



From the desk of Bishop Mark J. Webb

2020 General Conference postponed until 2024



On Friday March 4, Upper New York (UNY) Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb sent a note to the UNY Conference about the Commission on the General Conference announcement that the 2020 General Conference of the United Methodist Church rescheduled for Aug. 29 - Sept. 6, 2022, will not be held. Instead, the next General Conference will take place in 2024.

Bishop Webb acknowledged that this decision, along with the subsequent announcement that

the Global Methodist Church has decided to launch on May 1, 2022, raises many questions. He explained that it his commitment to offer accurate information in a spirit of transparency to address those questions appropriately and as quickly as possible.

Scan the QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/GCpostponed> to read Bishop Webb's full letter, which also links to the Commission on the General Conference announcement.



The Bridge is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York Conference and the world. For more news and stories visit: www.unyumc.org



Photo by Mike DuBose, UMC News.

"Let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it."
(1 Peter 3:11)

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Praying for Ukraine this Lenten season



Amid this Lenten Season, our world is faced with the reality of war and the ruthless invasion of Ukraine. We watch in horror as peaceful communities are turned into arenas of violence, families are separated, young people are forced to pick up weapons, places of refuge and safety are destroyed by missiles and lives are abused, wounded, and lost, including innocent children.

As United Methodists, “we deplore war and urge the peaceful settlement of all disputes among nations. From the beginning, the Christian conscience has struggled with the harsh realities of violence and war, for these evils clearly frustrate God’s loving purposes for humankind. We yearn for the day when there will be no more war and people will live together in peace and justice.” -2016 *Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church ¶164.I

As United Methodist followers of Jesus, “we believe war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ . . . As disciples of Christ, we are called to love our enemies, seek justice, and serve as reconcilers of conflict.” -2016 *Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church ¶165.C

In his sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be

called children of God.”

(Matthew 5.9)

1 Peter says: “Let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it.” (1 Peter 3:11)

In a spirit of faith, believing that God can change hearts and pour peace into the midst of violence, I call on all United Methodist believers and congregations in Upper New York to fervently pray for peace in Ukraine. I encourage you to hold prayer concerts in your sanctuaries, organize 24-hour prayer vigils, and to practice the spiritual discipline of fasting. Let us boldly pray to our God on behalf of all being affected by war, believing that through God, hearts, minds, and spirits will be transformed and turn from the path of war to the path of peace.

In your times of prayer and fasting, I offer some areas of prayer focus (not an exhaustive list) that you may find helpful:

- *Pray for the people of Ukraine, Russia, and the surrounding countries.*
- *Pray for Vladimir Putin that God may transform his heart through the love of Christ.*
- *Pray for the leaders of Ukraine that God may grant them wisdom and strength.*

- *Pray for world leaders that they may be bold in their resolve to stand against acts of war and lead toward reconciliation.*
- *Pray for The United Methodist Church in Ukraine and Russia, its Bishop, pastors, and laity.*
- *Pray for those physically injured and suffering the emotional distress of war.*
- *Pray for those who grieve the loss of loved ones.*
- *Pray for those who flee from the homes they love and families that have been separated.*
- *Pray for the countries that are receiving thousands of Ukrainian refugees.*
- *Pray that God will turn swords into ploughshares.*
- *Pray for reconciliation and peace in Ukraine and around the world.*
- *Pray that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be proclaimed in all the world and that the kingdom of God will be on earth as it is in heaven.*

The psalmist cries out: “I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer. (Psalm 17.6) The Psalmist proclaims: “God will respond to the prayer of the destitute; God will not despise their plea.” (Psalm 102.7)

I urge you to pray!

Giving opportunities for Ukraine

Individuals can give directly to the Ukrainian people through local church offerings by writing UMCOR/ Ukraine on the memo lines on their checks. Local churches can send checks to the UNY Conference office with the same memo lines on the checks.

Additionally, the Ukraine UMC has created a crisis committee that will oversee all the global support that is coming in through UMCOR’s Advance #14053A “Eurasia In Mission Together - Ukraine and Moldova.” The money channeled through this Advance fund will go to



the Ukraine UMC church account and decisions on how this will be used will be

considered by the crisis committee, which includes pastors as well as lay leaders.

UMCOR also offers other opportunities for more specific giving to Ukrainian refugees in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. You can donate directly to UMCOR Mission Together Advances by mail at 458 Ponce De Leon Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30308. Designate giving by stating it is for “Ukrainian Refugee support” to the following Advance numbers:

- Hungary In Mission Together (Advance # 00175A)
- Poland In Mission Together (Advance # 00408A)
- Romania In Mission Together (Advance #00211A)
- Slovakia In Mission Together (Advance # 00236A)