***“Savior of the Nations, Come”* A Prayer for the New Year 2017,**

Western Pennsylvania – East German Conference Partnership

**Hymn 214 Savior of the nations, come**

**Savior of the nations, come; Virgin’s Son, here make thy home!**

**Marvel now, O heaven and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth*.***

*Martin Luther, Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland, 1523*

**People:** O **Savior of the nations, come:**

Leader: Fill our hearts and our lives with your presence in this New Year. Make your home among us and within us, as we face another year filled with possibilities and with hope. Although fear and anxiety often abound in our world, reassure us that we can have confidence, for we are not alone. Your presence is always with us; the love of our families surrounds us; and the fellowship of your church is our constant companion. We are reminded on this day of the bonds of partnership that exist between the Western Pennsylvania Conference and the East German Conference of the United Methodist Church. May these bonds grow stronger in the days ahead, and may we find new opportunities for cooperation. We pray for our bishops, Cynthia Moore-Koikoi and Rosemarie Wenner, and for all of the lay and clergy leaders in our churches. May the light of Christ’s coming into the world be reflected through all of our ministries in the coming year.

**People:** O **Savior of the nations, come:**

Leader: Tear down the walls that so often divide us. May Christ’s prayer become a reality – that all of his followers would be one, even as the Father and the Son are one. Although we pray on this New Year’s Day in different languages, we share a common desire for unity toward the goal of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Throughout our cities, towns, and rural areas, enliven our witness and outreach to the surrounding community. Help us to represent the presence of Christ to our neighbors in need, and to each other.

**People:** O **Savior of the nations, come:**

Leader: Continue your work of spiritual transformation within us. May the Great Commandment to love you with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, serve as the core of our being in this New Year. With love as our motive, may the world increasingly see you at work within us. Although we cannot know what the future will hold for us, we are confident of the fact that you will hold us through the future. Bound together by a love that spans the ocean, empower our Christian witness in both of our conferences, and around the world.

**People:** O **Savior of the nations, come! Amen.**

Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg