My Vision for the People Called "United Methodists"

These are defining times for our United Methodist Church. While our decisions concerning our episcopal and jurisdictional churches and the course of our denomination, these leadership choices are pivotal.

In this era we are both blessed and challenged to stand at a place of tremendous influence on behalf of Christ in our local churches, annual conferences, the jurisdiction and the general church. In our region there are numerous signs of growth. Young youth and young adults are hearing the message of Christianity for the first time. Persons are returning with a yearning for newfound expressions of joy. Yet, along with this regional fruitfulness come unique challenges and questions. Can our church continue to be the Church of the Future? Can we do it in tune with the leading of the Spirit? Are we up to the task? Are we equal to the challenge before us?

I am genuinely heartened about the possibilities that lay ahead, excited about the deepening conversations, and keenly encouraged about our will and capacity to make significant progress in the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church.

As bishop, I have come to believe that leadership in the local church is the starting point for our mission. The role of the bishop is not as creating opportunities for vital ministry, but as challenging leadership as well. This involves both calling to do the same by affirming the faith and making disciples for generations to come. It is my hope that our local congregations will be places of vital ministry, and our denomination will continue to thrive. Do we have the necessary will? Are we in tune with the fruitfulness come unique challenges and questions. Can our church continue to be the Church of the Future? Can we do it in tune with the leading of the Spirit? Are we up to the task? Are we equal to the challenge before us?

I am convinced United Methodist Bishops are called to be leaders who guide, support, and inspire the people in the local churches. The work begins by partnering with laity and clergy to create opportunities for vital congregations. It continues by discovering the context for vitality, developing a plan, taking the risks that challenge us to make a difference, and holding ourselves accountable in ways that lead us to significant and inspiring growth. The desired result is that persons will grow spiritually, holding ourselves accountable in ways that lead us to significant and inspiring growth. The desired result is that persons will grow spiritually, holding ourselves accountable in ways that lead us to significant and inspiring growth.

WHAT OTHERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT JONATHAN HOLSTON

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On behalf of the Conference of Ladies of Board, it is my honor to endorse Reverend Jonathan Holston, our North Georgia Delegation’s Episcopal nominee. The Board voted unanimously to support Jonathan for the role of Bishop as we know move to be a more effective Church at our junction, that together we will continue to be the Church for the world.

As a member of the Board of Directors, I have known Jonathan for many years and have grown to appreciate his integrity and character. His wisdom and leadership have been evident in every setting in which he has served. I am heartened to know that he will continue to be a voice for God and for the growth of our Church.

Sincerely,
[Signature]
Rev. Nora Colmenares Martinez
Senior Pastor, Saint Paul United Methodist Church, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

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VITAL AND RENEWING SPIRIT

The role of the bishop is to faithfully practice, model and lead the spiritual disciplines of our faith and to call and inspire the clergy and laity within the Church to practice the Christian disciplines in their individual lives through the tradition of personal holiness.

“I am confident that a United Methodist Bishop is called to be a leader who preaches, supports and inspires people to practice their faith. One cannot lead where one is not going. I have learned to surrender daily to the practices of personal piety and the means of grace as well as taking the opportunity to share and proclaim our Wesleyan heritage. These are the holy conduits that transform lives and renew our faith.”

INQUIRING MIND AND A TEACHING OFFICE

The role of the bishop is to continue to learn and to teach how to make disciples and lead faithful and fruitful congregations using scripture, spiritual disciplines, our Wesleyan heritage, and the history and doctrines of United Methodism.

“We are faced with significant challenges in the midst of disconcerting times. The question of leadership is evident; namely, how do we breathe life into our inherited traditions and address the struggles of the emerging culture. It requires a decision of faith, a commitment to make hard choices and a willingness to make bold decisions. It requires teamwork that affirms a variety of leaders as well as taking risks that challenge us to discover God’s preferred future in our midst. When one affirms the laity, one empowers the ability to make disciples. When one affirms the clergy, one equips faithful and transformational leadership. I am committed to seek ways to share the faith and make disciples for Christ.”

A VISION FOR THE CHURCH

The role of the bishop is to lead the whole Church in claiming its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

“Peter and Paul were the two apostles that started the Church. Both bishops and apostles are leaders with vision to see the full horizon of faith, need and opportunity. Our Council of Bishops recognizes the mission of the church is best achieved through vital congregations that are equipped and empowered as well as laity and clergy who are imaginative and inspired. I am encouraged about the possibilities, excited about the conversations and empowered in the willingness to transform our efforts for today and beyond.”

A PROPHETIC COMMITMENT FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CHURCH AND WORLD

The role of the bishop is to be a prophetic voice for justice in a suffering and conflicted world through the tradition of social holiness.

“Wesley stated, “Faith without works of love is the grand pest of Christianity.” When episcopal leaders empower churches to be places of proactive discipleship, our congregations discover their mission field and serve in vital ministries of justice and mercy. When we embrace our spiritual duty to minister to those outside the church, we strive at the heart of Methodism’s mission.”

A PASSION FOR THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

The role of the bishop is to be the shepherd of the whole flock and thereby provide leadership toward the goal of understanding, reconciliation and unity within the Church.

“We are at our best when people are heard and valued, not stifled, suppressed or smothered. As we bridge the gaps of age, culture, ethnicity and language, we make an important address to our faith. As a pastor of a local church, I recognize how episcopal leaders are at their best when they embrace the strength of our diversity, the involvement of gifted laity and clergy, and a commitment to the best in Christian conferencing. Bishops are called to teach, defend the faith, unify the church and minister to the needs of the church. When effectively achieved, a deeper trust develops and the spiritual challenges of communi- cations are addressed.”

Jonathan consults with Bishop Daniel Wandabula following a leadership training event in Uganda.