

Statement from Bishop Carter on the Postponement of General Conference & Special Sessions of the Jurisdictional Conferences

February 25, 2021

To the People of The Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church:

Blessings to you friends, in the name of

Jesus Christ our Savior, who journeys with us in these days of Lent toward a garden and a cross, and then an empty tomb and a risen life!

I write to share the news released today of the upcoming General and Jurisdictional Conferences. We live in an unprecedented season. COVID has changed how we work, gather, travel, eat meals, worship, see our families and friends. This week we noted that 500,000 Americans and 30,000 Floridians have died of COVID. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers!

This has disrupted the denominational gatherings held every four years that we know as the General and Jurisdictional Conferences. The Commission on the General Conference and the Council of Bishops have released the new dates for these gatherings, which are linked [here](#) and [here](#). In addition, a Frequently Asked Questions document is provided [here](#).

Three brief words:

1. The setting of dates for two General Conferences and two Jurisdictional Conferences over the next eighteen months allows the elected delegates, half laity and half clergy, the opportunity to serve the church which has called them. The setting of these dates is very healthy.
2. The scope of work in the General and Jurisdictional Conferences will be done first in a minimal way, accomplishing what is necessary and what is possible, in 2021. The in-person General and Jurisdictional Conferences, in 2022, will take up the weightier matters which can most appropriately be done when we are together. A fundamental value in the call of the May, 2021 General Conference in particular was *equity*. It is simply not fair to make long-term decisions about the future of our denomination when many delegates across the world do not have equal access to technology.
3. We now have a sense, God willing, of a timetable for the next faithful steps in our denominational life. I encourage us, in this interim season, to focus on *our most important commitments*—to vital and sustainable local churches, on a path back to in-person gatherings; to the work of antiracism as a core matter of discipleship, mercy and justice; and to the health and resilience of our clergy leaders.

For those who want to learn more about the General and Jurisdictional Conferences, [the FAQs provide accurate and helpful information.](#)

I am in prayer for you, and I depend on your prayers. Be encouraged and stay safe!

The Peace of the Lord,

+Ken Carter
Bishop, Florida Conference
The United Methodist Church