

For Immediate Release
From the General Secretaries Table of the United Methodist Church
January 27, 2012

We, the general secretaries of the church's general agencies, pray that God's intended future for The United Methodist Church will be embodied in the actions of the 2012 General Conference. As the Church seeks to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit, we offer this statement.

We believe:

- the local congregation is the heartbeat of The United Methodist Church. It is where people are invited into a relationship with the living Word, nurtured in the faith, and sent out to live as God's people in the world;
- the whole of The United Methodist Church is greater than the sum of our parts. The web of relationships that connects congregations, annual conferences, and other ministry networks multiplies our effectiveness;
- The United Methodist Church becomes a stronger witness for Christ and agent for transformation with a vibrant, accountable, mission-directed general church system that helps to connect, equip, and extend the ministries of local congregations.

We affirm that The United Methodist Church values:

- an intentional focus on fostering and sustaining vital congregations effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world;
- balanced and collaborative clergy and lay leadership;
- a broad spectrum of inclusion that assures opportunities for witness and leadership are available to the wide variety of people found in The United Methodist Church;
- its longstanding commitment to ministries of justice, advocacy, and mercy.

We urge the delegates to the 2012 General Conference to:

- reaffirm commitment to the four areas of focus:
 - combating the diseases of poverty by improving health globally
 - engaging in ministry with the poor
 - creating new places for new people and revitalizing existing congregations
 - developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world;
- consider carefully the intended and unintended consequences of decisions, particularly as these relate to our mission and values;
- identify essential functions best provided by the general church system and support those functions through organizational structure, resource allocation, and churchwide action.