

**Dakotas Annual Conference  
Watertown, SD, June 8-11, 2011**

Over 500 members of the Dakotas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church gathered in Watertown, S.D. June 8-11, 2011 to REKINDLE.

**...rekindle the gift of God that is within you... 2 Timothy 1:6**

Bishop Deborah Lieder Kiesey called for all those in attendance at opening worship of the session to reach out across the Dakotas Conference and rekindle the flame. "May that fire be rekindled throughout the Dakotas and roar across these prairies, SO THAT ... The United Methodist witness will live and thrive, and SO THAT ... The transforming and saving gospel of Jesus Christ might set this world ablaze."

Dr. Lovett Weems, Director of the Lewis Center for Leadership, and guest teacher to the Dakotas Annual Conference encouraged members to REKINDLE the flame by asking thoughtful questions about what the church's current situation is and where the church should be in the future. "We need to embrace change. No one likes to be changed, except babies. Churches need to ask thoughtful questions and create a direction for change. We can rekindle the flame."

Ray Baker, Chair of the Common Table proposed and session members approved the vision statement for the Dakotas Conference:

We will increase average worship attendance by 1 percent. Our top priority is to undergird the local church to:

- + Equip lay people to make disciples and transform the world,
- + Reach more people, younger people, and more diverse people,
- + Develop strong children and youth ministries,
- + Support and strengthen families,
- + Make a difference in our communities, locally and globally, through acts of mission and mercy.

Delegates to General Conference April 24-May 4, 2012 were elected on Friday, June 10, 2011 on the floor of the 2011 Dakotas Annual Conference. The lay delegate to General Conference 2012 will be Janelle Jones, Spearfish, S.D. The alternate lay delegate will be Jodi Cataldo, Mitchell S.D. The clergy delegate will be Rev. Rebecca Trefz, Brandon, S.D. The alternate clergy delegate will be Rev. Greg Kroger, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Dakotas Conference elected two lay delegates and two clergy delegates to the North Central Jurisdictional (NCJ) Conference on July 17-21, 2012. Janelle Jones and Jodi Cataldo will serve as lay delegates to 2012 NCJ Conference. Matthew Bader, Valley City, N.D., Angelica Laudermitth, Vermillion S.D., and Larry Madsen, Gettysburg, S.D. were elected as alternates to the North Central Jurisdiction Conference. Clergy delegates elected to NCJ Conference 2012 are Rev. Rebecca Trefz and Rev. Greg Kroger. Rev. Rich Zeck, Fargo, N.D., Rev. Jenny Hallenbeck, Wahpeton, N.D. and Rev. Doug Diehl, Rapid City, S.D. will serve as alternate delegates to NCJ Conference.

The approved budget for 2012 is \$6,035,970 in Apportionments and \$1,260,000 in HealthFlex Direct Bills for a total of \$7,295,970. This is a decrease of \$97,426 from 2011 or 1.3%. The 2012 budget designates a 62% Increase in Budget for Equipping the Local Church Link. Thirty percent of the increase is a budget transfer of church revitalization funds from the Connectional Ministries Link. Much of the rest of the increase is the Equipping Link attempting to address key areas that affect church health. Jeff Pospisil,

Dakotas Conference Treasurer notes, "If the ministry and health of our churches is the top priority, we must have a budget that is *affordable for the churches* and *aligned with the mission and vision* of the Dakotas Conference."

A total of \$23,648.67 was collected at the 2011 Dakotas Annual Conference. The Japan Emergency will receive \$2,285.43. Dakotas Disaster Relief will be the recipient of \$10,529.82. UMCOR Domestic Relief funds will be replenished \$8,587.42 thanks to the Dakotas Conference. The offering at the Ordination Service of \$2,246 was equally divided between the Pensions of the Central Conference of the United Methodist Church and the Dakotas Seminary Debt Reduction.

2,276 Health Kits were collected at the 2011 Dakotas Conference Session. The Health Kits are being distributed to those people who have been evacuated from their homes due to flooding throughout the Dakotas Conference.

Ten retiring clergy were honored during the conference session.

Bob Duemig, Cheryl Lynne Fadley and Change Hyuck Yi were ordained. Neil Blair and Elmo Herman were received as full members. The average age of those ordained at this year's conference session was 50 years old.

Membership stands at 37,440, down 1,154 from the previous year. Worship attendance stands at 19,316 down 738. Church school attendance stands 6,055 at 6,055 down 234.

—Doreen Gosmire, Associate Director of Communications, Dakotas Conference