



# THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Dakotas-Minnesota Area

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October 2016

Dear Friends in Christ,

*Who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly? Since everything comes from you, we have given you that which comes from your own hand.*

*I Chronicles 29:14 CEB*

This is a portion of King David's thanksgiving and blessing, which he offered following the extravagant offering given by the leaders of Israel for the building of the temple in Jerusalem. It was a huge celebration with great rejoicing— *because they had presented their offerings to the Lord so willingly and whole heartedly (I Chronicles 29:9)*. Some years later, King Solomon, David's son, used this offering to build the temple.

Every time Char and I are privileged to offer a gift for the expansion of God's kingdom or the care of God's children, I am mindful of King David's prayer: *Who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly? Since everything comes from you.*

It is truly humbling to freely give to God what God has previously given to us. It is a cause for rejoicing.

It is out this profound privilege to give to God, what God has given to us, that I invite all our congregations to once again receive a special Thanksgiving offering in November. I look to our rejoicing because, together we once again offer willingly to the Lord with singleness of mind and gratefulness of heart.

This year we will dedicate one-half of our Thanksgiving offering to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) hurricane and flood relief efforts. Hurricane Matthew was a fierce storm that left nearly 1,000 dead in Haiti and at least 38 dead in the United States, with 19 of those in North Carolina. Six trillion gallons of rainwater fell in just three days, August 12-14, in southern Louisiana. The recovery, though, will take years. Indiana, Iowa, West Virginia are being overwhelmed with the devastation from floodwaters. This level of flooding is unprecedented and has nearly exhausted the resources UMCOR has available for relief and recover efforts.

The other half of the Thanksgiving offering will be given to Spirit Lake and Tree of Life Ministries, that minister to the spiritual and humanitarian needs of our brothers and sisters of the Spirit Lake and Rosebud nations.

I encourage you to respond to these opportunities to partner with UMCOR and our own Dakotas Conference Native American ministries to heal a broken world and transform lives. May we respond willingly and wholeheartedly to the Lord with gratitude, freedom and humbleness born of a giving, God that which has come from God's hand.

Thank you for sharing your blessings that others might be blessed.

In Christ's Love,

**Bruce R. Ough**  
Resident Bishop  
Dakotas-Minnesota Area of The United Methodist Church

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