



Dear Mountain Sky Area of the United Methodist Church:

I was thrilled when I received the news of Karen Oliveto's election as Bishop. As a classmate at PSR she always struck as the best the United Methodist Church could hope for in a leader, a person of strong character, intellect, compassion, and joy. It would be difficult to find a better pastor to live the role of Bishop.

As parents of a gay son my wife and I have been involved in PFLAG offering support to the LGBTQ community. We know from countless conversations that for many in this community their experience of church is one of judgment and ostracism not love and welcome. Her election says the Western Jurisdiction wants to embrace and communicate the message of love and welcome.

I am currently on Honorable Location working in public education. My work focuses on providing resources to help students explore career options and learn to make career decisions based on knowing how their unique gifts and skills can be applied in fulfilling work. But young people also make career decisions based on the role models they see in action so it is critical that we as a denomination have people like Bishop Oliveto in leadership roles to inspire every young person to consider a career in ministry, whether ordained or lay.

We live in a time fraught with peril for those who are LGBTQ, so it is more than ever a time when the Church must send a message of hope, love, and welcome to all as we did with this election.

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