

The Bulletin

Join us as 100 percent of our congregations become 100 percent vital and thriving

Bishop's message

Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling |
Episcopal servant, Peninsula-Delaware &
Baltimore-Washington Conferences

Beloved of God,

I greet you in the name of our Savior, Jesus, who lived, died, and is resurrected for the sake of reconciliation and peace. On Oct. 7, as many Jews had just observed the Jewish festival of Sukkot, Hamas launched thousands of rockets into Israel, killing more than 900 individuals and injuring thousands more. The carnage was exacerbated as individuals were taken hostage, brutally attacked and terrorized. This reprehensible act was wrought by air, land, and sea, harming many innocent civilians, including women and children. In response to this violence, Israel declared war against Hamas.

The world rose to condemn these heinous acts, as it should. There simply is no justification for such loss of life.

And the full truth requires an acknowledgment of the multi-faceted issues and longstanding conflicts in this region. The conflict is deeply rooted in a complex web of historical, political, social, and territorial issues. There has been aggression, violence, and bloodshed at the hands of both Israel and Palestine. Both claim rightful ownership of common land. Multiple administrations have worked tirelessly for a two-

state solution, one Israeli and one Palestinian, with neither side being willing to compromise to bring this plan to fruition. That unwillingness has cost countless lives and frustrated efforts for peace since World War I. As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., very aptly stated, "It is not enough to say we must not wage war. It is necessary to love peace and sacrifice for it."

We all weep with the families who have lost loved ones, both Israeli and Palestinian, and we pray for peace.

And we must weep for those around the world who are also living through war, prolonged violence, and terrorism. There are myriad armed conflicts in the world right now. According to Global Citizen, over 2 billion people currently reside in conflict-affected areas. I lament that we seem to call attention to pain in some parts of our world while ignoring the suffering and devastation in other parts. While God detests violence anywhere, God holds all life sacred everywhere.

There is not a single mainstream religious tradition founded upon the notion of hate, domination, or hierarchies of human worth. All those who believe in peace and the right for every human being to reach their highest potential

must work together for an end to violence of any kind. The World Council of Churches invites all religious communities to embrace an embodied ecumenism that will "never seek to divide or conquer, to exploit or humiliate, to overwhelm by violence or enforce unity, nor to collude anymore with the inequalities of the world." I join them in rejecting politics shaped by deepened individualism, dangerous nationalism or increasing militarism.

The United Methodist Book of Resolutions is clear on this subject. It states, "Peace is not simply the absence of war. ... It is that emerging dynamic reality envisioned by prophets where spears and swords give way to implements of peace; where historic antagonists dwell together in trust; and where righteousness and justice prevail. As the children of God, we believe this prophetic vision is not just a dream or a passive prayer; rather, it is our calling. We are called to acts of mercy, peace and justice.

As Mother Teresa stated, "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." May we remember our common bond, common calling, and common Creator and may we be willing to sacrifice for peace.



We are called to live a vital faith: Live and Love Like Jesus



Live and love like Jesus

As people of faith, we live a vital faith echoing the life of Jesus. We embrace Christ's commandment to love one another as we proclaim good news to the poor, heal the heartbroken, set the oppressed free and comfort all who mourn. In vitality, we grow to become the people God created us to be, in the image and likeness of Jesus.

As United Methodists, we have a blueprint to guide us on this

journey. Recognizing that we live as individuals and communities, we follow a General Rule of Discipleship. This rule calls us "to witness to Jesus Christ in the world and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

Like a pilot with a pre-flight checklist, we seek regularly to do acts of compassion, justice, worship and devotion – as we live and love like Jesus.



A Family of Faith

"Get Them Talking," is a resource of the UMC that encourages families to talk about faith. We share this reflection on "Gratitude."

Parents often teach their children to say thank you at an early age. When the child receives something from a parent, grandparent, sibling or friend, mom or dad will ask, "What do you say?"

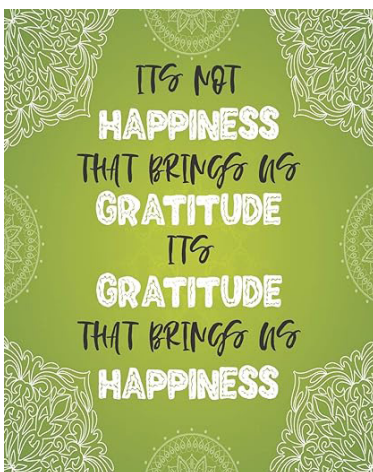
As we grow, we learn that gratitude is more than a polite response. It is a way of life. When we live with an attitude of gratitude we remind ourselves that all that we have – time, faith, family, and more – is a gift from God to be cherished and cared for in the ways God would.

To share:

- Who taught you to say "thank you"? What are some ways to express gratitude without saying it?
- Have you ever had trouble saying thank you? Why?
- How might caring for others be a way of expressing gratitude toward God?

Prayer

Thank you, God, for everything. Teach us to give thanks in every situation in both our words and actions. Amen.



Consider using a gratitude journal, like the one on the left, from Amazon or your favorite bookstore.



God gives us a gift of 86,400 seconds each day.

Have you taken one today to offer thanks?