

## ***From the Moderator ...***

*“Beloved we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed ...”*  
(1 John 1:2a – NRSV) – But it is coming into focus ...

Beloved Siblings,

A year ago, as I wrote this little missive, we were thinking about what we were becoming, and now it is coming into focus. Every detail has not been worked out, there are still many conversations going on about how we will continue this journey, but it is coming into focus.

It has been quite a year in the Penn West Conference. It has been historic, and I believe a year that we will always remember as a time when we were unafraid to act boldly. In the spirit of Pentecost, we decided to become stronger together as part of the new Keystone Conference.

Through the hours of work by so many people, we still managed to keep the mission and ministry of the Penn West Conference alive. At times it may have felt like we were juggling more balls than is possible, but with Rev. Ackerman’s leadership we managed to keep them all in the air.

There is still much to do. Now the conversation changes to thinking about how the six Associations become one Association. I want to encourage you to raise your questions, and to listen in love to one another. As I wrote last year, we have an opportunity to define our future and to work more collaboratively with one another to better serve the church. I know it is difficult, but one thing that I want to stress is that a structural change does not affect the friendships and partnerships that already exist. There will be opportunities to gather after the Annual Meeting in Zoom Town Halls for more discussion before votes take place at our fall Association meetings. Take advantage of those opportunities! Let your voice be heard. Raise your questions.

Finally, it has been a joy, a true joy to serve as the Moderator for the past two years. I enjoyed the work way more than I would have ever expected. Meeting so many people who are passionate about the church truly is good for a pastor’s heart. And I want to congratulate you on increasing our OCWM giving this past year! May it be a sign that we are beginning to understand that we are ***Stronger Together!***

**Peace!**

**Rev. David Mears**

**Penn West Conference Moderator**