



Bishop Jeremiah J. Park

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

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

We will gather for the **Seventh Session of the Susquehanna Annual Conference from June 9 thru June 11 at Messiah College**. For many of us this yearly gathering of God's people called United Methodists is very familiar. We have been to numerous annual conferences, and we know the routine and how to navigate the college campus. For others, this year's annual conference will be their first experience and everything will be new and unfamiliar. Whether this conference is your first or your fiftieth one, it is good to remember the purpose of the annual conference.

According to paragraph 601 of the *2012 Book of Discipline*: ***"The purpose of the annual conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all to the glory of God."*** Whether we are in a business session, a worship service, Bible study or in fellowship, it is important for us to remember that purpose statement. In all that we do as an annual conference we need to have the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ and transforming the world in mind.

The theme of this year's conference is: **Alive in Christ Together...Creating New Places for New People**. Our adaptive challenge is: How will we be partners together in birthing a new and exciting, as well as faithful and fruitful, way to reach more people for Jesus Christ? To be a church that creates new opportunities to connect with new people in our communities is not an option for such a time as this.

Among those who will lead us: the Rev. Lori Steffensen, State College District Superintendent, will be the preacher for the Memorial Service. Mr. Joe Castillo, a world-renowned SandStory artist who appeared on the show America's Got Talent, will be the presenter for the Celebration of Ministry Service. He will also lead the Bible study. Bishop Ernest Lyght, who served the New York and the West Virginia Conferences, will be the preacher at the Ordination Service.

Each annual conference is unique and special. This year we will have a service of repentance led by the Commission on Native American Ministries. We will also hear from the delegates for the General Conference. Please pray that we might discern God's voice amid of all of the other voices in the world so that we continue to be ever more faithful in our witness.

Welcome to the 2016 Susquehanna Annual Conference! Please come with an expectant heart to be touched afresh by the Spirit of God. Your prayers for our annual gathering to be in holy conferencing and witness would be deeply appreciated. I am looking forward to greeting you at Messiah College.

With You In Christ's Ministry,

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Jeremiah J. Park