

New Heaven and New Earth

“Be glad and rejoice forever in what I’m creating, because I’m creating Jerusalem as a joy and her people as a source of gladness.” Isaiah 65:18CEB

Reading this passage from Isaiah fills us with a sense of peace for a vision that God has created for us.

When the world around us is filled with disagreement and suffering, we are assured that **God has a vision of a new heaven and a new earth** that is already being manifested on earth as it is in heaven.

I see this vision of a new heaven and new earth lived out in the life of our church and in our Connection as United Methodists. In this Body of Christ called (church name), I see a God sized vision being lived out in

- the **love and tenderness** as we journey with those who are sick and sit with those

who are dying and care for those who are grieving.

- In the **shared rejoicing** when prayers are answered
- In the **children** who know that this is a place where they belong and they are cherished and. . . I see it in how they return that love and in their desire to know that we will support their dream for what this church can be.

From this community, this Jerusalem, we are **creating God’s dream of beloved community beyond the church walls.**

We are living out the Holy One’s preferred future for us to be the church in the world. Trusting in the creator, we are building relationships and sharing with our neighbors that God loves each and every one of us and there is nothing we can do about it.





- I see a new heaven and a new earth being created with every meal served or can donated to the food pantry through ministries that address food insecurity (name these ministries for your church)
- I see a new heaven and new earth being created in how we reach out to those who are in prison (name these ministries for your church).
- I see a new heaven and new earth being created in the work of the missionary who we support (name and country of missionary).
- I see a new heaven and new earth being created in the rebuilding of communities

after disasters (places being supported through volunteer mission)

- I see a new heaven and new earth being created through our Connection, with every student educated through the Africa University Fund and each ecumenical relationship that is nurtured through the Interdenominational Fund.
- I see a new heaven and a new earth being created every time we stand with those facing injustice, and pray with a member who seeks healing, with every dollar placed in the offering plate, and every time we gather as a community of grace for baptisms, weddings, funerals, and worship.

I see a new heaven and a new earth being created in our commitment to the ministries of (name of church) through our gifts, our prayers, our presence, our witness, and our service.

As we engage in **prophetic loving imagination** to create the beautiful city ask yourself

- Where do you see it today?
- And where do you see it not yet?
- What does the vision of beloved community look like for this congregation?
- If there was no financial limit, what could you imagine for the future of this Body of



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Christ to reflect the vision of God's holy joy in the beloved community?

- And what will you do to be part of bringing that vision into the here and now?

It is so awesome that we are invited to be part of this creation!

We are invited to be part of the transformation of the world for the glory of God as disciples of Jesus Christ!

Together we are more, united as the body of Christ, called to be

- justice seekers,
- truth tellers, and peace makers.

We are called to **embrace** the other, to **seek** forgiveness, to **offer** grace.

We respond to God's grace not only to claim Isaiah's vision for ourselves, but to experience relationship with God who delights in us and wants us to be whole.

May we have the confidence that we are equipped to partner with God to create a new heaven and new earth not through the powers and principalities of this world but through the teachings and promise found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Amen



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