



Northern Illinois Conference

OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Dear all,

As a little coolness comes into the late-summer air, we find ourselves between the warmth of summer and the coming of autumn. The colors have not yet changed, but we already feel the season turning and calling us to begin again. In our churches, this is the time of Rally Day, Homecoming Sunday, choirs returning to worship for regular singing, and the joyful starting of Sunday School. These rhythms show us God's faithfulness from one season to another, and invite us to walk into this new chapter with hope and joy.

I am very encouraged that this fall we are starting a new cohort on reaching new people. Together we will learn how to connect with our neighbors, how to welcome those who are looking for community, and how to share God's love with wisdom and courage. In a world where many feel alone, even a small invitation can become a gift of grace. Please keep this cohort in your prayers and if you would like to know more about it, please let me know.

My summer days have been so richly blessed by my clergy interviews. These talks were full of faithfulness, innovation in ministry, and dedication. I am very grateful for the opportunity to listen and learn from each of our pastors how our churches are doing. Church conferences will begin in late September. I look forward to learning more about your ministry through church conferences.

The psalm tells us: *"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it"* (Psalm 118:24). As we step into this new season, may we rejoice in the gifts God gives each day and trust the Spirit to lead our ministries into fresh and fruitful ways.

I invite you to join me in offering this prayer today:

Loving God, as we enter this new season, I ask your blessing for every pastor, every congregation, and every household in our district. Please bless each Rally Day, each choir song, and each Sunday School gathering with your Spirit. Give us wisdom to welcome new neighbors, courage to go beyond our walls, and joy in serving one another. Guide us, renew us, and remind us that you walk before us in every beginning. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

In Christ,
DS Hwa-Young