



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
HARRISBURG AREA – SUSQUEHANNA CONFERENCE
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Dear Clergy and Laity 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!

After nine years as a Cabinet member, the Rev. Dr. Dennis L. Otto will be appointed as the Lead Pastor of the Fishburn United Methodist Church, Hershey, PA, effective July 1st, 2017. Dr. Otto is an outstanding pastor and will provide exceptional leadership for this congregation. Wherever he has served, new disciples for Jesus Christ have been made and the church communities have been transformed. He previously served as the Senior Pastor of First United Methodist Church, Williamsport, for 14 years and helped to lead that congregation into becoming such a vital witness in the Williamsport area and beyond. He also served Grace United Methodist Church, Mechanicsburg, Asbury United Methodist Church in York, and the Hegins-Muir Charge.

For the past four and half years, Dr. Otto has served as the Director of Congregational Development for the Susquehanna Annual Conference and has also served on the Appointive Cabinet. Prior to this position, from 2008-2012, he served as the District Superintendent of the Altoona District. Dennis has provided significant and vital leadership in crafting the position of congregational development and has provided some of the foundational policies and procedures that will continue to form our conference's commitment to grow effective churches, as well as to create new places for new people. He has been instrumental in helping to retool our churches poised for the 21st century.

During his tenure as the Director, Dr. Otto has provided oversight to approximately 100 congregations who have participated in Matthew 28 Consultations. In addition, many pastors have been provided substantial training through the Pastoral Leadership Development (PLD) programs. Under his gifted leadership and supervision, there have been several new church plants started, many of our churches that previously were on a downward trajectory have been given the tools and resources needed to turn around, positive momentum was created for many congregations to move forward, and many places experienced growth and expansion of ministry. Indeed, there is no way to adequately measure the work that Dr. Otto has accomplished. His keen observations, insight, and perspective, as well as vast knowledge and experience, have been such valuable assets to the Cabinet. Dennis' many gifts and graces have also been used on several conference committees. He has been very helpful in leading the newly reorganized Conference Loan Committee. His ministry will continue to benefit and bless the conference beyond the local church.

I would ask your prayers for Dennis and his wife, Mona, as they make this transition; that their journey ahead will be most rewarding. I also, humbly request your prayers for the Cabinet as well, as we begin the discernment process as to the future direction of this very vital ministry of congregational development within our conference.

With You in Christ's Ministry,

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Jeremiah J. Park