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*God has proclaimed to the end of the earth:
Say to daughter Zion, "See, your salvation comes . . ." —Isa. 62:11 (alt).*

There has never been a time in my life when I have not known the loving presence and the rock-solid bulwark-protection of God in my own life.

Although I have lived with sexism and racism as expressed in our society—and even in the beloved church of my ancestors, I have also found, through the church, that abiding, soul-saving walk with God through Jesus Christ. And I want that for everyone on earth—the assurance, the knowing that God is good, that God is with us and that evil cannot overcome goodness as long as God reigns. And God will reign forever and ever.

But there are corners of our church where this assurance is not evident. In the past four years, I have raged with United Methodist laywomen who are still barred from the fiscal ministries of their local congregations. I have spoken with worship leaders and seminary students who say they have been belittled and reprimanded for introducing inclusive theological images for God.

I have cried with United Methodist 64 lay and clergy sisters—and even three lay brothers—who have been sexually abused at the hands of pastors and other church leaders.

I have watched racial-ethnic women and women under age 35 pass by congregations because they don't see themselves among the leaders and in the congregation, and they don't hear their concerns, their voices, their prayers acknowledged through the literature and priorities of the denomination.

Until institutional sexism is expunged from our church's doctrine and deeds, until every congregation welcomes every kind of women with open arms, and until the right living that we claim for those "called and set apart" is lived out fully, then there must be a place for justice-for-women ministries in The United Methodist Church.

Our disciple-making depends on our obedience to God and our tangible agreement with God that Jesus is the Savior and friend of the whole world, without exception or reservation.