



This photograph was taken at the 1968 merger of the NC-Va Conference with the Western NC Conference. Pictured, from left to right: Mrs. Murphy Nelson, President, The Women's Society for Christian Service - WNC Conf.; Mrs. Jettie Morrison, President, The Women's Society for Christian Service - NC-Va Conf.; Bishop Earl G. Hunt, Charlotte Area, Southeastern Jurisdiction; Bishop Edgar A. Love, Baltimore Area, Northeastern Jurisdiction; Dr. Clarence M. Winchester, Lay Leader, NC-Va Conf.; Mr. Robert Smith, Lay Leader, WNC Conf.

**Fifty years ago, institutional segregation prayerfully ended with the merger of two denominations, the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church; and the merger of the Central (black) and Southeastern (white) Jurisdictions of The Methodist Church. We became The United Methodist Church.**

Since that time, the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church has appointed more than 125 clergypersons in cross-racial appointments, further cementing the unity to which our predecessors strove.

While the merger of 1968 came with its own set of angst and dissension, we *honor* and *celebrate* the work of those who came before us, and *recommit* to their legacy. We recognize we have come a long way, since seeing walls come down a half-century ago, and we know we have a longer way still, as we strive for unity: unity and diversity, unity and love.

In the face of an uncertain future for our United Methodist Church, we *commit again to love*. Our hearts are to honor God in all we do; to have a Christ-like compassion and conviction to love our neighbors; to share our faith not just with our world, but with our brothers and sisters in our own communities.

Let us strive to have God's heart of acceptance and forgiveness, to focus not on the differences that divide, but the internal Spirit we share. Let us come to accept each person on this earth as a beloved child of God, celebrating each person's God-given uniqueness. Let us commit to tearing down walls instead of erecting new ones. Let us all, as individuals, choose to make our Western North Carolina Conference a better place to worship and grow in faith.

For more information on the merger and history of The United Methodist Church, please see "Becoming the UMC" in the Program & Reports Book.



1968-2018

*...that they may all be one.  
As you, Father, are in me  
and I am in you, may they  
also be in us, so that the  
world may believe that you  
have sent me.  
John 17:21*

