

January 5, 2010

Dear Friends,

You are invited to be part of an exciting step of the United Methodist Way journey in Arkansas. On February 13, 2010 we will conduct a Laity Convocation for Lay Leaders and Certified Lay Speakers in the Arkansas Conference. The convocation, "Leading in the United Methodist Way," will be held 10 am to 3:30 pm at St. James United Methodist Church, Little Rock. As leaders in the local church, we are inviting you to attend and bring others with you.

As you know, the mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We are a church founded on the missionary movement among people who were not being reached by the established church. This need remains before us. It is critical for us to clarify and claim our mission as a Church. When the mission is clear, we thrive. When we are unclear about our mission, we deteriorate.

Bishop Scott Jones (Kansas Area Conference) has cited four reasons we need clarity within our church.

- **We believe the Wesleyan way of salvation is the heart of what God has revealed in the Bible.** It is the purpose of our existence as a people of God, called out by God to participate in God's saving activity. More than structure, decision-making processes, culture wars over worship or conflict over social issues, it is clarity about identity that will allow our church to thrive.
- **The proliferation of religious groups in the world has resulted in the multiplication of religious options for everyone.** It is our responsibility to pass along the knowledge of United Methodist doctrine to our children and grandchildren to guide their decisions.
- **American religion has become increasingly polarized.** The United Methodist church has at its core a message of grace and hope that resonates with those seeking an alternative to the fundamentalist message.
- **Many of youth and young adults have a deep uncertainty about truth, about the purpose of life, and how best to find happiness.** It is the extreme center of the Wesleyan way that includes both justification and sanctification, both grace and good works, both individual salvation and the transformation of the world. It is all about God's grace saving us and not our works.

We don't know what answers God will supply but believe with all our hearts that through study, prayer, holy conferencing, and the power of the Holy Spirit we can truly become a church alive in the grace of God. Please join your fellow Arkansans for the Laity Convocation, Saturday, February 13 at St. James United Methodist Church in Little Rock. Register on line at www.arumc.org/convocation or return the enclosed registration form with your payment by February 6. And please, invite your friends to join us as we work together to discover God's plans for the United Methodist Church in Arkansas.

In Christ's Name,



Barbara Clark
Conference Director of Lay Speaking Ministries



Asa L. Whitaker, Jr.
Conference Lay Leader
