings of Jesus in Luke 10:30-37. What are you learning and sharing about service to and among others? Where is God calling you to show up and do good? What impact are you having in your community or through your organization?

I have faith that our conference leaders and staff will continue in stellar service to you. They will answer your questions as they arise. My request is that you "go and do likewise" in all the places God calls you to serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Cedrick D. Bridgeforth', written in a cursive style.

Bishop Cedrick D. Bridgeforth