



Mountain Sky Conference The United Methodist Church

For Christ is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. (Ephesians 2: 14-16)

To the People Called United Methodist of the Mountain Sky Conference:

We are called to love as Jesus loved — love God and love neighbor. Abiding by these two commandments, we as United Methodists become a beacon of hope to those who are walking in a broken world.

It was not the best week for the evangelical witness of United Methodism. The wide divide of our church regarding the role of LGBTQ persons in the life of the church was played out on a global stage. Unfortunately, what we know to be true of our local churches — that we sit in the same pews with people whom we disagree with and yet have found our unity in Christ through mutual love and commitment to mission — was missing in the debates of St. Louis. We instead experienced the reinforcement of human walls within the Body of Christ rather than leaning into the power of Christ, which has the power to break down our walls through the unifying power of love. Instead of reconciliation, we experienced estrangement from one another as we failed to keep our eyes on Jesus and our hearts focused on the mission and ministry to which He calls.

We cry a psalm of lament at our corporate sin, but we know that while “weeping may last through the night, joy comes in the morning.” (Psalm 30:5). As your episcopal leader, lay leaders, superintendents and delegates, we call the clergy and laity of our conference to hold fast to the commitment we have as the Body of Christ. We have learned that we see the image of God in every human face. We have been blessed by the enthusiasm of our youth and the wisdom of our elders. Our discipleship is enriched by the theological gifts of conservatives, centrists and progressives. We have found our common life blessed by different cultures. And we have been ably led by the many people — heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender — whom God has called and set aside for a particular ministry.

The joy and oneness we feel by participating in the Body of Christ overcomes any walls that have been created. We will continue to support our ministries, pastors, and lay leaders across the theological and geographic differences that exist in our region. We are truly better together than apart.

We will continue to let our love of God and neighbor guide us. This will ground us as we seek to strengthen our local churches for vital ministries and equip and empower lay and clergy leaders, so that our churches can continue to be mission outposts, offering the life-saving, life-changing love of Christ in tangible ways.

Bishop Karen P. Oliveto

Gayla Jo Slauson, Co-Lay Leader

Margaret Hotze, Co-Lay Leader and delegate to General Conference

Don McCammon, Co-Lay Leader and delegate to General Conference

Rev. Jeff Rainwater, Dean of the Cabinet, Wyoming District Superintendent

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Rev. Margaret Gillikin, Trinity District Superintendent
Rev. Paul Kottke, Mile High Metro District Superintendent
Rev. Tezenlo Thong, Peaks/Pikes Peak District Superintendent
Rev. Marv Vose, Utah/Western Colorado District Superintendent
Rev. Deborah Christine, Montana East District Superintendent
Rev. Amy Gearhart, Senior Executive for Transition and Conference Culture
Rev. Youngsook Kang, Director of Connectional Ministries/Superintendent for Leadership Development
Rev. Tyler Amundson, clergy delegate, Yellowstone Legacy Conference
Rev. Kent Ingram, clergy delegate, Rocky Mountain Legacy Conference
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Rev. Bradley Laurvick, clergy delegate, Rocky Mountain Legacy Conference
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Rev. Jeremy Scott, clergy delegate, Yellowstone Legacy Conference
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Rev. Cathie Kelsey, clergy delegate, Rocky Mountain Legacy Conference
Rev. Elizabeth McVicker, clergy delegate, Rocky Mountain Legacy Conference
Laurie Day, laity delegate, Rocky Mountain Legacy Conference
Rev. Skip Strickland, retired clergy and delegate, Rocky Mountain Legacy Conference