



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
HARRISBURG AREA – SUSQUEHANNA CONFERENCE

303 Mulberry Drive, Suite 100 • Mechanicsburg, PA 17050-3198
Phone (717) 766-7871 • Fax (717) 766-3210 • Email: bishoppark@susumc.org

Bishop Jeremiah J. Park

Christy Mackey
Executive Admin. Asst.
cmackey@susumc.org

Rev. Gregory C. Myers
Clergy Assistant
gmyers@susumc.org

Rev. Dr. Thomas Salsgiver
Clergy Assistant
tsalsgiver@susumc.org

Sarah Filizzi
Admin. Assistant
sfilizzi@susumc.org

March 1, 2021

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,
let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles,
and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame,
and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

(Hebrews 12:1-2)

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!

By now you probably have heard that the Commission on the General Conference has again postponed the 2020 General Conference. This difficult decision to postpone was not made lightly, but only after much prayer, conversation, and study. [\(Click here to read the Commission’s press release\)](#)

Many factors led the Commission to make this decision. Some of those factors include:

- The COVID situation continues to be a serious threat to safety worldwide
- A vaccine is not expected to be widely available this year in many countries
- International travel is extremely difficult
- Report of the Technology Study Team, whose job was to explore many options including utilizing technology and online voting. [\(Click here to read the Study Committee’s report\)](#)

The new postponed dates of the General Conference will be **August 29 - September 6, 2022**. It is hoped that by August 2022 General Conference delegates will be able to travel and meet in person.

In consultation and collaboration with the Commission, the Council of Bishops has called a Special Called Session of General Conference. It will be held virtually on **May 8, 2021**.

The call is very specific. The purpose is to suspend the rules of General Conference so that all delegates shall use paper ballots to consider only 12 pieces of legislation. [\(Click here to see the 12 pieces of legislation to be considered\)](#) These 12 pieces of legislation that require votes were determined to be critical to being able to move forward until General Conference can meet in person.

According to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church, the delegates elected to the postponed 2020 General Conference will be the delegates for these two sessions.

The Council of Bishops also has called for a Special Session of the US Jurisdictional Conferences. The date will be in **July 2021**. These Conferences will be held virtually and will occur at the same time.

The call for the Special Session of Jurisdictional Conference is very specific. The only items that will be considered are:

- Retiring bishops in the Jurisdiction
- Announcing episcopal coverage of areas for the Jurisdiction
- Determining if and how many bishops will be elected following the postponed General Conference to be held in 2022

It is expected that a regular Jurisdictional Conference will also be held, possibly in the fall of 2022. This will occur after the postponed General Conference in 2022.

I know that for many of our people and congregations, the waiting in these days of uncertainty can be difficult. I am grateful for your patience in this liminal time. We must continue to hold steady until the General Conference can meet in person to prayerfully discern God's future for our beloved church. We must trust in the leading of God. God will lead God's people forward according to God's plan in God's time.

There are many significant issues that we must consider as we look to the future of our beloved denomination. Please continue to pray for our denominational leaders in this uncertain time. Also, please lift the Susquehanna Conference Delegates whom you have elected to serve at the General and Jurisdictional Conferences. **(Click the links to see the list of [General Conference Delegates](#) and [Jurisdictional Conference Delegates](#))** May they be encouraged and supported by God's leading and our prayers.

As we continue together on our Lenten journey, let us walk with perseverance in faith and commitment. May we cling ever closer to Jesus the Christ for His strength, patience, grace and peace for such a time as this.

Blessings in this Lenten Season,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremiah J. Park".

Jeremiah J. Park