



# THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Dakotas-Minnesota Area

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April 17, 2024

Dear members and friends of the Dakotas Conference of The United Methodist Church:

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart; don't rely on your own intelligence. Know him in all your paths, and he will keep your ways straight. Proverbs 3:5-6 (CEB)*

I am writing to address a disturbing and difficult topic: Internet crime involving the altering of one of the Dakotas Conference public documents and the sharing of the altered document under the pretense of authorship attributed to our beloved Dakotas Conference of The United Methodist Church.

It has come to our attention that the General Conference Webinar Question and Answer document highlighting the mission and ministry of our delegation, published on April 8, 2024, was infiltrated, and altered on April 9. This counterfeit document was littered with disinformation about our denomination and reeked of a spirit of divisiveness and deceit. Further, not only did it seek to do harm to our relationship together, it was distributed as an official document of the Dakotas Conference of The United Methodist Church. This action is not only outside the bounds of human decency, it is also counter to the very character of Christ.

The original document was created in the spirit of connection from our elected delegation who desired to share both integrous information and their responses to the questions that participants posed in the webinars held April 4 and 7. To be clear, the unauthorized edits do not reflect the response or position of the Dakotas Conference or The United Methodist Church or our delegation.

To ensure that you have the most accurate information, you can view the recorded sessions of the webinars on the Dakotas Conference. Here are direct links to recordings of the webinars on [April 4](#) and [April 7](#). Time stamps for the questions and answers are in the summary. You can also reach out to your Dakotas Conference General Conference delegation. [Here](#) is a list of your delegation with contact information.

As your episcopal leader, I am deeply saddened by this matter. This places undue tension and burden on our Dakotas Conference leadership and staff, the General Conference delegation, and all United Methodists across the Dakotas-Minnesota Area. It challenges the trust that we each hold in our beloved church.

The Dakotas Conference has in place very secure processes that protect files, financial matters, and personal information. Moving forward as a precautionary measure, all public documents shared by the Dakotas Conference will include the conference logo. I encourage you to review your church's safeguards against improper access to digital files.



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We cannot tolerate fraud or crimes being committed in any form. I lament the damage caused by this person's actions. We will pray for them even as we seek to work with law enforcement officials addressing this matter.

In our 100 days of prayer, the words of today's prayer (Day 17) echo poignantly: "When the storms of life are raging, speak peace over our troubled hearts that we may be still and know that you are God. Amen." May the God of grace and truth, of justice and righteousness, and of what has been and what will continue to guide us as we follow our risen Savior.

Yours in Christ,

*Bishop Lanette Plambeck*

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