



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Dakotas-Minnesota Area

Resident Bishop
Bruce R. Ough
bishop@dkmnareaumc.org

Administrative Assistant
Sheilah J. Kyburz
sheilah.kyburz@dkmnareaumc.org

March 3, 2016

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God, who knows our hearts, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Savior.

We will gather this June in Sioux Falls, South Dakota for the 23rd Session of the Dakotas Conference. Our theme for this conference session, **“Living Generously Unleashing God’s Gifts”** will launch us into a focus on stewardship of the bountiful resources we experience in God’s Kingdom. Rev. Jim Harnish, our conference teacher, will challenge us to unleash God’s resources to live out the missional imperatives: growing in love for God and our neighbor, reaching new people and healing a broken world.

As one expression of our yearning to live generously by unleashing God’s gifts, we will receive, again this year, a Miracle Offering. I invite each of our congregations to begin preparing, even now, to participate in another miraculous expression of God’s gifts poured out in love.

According to Matthew’s gospel, Jesus sent his twelve disciples out on their first mission with these instructions.

Don’t begin by traveling to some far off place to convert believers. And don’t try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighborhood. Tell them the Kingdom is here. Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons.

You have been treated generously So live generously.

Matthew 10:5-8, The Message

As followers of Jesus, we embrace this great truth of God’s economy. We have been treated generously, so we live generously. It is this generous living that releases God’s power and grace to proclaim the good news, heal the sick, raise the dead, touch the untouchables and free the possessed and oppressed.

The **2016 Miracle Offering calls for giving 10,000 hours** of our service to Dakotas Conference ministries. I am calling for your time, talents and energy. I ask each church to identify 10 or more people who will each give 10 hours of their time to one of these ministries in our conference: Bakken Oil Rush Ministry in Watford City and Williston, Dakotas Conference Camping at Lake Poinsett, Storm Mountain and Wesley Acres, Spirit Lake Ministry Center, Solar Oven Partners and Tree of Life.

If each of our 250 congregations pledges 10 people for 10 hours we will exceed our goal of **10,000 hours**. Each congregation will receive a pledge card to sign up for specific dates and times to volunteer with the ministry of your choice. We invite you to bring this card forward during the Miracle Offering time at Annual Conference.



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Dakotas-Minnesota Area

Resident Bishop
Bruce R. Ough
bishop@dkmnareaumc.org

Administrative Assistant
Sheilah J. Kyburz
sheilah.kyburz@dkmnareaumc.org

I am also asking that you fund **10,000 hours** of internship for young people exploring the call to ministry through our Conference's Elisha Project. We need to raise up the next generation of leaders. Over 60 percent of the Dakotas Conference clergy are eligible to retire in the next five years. Currently, only 12.3 percent of the United Methodist clergy serving in the Dakotas are under the age of 40.

Internship programs like the Elisha Project are designed to assist young people as they sense God's call in their life. Interns spend one semester of their college or summer working with a local church under the leadership of a clergy mentor. Students receive a stipend of \$3,000.

I am requesting that we set a goal of \$100,000 to fund **10,000 hours** of internship or just over 30 interns. This will help launch the next generation of clergy leaders in the Dakotas Conference.

If each of our 250 congregations raises \$500 we will exceed our goal. Imagine the miracle we will experience if each of our congregations commits to living generously through these two avenues - **10,000 hours** of ministry service and funding **10,000 hours** of student internship.

Obviously, the capacity of our congregations varies greatly; some will do much more and others will do less. In God's economy, the size of the gift is not as significant as being a joyful and generous giver. *"For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has – not according to what one does not have."* (II Corinthians 8:12)

The **10,000 Hours Miracle Offering** will be received at worship on the morning of June 10 in Sioux Falls. Each church will soon receive a packet of additional information regarding our 2016 Annual Conference Session and the **10,000 hours Miracle Offering**. The packet and this website will provide resources that can assist you in inviting your congregation to participate in the Miracle Offering.

Thank you for you for your extravagant stewardship, for your God-sized love for all those who yearn to know God's generous grace and for unleashing God's gifts to heal a broken world.

Yours in Christ's love,

Bishop Bruce R. Ough