



DAILY MEDIA BRIEFING

Monday, May 20

9:00 pm CST

Hundreds Gather for UMCNext Conversation

Day 1 of the UMCNext gathering began with silent prayer, an appropriate start to a day that emphasized listening. More than 600 participants, coming from every U.S. annual conference, were asked to bring the fullness of who they are to the discussion.

The day was anchored by powerful testimonies, reminding participants of the history of schism in the church, the sin of segregation, of the struggle for gender equality, and the painful history of use of the Bible as a tool for exclusion. There were stories shared of radical love and transformation.

The group took several polls to understand the diversity in the room and to share insights and opinions. Table discussions centered on hopes for the church.

A call to remember our baptismal vows pointed the participants to actively work toward inclusion, while eradicating injustice and the sin of racism.

The evening concluded with a final testimony and prayer. Participants will reconvene Tuesday, May 21, when they will begin a deep dive into strategic thinking around a more inclusive and just expression of Methodism.

UMC Next Convening Team

Tom Berlin, Floris UMC

Michael Bowie, St. Luke's UMC, Dallas

Lonnie Chafin, Northern Illinois Annual Conference

Stan Copeland, Lover's Lane UMC

Katie Dawson, Immanuel UMC

DJ del Rosario, Pacific Northwest Conference

Junius Dotson, Discipleship Ministries

Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, Foundry UMC

Adam Hamilton, Church of the Resurrection

Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson, North Georgia Annual Conference

Jan Lawrence, Reconciling Ministries Network

Pat Luna, Point Washington UMC

Bishop Mike McKee, North Texas Annual Conference

Jasmine Smothers, Atlanta First UMC

Cynthia Weems, Florida Annual Conference