



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:2-6)

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

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

The Commission on a Way Forward was established at the 2016 General Conference to discern our denominational position on the matter of homosexuality and same gender marriage. It has been charged to bring a report to a called session of the General Conference, which will probably be held in 2018.

Perhaps, many of you have now learned that the Council of Bishops has named the thirty-two persons who will serve on the Commission on a Way Forward as well as the three bishops who will act as moderators. The members consist of eight Bishops, eleven laity, twelve elders, and one deacon. One of them is a clergy member of the Susquehanna Annual Conference; The Rev. Dr. Thomas Salsgiver, Director of Connectional Ministries and Administrative Services of our conference. Rev. Salsgiver is one of three persons chosen from the Northeastern Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church. We rejoice that one of our own has been selected to participate in this most critical task of historic significance. We give thanks to God for Tom’s gifts and graces for the whole church, as well as for our conference.

At the same time, we recognize that serving on the Commission will be an extremely difficult and demanding responsibility to fulfill. As you can imagine the unity of our church is at stake. We thank Tom for his willingness to extend himself to serve in this most challenging way on behalf of our denominational church. He needs and appreciates our prayers and support. I would like to solicit all of us to be in fervent prayer for these thirty-two persons who have been selected. I especially request that the members of the Susquehanna Annual Conference pray for Rev. Salsgiver. Truly may we all ardently pray that the Commission will be blessed and led by the Spirit of God so that it will accomplish its task according to God’s desire for the sake of God’s future in and through our beloved United Methodist Church.

With You in Christ’s Ministry,

Jeremiah J. Park