



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
HARRISBURG AREA – SUSQUEHANNA CONFERENCE  
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Bishop Jeremiah J. Park

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*“I pray that they will be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. I pray that they all will be in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me.”*  
(John 17:21)

*“By your Spirit make us one with Christ,  
one with each other,  
and one in ministry to all the world,  
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.”*  
(from the “Great Thanksgiving”)

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Susquehanna Conference,  
Grace to you and peace from the Lord Jesus Christ.

We will gather in holy conferencing as the Susquehanna Annual Conference from Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup> thru the end of the Ordination Service on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. Our 2017-2020 quadrennial theme is: “Better Together.” This year we will gather around the sub-theme: “Make Us One.” We will spend time in reflection and prayer around Jesus’ priestly prayer for the unity of his followers as recorded in John 17. Our speakers will help us to deepen our understanding of and commitment to unity in Christ. The Bible Study leaders this year will be the Rev. Dr. Jaime Clark-Soles, New Testament Professor at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University and the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Loyer, Lead Pastor of Spry United Methodist Church, York.

We live in a very divisive society; even within the church. Unity as a people and as a church is seriously challenged and threatened. I am compelled to work for unity among God’s people for such a time as this. Let’s be reminded that unity doesn’t mean uniformity or common agreement on everything; but rather, unity is about God’s desire for us to be one over the differences we may have for the sake of the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

We will spend significant time throughout the annual conference in prayer. May 4<sup>th</sup> is also the National Day of Prayer, so we will be joining with other people of faith around the nation in prayer. The week following Annual Conference will be our conference’s opportunity to pray for the whole church and the Commission on A Way Forward. We believe that a praying way forward is indeed a way forward in unity.

I am also grateful that clergy members of our annual conference will preach at two of our worship services. The Rev. Dr. Charles Salisbury, York District Superintendent, will preach at the Memorial Service on Thursday evening. Pastor Kris Sledge will bring the message at Friday’s Celebration of Ministry Service. Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi,

Bishop of the Western Pennsylvania Conference, will proclaim God's Word at the Ordination Service on Saturday afternoon. I know that we will be richly blessed by all of our conference speakers and preachers.

Conference registration begins today, February 27, 2017 at noon. As we are meeting in a new place, early registration would be beneficial to all. Please visit [www.susumc.org](http://www.susumc.org), click on the Annual Conference link and register when registration opens.

Finally, I would like to invite you to join me in setting aside time each day to be in prayer for God's blessings upon our church and the up-coming annual conference. Indeed, our prayer is the soul's sincere desire. God will hear and honor our prayers and will bless us abundantly.

I look forward to greeting you at the new, exciting, and "sweetest place on earth" for our time together at the annual conference this May.

With You in Christ's Ministry,

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Jeremiah J. Park