

A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP LANETTE PLAMBECK

To the farmers, ranchers, and ag families across the Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area and all who love them:

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, who knew the language of seed and soil, sheep and shepherd, sowing and harvest.

I miss the harvest rhythm of western Iowa. My faith journey began in Crawford County, and some part of me still keeps time by the seasons there: the hum of the combine at dusk, dust hanging in the late light, trucks lined up at the elevator, supper carried out to the field.

Now, as I travel across the Dakotas and Minnesota, I see that rhythm everywhere. Beet piles rising in the Red River Valley. Wheat and sunflowers across North and South Dakota. Wild rice gathered from northern Minnesota waters and grain coming off northern fields. Cattle coming home from summer pasture across our region. Corn and soybean fields stretching across southern Minnesota, with lights of farm equipment moving through the darkness long after most of us are asleep.

And I also know these are not easy days.

Costs are high. Markets are uncertain. Drought and changing weather have taken their toll. Decisions about land, livestock, debt, succession, and the future carry real weight. For some, this harvest comes with gratitude. For others, disappointment. For many, both.

I want you to know that your United Methodist family is paying attention.

Your church sees you. We give thanks for you. We are praying for you.

I also want to express my deep appreciation for your hard work and loyal labor. Day after day, season after season, you rise to responsibilities that demand patience, courage, skill, and sacrifice. You care for the land and animals entrusted to you, provide for your families and communities, and help sustain life far beyond the places where you live and work. Your labor is often unseen, but it is never unnoticed or unvalued. Thank you for the faithfulness with which you continue this work.

Scripture tells us that God placed humanity in the garden “to till it and keep it” (Genesis 2:15). There is something sacred in tending what God has entrusted to us. Every field harvested, every animal tended, every fence mended, every meal carried to someone working late participates in the work of sustaining life.

And when the work becomes heavy, hear again the invitation of Jesus: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Farming and ranching can be lonely and isolating work. Long hours, uncertainty, financial pressures, and the weight of responsibility can take a toll on mental health and well-being. We want you to know that your church is paying attention. You are not alone, and you do not have to carry every burden by yourself.

To our congregations across the Dakotas and Minnesota: pay attention to the farmers and ranchers among you. Pray for them by name. Check in. Take a meal. Sit over coffee. Notice who has become quiet or withdrawn. Learn the signs of farm stress. Be the kind of church where someone can say, "This is hard," without having to pretend otherwise.

As harvest continues, I am praying for your safety and security, for your families and livelihoods, and for the land and animals entrusted to your care.

May God watch over your fields, your herds, your homes, and your families. May Christ meet you in both abundance and uncertainty. And may the Holy Spirit bind us together so that no one carries the harvest alone.

Let us pray:

*God of seedtime and harvest,
bless those who work the land.*

*Keep safe those who rise before the sun
and return home long after it has set.*

*Bless the harvest gathered in
and hold tenderly the disappointment of when the expense is higher than the earning.*

Where the numbers do not add up, give wisdom.

Where uncertainty presses hard, give courage.

Where bodies are weary, give rest.

Where spirits are burdened, send companions.

Protect those working machinery, hauling grain, tending livestock, and traveling tired roads.

Bless the land, the animals, the families, and the communities that depend upon them.

And remind us that those who feed the world should never feel forgotten by it.

God of every season, make us faithful stewards of what you have entrusted to us, good neighbors to one another, and people who trust your presence in planting, in harvest, and in all that lies between.

*In the name of Jesus Christ,
the Sower and the Good Shepherd. Amen.*

With gratitude and prayer,



Bishop Lanette Plambeck

Resident Bishop

Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church

Rural Dakota-Minnesota Farmer Resources

Information Sites and Ideas for Church Partnerships

Resources

Farm Stress

[North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center](#)

From website: We want to make sure that you, your family, and the people you work with have access to the resources needed, when they are needed. We believe in working together to cultivate rural supports, mental health resources, and community to help farmers, ranchers, and other agriculture workers as they navigate increasing stress.

American Farm Bureau

[Farm State of Mind](#) page includes resources, tips, peer-peer support, research, training.

Farm to Farm Services

[Farm to Farm Services](#)

Offers specialized farm-to-farm telehealth and counseling services with providers who have agricultural backgrounds.

From website: We believe that farm-related stress and struggles can be overcome. Our counselors relate to you on a deeper level and can help you find a way forward.

Together All - <https://togetherall.com/en-us/>

Website: An anonymous community for your mental health, available 24/7. Free through many universities, colleges, employers and employee assistance programs. Safe, clinically moderated, digital peer-to-peer support. Instantly accessible mental health support whenever and wherever it's needed.

Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (UMASH)

[Resources](#) for stress, suicide, and mental health conditions

North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension

[Farm and Ranch Stress](#) page provides contact information, fact sheets, articles, and stress management tools, some in Spanish.

South Dakota State University (SDSU) Extension

[SDSU Extension Farm Stress Assistance](#) - community education resources like Mental Health First Aid and QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide prevention training. Also:

Avera Health [Farm Stress Hotline](#)

United Methodist Bishops Call for Prayer and Peace in the New Middle East War

3/1/2026 - Ministries



United Methodist Bishops Call for Prayer and Peace in the new Middle East war
For Immediate Release
Sunday, March 1, 2026

WASHINGTON, D.C. --- We know that our hearts are heavy as we witness the mounting loss of life from the ongoing military strikes carried out by the United States and Israel, and from retaliatory strikes by Iran. Families are grieving the loss of loved ones, and entire communities are shaken by the weight of uncertainty, fear, and profound sorrow. Innocent civilians are caught in the crossfire of a widening conflict they did not choose.

Scripture reminds us that “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18). As bishops of The United Methodist Church, we hold fast to this promise as we pray for all who have been killed, all who are injured, and all who now carry trauma and fear in the wake of this violence. We stand resolute in remembering the uncompromising call of Jesus: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called

children of God” (Matthew 5:9). This calling is a summons to act with courage and with a steadfast commitment to honoring the dignity and life of every human being.

We urge leaders on every side to turn from the escalation of violence and seek paths toward justice, reconciliation, and lasting peace. We implore them to place the protection of innocent lives at the center of every decision.

As followers of Christ, let us be steadfast in prayer for those whose lives were taken that they may rest in God’s eternal peace. Let us pray for the wounded that healing and comfort may surround them. Let us pray for families and communities in mourning that they may find strength for the days ahead. And let us pray for leaders and nations that they may choose the path of peace over the path of destruction.

May God’s Spirit move among us and within us, guiding our hearts toward justice, compassion, and the hard, holy work of peacemaking. May we be instruments of Christ’s peace in a world yearning for healing.

In Christ’s mercy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tracy S. Malone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bishop Tracy S. Malone
President, Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church