

Chicago Metropolitan Association
Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ
Annual Spring Meeting
Saturday, June 6, 2020
CMA Moderator's Annual Report
"Living Into Hope"

Again I give thanks and praise to God for allowing me the opportunity to serve as moderator of the Chicago Metropolitan Association this past year and for letting me complete my two year obligation even in the midst of a Global Pandemic, through peaceful protests and through Lootings and Violence. The fact that these things have happened simultaneous has been detrimental even to the point of death for some. But God has seen fit to keep us through it all so we must now question why. There must be a reason why we're still here. I plan to try to discern what it is that He wants me to do and I pray that I get it right.

Our plans for this meeting had to be streamlined to the extreme due to the fact that we are meeting via Zoom and have had very limited experience in doing so. Because of the circumstances mentioned above our season was cut short in many ways, but I pray that we all have found ways to connect with family, church family, friends and neighbors. This meeting will have a limited amount of business, which is the reason for a Spring Meeting, but we are hopeful that as things get back to a semblance of the normalcy we are familiar with, we will be able to get back to the business left undone. However, we also recognize that the norm we are familiar with may not return. And we will be okay with that. We have long had conversations about the need for making a change in the way we do Church, in the way in which we are The Church and there is no better time than now to start to make that change.

Toward that end, we will have a speaker, the Rev. Dr. Waltrina Middleton, Executive Director of The Community Renewal Society, who will speak on the Church's Response to Crisis. And, our Acting Associate Conference Minister, the Rev. Dr. Terrill Murff, will deliver A Word of Hope. The theme of our meeting for this year is "Living Into Hope" and we will discuss ways and means to help all churches and congregants in the Chicago Metropolitan Association to find that hope even in the midst of the things we have to go through and endure.

I, as I said before, and like all of you, have been living through the Pandemic, the Protests, the Lootings and the Violence (some of which is still being perpetrated by Police which started these latest events in the first place). My heart is heavy and I really have no words to express my feelings in a way that some people will understand. The trauma that I, along with millions of others, have suffered because of this is real. Therefore, I ask only that we pray for each other, that we pray for our families, that we pray for our neighbors, that we pray for our elected officials, that we pray for our cities, that we pray for our states, that we pray for our nation. I ask that we pray fervently and that we pray without ceasing knowing that God knows our situation and He hears our prayers! That is what I do and will continue to do. That is my faith!

And so as I end my time with you as your moderator I offer this special prayer for you. "May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you His favor and give you His peace." Num. 6:24-26 NLT

Faithfully Submitted,
This 6th Day of June 2020

Juanita Bradley

Juanita Bradley, Moderator
Chicago Metropolitan Association