



# THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Dear Members and Friends of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference,

Greetings and all praise and thanksgiving to God from whom all blessings flow!

I have great hope for the future of our Annual Conference! We are on the way to realizing a vision of healthy vital congregations changing lives and transforming communities. New life and new growth are evident even in churches where there was decline and hopelessness. People are willing to work, learn and pray together; journeying deeper into our faith; and farther into the world, reaching out to others. The Hunger Initiative, the Time to Grow Campaign, and the Vital Church Project are just 3 of the many places where new energy, new hope, and new vision are emerging in our Conference. Much of this is possible because of your prayers, your generosity, and your trust.

In the midst of this hopefulness, let me also share a deep concern with you. This year our conference is repeating the trend of responding to only a portion of our budget asking. Although we reduced our budget for 2011 by a half million dollars, we are running behind our projections. As a result, we are facing a very serious shortfall in the income from apportioned funds. We are presently on a course to end the year with only 73% of our apportioned income from local churches.

I understand the economic and financial difficulties you are facing. Even so I am asking you to do everything possible to help us end the year in a more positive position. I am hoping that with your help, we can reach a milepost of 80% paid on our way to full shared mission giving in future years. The Vital Church Project and many of our ministries are counting on your faithful giving. Will you join me reversing this trend?

This has been a tremendously challenging time for all of us. Yet, in spite of that challenge, I appreciate that you are working diligently to give your best to God to support your congregation as well as the ministry of the Conference. As we near the close of the calendar year, we are doing all we can to keep our expenses to the bare minimum while still providing our best leadership to assist you and your ministries. I hope that you will do your very best to offer back to God your portion of the Shared Mission Giving for the ministries of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference!

And in all times, know that the Ministry Leadership Team (the Conference Staff and the Cabinet) joins with me in giving God thanks for your ministries and for your leadership. To you we offer our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness to support you as you grow your congregation to be healthy and vital, changing lives by faith in Jesus Christ. If there is anything I can do to assist you as we end the year 2011, please contact me.

In Christ's shalom,

  
Bishop Robert T. Hoshibata

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