



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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“For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.” (Ephesians 2:14)

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the most precious name of Jesus Christ the Risen Savior!

My heart was overwhelmed by what I saw on TV that showed the incredible moment when the two leaders of South and North Korea crossed the demarcation line and shook each other's hand. It was not even conceivable a few months ago. It is a surreal, as well as an emotional moment. I imagine what went through the minds and hearts of the Korean people as they witnessed this amazing and historic moment. It was a “Wow!” moment and “divine moment” combined in a very special way to so many people. Particularly, it was an intensely personal moment to those who have been separated from their loved ones for over 70 years. It was also a very special and personal moment to me. On October 11, 2014, thirty-five of us from the Susquehanna Conference were right there in that space where Moon of the South and Kim of the North walked together.

I know that this is only a beginning toward the long and challenging goal of peace and reconciliation in Korea. The agreements made are aspirational in many aspects at this point. But an incredible giant first step was taken in an unprecedented fashion. There seems to be a real season of change as the dream of ending the Korean War, the total removal of nuclearized military capability, and permanent peace becomes more alive than before. We are seeing a dramatic reversion from a rapid escalation towards an unavoidable war by irreconcilable forces on a collision course, to a renewed commitment by both sides to drawing a road map to peace. I prayed and asked others to pray for peace in Korea out of sense of desperation and despair before, but now I pray with a renewed sense of hope.

We are in Eastertide now, but we are perpetually Easter people by always joining the revolt of hope even in the midst of deep despair. Indeed, we worship and serve the God of hope. Our God can make a way out of no way and bring life out of death. So we never ever give up on hope. I solicit your prayers that the peace and reconciliation in Korea will be a gift not only to the Korean people, but also to the rest of the world. As our prayers are intensified for such a time as this, God raises the tide of peace higher, breaking the dividing wall of hostility everywhere.

In the name Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, Healer of our brokenness, and Hope of the world.

Jeremiah J. Park