**Preaching Resources**

*In the Book of Esther, Mordecai sends a message for Queen Esther saying “Do not think that   
in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity   
for just such a time as this.”*   
Esther 4: 12 -14, NRSV

GNJ believes that you have been called to lead in such a time as this. Your community has heard the decisions made at General Conference 2019 through friends, the news and social media. GC2019 has evoked a variety of strong emotions, prompted meaningful questions and the desire for deep conversations. GNJ trusts that you know how best to reflect upon the decisions with your church and community. Some clergy will choose to host a prayer service or worship series, small group discussion or one-on-one conversations, write a congregational letter or a series of newsletter articles. The way you choose to process this decision is unique to your congregation and community.

When addressing the decisions of GC2019 during a sermon, consider the following:

1. Choose scriptures that speak both authentically to you and your community, assuring the congregation that all people are beloved children of God.
2. People in your congregation will feel differently about General Conference, therefore know and present the details well.
3. Refer to portions of Bishop Schol’s letter from February 27th that outlines how GNJ intends to function as we have been, a conference that welcomes all.
4. Use “I” language to share how you feel as your congregation’s clergy leader.
5. While people want to hear from you as the pastor, they also may wish to respond to your sermon through small group discussion.

We are facing challenges, but you are the right leader to journey beside your community. Provide compassion during this time of hurt. Listen deeply to their stories. Be kind to yourself as you care for the community. Point to the eternal love of Jesus Christ that is offered to all. Remind the local church that especially in such a time as this, they are the body of Christ for the world.

**Resources for Leading Effectively**

[**Preaching Controversial Issues Without Dividing the Church**](http://www.umcom.org/learn/preaching-controversial-issues-without-dividing-the-church) *Adapted from*Preaching Controversial Issues *in* [***Ministry Matters***](http://www.ministrymatters.com/) *and originally from The New Interpreter's Handbook of Preaching, Copyright © 2008 Abingdon Press.*

[**4 Tips for Preaching on Politically Charged Topics**](https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/4-tips-for-preaching-on-politically-charged-topics/) *by* [*Ginger Gaines-Cirelli*](https://www.churchleadership.com/author/ginger-gaines-cirelli/)

**Leading in Ways that Glorify God***by Bishop John Schol*

1. Lead with integrity
   1. In the Wesleyan spirit, do no harm, do good and stay in love with God.
   2. Do not fan the flames of bitterness, divisiveness and discontent.
   3. Do fan the flames of mission, respect in the midst of differences and point to where Christ is alive and active through The United Methodist Church.
2. Lead together
   1. Don’t let yourself be isolated. Connect with colleagues and learn from each other what you are doing to lead with integrity.
   2. Report to your superintendent anything that raises concerns for you within your congregation. We are here to work with you.
   3. Ask for help. I’ve been asking for help. Not from people who tell me what I want to hear but from people who help me see things from all sides. I invite you to do the same.
3. Lead well
   1. Lead with stories.
   2. Use this present challenge as opportunity to deepen faith.
   3. Use good questions:
      * How is the conversation about the way forward deepening faith?
      * How is the conversation raising questions about your faith?
      * What do you need during this season to be faithful and move through this time?
   4. Lead conversations with your congregation and if you need help, ask another colleague who is good at facilitating dialogue to lead the conversation with your congregation.

**Three Types of Leadership to Use During Times of Transition, Change and Challenges***by Bishop John Schol*

1. Narrative Leadership – Narrative leadership tells stories of how the church/organizations have moved through challenges in the past and how they are working through them today. Narrative leadership through story says, “Let’s journey together”. When a leader uses a narrative style, they tell positive stories and share what was learned when things did not go well including how they adapted and adjusted along the way. Google “narrative leadership” for more information on narrative leadership.
2. Balanced Leadership – Balanced leadership is most appropriate with congregations and groups that are more of one mind about how The Book of Discipline should not change or for congregations that are primarily of one mind that The Book of Discipline should change concerning homosexuality. Balanced leadership gives voice to the ideas and stories of people who are not represented within the congregation. It is not an attempt to change people’s minds but to include other points of view without vilifying, objectifying or discounting them. When a leader does not feel adequate to share stories and views of others who have a different perspective, the leader should create a safe space for someone else to articulate an alternative view. The goal is not to convince or convict, but to seek understanding of others experiences and understanding.
3. Confessional Leadership – Confessional leadership shares beliefs. This is most effective when a congregation has members who have differing views. Confessional leadership:

a. Acknowledges there are differing views.

b. Expresses the understandings and feelings of each group.

c. Shares her/his own beliefs including the “why”.

d. Calls people to something greater or better than the differences that divide people.

e. Shares how the leader will lead in the midst of differences.