



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

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My Dear Sisters and Brothers 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!

It has now been announced that the postponed session of the 2020 General Conference will be held August 29 to September 7, 2021 and the Jurisdictional Conferences will be held November 10 to 12, 2021. I am writing to you so that you may have the most up to date information regarding Episcopal assignments and coverage as they relate to this unprecedented situation.

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church outlines the process for the retirements and assignments of Bishops. Specifically, ¶406 speaks to the process of Bishop's assignments. "The jurisdictional committee on episcopacy, after consultation with the College of Bishops, shall recommend the assignment of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the jurisdictional conference..." That paragraph also indicates that "the date of assignment for all bishops is September 1 following the jurisdictional conference."

The Discipline does not address the possibility that General and Jurisdictional Conferences could be postponed. Clearly, we are in an uncharted time in the history of The United Methodist Church.

With the postponement of the General and Jurisdictional Conferences, the Council of Bishops, the five Colleges of Bishops, and the Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy have been in prayer, discernment, and dialogue. Having never been in this situation before, we want to be faithful to the leading of God's Spirit as well as the spirit of the Discipline.

As the Jurisdictional Conference assigns Bishops to Areas and the College of Bishops is responsible for the episcopal coverage of the annual conferences in the Jurisdiction, Bishop Peggy Johnson, President of the Northeastern Jurisdiction College of Bishops, announced the plan for episcopal supervision for the Northeastern Jurisdiction until the 2021 postponed session of Jurisdictional Conference.

As you may know, I had requested for an early retirement effective September 1, 2020. I would like you to know that, under the current circumstances and in sync with the Jurisdictional Conference in 2021, my retirement is postponed.


COVID-19 has brought many significant changes in all aspects of our lives. Sometime ago, when the Cabinet had a time of devotion, we had a moment of pondering this question: "What has this virus taken away from me?" Among other things, I thought of "plans" I had. As you would imagine, Lisa and I had many immediate and long-term "plans" for our life in retirement. Now, many are gone at least for some time. I am reminded of a passage in scripture: "Many are the plans in one's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." (Proverbs 19:1)

Together God has placed us in this time and place for longer than any of us imagined. I know that, as we join our hands and hearts with each other, we will continue to be disciples of Christ to bring healing and hope to the hurting world with the love of Jesus.

I have come this far by the grace of God. I have my total trust that this grace will lead me on. As we look forward to God leading us into God's preferred future for an extended time, I covet your prayers.

Please know that my dear thoughts and prayers are with God's people of the Susquehanna Conference, that together we will continue be faithful to be the church alive in mission for such a time as this.

With You in Christ's Ministry,

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Jeremiah Park