



Mountain Sky Area of The United Methodist Church

Rocky Mountain Conference Yellowstone Conference

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NOTE TO PASTORS: You may share the following letter with your congregations beginning October 5, 2014, as you deem appropriate.

September 29, 2014

United Methodist sisters and brothers in the Mountain Sky Area,

I give thanks every day for you in my prayers.

This week, leaders of the Rocky Mountain and Yellowstone Conferences received a recommendation from the Yellowstone Futures Task Force to enter into a serious conversation about merging these two conferences into one. As with sister denominations and United Methodist conferences around the country, both conferences are in a long-term pattern of decline in church membership and participation. Both conferences have been exploring ways to refocus our ministries on their purpose of “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” Both conferences are already experiencing the benefits of collaboration and cooperation.

In the weeks ahead, I will appoint an area-wide Transformation Team to initiate a joint conversation about how Yellowstone and Rocky Mountain might embrace and serve God’s future together. The earliest we might expect a proposal from this group is 2016. As this group seeks God’s leading, I call each of you to a season of renewal and action. Jesus called every one of his followers to share the story of Jesus, to care for the physical and spiritual needs of others and to invite people into the community of faith. Jesus loves us and sends us to be his *real presence* in the world.

I encourage you to join me in this prayer:

God, help us receive and share your abundant life in Jesus Christ.

With love in Christ,

Bishop Elaine J. W. Stanovsky