



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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ROBERT T. HOSHIBATA
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Dear Members of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference:

Grace and peace to you in the name of Christ who makes all things new!

At our Annual Conference session in June, I announced that there would be changes to the conference organizational structure. These changes are designed to align the resources of the Annual Conference with our vision of growing healthy vital congregations. To that end, two very significant changes are on the horizon.

In 2012, we anticipate that the Oregon-Idaho, the Pacific Northwest, and the Alaska Conferences will be cared for by one bishop who will divide her or his time among the three. To insure continuity and excellence in our ministries in our Annual Conference, we must realign our leadership so that with the change in episcopal leadership, our focus on growing healthy vital congregations will continue. The first major change is the appointment of a person to serve as General Assistant to the Bishop who will be responsible for providing continuity of leadership and linkage to your bishop when the bishop is not full-time in Oregon-Idaho. The second change: In order to accommodate the addition of the General Assistant and to be fiscally responsible in these times of economic challenge to our churches, I am asking for your support to reduce the number of districts in our Annual Conference to 4 as of July 1, 2012.

In accordance with the Book of Discipline, a plan to reduce the number of districts must be approved by vote of the Annual Conference. I am issuing this call to members of the Annual Conference to participate in a special session of the Conference. This special session will be convened in order to vote on one question: **Shall there be 4 districts in the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference beginning on July 1, 2012?** The Special Session will take place in a manner different from our usual in that the vote will be conducted by mail-in ballot.

In order to prepare, additional information will be shared this fall on the conference website, in clergy colloquies and in the UM Connector. In early November, members of the Annual Conference who are eligible to vote will be sent additional explanatory material and a ballot.

I ask that you read the materials that will be sent, discuss the issue with others, and hold the leaders of the Annual Conference in prayer even as we hold each of you in our prayers in these times of change. As always, if you have comments you would like to share with me directly, you may e-mail me at bishop@umoi.org.

In the transforming spirit of Jesus Christ,

Robert T. Hoshibata
Resident Bishop

NOTE: If you are not the correct person to receive this for your church please notify Turella Woods, Conference Center Administrative Assistant at turella@umoi.org or 503-226-7931.