



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF NIGERIA

MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST AND TRANSFORMING THE WORLD

Serving the People and Communities of Nigeria
North, Northeast, Central and Southern Nigerian Conferences



BISHOP JOHN SCHOL

EPISCOPAL TEAM: BISHOP EBEN NHIWATIWA, BISHOP PATERICK STREIFF, BISHOP JOHN SCHOL

August 5, 2024

Dear United Methodists of Nigeria,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I am humbled and honored to serve as your Bishop alongside Bishop Eben Nhiwatiwa, Bishop Patrick Streiff, and Bishop David Yemba. We are grateful to the Council of Bishops for assigning us to this important time in the life of The United Methodist Church in Nigeria. Bishop Nhiwatiwa and I look forward to arriving later in August and have already been working with leaders throughout Nigeria. Later this week, I will announce the appointment of 41 District Superintendents who will serve you and The United Methodist Church in the four Annual Conferences of Nigeria. God has a future with hope for the United Methodists of Nigeria.

It is sad and disappointing that most of the former cabinet members and Bishop have resigned from The United Methodist Church. I had hoped we could work together on a Path Forward to bring peace and reconciliation. While it is unfortunate that they did not wish to be part of the continued mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church, we pray for them and release them to what God has next for them.

Several hundred congregations and clergy have already communicated that they will stay with The United Methodist Church. We are grateful for your conviction and courage. We are in prayer with those who are concerned and are discerning.

There are reports that Annual Conferences were held, and Conferences voted to leave The United Methodist Church. This is not true. There were no Conference Sessions convened according to our Book of Discipline, and most delegates/conference members were not invited to these gatherings. We pledge to work with every congregation and through the Path Forward Covenant to listen and hear directly from congregations about their hopes for the future. Through the Path Forward, Annual Conferences will be provided an opportunity for any Annual Conference to discern their future with The United Methodist Church according to paragraph 572 of our Book of Discipline.

I learned today that a group of United Methodists were imprisoned due to complaints by the former cabinet and leaders because they are committed to staying with The United Methodist Church. They are like Peter and John in the Book of Acts and the Apostle Paul who were arrested because of their humility and conviction. I call on all United Methodists and those who have left The United Methodist Church to follow Jesus Christ, who humbled himself and sought peace and reconciliation. When people do otherwise, they hurt the witness of Jesus Christ. Let us all work to honor Jesus Christ in what we say and do.

SECRETARIAT, MILE SIX, JALINGO – NUMAN ROAD, JALINGO, TARABA STATE

Because some of the leadership have left The United Methodist Church, we are in the process of reorganizing The United Methodist Church of Nigeria. Working together, God is and will continue to see us through this challenging time. I pledge to you that I will follow Christ, be transparent, keep you informed, and be honest with you. My colleague Bishops and I will love God and you with our whole hearts. Please pray for my leadership and that of my colleague Bishops as we serve God, the Church, and you.

I and a newly appointed communications team will keep you regularly updated on how the leadership and The United Methodist Church are moving forward for God's glory.

God is seeing us through.


Bishop John Schol

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