Friends,

The Commission on a Way Forward was proposed by the Council of Bishops and approved by the 2016 General Conference to do a complete examination and possible revision of every paragraph of the Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and explore options that help to maintain and strengthen the unity of the church. As part of this work, a “Praying our Way Forward” initiative was launched New Year’s Day. It is a 75-week time of prayer where each annual conference will take one week to have intentional prayer time for the mission of The United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world and for the work of the Commission.

Starting on Monday, September 11th, the Alabama-West Florida Conference will pray for the commission, their work and the United Methodist Church. I will be sharing with you a prayer that week that will also be posted to the Website called umcprays.org. On that Website you are also able to post your own reflections to the prayer wall. We invite you to participate in that way.

Our eight district superintendents will also be writing prayers that will be shared on social media throughout the week of the 11th. Another way to be involved is to participate in a unified ringing of the church chimes or bells. On Wednesday, September 13th at 5:23pm, we are asking all churches with bells to sound them for seven minutes, concluding at 5:30pm. The 23 signifies the special called General Conference session which begins on February 23rd of 2019. There is no sound more beautiful in a community or neighborhood than hearing church bells ring out, reminding people of God’s love. Perhaps you have Wednesday night activities or prayer meetings at your local church already scheduled. You are welcome to invite church members of all ages or local dignitaries to participate in this moment. It is up to you how you participate, but we hope you will do so in some way. These bells will signify our connectional hearts and minds.

Please mark your calendars for the week of September 11th and I know the best is certainly yet to come! Thank you for all you do for the kingdom.