



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
HARRISBURG AREA – SUSQUEHANNA CONFERENCE
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*On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.*

*And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
he will swallow up death forever.*

*Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.*

*It will be said on that day,
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.
This is the LORD for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. (Isaiah 25: 6-9)*

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Luke 2:10-11)

November 1, 2020

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!

Many of you are now planning your Advent and Christmas celebrations. Though the world is struggling with the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and racism, Advent and Christmas joyfully remind us that we have a fixed hope in salvation through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God-with-us. As a sign of that hope, I ask you to name **the Building the Beloved Community Fund (BBCF)** the beneficiary of your Christmas offering.

I established the Building the Beloved Community Fund, announced at the annual conference session, to help our conference and churches to join the denomination-wide effort to [end racism](#).

Methodism's founder, John Wesley, abhorred racism. He vehemently decried slavery. Among the first Methodists in the American colonies were African Americans. Wesley notably encouraged the preaching of Harry Hosier, an African-American Methodist who was called by Benjamin Rush “the greatest orator in America.”

Our United Methodist Social Principles teach that “racism, manifested as sin, plagues and hinders our relationship with Christ, inasmuch as it is antithetical to the gospel itself... We define racial discrimination as the disparate treatment and lack of full access and equity

in resources, opportunities, and participation in the Church and in society based on race or ethnicity” (§ 162.A).

The Building the Beloved Community Fund will support our efforts to:

- Combat racism
- Promote diversity
- Help churches connect with the diverse demographics of their area
- Prepare churches and clergy for cross-racial appointments, and to bolster supportive fellowship among clergy of color
- Build just and respectful relationships among people of various races

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Fellowship of Reconciliation used the phrase “the Beloved Community” to describe a world in which the image of God is recognized in all people and all are afforded the dignity that conveys. Peace, health, wholeness, compassion, justice, equality, respect, and reconciliation are the hallmarks of The Beloved Community.

This is truly biblical teaching. Though the recent killings of Mr. George Floyd and other African-American citizens have jolted white Americans into increased awareness of systemic racism, this is in fact a sin that has plagued our nation for centuries. Our call as Christ-followers includes advocating for full inclusion and respect for all, particularly those who are excluded from respect and basic human rights.

We will post at susumc.org a flier and a slide that you can use to promote giving among your church members and worshipers. By sharing in our support of this fund, we are better together in our efforts to participate in building the realm of God.

Individual contributions can be mailed to Susquehanna Conference Attn: Finance Office, 303 Mulberry Dr. Mechanicsburg, PA 17109. Please make the check payable to Susquehanna Conference and put 9300 – BBCF in the memo line. Churches can send in contributions by including it on their remittance report by writing 9300 – BBCF in one of the line items under G. Miscellaneous items. Or if you would rather give online you can go to <https://susumc.org/donations/4605/> to make a secure donation online. 100% of your giving will go to the fund to enhance the vision of Building the Beloved Community. Please accept my appreciation from the bottom of my heart for your hope inspiring generous gift.

Advent is the time when we look for the coming of the light of Christ. It is that light that illumines our bleak world. Help shine the light of hope into the dim recesses of racism by giving to the Building the Beloved Community Fund.

My God bless your Advent and Christmas services this year.

With You in Christ’s Ministry,



Jeremiah J. Park



RESISTING RACISM • PROMOTING DIVERSITY • LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS

Together with God, we are transforming the world!

The ***Building the Beloved Community Fund*** will help Susquehanna United Methodists:

- Resist racism
- Promote diversity
- Connect churches to their neighbors
- Support cross-racial appointments
- Build strong race relations

Projects by churches and conference organizations will benefit from these funds.

For your ***Christmas offering***, please contribute to this Conference fund by giving through your church. Designate your gift to “**BBCF (9300)**.”

To learn more go to:

susumc.org/endr racism