



Bishop Jeremiah J. Park

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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*“By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world”
(from the Eucharistic Prayer of Holy Communion)*

Dear Laity and Clergy of the Susquehanna Conference,

Grace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, Healer of Our Brokenness, and Hope of the World!

We just had the first annual conference in a new quadrennium at a new place. Thanks and praises be to God that it was a prayer-led annual conference. In the face of the current denominational climate of divisiveness, God’s people of the Susquehanna Conference joined their hearts in prayer for unity under the banner, “Better Together: Make Us One”. Knowing that our God is able and is in charge and that unity is a gift from God, we saturated the annual conference with diverse and numerous opportunities for prayer. During the conference and afterwards, many expressed their appreciation for the theme of unity and the central focus on prayer. Like you, because of the prominent place of prayer throughout the sessions, I too felt that the tenor of this year’s conference was different. I came home with a stronger and renewed sense of hope for our church. Indeed, God richly blessed us in and through the times of prayer we had together and with one another.

The spirit of prayer surrounds us as our conference is engaged in a week of prayer in gatherings and/or individually throughout the clusters, districts and conference this week and beyond. It is my ardent hope and prayer that what was started at the annual conference is the beginning of a new chapter of our Susquehanna Conference as a praying annual conference. We will intensify the practice of prayer throughout the sessions next year and years to come.

It is also my ardent hope and prayer that what we witnessed during the annual conference will inspire a movement in our congregational and personal lives. I pray that our clergy and laity will build up or start a prayer ministry by creating more space and opportunities for God’s people to get together to pray for the mission of our church, for a way forward in unity, and for the vision of the beloved community, as well as for whatever needs we

have. Perhaps your local congregation might provide the “braided prayer chords” to everyone. Let the flame of prayer continue to spread and burn higher and brighter all around us and all over the place.

Finally, I would encourage our lay members and clergy to share their conference experiences with their congregations. Please share the video that opened the leadership report and each prayer time. You may also want to show the additional video of Brookye Keeney making the mosaic. Surely, each one of us has brokenness but is unique, beautiful, and essential to building up the Body of Christ, the embodiment of the Beloved Community.

Let’s continue to pray for God’s anointing Spirit to be poured out in such powerful ways that we move forward as God’s people. Please continue to pray for your leaders and your congregations. Please pray for our conference leaders and conference staff as we minister together to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world for a time such as this.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in God, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

(Romans 15:13)

Grace and Peace,

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Jeremiah J. Park