

# Section E



Petitions and  
Items for  
Conference  
Action



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## “20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World” - Kansas East Conference

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**Financial Implications:** Yes, but with no direct impact to the Kansas East Annual Conference budget.

- 1     **RATIONALE:** The purpose of this petition is to increase the involvement of the Kansas East  
2     Annual Conference, its local churches and members in the United Methodist Church Global AIDS  
3     Fund campaign “20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World”.
- 4     **WHEREAS,** the global HIV and AIDS pandemic has for more than 30 years been impacting the  
5     world, particularly among the poor and the marginalized, and the General Conference has  
6     established the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund which has supported more than 175 HIV and  
7     AIDS church-oriented and Christ-centered ministries in 37 countries, and
- 8     **WHEREAS,** more than 30 million people are infected world-wide, almost 50% of whom are  
9     women, and more than 15 million children are orphaned, and information about the global health  
10    crisis and the church response are available on [www.2020aidsfreeworld.org](http://www.2020aidsfreeworld.org) and  
11    [www.umglobalaidsfund.org](http://www.umglobalaidsfund.org), and
- 12    **WHEREAS,** Jesus called his disciples to “heal every disease and sickness” (Matthew 10:1) and  
13    John Wesley instructed his followers to treat the sick without stigma or discrimination, and
- 14    **WHEREAS,** a gift as small as \$20 can stop the transmission of HIV from several mothers to their  
15    new-born babies, supply nutrients to 20 HIV positive children suffering from dehydration, ensure  
16    nursing care for a newborn infant born with AIDS, teach young people and adults how to prevent  
17    HIV, feed an HIV positive person for a month so they can take powerful medicines, and provide  
18    free Upper Room biblical readings and prayers for those infected and affected.
- 19    **THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED,** the Kansas East Conference participate in the United Methodist  
20    Global AIDS Fund campaign entitled “20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World,” by:
- 21       1. Endorsing the “20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World” campaign.
  - 22       2. Calling upon its churches in 2012 to devote at least 30 minutes discussing the AIDS  
23       pandemic and practical ways each congregation can respond.

## Maternal Health - the Church's Role

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- 24           3. Committing that 30 minutes of the 2012 Kansas East Annual Conference plenary time be  
25           devoted to "20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World."  
26           4. Inviting every church member to contribute yearly \$20.00 or more to the United Methodist  
27           Global AIDS Fund (Advance #982345).  
28           5. Challenging individuals and/or congregations to join the 2020 Club comprised of those who  
29           have committed \$2020.00 by 2020 to the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund.

30   **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that words are best matched by action. The 2012  
31   Kansas East Annual Conference is therefore petitioned to take a special offering during the 2012  
32   annual conference session to support the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund (Advance #982345).

33   **IMPLEMENTED BY:** The Conference Director of Connectional Ministry (involving the appropriated  
34   staff and conference committees)

Date: March 7, 2011

Kurt Cooper

Submitted by: The KEC Board of Church and Society, Kurt Cooper, Chair

Phone: 620-342-5854 (office)           620-757-7802 (cell)           no fax

Email: [umcmesu@yahoo.com](mailto:umcmesu@yahoo.com)

## “20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World” - General Conference

Page 1 of 2

**Financial Implications: Yes, but not to the conference or the general conference budget**

1 **RATIONALE:** The purpose of this petition is to increase the involvement of the General Church in  
2 the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund campaign “20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World”.

3 **WHEREAS,** The United Methodist Church has long been committed to creating an AIDS-free  
4 world, and beginning in 2005 started the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund as a global health  
5 initiative to raise funds to support church-oriented and Christ-centered HIV and AIDS ministries,  
6 and

7 **WHEREAS,** this Fund successfully has raised funds for distribution for more than 175 projects in  
8 over 37 countries (including the United States), and the need for continued and increased funding  
9 for programs of HIV and AIDS education, prevention, care, and treatment is everywhere evident,  
10 and

11 **WHEREAS,** more than 30 million people are infected worldwide, almost 50% of whom are women,  
12 and over 15 million AIDS orphans struggle to survive, we are reminded anew that “where there is  
13 no vision, the people perish . . .” (Proverbs 29:18) and that Jesus called his disciples to “heal every  
14 disease and sickness” (Matthew 10:1), and

15 **WHEREAS,** our founding leader, John Wesley practiced medicine himself and called his followers  
16 to care for the sick and suffering, and to avoid stigmatization and discrimination,

17 **WHEREAS,** a gift as small as \$20 can stop the transmission of HIV from several mothers to their  
18 new-born babies, supply nutrients to 20 HIV positive children suffering from dehydration, ensure  
19 nursing care for a newborn infant born with AIDS, teach young people and adults how to prevent  
20 HIV, feed an HIV positive person for a month so they can take powerful medicines, and provide  
21 free Upper Room biblical readings and prayers for those infected and affected.

22 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** that the 2012 General Conference endorses the new “20/20:  
23 Visioning an AIDS-Free World” campaign of the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Committee,  
24 and

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- 25           1. Encourages every United Methodist to contribute yearly at least \$20.00 or more to the  
26           United Methodist Global AIDS Fund (Advance #982345) and to invite others to join in  
27           this mission of mercy.
- 28           2. Asks each church and Annual Conference to educate its members about the HIV and  
29           AIDS crisis and to take up at least one major Annual Conference offering during the  
30           quadrennium.
- 31           3. Invites local congregations and individuals to join the 2020 Club composed of those  
32           who will commit \$2,020.00 by the year 2020 to the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund.
- 33
- 34           4. Requests United Methodists to pray for an AIDS-free world, remembering the words of  
35           Galatians 6:9: "and let us not grow weary in well doing, for in due season we shall  
36           reap, if we do not lose heart."

37           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the 2012 General Conference requests that planners of the  
38           2016 and 2020 General Conference set aside plenary time to review the progress of  
39           the "20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World" campaign, evaluating and highlighting the  
40           contributions United Methodists have made in this global health initiative.

41           **IMPLEMENTED BY:** The General Conference

Date: March 7, 2011

Kurt Cooper

Submitted by: The KEC Board of Church and Society, Kurt Cooper, Chair

Phone: 620-342-5854 (office)   620-757-7802 (cell)           no fax

Email: [umcmesu@yahoo.com](mailto:umcmesu@yahoo.com)

## Maternal Health - the Church's Role

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**Financial Implications: None**

1 **RATIONALE:** "I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

2 **WHEREAS**, the Kansas East Conference is one of the annual conferences where the General  
3 Board of Church and Society is promoting its "Healthy Families Healthy Planet"  
4 international family planning initiative, and

5 **WHEREAS**, the 2010 session of the Kansas East Conference tasked the conference Board of  
6 Church and Society to contact Kansas Senator Sam Brownback and encourage his  
7 support for funding of international family planning, and

8 **WHEREAS**, those present at the 2010 session of the Kansas East Conference were  
9 encouraged to write individual letters to Kansas Senator Sam Brownback encouraging  
10 his support of international family planning.

11 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Kansas East Conference Board of Church and  
12 Society contact Kansas Senator Jerry Moran, current member of the Senate  
13 Appropriations Subcommittee, and encourage his support of international family  
14 planning.

15 **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Kansas East Conference of the United  
16 Methodist Church continue its support of international family planning by encouraging  
17 the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in 2012 to adopt the following  
18 resolution, "Maternal Health: the Church's Role".

### 19 **Maternal Health: the Church's Role**

20 Motherhood is sacred. Women who are called to be mothers are entrusted by God to carry life  
21 within themselves and bring that new life into the world. Mothers are important figures in our  
22 biblical tradition. Women like Eve, Hagar, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Mary the mother of Jesus are  
23 remembered for their role as bearers of new life. But within the sacred texts, there are also  
24 stories of maternal tragedy and loss. Both Rachel (Genesis 35: 16-20) and the wife of  
25 Phinehas (1 Samuel 4: 19-20) died after prolonged and difficult labors.

26 Tragically, stories of maternal death are commonplace today. For many women, especially  
27 those living in poverty and in developing countries, giving birth is dangerous and life-

## Maternal Health - the Church's Role

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28 threatening. Worldwide maternal mortality is one of the leading causes of death for women of  
29 childbearing age. Every 90 seconds somewhere in the world a woman dies as a result of  
30 complications during pregnancy or childbirth;<sup>1</sup> for every woman who dies, another twenty  
31 suffer disability.<sup>2</sup> The main causes of maternal mortality include infection, hemorrhaging, high  
32 blood pressure, and obstructed labor and are mostly preventable.

33 In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells his disciples that he came to bring abundant life to his  
34 followers. God's desire is that every mother, every child, and every family not only survives,  
35 but thrives. Tragically, survival is often a daily struggle for those who lack access to basic  
36 services and care. God calls us to respond to the suffering in the world, to love our neighbors  
37 throughout the world. As followers of Christ, we are members of the same body, and the loss  
38 of one member is a loss for all.

39 The global community is taking steps to address the tragedy of maternal mortality. In 2000 the  
40 members of the United Nations established the eight Millennium Development Goals that set  
41 targets for improving health, reducing disease and poverty, and ensuring the human rights of  
42 all people. The fifth Millennium Development Goal, to improve maternal health, sets a goal of  
43 reducing maternal mortality by 75% by 2015. Maternal deaths have dropped by a third since  
44 1990.<sup>3</sup> While such progress is significant, increased efforts must be implemented globally in  
45 order to reach the 2015 target of 75% reduction. Maternal deaths occur throughout the world  
46 and exist in developed and developing countries. An example in the developed world is the  
47 reality that maternal mortality in the United States is on the rise. Since 1987 U.S. maternal  
48 deaths have doubled.

49 Maternal mortality is a moral tragedy. Nearly all of the more than 350,000 annual maternal  
50 deaths occur in the developing world.<sup>4</sup> There are many factors that contribute to this vast  
51 health inequality and inequity.

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<sup>1</sup> "On a Clock, a Grim Toll for Mothers," Clyde Haberman, *New York Times*, September 20, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> "Fact Sheet: Motherhood and Human Rights," United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), August 2009.

<sup>3</sup> "Maternal deaths worldwide drop by a third," World Health Organization, September 15, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> "Fact Sheet: Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health," United Nations Department of Public Information," September 2010.

## Maternal Health - the Church's Role

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### 52 ***Health Barriers***

53 In the developing world many women of child-bearing age lack access to reproductive health  
54 services such as pre-natal care, post-natal care, and family planning services. This is  
55 particularly dangerous for women who are pregnant. Often with no hospitals or clinic nearby,  
56 women customarily give birth at home in unsanitary conditions, putting the woman and her  
57 baby at risk of infection. If, while in labor, a woman experiences a life-threatening complication  
58 at home, she may not be able to reach emergency care in time. Situations like these could be  
59 prevented if women had access to health information and medical care.

60 Unintended pregnancy is also a health concern. Globally, more than 200 million women would  
61 like to avoid or delay pregnancy but lack access to modern contraceptive services, resulting in  
62 millions of unintended pregnancies every year.<sup>5</sup> Supply shortages, lack of education,  
63 misinformation, and cultural barriers all contribute to this unmet need. Without access to  
64 contraceptives, women are unable to determine the timing and spacing of their children. This  
65 is of particular concern to women who have had children within the last two years, whose  
66 bodies may not have fully recovered, and to HIV positive women whose immunity is  
67 compromised.

68 One of the key health interventions for reducing both maternal and infant mortality is birth  
69 spacing. When a woman spaces her pregnancies at least three years apart, she is more likely  
70 to have a healthy delivery, and her children are more likely to survive infancy.<sup>6</sup> If a woman  
71 becomes pregnant too soon after giving birth, her body does not have time to recover, and  
72 her risk for complications increases. In order to space her pregnancies in the healthiest  
73 manner, a woman must have access to safe, modern family planning services.

74 Providing family planning services to a woman is inexpensive, costing approximately \$2 a  
75 year, but the direct and indirect benefits of women planning their families are priceless and  
76 countless: smaller family size, better health for both children and mother, less economic  
77 burden on the family, and women's continued economic contribution to the greater  
78 community. By meeting all the unmet need for family planning, maternal mortality rates would  
79 drop by a third, and the need for abortion would be reduced significantly.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the

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<sup>5</sup> "A Global Need for Family Planning," UNFPA, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> "Healthier Mothers and Children Through Birth Spacing," USAID, June 2006.

<sup>7</sup> *Family Planning Saves Lives*, Population Reference Bureau, 2009.

## Maternal Health - the Church's Role

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80 use of condoms reduces the risk of infection for HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections  
81 (STIs). In particular, access to female condoms is crucial for empowering women to initiate  
82 their own protection against these infections.

### 83 ***Cultural Barriers***

84 There are many cultural differences that complicate this issue. In many parts of the world,  
85 having a large family is a sign of honor. For men, having many children, especially boys, is a  
86 showcase of their masculinity and virility. Men who expect their wives to bear many children  
87 may not consider or support healthy birth spacing or family planning.

88 The expectation to birth many children comes not only from the husband, but also from other  
89 family members, particularly the mother-in-law. In some areas of the developing world, it is the  
90 mother-in-law who makes decisions regarding the use of contraceptives. Oftentimes such  
91 societal and familial pressures come into conflict with a woman's health and her own personal  
92 desires regarding her fertility.

93 Marrying age also has an impact on maternal health. The practice of child marriage is  
94 prevalent in many cultures, and girls marry and begin giving birth in their early adolescence. If  
95 these young women are not practicing family planning, they may have multiple children even  
96 before their twentieth birthday. Young women who have not yet fully developed physically at  
97 the time of marriage are at great risk for complications like obstetric fistula, a birth injury that  
98 leaves them incontinent.

### 99 ***The Call***

100 Women, who are crying out for not only their own survival but also the survival of their families  
101 and communities, deserve access to services and care that empower their personal decision-  
102 making. As a global church, we are called to eradicate systems of oppression and  
103 marginalization that inhibit women's health and well-being.

### 104 ***Recommendations***

105 We call upon all local congregations to:

106 1. Support United Methodist projects around the world working on maternal health and family  
107 planning.

## Maternal Health - the Church's Role

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108 2. Advocate with policy makers at all levels to improve maternal health through increased  
109 access to maternal health and family planning services.

110 3. Support local health initiatives that expand access to information and services for women's  
111 health.

112 We call upon the General Board of Church & Society to continue placing a programmatic  
113 emphasis on education and advocacy for the next quadrennium on maternal health

114 **IMPLEMENTED BY:** the Kansas East Conference Board of Church and Society, the 2012  
115 Kansas East General Conference Delegation (to pursue the legislation through the legislative  
116 process), the General Conference and the General Board of Church and Society.

Date: March 8, 2011

Kurt Cooper

Submitted by: The KEC Board of Church and Society, Kurt Cooper, Chair

Phone: 620-342-5854 (office)    620-757-7802 (cell)                  no fax

Email: [umcmesu@yahoo.com](mailto:umcmesu@yahoo.com)

# Petition One to Amend Homosexuality Language in ¶161.F in the *Book of Discipline*

Page 1 of 3

Financial Implications: None

1 **Rationale:** The current language in ¶161.F in the 2008 BOD is judgmental and discriminatory  
2 toward lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender persons. Such language displays a lack of  
3 understanding of current scientific knowledge and ignores the findings of the American  
4 Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association.

5 **Whereas,** the position of the United Methodist Church as stated in ¶161.F dehumanizes and  
6 marginalizes LGBT persons; and

7 **Whereas,** the current position of the United Methodist Church is not embraced by many Biblical  
8 scholars and theologians; and

9 **Whereas,** sexuality is God's good gift to all persons and is most clearly affirmed in a sacred  
10 covenant between two persons;

11 **Therefore be it resolved** that the 2011 Kansas East Annual Conference of the United Methodist  
12 Church recommends to the 2012 General Conference the following changes to

13 ¶161.F in the *Book of Discipline*:

14 **¶161.F) Human Sexuality** -We affirm that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. We call  
15 everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

16 Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, ~~sexual~~  
17 ~~relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.~~

## Petition One to Amend Homosexuality Language in ¶161.F in the *Book of Discipline*

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18 ~~sexual relations are only most clearly affirmed in the marriage bond.~~ sexual relations are only  
19 most clearly affirmed by a sacred covenant . Sex may become exploitive within as  
20 well as outside the covenant of marriage. We reject all sexual expressions that damage or  
21 destroy the humanity God has given us as birthright, and we affirm only that sexual  
22 expression that enhances that same humanity. We believe that sexual relations where one or  
23 both partners are exploitive, abusive, or promiscuous are beyond the parameters of  
24 acceptable Christian behavior and are ultimately destructive to individuals, families, and the  
25 social order.

26 We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, ~~created in the image of God~~  
27 regardless of their sexual orientation and identity. All persons need the ministry of the church  
28 in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a  
29 fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. ~~The~~  
30 ~~United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this~~  
31 ~~practice incompatible with Christian teaching.~~ While Christians of good faith differ on what  
32 Christian teaching reveals regarding sexual identity and sexual orientation, we affirm that  
33 God's grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community,  
34 welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We  
35 implore families and churches not to reject or condemn ~~lesbian and gay~~ members and friends  
36 on the basis of sexual identity or sexual orientation. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for  
37 and with all persons.

**Petition One to Amend Homosexuality Language in ¶161.F in the *Book of Discipline***

**Page 3 of 3**

**Implemented by** the Annual Conference.

**Date:** March 7, 2011

**Signatures of Petitioners:** Elizabeth A. Schoeni, Jeanette J. Grenz, Frank L. Dorsey, Barbara P. Lukert, Pamela Baker Blood, Brenda J. Land, Kenneth K. Grenz  
Kurt Cooper

**Submitted by:**

The Steering Committee of *Wide Is God's Welcome-Kansas City*:

Elizabeth A. Schoeni, Chair (Member of Asbury UMC)

Jeanette J. Grenz, Secretary/Treasurer (Member of Valley View UMC)

Barbara P. Lukert, Chair of the Program Committee  
(Member of Asbury UMC)

Pamela Baker Blood, Chair of the Hospitality Committee  
(Member of University UMC)

Brenda J. Land, Chair of the Education/Empowerment Committee  
(Member of Shawnee UMC)

Kenneth K. Grenz, petition advisor (Retired member of KEC)

Frank L. Dorsey, Chair of the Advocacy Committee  
(Retired member of KEC and **Corresponding Author**)

Kansas East Conference Board of Church and Society, Kurt Cooper, Chair

**Phone:** 913-649-2011 (Frank Dorsey) or 620-757-7802 (Kurt Cooper)

**Email Address:** [nancydorsey@hotmail.com](mailto:nancydorsey@hotmail.com) (Frank Dorsey) or [umcmesu@yahoo.com](mailto:umcmesu@yahoo.com) (Kurt Cooper)

## Disability Awareness Annual Conference Theme

**Total Number of Pages:** 1

**Discipline Paragraph or Resolution Number:** New Resolution

**General Church Budget Implications:** No

**Global Implications:** Yes

1 WHEREAS, scripture teaches us the importance Jesus placed on ministering to and with people  
2 with disabilities; and

3 WHEREAS, at least one in five persons worldwide has a disability, and the number is rapidly  
4 increasing due to aging, war and natural disasters; and

5 WHEREAS, the 2008 Book of Resolutions, No. 3304, states, in part that church leaders are to  
6 “Lead the local churches in attitudinal change studies, to the end that the people called United  
7 Methodist are sensitized to the gifts, needs, and interests of people with disabilities, including their  
8 families;” and

9 WHEREAS, the United Methodist Church has promoted itself as a Church of “Open Hearts, Open  
10 Minds, Open Doors;” and

11 WHEREAS, Local Churches and Districts look to their Conference for guidance.

12 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that each Conference shall designate that at least one Annual  
13 Conference session during the 2013-2016 quadrennium will have a theme centered on Disability  
14 Awareness to set an example for each District and Local Church. Resources and guidance are  
15 available from the Committee on Disability Ministries (currently the United Methodist Task Force  
16 on Disability Ministries – see separate petition for name change) and UMCOR Health/Health and  
17 Welfare Ministries.

**Date:** February 26, 2011

**Petitioner:** Patricia Magyar

**Identification of the Petitioner:** Patricia Magyar, Executive Secretary, UMCOR Health

**Petitioner:** Lynn Swedberg

**Identification of the Petitioner:** Chair, United Methodist Task Force on Disability Ministries

## Disability Awareness Sunday as Special Sunday with Offering

**Total Number of Pages:** 3

**Discipline Paragraph or Resolution Number:** 2008 Discipline ¶¶ 263, 265, 823 (related)

**General Church Budget Implications:** Yes (See 2008 Discipline ¶ 823)

**Global Implications:** Yes

1 The 2012 General Conference directs the following:

2 ∅ ¶ 265.4 of the 2008 Discipline is deleted.

3 ~~¶ 265.4. *Disability Awareness Sunday*—Disability Awareness Sunday shall be~~  
4 ~~observed annually on a date to be determined by the annual conference. Disability~~  
5 ~~Awareness Sunday calls the Church to celebrate the gifts and graces of persons~~  
6 ~~with disabilities and calls the Church and society to full inclusion of persons with~~  
7 ~~disabilities in the community. If the annual conference so directs, an offering may~~  
8 ~~be received and the funds used by the annual conference to promote the creation~~  
9 ~~of architectural and attitudinal accessibility in local churches. The observance of~~  
10 ~~Disability Awareness Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the General~~  
11 ~~Board of Global Ministries.~~

12 ∅ \_\_\_\_\_

13 The opening sentence of ¶ 263 is amended:

14 ¶ 263. Seven ~~Six~~ churchwide special Sundays with offerings shall be celebrated in  
15 each United Methodist Church.

16 ∅ ¶ 263.7 is added:—

17 263.7. *Disability Awareness Sunday* – Historically Disability Awareness Sunday  
18 has been observed annually on a date determined by each annual conference.  
19 Congregations are to observe Disability Awareness Sunday on the Sunday after  
20 Labor Day or on another date appropriate to the local church. Disability  
21 Awareness Sunday calls the Church to celebrate the gifts and graces of persons  
22 with disabilities and calls the Church and society to full inclusion of persons with

## Disability Awareness Sunday as Special Sunday with Offering

23 disabilities in the community. The observance of Disability Awareness Sunday  
24 shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries.

25 a. The annual conference treasurer shall retain 50 percent of the receipts for  
26 disability-related ministries which develop and promote the creation of  
27 architectural and attitudinal accessibility in local churches and agencies  
28 within the annual conference, to be administered by the annual conference  
29 Disability Concerns Committee (see ¶ 653) or an equivalent structure.

30 b. The annual conference treasurer shall remit the remaining 50 percent of  
31 the receipts to the General Council on Finance and Administration. Net  
32 receipts, after payment of promotional expenses, shall be distributed by  
33 the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration to the  
34 General Board of Global Ministries or the designated administering agency  
35 for disability-related ministries.

36 Ø ¶ 823 is amended (as related to General Church Budget Implications):

37 § Add:

38 ¶ 823.7 Disability Awareness Sunday – Historically Disability Awareness Sunday  
39 has been observed annually on a date determined by each annual conference.  
40 Congregations are to observe Disability Awareness Sunday on the Sunday after  
41 Labor Day or on another date appropriate to the local church. Disability  
42 Awareness Sunday calls the Church to celebrate the gifts and graces of persons  
43 with disabilities and calls the Church and society to full inclusion of persons with  
44 disabilities in the community. The observance of Disability Awareness Sunday  
45 shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries.

46 a. The annual conference treasurer shall retain 50 percent of the  
47 receipts for disability-related ministries which develop and promote  
48 the creation of architectural and attitudinal accessibility in local  
49 churches and agencies within the annual conference, to be  
50 administered by the annual conference Disability Concerns  
51 Committee (see ¶ 653) or an equivalent structure.

52 b. The annual conference treasurer shall remit the remaining 50  
53 percent of the receipts to the General Council on Finance and

## Disability Awareness Sunday as Special Sunday with Offering

54                    Administration. Net receipts, after payment of promotional  
55                    expenses, shall be distributed by the treasurer of the General  
56                    Council on Finance and Administration to the General Board of  
57                    Global Ministries or the designated administering agency for  
58                    disability-related ministries.

59                    § Amend: ¶ ~~823.7~~ to ¶ 823.8

60                    § Amend: ¶ ~~823.8~~ to ¶ 823.9

61                    **Rationale:** Disability Awareness Sunday was established as an Approved Sunday for  
62                    Annual Conference Observance in 1996 (¶ 265.4). The transitioning of Disability  
63                    Awareness Sunday to a churchwide special Sunday with offering will enable the Church to  
64                    promote the full inclusion of people with disabilities and to provide more adequate funding  
65                    of existing and newly emerging ministries. The Church presently recognizes and promotes  
66                    six (6) churchwide special Sundays with Offerings (¶ 263) – Human Relations Day, One  
67                    Great Hour of Sharing, World Communion Sunday, United Methodist Student Day, Peace  
68                    with Justice Sunday, and Native American Ministries Sunday – and has named specialized  
69                    ministries as recipients of funds received through these offerings.

70                    The disability rights movement has grown considerably since its early days as WWII  
71                    veterans returned home with physical and psychological disabilities, to the adoption of the  
72                    Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by the United States in 1990, to today’s inclusion of  
73                    people with a variety of disabilities in societal roles which had earlier been denied them.  
74                    Despite the “Call to Inclusiveness” in The Ministry of All Christians (¶139) and the “Rights  
75                    of Persons with Disabilities” in our Social Principles (¶ 162.1) the Church struggles with  
76                    providing inclusive and accessible programming, camping and retreat centers, seminary  
77                    training, church facilities, and other ministries.

**Date: February 26, 2011**

**Petitioner:** Patricia Magyar

**Identification of the Petitioner:** Patricia Magyar, Executive Secretary, UMCOR Health

**Petitioner:** Lynn Swedberg

**Identification of the Petitioner:** Chair, United Methodist Task Force on Disability Ministries

## Establish the Committee on Disability Ministries

**Total Number of Pages:** 1

**Discipline Paragraph or Resolution Number:** 2008 Discipline ¶ 1327

**General Church Budget Implications:** Yes

**Global Implications:** Yes

1 The 2012 General Conference directs the following:

2       Ø ¶ 1327.3 (5) is amended by adding a new sentence:

3               (5) To provide programs for annual conferences, districts, and local churches  
4               that encourage awareness of the gifts and needs of persons with disabilities  
5               and to promote the leadership and employment throughout the connectional  
6               system of persons with disabilities. UMCOR Health (formerly Health and  
7               Welfare Ministries) shall establish, maintain, and provide financial and  
8               personnel support for a United Methodist Committee on Disability Ministries to  
9               provide advocacy, education and empowerment to lead the United Methodist  
10              Church in creating a culture where people with disabilities are fully included in  
11              all aspects of worship, leadership and ministry.

12       Ø Current funding from the General Board of Global Ministries for the expanded work  
13       of the newly established permanent committee will be supplemented by additional  
14       funding from a proposed change in Disability Awareness Sunday from an Approved  
15       Sunday for Annual Conference Observance to a Churchwide Special Sunday With  
16       Offerings (see separate petition).

17 **Rationale:** Health and Welfare Ministries of the General Board of Global Ministries has  
18 sponsored and financed the United Methodist Task Force on Disability Ministries (formerly  
19 The United Methodist National Task Force on Developmental Disabilities) since 1994. The  
20 proposed legislation establishes the “Task Force” as a permanent committee with  
21 appropriate financial resources and a broadened focus on all disabilities.

**Date:** February 26, 2011

**Petitioner:** Patricia Magyar

**Identification of the Petitioner:** Patricia Magyar, Executive Secretary, UMCOR Health

**Petitioner:** Lynn Swedberg

**Identification of the Petitioner:** Chair, United Methodist Task Force on Disability Ministries

## Changes Regarding “Incapacity Leave”

**Total Number of Pages:** 5

**Discipline Paragraph or Resolution Number:** 2008 Discipline ¶¶ 357, 652 (related)

**General Church Budget Implications:** No

**Global Implications:** Yes

1 The 2012 General Conference directs the following:

2 Ø ¶ 357 of the 2008 Discipline is amended as follows:

3 ~~¶ 357. Incapacity Medical Leave Resulting From Due to Medical Health Matters and~~  
4 ~~Disabling Conditions which Prevent Performance of Ministerial Duties~~

5 1. When clergy who are members of an annual conference (¶ 369) are unable to  
6 perform their ministerial work duties because of ~~incapacity due to health matters~~  
7 medical and disabling conditions, upon recommendations of the conference Board  
8 of Ordained Ministry and the conference board of pensions, and by a majority vote  
9 of the executive session of clergy members in full connection with the annual  
10 conference who are present and voting, they may be granted annual ~~incapacity~~  
11 medical leave without losing their relationship to the annual conference; provided,  
12 however, that such leave may be granted or renewed upon reasonable and  
13 appropriate investigation of the case by the joint committee on ~~incapacity clergy~~  
14 medical leave of the annual conference, or the party responsible for managing ~~the~~  
15 ~~incapacity of clergy~~ medical leaves in accordance with the annual conference’s  
16 policies, which will report its findings to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry  
17 and the conference board of pensions. This relationship may be initiated by the  
18 clergy member or cabinet with or without the consent of the clergy member through  
19 the Board of Ordained Ministry. When ~~incapacity~~ medical leave is given without the  
20 clergy member’s consent, reasonable accommodation shall be offered whenever  
21 possible. When a clergy member is granted ~~incapacity~~ medical leave by the annual  
22 conference, if the medical evidence has not yet met the standards for the receipt of  
23 benefits as set forth in the Comprehensive Protection Plan, section 5.04, the  
24 conference board of pensions may authorize payment of the benefits in the amount  
25 that would otherwise be payable from the Comprehensive Protection Plan. The  
26 payments shall be made by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits as a  
27 charge to the annual conference granting the ~~incapacity~~ medical leave. If payments  
28 from the Comprehensive Protection Plan are subsequently approved, the annual  
29 conference will be reimbursed for benefits already paid, not to exceed the amount

## Changes Regarding “Incapacity Leave”

30 otherwise payable from the Comprehensive Protection Plan. Each ~~incapacity~~  
31 medical leave granted by the annual conference shall be recorded in the  
32 conference minutes.

33 2. When clergy who are members of an annual conference are unable to perform  
34 their ministerial ~~work~~ duties between sessions of the annual conference on account  
35 of medical ~~matters and disabling~~ conditions, with the approval of a majority of the  
36 district superintendents, after consultation with the executive committee of the  
37 conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the executive committee of the  
38 conference board of pensions, ~~an incapacity~~ a medical leave may be granted by the  
39 bishop for the remainder of the conference year; provided, however, that such leave  
40 may be granted upon reasonable and appropriate investigation of the case  
41 including accommodation provisions by the joint committee on ~~incapacity~~ clergy  
42 medical leave of the annual conference, or the party responsible for managing ~~the~~  
43 ~~incapacity~~ of clergy medical leaves in accordance with the annual conference’s  
44 policies, which will report its findings to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry  
45 and the conference board of pensions. When a clergy member is granted  
46 ~~incapacity~~ medical leave by the bishop, if the medical evidence has not yet met the  
47 standards for receipt of benefits as set forth in the Comprehensive Protection Plan,  
48 section 5.04, the conference board of pensions may authorize payment of the  
49 benefits in the amount that would otherwise be payable from the Comprehensive  
50 Protection Plan. The payments shall be made by the General Board of Pension and  
51 Health Benefits as a charge to the annual conference granting the ~~incapacity~~  
52 medical leave. If payments from the Comprehensive Protection Plan are  
53 subsequently approved, the annual conference will be reimbursed for benefits  
54 already paid, not to exceed the amount otherwise payable from the Comprehensive  
55 Protection Plan.

56 3. When clergy members on ~~incapacity~~ medical leave provide medical evidence that  
57 they have recovered sufficiently to resume ministerial ~~work~~ duties, or are able to  
58 return through reasonable accommodation, with the approval of a majority of the  
59 district superintendents, after consultation with the executive committee of the  
60 conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the executive committee of the

## Changes Regarding “Incapacity Leave”

61 conference board of pensions, they may receive an appointment from a  
62 bishop between sessions of the annual conference, thereby terminating the  
63 ~~incapacity~~ medical leave. Such appointment shall be reported immediately  
64 by the cabinet to the conference board of pensions and to the General  
65 Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Such termination of leave, together  
66 with the effective date, shall also be recorded in the minutes of the annual  
67 conference at its next regular session.

68 4. A person under consideration for ~~incapacity~~ medical leave shall have the  
69 right to appear before the joint committee on ~~incapacity~~ clergy medical leave  
70 or to designate someone to meet with the committee on his or her behalf. In  
71 the event of unresolved issues, a person will be ensured of fair process per  
72 the guidelines for administrative hearings in ¶362.2

73 5. Any person eligible to receive an appointment from a bishop and able to  
74 perform ministerial duties may not be placed on involuntary medical leave  
75 solely because of a medical condition. All reasonable accommodations  
76 should be made to enable qualified clergy with disabilities to serve in ministry  
77 settings compatible with their gifts and graces. (See 2008 Book of  
78 Resolutions, No. 3002)

79 Ø ¶ 652 of the 2008 Discipline is amended as follows:

80 ¶ 652. Each annual conference shall establish a procedure by which it will  
81 manage ~~incapacity of~~ clergy medical leaves. The annual conference may  
82 establish a joint committee on ~~incapacity~~ clergy medical leave. If the annual  
83 conference establishes such a committee, it should be composed of at least  
84 two representatives each from the Board of Ordained Ministry and the  
85 conference board of pensions, who may be elected by those boards at the  
86 beginning of each quadrennium and at other times when vacancies occur,  
87 and a district superintendent appointed from time to time by the bishop to

## Changes Regarding “Incapacity Leave”

88 represent the cabinet. The joint committee shall be encouraged to include in  
89 its composition a person with a disability, preferably someone under  
90 appointment. Unless and until other members are elected, the chairperson  
91 and registrar of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the chairperson and  
92 secretary of the conference board of pensions, or others designated by them,  
93 shall be authorized to represent their respective boards. The committee shall  
94 organize at the beginning of each quadrennium by the election of a chairperson and  
95 a secretary. If the annual conference does not establish a joint committee, the  
96 annual conference’s established policy and process for managing ~~incapacity of~~  
97 clergy medical leave nonetheless should involve the Board of Ordained Ministry, the  
98 conference board of pensions and representation from the cabinet.

99 The duties of the annual conference, with respect to ~~incapacity clergy medical~~  
100 leave, or the joint committee on ~~incapacity clergy medical leave~~, or its equivalent,  
101 shall be:

- 102 a) To study ~~the problems of incapacity~~ issues related to of clergy medical  
103 leave in the annual conference.
- 104 b) To provide for a continuing personal ministry to any ~~disabled clergy on~~  
105 medical leave of the conference and to aid them in maintaining fellowship  
106 with the members of the conference.
- 107 c) To provide advice and support to and, where appropriate advocacy for,  
108 clergy on ~~incapacity~~ medical leave in (i) applying for and securing disability  
109 benefits from the Comprehensive Protection Plan and government  
110 programs, (ii) exploring possible sources of interim financial assistance  
111 before disability benefits can be obtained, ~~and~~ (iii) establishing  
112 rehabilitation and return-to-service programs, and (iv) assessing the need  
113 for and providing reasonable accommodations.
- 114 d) To make recommendations to the Board of Ordained Ministry, the  
115 conference board of pensions, and the cabinet on matters related to  
116 ~~incapacity clergy medical leave~~, including steps for ~~its~~ the prevention of the  
117 need for medical leave; incapacity the process of granting medical leave,  
118 benefits, grants or other assistance, and programs of rehabilitation.

## Changes Regarding “Incapacity Leave”

119 e) To cooperate with and give assistance to the General Board of Pension  
120 and Health Benefits in its administration of the Clergy Retirement Security  
121 Program, the Comprehensive Protection Plan and other benefit plans for  
122 clergy on ~~incapacity~~ medical leave, and to the extent applicable assist with  
123 the disability benefits and other benefits provided under those plans.

124 Ø All references to “joint committee on incapacity” in the Discipline are changed to “joint  
125 committee on clergy medical leave.”

126 **Rationale for change of language:** The term “incapacity” when describing a clergy  
127 person who is in need of a health-related leave denotes a lack of ability and/or eligibility, yet  
128 the need of a clergy person to take such a leave from an appointment for medical reasons  
129 does not mean one is inherently or permanently incapable of serving the church. The  
130 United Methodist Church has a vital interest in recognizing and nurturing all persons who  
131 have been ordained and commissioned for ministry, and cannot afford to waste the gifts and  
132 graces of any person eligible to receive an appointment by a bishop. Eligibility should not be  
133 determined solely by the presence of a disability.

134 **Rationale for change of process:** Often clergy in the process or on “incapacity” leave feel  
135 abandoned by their conference and have difficulty fitting into an appropriate status in the Church.  
136 There is a need for an expanded due process providing opportunity for those persons to be heard.  
137 An important theological basis for ministry is that “ordained persons exercise their ministry in  
138 covenant with all Christians ... [and] also live in covenant of mutual care and accountability with all  
139 those who share their ordination, especially in The United Methodist Church, with the ordained who  
140 are members of the same annual conference and part of the same Order.” (§ 303.3).

**Date: February 25, 2011**

**Petitioner: Patricia Magyar**

**Identification of the Petitioner: Executive Secretary, UMCOR Health**

**Petitioner: Lynn Swedberg**

**Identification of the Petitioner: Chair, United Methodist Task Force on Disability Ministries**

**Petition Two to Amend Homosexuality Language in ¶161.F in the *Book of Discipline***

Page 1 of 1

Financial implications: none

1 WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church seeks always and in all ways to be an inclusive church,  
2 with “Open Hearts, Open Minds and Open Doors,” and  
3 WHEREAS, the Social Principles avers that “...sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons”  
4 (paragraph 161-F), and  
5 WHEREAS, the Social Principles further avers that “...all persons are individuals of sacred worth,  
6 created in the image of God” (paragraph 161-F), and  
7 WHEREAS, singling out any one group of persons, for any reason, leads to divisiveness within the  
8 Body of Christ, and  
9 WHEREAS, vital, involved and contributing members of The United Methodist Church experience  
10 feelings and acts of exclusion due to the language concerning the practice and nature of  
11 homosexuality in the *Book of Discipline*,

12 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that language related to the practice and nature of homosexuality  
13 be removed from the *Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church.

14 THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Kansas East Annual Conference petition the  
15 2012 General Conference to remove all references to the practice and nature of homosexuality  
16 from *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church.

17 IMPLEMENTED BY the Kansas East Annual Conference

Date: March 15, 2011

Signature of Petitioner: The Monday Study Group, St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, Lenexa,  
KS, including Jill Quigley, Pat White, Mary Footh, Linda J. Stoner, Carol Fleeger, Beverly Hlssong,  
Lelia Moore, Barbara Balzer, Janice Downs, Darlene Massad, Janet Hall, Debbie Van de Voort,  
Mary Maughn Lewis, Martha Johnson, Joy Dodd, Cathy Matlack, June Gfeller, Heather J. Vrabac,  
Jan Rhind

Submitted by: Jan Rhind

Phone: 913-362-5174, Email address jrrkansas@aol.com

## Peace and Civility Covenant

1 **Whereas:** in the of Spring 2010, Jim Wallis, an evangelical and editor of *Sojourners*, began an  
2 important work with over 100 Christian leaders who signed the “**Peace and Civility Covenant.**”  
3 Each leader committed to modeling civil discourse, even with people with whom they disagree. In a  
4 divided world each made a commitment to model the peace of Jesus Christ in their lives and their  
5 communities.

6 **Whereas:** the church can offer a message of hope and reconciliation to a nation that is deeply  
7 divided. Those who claim the name of Christ are urged to "put away from you all bitterness and  
8 wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another,  
9 tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you" (*Ephesians 4:31-32*).

10 **Whereas:** the Kansas East Conference of the United Methodist Church is a visible witness to the  
11 people in the eastern 1/3 of the state of Kansas and as a connectional church has a Christian  
12 relationship with the larger United Methodist Church.

13 **Therefore Be It Resolved:** that we - the clergy and laity, as the Kansas East Conference of the  
14 United Methodist Church make the commitment to model the peace of Jesus Christ in our lives and  
15 our communities through living out of “this **Peace and Civility Covenant.**”

16 **1.)** I believe Jesus' teaching that "*Blessed are those who make peace*" (*Matthew 5:9*). I  
17 acknowledge that most of us have been guilty of violence in our hearts and with our tongues. I hold  
18 myself to the higher standard to which Christ called me: to refrain from not only physical violence  
19 but violence of the heart and tongue. "*Do not commit murder. Anyone who murders will be judged*  
20 *for it,*" and "*Do not be angry with your brother or sister*" (*Matthew 5:22-23*).

21 **2.)** I commit that my dialogue with others will reflect the spirit of the Scriptures, which tells us, in  
22 relating to each other, to be "*quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry*" (*James*  
23 *1:19*).

24 **3.)** I believe that each of us, and our fellow human beings, are created in the image of God. This  
25 belief should be reflected in the honor and respect I show to others, particularly in how I speak.  
26 "*With the tongue I bless the Lord and Father, and with it I curse those who are made in the likeness*  
27 *of God....this ought not to be so*" (*James 3:9,10*).

28 **4.)** I pledge that when I disagree, I will do so respectfully, without falsely impugning the other's  
29 motives, attacking the other's character, or questioning the other's faith. I will be mindful of my

## Peace and Civility Covenant

30 language, being neither arrogant nor boastful in my beliefs as I strive to *"be completely*  
31 *humble and gentle; being patient, bearing with one another in love"* (Ephesians 4:2).

32 **5.)** I recognize that I cannot function together as a citizen of the same community, whether local or  
33 national, unless I am mindful of how I treat others. I must therefore *"put off falsehood and speak*  
34 *truthfully to my neighbor, for we are all members of one body"* (Ephesians 4:25).

35 **6.)** I commit to pray for our political leaders - those with whom I agree or disagree. *"I urge that*  
36 *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made — for all who are in high*  
37 *positions"* (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

38 **7.)** I believe that it is more difficult to hate others, even adversaries and enemies, when I am  
39 praying for them. I commit to pray for others, those with whom I agree and those with whom I may  
40 disagree, so that I may be a faithful witnesses to our Lord, who prayed *"that we may be one"* (John  
41 17:22).

42 *Note - This pledge was edited to reflect a first person pronoun rather than plural pronouns, making*  
43 *it an individual's pledge to Peace and Civility.*

- **Date:** Tuesday, March 15, 2011 - 7:04:24 AM
- **Signatures of Petitioners:** **Ken Parker**, Clergy Kansas East (Stilwell UMC), **Lane Bailey**, Clergy Kansas East (Clearfield UMC / Wellsville UMC), **Kim Dominic**, Clergy Kansas East (Edwardsville UMC / Kansas City Grinter Chapel UMC)
- **Phone:** Ken Parker - 913-897-2101 Stilwell UMC
- **Email Address:** ken.parker@stilwellumc.org

## **Amendment to the Standing Rules, p. 377 in the 2010 Journal**

From the 2008 BOD, para. 602.5 *“A special Conference of the annual conference may be held at such time and in such place as shall have been determined by the annual conference after consultation with the bishop, or by the bishop with the concurrence of three-fourths of the district superintendents. A special session of the annual conference shall have only such powers as are stated in the call. (refer to Judicial decision 397) ”*

The Sessions and Rules Committee proposes this addition to our Standing Rules. Under I. ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION, this addition would be a new # 2 and the subsequent points would be re-numbered.

### **2. Special Sessions**

In the event that the bishop, in consultation with the Conference Leadership Team, determines that a special session is required to vote on a matter of the annual conference that cannot wait until the following year's regular session, a vote may be taken by email or mail ballot.

1. The members of the Annual Conference (lay and clergy) who are eligible to vote will be notified that a vote will be taken and informed of the issue via electronic and written methods.
2. There will be given reasonable time for the body to respond and a stated deadline announced.
3. A simple majority of the respondents must affirm the vote for it to be a binding vote.
4. If a simple majority is not achieved, the Bishop may call a Special Session of the Annual Conference.
5. The members of Annual Conference will receive notification of the results of the vote as soon as possible after the deadline for voting.

**ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION**  
**OF**  
**EMBERHOPE, INC.**  
(a Kansas Nonprofit Corporation)

The undersigned, a natural person, for the purpose of incorporating a corporation under the Kansas General Corporation Code, as amended and supplemented, hereby adopts the following Articles of Incorporation:

**NAME**

The name of the corporation (the “Corporation”) is **EmberHope, Inc.**

**REGISTERED OFFICE AND REGISTERED AGENT**

The address, including street, number, city, and county, of the registered office of the Corporation in the State of Kansas is 4505 East 47<sup>th</sup> Street South, Wichita, Kansas 67210. The name of the Corporation’s resident agent at such address is EmberHope, Inc.

**OBJECTS AND PURPOSES**

The Corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational and scientific purposes within the meaning of Sections 501(c)(3), 170(c)(2)(B), 2055(a)(2) and 2522(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code (the “Code”), including for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(a) of the Code by reason of description in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code. The Corporation’s purposes shall include, but not be limited to promoting community good through the provision of services that work with vulnerable populations needing health and or human service programming. The focus of all programming will be to improve the lives of those served in the community regardless of level of need or level of severity.

To enable the Corporation to carry out such purposes, it shall have the power to do any and all lawful acts and to engage in any and all lawful activities, directly or indirectly, alone or in conjunction with others, which may be necessary, proper or suitable for the attainment of any of the purposes for which the Corporation is organized.

**CAPITAL STOCK**

The Corporation shall have no authority to issue capital stock.

**INCORPORATOR**

The name and the mailing address of the incorporator is United Methodist Youthville, Inc., 4505 East 47th Street South, Wichita, Kansas 67210.



of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

No part of the net earnings or other assets of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, directors, officers, contributors or other persons in their private capacity, except that the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in this Article.

To further the Corporation's objectives and purposes, the Corporation shall have and shall exercise all of the powers conferred by the provisions of The Kansas General Corporation Code, not outside the scope of these Articles of Incorporation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions, the Corporation shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(a) of the Code, as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, or by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under Sections 170(c)(2), 2055(a)(2) or 2522(a)(2) of the Code.

#### **INDEMNIFICATION**

The Corporation shall indemnify and protect any director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation, or any person who serves at the request of the Corporation as a director, officer, employee, member, manager or agent of another corporation, partnership, limited liability company, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise, to the fullest extent permitted by the laws of the State of Kansas.

#### **NO PERSONAL LIABILITY FOR CORPORATE DEBTS**

The directors and members of the Corporation shall not be personally liable to the Corporation for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a member or director, except for liability (i) for any breach of the director's loyalty to the Corporation; (ii) for the acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law; (iii) under K.S.A. §17-6424 and amendments thereto; or (iv) for any transaction from which the director derived any improper personal benefits.

**BYLAWS  
OF  
EMBERHOPE, INC.**

A Kansas Nonprofit Corporation  
501(c)(3) Public Charity

**ARTICLE 1  
PURPOSES AND LIMITATIONS**

The Corporation is organized and will be operated exclusively for charitable, religious, educational and scientific purposes within the meaning of Sections 501(c)(3), 170(c)(2)(B), 2055(a)(2) and 2522(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended or the corresponding section of any future United States Internal Revenue Law (the “Code”), including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) and 170(c)(2) of the Code. The Corporation’s purposes include, but are not limited to, any purposes set forth specifically in its Articles of Incorporation, as may from time to time be amended (the “Articles”), and will include promotion of community good through the provision of services that work with vulnerable populations needing health and or human services programming. The focus of all programming will be to improve the lives of those served in the community regardless of level of need or level of severity.

To further the Corporation’s purposes and mission, the Corporation will have and exercise all of the powers conferred by the provisions of the Kansas General Corporation Code, as may from time to time be amended (the “KGCC”), not outside the scope of the Articles.

The Corporation’s purposes shall include, but not be limited to promoting community good through the provision of services that work with vulnerable populations needing health and or human service programming. The focus of all programming will be to improve the lives of those served in the community regardless of level of need or level of severity.

No part of the net earnings of the Corporation may inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its Directors, trustees, officers or other private persons, except that the Corporation will be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the Articles.

No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation may be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Corporation will not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provisions herein, the Corporation will not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on: (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(a) of the Code, as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Code; (b) by a corporation

operating as a supporting organization within the meaning of section 509(a)(3) of the Code; and/or (c) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under sections 170(c)(2), 2055(a)(2) or 2522(a)(2) of the Code.

## **ARTICLE II MEMBERS**

Pursuant to § 17-6002 of the KGCC, as amended effective January 1, 2005, the Directors of the Corporation will be deemed to be “members” for all purposes of the KGCC for which action by members is required. The Corporation will have no other members.

## **ARTICLE III BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

3.1 **MANAGEMENT AND NUMBER.** The property, business, and affairs of the corporation shall be governed according to policies set by a Board of Directors. A range of twelve (12) to eighteen (18) members shall constitute the Board of Directors: a) four of whom shall reside in the Kansas West Conference of the United Methodist Church, b) four of whom shall reside in the Kansas East Conference of the United Methodist Church; c) four of whom shall be elected at large; d) the Bishop of the Kansas Area of the United Methodist Church; and e) Two (2) District Superintendents of the United Methodist Church, one (1) from the Kansas West Conference and one (1) from the Kansas East Conference, appointed by the Bishop, all of whom shall have voting power. Members of the Board of Directors shall also by virtue thereof be members of the corporation. Membership shall terminate upon the expiration of such member’s term of appointment as director, without re-election, or upon such member’s resignation or removal as a director under these Bylaws. Memberships in the corporation shall be nontransferable.

3.2 **ELECTION.** Except as otherwise provided herein, the Directors of the Corporation shall be elected upon being nominated by a Development Committee, upon receiving a majority vote of the members at a Board meeting, and approved by the appropriate annual conference of the United Methodist Church.

3.3 **VACANCIES.** Vacancies in newly created Directorships resulting from an increase in the authorized number of Directors may be filled by a majority of the Directors then in office, although less than a quorum. When one or more Directors shall resign from the Board of Directors, effective at a future date, a majority of the Directors then in office, including those who have so resigned, shall have power to fill such vacancy or vacancies, the vote thereon to take effect when such resignation or resignations shall become effective.

3.4 **TERM.** Directors shall assume office at the close of the annual meeting of the Board of Directors, or a special meeting at which their election is declared, and shall serve for a three (3) year term and thereafter until their successor shall have been duly elected by the Board. Directors may serve for up to three (3) consecutive terms.

The only exception to this regulation of terms shall be when the outgoing Board Chair shall have served three (3) complete terms, as that Director shall continue to serve until the succeeding Board Chair has completed the term of President.

3.5 ATTENDANCE. Directors shall attend Board meetings regularly. Two (2) consecutive absences from Board meetings without notice shall be deemed an immediate resignation from the Board. Three (3) absences from the Board meetings during any one-year period, without notice, shall be deemed an immediate resignation from the Board.

3.6 PARTICIPATION. All Board Members shall be prepared for and participate in Board Meetings, special briefings, standing committees, ad hoc committees and policy-decision making. Board Members shall invest personal energy and skills in the purposes and objectives of the organization, and shall make themselves familiar with organizational documents.

3.7 RESIGNATION. Any Director may withdraw from the Board after fulfilling all obligations to it by giving written notice of such intention to the Secretary of the Board, which notice shall be presented to the Board by the Secretary at the first meeting after its receipt.

3.8 SUSPENSION/EXPULSION. A Director may be suspended for a period or expelled for violation of any of the Bylaws, or provisions of the Board Policy Manual, or conduct prejudicial to the best interests of the organization. Suspension or expulsion shall be by two-thirds vote of the membership of the Board, provided that notice of the proposed action and the time when and place where the Board will take action is given to the Director by registered mail to the Director's last known address at least fifteen days before final action is taken thereon. The Director shall be given an opportunity to present a defense at the time and place mentioned in the notice. This section shall not apply to Directors who are deemed to have resigned pursuant to Section 3.5 above.

3.9 DUTIES OF DIRECTORS. The governance of the corporation shall be vested in the Board of Directors who shall have the following powers and duties, exercised in congruence with a Board Policy Manual adopted by the Board and amended from time to time:

- A. To carry out its duties in a manner not inconsistent with "The Discipline of the United Methodist Church" and the laws of the State of Kansas. An annual report covering the conduct of the corporation shall be made to the sessions of the Kansas East Conference and Kansas West Conference of the United Methodist Church.
- B. To give of their personal energy and skills to fulfill the mission of the organization through their interactions with each other, their communities, the organization's stakeholders, and organization's employees.
- C. To maintain written policies reflecting the values and governance of the structure of the organization.
- D. To represent the stakeholders of the organization in the exercise of its governing authority.
- E. To conduct an annual Board self-appraisal in order to discipline itself and its efforts.
- F. To hire and regularly evaluate the President/CEO.

- G. To participate and assist in fund-raising efforts.
- H. To maintain fiscal responsibility in a manner consistent with the governing structure.
- I. To hold such meetings at such time and place as the Board of Directors deems proper.
- J. To admit members and suspend or expel them by election.
- K. To appoint committees for particular subjects from the members of the Board.
- L. To devise and carry into execution such other measures as the Board deems consistent with the governing structure and expedient to promote the purposes of the corporation.
- M. To make informed decisions and support such decisions once they have been resolved.

3.10 ADMINISTRATION. The Board of Directors shall employ a President/CEO who is a member of the United Methodist Church or an acting member of a church in sympathy with the aims and ideals of the United Methodist Church, and endowed with personal characteristics, education and experience appropriate for carrying out the policies adopted by the Board, and who shall officially represent the Board of Directors in the management of the corporation. The President/CEO shall be given the necessary authority and held responsible for the administration of the corporation and all its departments, subject to the policies enacted by the Board of Directors and to such orders as may be issued by the Board. More specifically, the authority and duties of the President/CEO shall be contained in a written job description and approved by the Board of Directors. The President/CEO shall, unless otherwise directed by the Board, attend all Board and committee meetings as an ex-officio member of the Board, without any other warrant or appointment, and without the right to vote.

3.11 VESTED INTERESTS. Board members shall identify all conflicts of interest and cause the Board to resolve conflicts that are unacceptable. Board members shall have no direct or indirect financial interest in the assets or leases of the organization. No contact or transaction between this corporation and one or more of its Directors or officers, or between this corporation and any other corporation, partnership, association or other organization in which one or more of its Directors or officers are officers or Directors or have a financial interest, shall be void or voidable solely for this reason, or solely because the Director or officer is present at or participates in the meeting of the Board which authorizes the contract or transaction, or solely because his/her or their votes are counted for such purpose, if:

- A. The material facts as to his/her relationship or interest as to the contract or transaction are disclosed or are known to the Board of Directors and the Board in good faith authorized the contract or transaction by the affirmative votes of a

majority of the disinterested Directors even though the disinterested Directors be less than a quorum.

- B. The contract or transaction is fair as to the corporation as of the time it is authorized, approved or ratified by the Board of Directors.

Any such contracts shall not be violative of the relevant prescriptions against use or application of organization funds or assets for private benefit. No contract, transaction or act shall be taken on behalf of the organization which would result in the denial of tax exemption under the Internal Revenue Code and its Regulations as they now exist or as they may be amended.

This Corporation shall not have or exercise any power or authority either expressly, by interpretation, or by operation of law, nor shall it directly or indirectly engage in any activity that would prevent this Corporation from qualifying (and continuing to qualify) as an organization described in 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law). No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall consist of carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, nor shall the corporation intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

This corporation shall never be operated for the primary purpose of carrying on a trade or business for profit.

No compensation or payment shall ever be paid or made to any member, officer, director, trustee, creator, or organizer of this corporation, or substantial contributor to it, except as an allowance for actual expenditures or services actually made or rendered to or for this corporation, and neither the whole nor any portion of the assets or net earnings, current or accumulated, of this corporation shall ever be distributed to or divided among any such persons; provided, further, that neither the whole nor any part or portion of such assets or net earnings shall ever be used for, accrue to, or inure to the benefit of any member or private individual within the meaning of 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law).”

3.12 NEPOTISM. When a Board member has a relative on the staff of the organization, he/she will refrain from being part of any action involving financial expenditures which, in any way, relate to this staff person’s responsibilities.

3.13 REIMBURSEMENT. Board members may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in performing official duties but no honorariums or fees for services will be paid.

3.14 MEETINGS. The annual business meeting of the Board of Directors and the other members of the corporation shall be held in September at the registered office of the corporation or at such other place as may be designated by the Board. There will be quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors. The time and place of these meetings shall be set at the annual meeting. Notice of the annual business meeting, and such regular meetings, shall be given by mail at least ten (10)

days prior to said meeting. Special meetings of the Board of Directors or of the Executive Committee may be called by the direction of the Chair or by the Board of Directors upon the request of five members of the Board, provided notice of such meetings shall be given by mail at least five days prior to said meeting.

3.15 QUORUM. The meeting having been duly called on at least ten (10) days notice, or such notice being waived as set out in Section 3.16, the elected voting Directors present shall constitute a quorum.

3.16 WAIVER OF NOTICE. The notice required by these Bylaws may be waived by any Board member in writing, whether before or after the time stated for holding a meeting. The presence of any Board member at any meeting regularly called shall constitute a waiver by him/her of the notice of said meeting unless he/she shall specifically take exception thereof. Waiver of any notice of meeting by the Board shall be by vote of at least 50% of the members present.

3.17 MEETINGS BY TELEPHONE. Members of the Board of Directors of the corporation, or any committee designated by such board, may participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear one another, and such participation in a meeting shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.

3.18 ADJOURNMENT. A majority of the directors present may adjourn any directors meeting to meet again at a stated day and hour or until the time fixed for the next regular meeting of the Board.

## **ARTICLE IV COMMITTEES**

4.1 STANDING AND AD HOC COMMITTEES. The Board may designate, by resolution passed by a majority of the whole Board, one or more committees, each committee to consist of one or more of the Directors of the corporation. Standing committees appointed by the Board shall have committee chairs and membership appointed annually by the Board Chair. Ad hoc Committees may be appointed for specific, limited purposes, with the committee to disband when its assigned task or tasks are concluded. Committees shall have no executive or deciding authority, except when such authority has been specifically granted by the Board in a resolution. To the extent such authority is granted, any such committee, including Ad Hoc Committees, shall have and may exercise its powers in the governance of business and affairs of the corporation, and may authorize the seal of the corporation to be affixed to all papers which require it, but no such committee shall have the power or authority to reform or amend the Bylaws. Such committee or committees shall have such name or names that may be determined from time to time by resolution adopted by the Board.

4.2 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Board Chair, Secretary, and Past Board Chair and up to three Board members chosen by the Chair. The Executive Committee may act on behalf of the Board in all matters delegated to it by specific action of

the Board, including urgent legal issues, urgent financial issues, and urgent personnel issues regarding the President/CEO, and annual evaluation and salary of the President/CEO. Any action taken by the Executive Committee between Board meetings shall be reported to the full Board at the next scheduled meeting, or at a special meeting called for that purpose. Three members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

**BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.** The Board Development Committee

4.3

shall consist of three or more Board members appointed annually by the Board Chair. The Board Development Committee shall be responsible for nominating a Board Chair, nomination of Board members, recommending criteria for selection of Board members, providing orientation and ongoing training to Board members, reviewing participation of Board members, recommending action regarding nonparticipating members, and recommending suspension or expulsion of members. Upon approval of Board nominees, the Board Development Committee will offer names of nominees to the appropriate Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church for approval. The Board Development Committee will endeavor to maintain a Board which is geographically representative of the organization's constituency.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE.** The Finance Committee shall consist of three or more

4.4

Board members appointed annually by the Board Chair. The Finance Committee shall be responsible for outlining acceptable limits for asset control and fiscal risk, and shall adopt and implement a Finance Policy and Guideline for that purpose. The Committee may act on behalf of the Board in all matters delegated to it by the Board, including oversight of significant purchases or sales of property, and investment of funds. The Committee shall arrange for an annual external audit of finances by an independent firm of Certified Public Accountants recommended by the Committee and approved by the Board.

4.5 **COMMITTEE VACANCIES.** The Chair is empowered to fill any committee vacancies.

4.6 **MEETINGS BY CONFERENCE TELEPHONE OR SIMILAR**

**COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT.** Members of a committee may participate in a meeting of the committee by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment whereby all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other, and participation in a meeting in this manner will constitute presence in person at the meeting.

## **ARTICLE V OFFICERS**

5.1 **OFFICERS.** The officers of the corporation shall be a Chair and Secretary.

5.2 **ELECTION AND TERM.** The Board of Directors shall annually elect the Chair and Secretary of the corporation six months prior to the annual meeting of the Board with the elected officers to begin their service at the annual meeting of the Board. An officer who has been elected but has not yet begun his/her service shall have the title "Chair Designate" or "Secretary Designate." Such officers

shall hold office until their successors are elected and qualified or until their earlier resignation or removal. Officers shall have a maximum term limit of two (2) years.

5.3 REMOVAL. Either officer elected by the Board may be removed at any time by an affirmative vote of a majority of the entire Board.

5.4 VACANCIES. In case either office shall become vacant by reason of death, resignation, removal or otherwise, the directors then in office, even though less than a majority of the entire Board may be a majority vote of those voting, choose a successor or successors for the unexpired term.

## **ARTICLE VI GENERAL PROVISIONS**

6.1 CONTRACTS. The Board may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Notwithstanding the foregoing, unless otherwise limited by the Board, the President of the Corporation will have the power and authority to execute on behalf of and bind the Corporation with respect to contracts in the ordinary course of the Corporation's business and activities.

6.2 LOANS. No loans may be contracted on behalf of the Corporation and no evidences of indebtedness may be issued in its name unless authorized by the Board. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. The Corporation is prohibited from making loans (excluding advances made for legal defense made pursuant to Article VII) to its Directors or officers under any circumstances.

6.3 CHECKS, DRAFTS, ETC. All checks, drafts or other orders for the payment of money, notes or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Corporation will be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the Corporation and in such manner as may from time to time be determined by the Board.

6.4 DEPOSITS. All funds of the Corporation will be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as the Board may select.

6.5 CUSTODIANS. The Board may from time to time designate a bank, trust company or depository as custodian of the funds and properties of the Corporation, which custodian will maintain a record of all receipts, expenditures, income and expenses of the Corporation and/or perform such ministerial duties as the Board by written direction may instruct. The custodian may receive fees for its services as may from time to time be agreed upon by the Board and the custodian.

6.6 AGENTS AND ATTORNEYS. The Board may appoint such agents, attorneys and attorneys-in-fact of the Corporation as it may deem proper, and may, by written power of attorney, authorize such agents, attorneys or attorneys-in-fact to represent it and for it and in its name, place and stead, and for its use and benefit to transact any and all business which said Corporation is authorized to

transact or do by the Articles, and in its name, place and stead, and as its corporate act and deed, to sign, acknowledge and execute any and all contracts and instruments, in writing necessary or convenient in the transaction of such business as fully to all intents and purposes as said Corporation might or could do if it acted by and through its regularly elected and qualified officers.

6.7 FISCAL YEAR. The Board will have the power to fix and from time to time change the fiscal year of the Corporation. In the absence of contrary action by the Board, the fiscal year of the Corporation will begin on the first day of July in each year and end on the last day of June in each year.

6.8 INTERPRETATION. The terms “include,” “including” and similar terms shall be construed as if followed by the phrase “without being limited to.” The term “or” has, except where otherwise indicated, the inclusive meaning represented by the phrase “and/or.” The words “hereof,” “herein,” “hereby,” “hereunder,” and similar terms in these Bylaws refer to these Bylaws as a whole and not to any particular provision or section of these Bylaws. The masculine gender, when used in these Bylaws, will be deemed to include the feminine.

6.9 ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND SIGNATURES. Electronic communications, records and signatures may be used in connection with all matters contemplated by these Bylaws except to the extent prohibited by applicable law. Except as may be specifically set forth herein, the parties may use and rely upon electronic communications, records and signatures for all notices, waivers, consents, undertakings and other documents, communications or information of any type sent or received in connection with the matters contemplated by these Bylaws. An electronically transmitted (but not oral) document will be deemed to satisfy any requirement under these Bylaws or applicable law that such document be “written,” “in writing” or the like. An electronic signature or electronically transmitted signature by any person on any document (properly authenticated) will be deemed to satisfy any requirement under these Bylaws or applicable law that such document be “signed” or “or executed” by such person. An electronic transmittal or communication (but not oral) of a document will constitute delivery of such document. None of the Corporation, any Director or Member may contest the authorization for, or validity or enforceability of, electronic records and electronic signatures, or the admissibility of copies thereof, under any applicable law relating to whether certain agreements, files or electronic records are to be in writing or signed by the party to be bound thereby.

## **ARTICLE VII INDEMNIFICATION OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

The Corporation will indemnify and protect any Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation, or any person who serves at the request of the Corporation as a Director, officer, employee, member, manager or agent of another corporation, partnership, limited liability company, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise, for any threatened or pending action, suit or proceeding, by reason of the fact that such person is or was serving in such capacity, against expenses judgments, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with such action, suit or proceeding, including attorneys fees, to the fullest extent permitted by the laws of the State of Kansas.

**ARTICLE VIII  
PROPERTY DEVOTED TO CORPORATE PURPOSES**

All income and properties of the Corporation will be devoted exclusively to the purposes as provided in the Articles and these Bylaws. The Board may adopt such policies, regulations and procedures governing the management and/or disbursement of funds for such purposes as in its opinion are reasonably calculated to carry out such purposes as set forth in the Articles and these Bylaws.

**ARTICLE IX  
AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed, and new Bylaws may be adopted, by the affirmative vote of a majority of all Directors then in office at a meeting of the Board called for that purpose, and, if applicable, by approval of a majority of the voting interests held by all Voting Members at a meeting of the Voting Members called for that purpose. The Bylaws and any amendment must be subject to approval by the Annual Conference; including the Bishop and Directors of Correctional Ministries.

## **Conference Advance Specials**

A way to develop new Christian leaders in our conference is in ministries throughout our conference. Those who qualify for Conference Advance Specials for the next conference year include:

### Independent Ministries

Camp Chippewa

Center of Grace – Olathe

Common Ground – Elwood

CONAM – (Committee on Native American Ministries)

Fellowship and Faith Ministry, Inc. – Topeka

Five Campus Ministries – ESU, KSU, KU, PSU, Washburn

Forest Park – Topeka

La Esperanza – Emporia

Ogden Friendship House – Ogden

Tall Grass Retreat Center – Matfield Green

Wesley House – Pittsburg

### Cooperative Ministries

Five Rivers District – Bourbon County Parish

Flint Hills District

Friendship Ministries Parish

Jerusalem Road Parish

Santa Fe Parish

Haiti Task Force

## BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits to the Kansas East Conference for 2012:

**1. Resolution on Rental/Housing/Household Expense Allowance**, in accordance with Federal Guidelines for clergy housing, the following resolution is recommended:

WHEREAS, the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (the “Church”) of which this Conference is a part, has in the past functioned and continues to function through ministers of the Gospel (within the meaning of the Internal Revenue Code Section 107) who were or are duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of the Church (“Clergypersons”) and

WHEREAS, the practice of the Church and of this Conference was and is to provide active Clergypersons with a parsonage or a rental/housing allowance as part of their gross compensation, and

WHEREAS, pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired and disabled Clergypersons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to retired and disabled Clergypersons in consideration of previous active service, and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service has recognized the Conference (or its predecessors) as the appropriate organization to designate a rental/housing allowance for Clergypersons who are or were members of this Conference and are eligible to receive such deferred compensation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT an amount equal to 100% of the pension or disability payments received from plans authorized under The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (the “Discipline”) which includes all such payments from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBOPHB) during the year 2012 by each active, retired or disabled Clergyperson who is or was member of the Conference or its predecessors be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such Clergyperson; and

THAT the pension or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance applies will be any pension or disability payments from plans, annuities or funds authorized under the Discipline, including such payments from the GBOPHB and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a GBOPHB plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the Discipline, that result from any service a Clergyperson rendered to this Conference or that an active, retired or disabled Clergyperson of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church, general agency of the Church, other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church or any other employer that employed the Clergyperson to perform services related to the ministry of the Church or its predecessors and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue as benefit under, such a plan, annuity, or fund for such retired or disabled Clergyperson’s pension or disability as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a Clergy person's gross income in any year for federal income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code Section 107(2) and regulations thereunder to the LEAST of: (1) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the Clergy person's employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year; or (2) the amount actually expended by the Clergy person to rent or provide a home in such year, including utilities; or (3) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year.

2. **Past Service Rate:** Increase from the 2011 rate of \$587 for each past service year to \$593 for each past service year, beginning January 1, 2012. (The past service rate is a defined benefit based upon years of service through December 31, 1981.)

**3. Pension Funding Plan for Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP):**

Each conference is required to adopt and publish annually a funding plan for addressing pension plan obligations. The Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the Kansas East Conference is submitting its plan for 2011 funding for adoption by the Kansas East Conference:

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**KANSAS EAST CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
FUNDING PLAN FOR SUPPLEMENT ONE TO THE  
CLERGY RETIREMENT SECURITY PROGRAM  
As of January 1, 2011**

Past Service Rate: The Past Service Rate (PSR) for the Kansas East conference Pre-82 Pension Plan for 2011 is \$587.00, an increase of \$12 or 2.09%. This PSR equates to 1.05% of our Conference Average Compensation (CAC) which is currently \$55,992. PSR increases for the past five years have ranged from \$12 to \$16 (2-3%) with an average of 1.06% of our CAC.

It is the intent of the Board of Pensions & Healthcare Benefits of the Kansas East. Conference of the United Methodist Church, Inc. to provide a PSR in the range from 1% to 3% but, on average, not greater than 3% while maintaining a PRS that is not less than 1% of CAC.

**Actuarial Funding:** After adoption of the 2011 PSR, based on the actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2009 for 2011 by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, the Kansas East conference Pre-1982 Pension fund would be over funded by approximately \$3.4 million as set forth below:

Plan Funding	\$24,500,341
Total Liability	\$21,024,100
Funding Status	\$3,476,241
Funding Ratio	117%

To protect the Pre-82 commitment, it is the intent of the Board of Pensions & Healthcare Benefits of the Kansas East Conference of the United Methodist Church, Inc. to maintain a 120% funding percentage.

As of January 1, 2011 the unrestricted deposit account had in reserves approximately \$2.4 million which could be used for meeting contingencies, barring a complete collapse of the financial markets.

(The assumptions for these figures are based on a 3% increase in the past service rate, a 7 percent earnings rate and the RP-2000 mortality table.)

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#### **4. Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) Funding:**

The Board recommends funding the CRSP defined contribution as follows:

- Use any Pre-82 excess funds first to fund the 2011 and 2012 retirement contributions in excess of those paid by the local churches in this Conference.
- Use Board reserve funds for any contributions not covered by Pre-82 or contributions paid by local churches.
- In 2012, retain the percentage of compensation billed to local churches at 6% of compensation for the CRSP defined benefit funding.
- Maintain the CRSP defined contribution funding and CPP funding at 3% of compensation each, for a maximum total contribution of 12% of compensation.
- Spousal benefit at 75% (must remain at this rate).
- Continue PSR increases between 1% and 2% on annual basis.
- Use 7% as the average income investment earnings.

#### **5. Funding 2011 Central Conference Pension Initiative contributions:**

Each Conference is asked to contribute to the Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI) annually. The 2011 amount owed is \$5,750. Until 2008, the Kansas East Conference used the annual rebate from Cokesbury to offset this contribution. However no Cokesbury rebates have been issued since, so contributions were made from Oil & Gas lease funds as approved at the Annual Conference. The Board recommends paying the \$5,750 CCPI contribution with Oil & Gas lease funds.

#### **6. Retiree Medical Plan Funding:**

Each conference is required to adopt and publish annually a funding plan for addressing retiree medical insurance obligations. The Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the Kansas East Conference is submitting its plan for 2011 funding for adoption by the Kansas East Conference:

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### **FUNDING PLAN FOR RETIREE MEDICAL**

#### **Eligibility and Benefit Design**

Eligibility for retiree medical is as follows:

Clergy members and lay employees of the conference or local churches must be enrolled in the conference health insurance five years prior to retirement. Health coverage from another conference may be used in combination to make up five consecutive years of coverage prior to retirement.

Those eligible:

- Retired clergy
- Retired lay employees of the conference
- Retired lay employees of the local church
- Spouses of clergy
- Spouses of conference lay employees of the conference
- Spouses of lay employees of the local church
- Surviving spouse of clergy
- Surviving spouses of conference lay employees
- Surviving spouses of lay employees of the local church

Should the retired clergy member, retired lay employee of the conference, retired lay employee of the local church, or surviving spouse drop conference coverage they will not be allowed to return to conference health insurance.

Spouses will not be allowed coverage if the retired clergy member, retired lay employee of the conference, or the retired lay employee of the local church is not enrolled in the conference health plan.

Coverage is not available for the spouse of the surviving spouse should they remarry.

Lifetime coverage is available as long as coverage is not dropped.

### **Plan Assets & Plan Liabilities**

The conference does not subsidize or pay any portion of the retiree medical; therefore, there are no plan assets or liabilities.

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#### **7. Health Insurance for 2012:**

The bids from insurance companies for 2012 will be available in the fall of 2011. The Annual Conference can do one of three things to approve the health insurance plans for 2012:

1. Delegate authority for determining 2012 insurance company and local church health insurance premiums and HSA funding requirements to the Leadership Team, based on recommendation from the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits.
2. Call a special session of Annual Conference in the fall to vote on the insurance company and determine local church health insurance premiums.
3. Call a mail-in ballot vote in the fall to vote on the insurance company and determine local church health insurance premiums.

#### **8, Future Health Insurance elections:**

Rather than ask each year to delegate authority, the Board recommends to permanently delegate health insurance decisions to the Leadership Team, unless the Annual Conference votes to rescind such authority a year in advance.

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## Commission on Equitable Compensation

The work of a Commission on Equitable Compensation is described on Paragraph 625 of The 2008 Book of Discipline. In the Kansas East Conference, that work has been assigned to the Personnel Committee. The work of the committee, for this purpose, is directed by paragraphs 624, 625, and 626. According to Paragraph 625.2, it is the purpose of equitable compensation to support full-time clergy serving as pastors in the charges of the annual conference by:

- 1) recommending conference standards for pastoral support;
- 2) administering funds to be used in base compensation supplementations;
- 3) providing counsel and advisory material on pastoral support to district superintendents and committees on staff and pastor-parish relations.

### Conference Standards for Clergy Support

1. All persons appointed by the bishop to serve full time in a church or charge in the Kansas East Conference shall have a right to receive not less than the minimum base compensation as established below. This includes those licensed as a local pastor, commissioned as a provisional member, ordained as a deacon as a provisional member of the conference, ordained a deacon (paragraph 331.14b and 625) or elder as a full member of the conference or other Methodist denomination (Paragraph 346.1), and those appointed while retaining membership in another denomination (Paragraph 346.2).
  
2. All persons appointed by the bishop to less than full-time service under the provision of Paragraph 338.2 shall have a right to receive minimum base compensation in proportion to the quarter increments of their service.
  
3. The church or charge to which a clergy person is appointed is required to provide minimum base compensation at a new level on January 1 of the year following the clergy person's completion of course of study, seminary, conference membership, or years of service. A church or charge is free to move to a new level of compensation at mid-year.
  
4. In addition to minimum base compensation, the standing rules of the Kansas East Conference require that the charge pay the actual cost of parsonage utilities and church related telephone calls, the pastor's travel for local church work, conference health insurance for the pastor and the pastor's family, contributions to the Clergy Retirement Security Program, and to provide a parsonage which meets minimum standards or an adequate housing allowance.
  
5. The minimum base compensation for the years 2011 and 2012 is as follows:

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Local Pastors with less than ½ Course of Study	\$26,250	\$26,644
Local Pastors with more than ½ Course of Study	\$27,903	\$28,322
Local Pastors who have completed Course of Study	\$29,560	\$30,003
Local Pastors who have 5 or more years after completing Course of Study; Provisional Members	\$31,334	\$31,804
Full Members & Associate Members with less than 5 years experience as a Full Member or Associate Member	\$32,598	\$33,067
Full Members & Associate Members with 5 to 9 years experience as a Full Member or Associate Member	\$33,227	\$33,725
Full Members & Associate Members with 10 or more years experience as a Full Member or Associate Member	\$34,174	\$34,687

6. The Equitable Compensation Fund has a history of providing long-term salary support to missional congregations whose ministry is dependent on assistance to pay its pastor. Salary support for settings with this missional component shall be exempt from the expectation of becoming fiscally independent at the discretion of the Personnel Committee.
7. Minimum compensation for members of other conferences and other Methodist denominations is as established above. Compensation for members of other denominations is negotiated by the District Superintendent, the pastor and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, taking into consideration the education and credentials of the pastor and the minimum base compensation schedule.
8. Compensation for certified or commissioned lay speakers, interns, student local pastors, part-time local pastors and retired clergy serving a church or charge less than full-time is negotiated by the District Superintendent, the pastor and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee apart from the minimum compensation schedule.
9. The Personnel Committee will provide District Superintendents and the chairpersons of committees on Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations with advisory material for use in the process of negotiating the total of each pastoral support package, the schedule of the minimum base compensation, and other information relevant to the establishment of the minimum base compensation by all the charges of the conference.

#### **Equitable Compensation Fund**

1. The equitable compensation fund may be used to provide compensation beyond the minimum base compensation with an additional amount sufficient to make the base compensation approved by the pastoral charge plus income from other sources equal to the minimum base compensation approved by the conference (Paragraph 625.9). Those eligible to receive equitable compensation funds are those who are serving a church or charge full-time or those serving less than full time under the provisions of Paragraph 338.2.
2. The equitable compensation fund may be used to provide compensation beyond the minimum base compensation schedule. (Paragraph 625.6) Such funds may be made available to churches or charges:
  - a. having ministries to economically disadvantaged communities;
  - b. with potential for growth, mission and/or future financial independence;
  - c. requiring pastors with particular skills;
  - d. being served by pastors who have special needs.
3. The equitable compensation fund may also be used to provide appropriate compensation for pastors for whom the standards for clergy support do not apply; student local pastors; part-time local pastors, retired clergy serving less than full-time, diaconal ministers, and certified or commissioned lay speakers, clergy from other denominations. Funds for such special situations are limited to \$5,000 per year.
4. A church or charge applying for equitable compensation funds is responsible for:
  - a. conducting annually a vigorous and conscientious stewardship effort;
  - b. supporting conference ministerial support, world service and conference

- benevolences, support services, and general and jurisdictional apportionments;
- c. providing all pastoral compensation and reimbursements required by the standing rules beyond minimum base compensation.

5. The Personnel Committee is responsible for the administration of the Equitable Compensation Fund.

- a. The committee will determine and request funds needs for equitable compensation through the conference ministerial support budget.
- b. The committee will prepare a form by which churches and charges may apply for equitable compensation funds. The application will ask for the following items:
  - i. the amount being requested from equitable compensation funds and the portion of the funds to be sent to each local church if part of a multi-point charge.
  - ii. the conference relationship of the pastor.
  - iii. a copy of the pastor's worksheet for the coming year.
  - iv. a financial statement of income and expense, January through September of the current year.
  - v. a copy of the budget for the coming year.
  - vi. a record of apportionments paid to the Kansas East Conference in the previous and current years.
  - vii. a description of the annual stewardship effort.
  - viii. If the amount being requested is more than 40% of the minimum base compensation, or if the amount being requested will place total base compensation above minimum base compensation a recommendation from New Church Development, Board of Global Ministries, the Appointive Cabinet or other agency of the Kansas East Conference justifying the need for a full-time pastor or for a pastor compensated above minimum base in the appointment.
- c. The application forms will be distributed to the District Superintendents by August 1. The District Superintendents will be responsible for distributing the application forms to all churches or charges requiring equitable compensation funds. The local church or charge will complete the application, secure the approval of the administrative board or council and the necessary signatures and return the application to the District Superintendent by November 1, so that the application can be forwarded to the Personnel Committee by November 15.
- d. The Personnel Committee will keep a history of the funds provided to each local church and charge, carefully review the applications, consult with the district superintendents as needed and report to the District Superintendents the actions taken. The District Superintendents are asked to report the action taken to the local church or charge.
- e. Interim applications or modifications of current applications for equitable compensation funds may be received and considered at other times of the year.
- f. After the Personnel Committee has determined the payments to be made for the year, the conference treasurer is authorised to make such payments monthly to local churches and charges as described by the Personnel Committee.

## **Resolution for the Discontinuance of Mulberry United Methodist Church**

**WHEREAS**, the Mulberry United Methodist Church, located in Crawford County Kansas in the Parsons District of the Kansas East Conference, was founded in 1897 and has had a long and faithful history of 114 years of ministry in the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the Church Conference of the Mulberry United Methodist Church voted on April 12, 2011 with a unanimous vote by all three members to discontinue the church, effective June 10, 2011; and

**WHEREAS**, the District Superintendent has recommended discontinuance of Mulberry United Methodist Church and transfer of its membership to other United Methodist Churches as requested; and

**WHEREAS**, the consent to discontinue has been granted by Bishop Scott Jones, the Kansas East Conference District Superintendents, and the Parsons District Board of Church Location and Building, and all proper Disciplinary requirements have been followed; and

**WHEREAS**, the last worship service was held at 8:00am on October 31, 2010;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Kansas East Annual Conference concur with the decision of the Mulberry United Methodist Church Conference to discontinue, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Parsons District Superintendent, in consultation, with the congregation, make recommendations to the Kansas East Conference Board of Trustees regarding the disposition of the church property, in accordance with the Book of Discipline.

## **Resolution for the Discontinuance of LeRoy United Methodist Church**

**WHEREAS**, the LeRoy United Methodist Church, located in Coffey County Kansas in the Five Rivers District of the Kansas East Conference, has a long and faithful history of service to Jesus Christ ; and

**WHEREAS**, the Church Conference of the LeRoy United Methodist Church voted on September 9, 2010, with a unanimous vote by all members present to discontinue the church, effective June 10, 2011; and

**WHEREAS**, the District Superintendent has recommended discontinuance of LeRoy United Methodist Church and transfer of its membership to other United Methodist Churches as requested; and

**WHEREAS**, the consent to discontinue has been granted by Bishop Scott Jones, the Kansas East Conference District Superintendents, and the Five Rivers District Board of Church Location and Building, and all proper Disciplinary requirements have been followed; and

**WHEREAS**, the last worship service was held on November 7, 2010;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Kansas East Annual Conference concur with the decision of the LeRoy United Methodist Church Conference to discontinue, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Five Rivers District Superintendent, in consultation, with the congregation, make recommendations to the Kansas East Conference Board of Trustees regarding the disposition of the church property, in accordance with the Book of Discipline.



# Great Plans for the Great Plains: A Vision

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

*– Jeremiah 29:11*

What was it that Jeremiah saw?

Where the exiled community to whom he was writing perceived a tragic turn in their history, Jeremiah saw a *gift*. Where the exiles pulled their beards in grief and wrung their hands over their losses, Jeremiah imagined the hand of God inviting them to put their own hands and shoulders to work blessing their new home. *Search for me with all your heart*, God tells the people through the voice of the prophet, *and I will let you find me*. *Build houses and pray for the city where you are living*. God’s blessing is to be found even in the most unlikely places when God’s people turn outward from themselves and seek to bring his grace to their time and place in history.

Could God be telling United Methodists in Nebraska and Kansas something similar today? After decades of bewildering change and organizational decline, is it possible that God has plans for a hopeful future for us if we seek to “build new houses” and to “plant new vineyards” to bless this time and place?

Decisions at the 2008 General Conference and subsequent College of Bishops meetings have placed in front of us an opportunity to ask these questions and search for answers. After nearly two years of prayer, discernment, listening, studying, and working together, the Nebraska-Kansas Area Transition Team believes that it is time for us, like Jeremiah’s first hearers, to let go of trying to recreate memories of past fruitfulness as if they would work for the situation we find ourselves in. Instead, let’s move toward new possibilities of a working future and remember well those great moments that worked in the past. It is time for us to turn our eyes from institutions and practices that served us better in the past than they do now. It is time to turn, instead, toward God’s promises, God’s plans, God’s vision, and the people God calls us to serve. We believe God is leading us now into a new way of being. It is our responsibility to follow.

## **I. Our Current Reality**

Part of the Transition Team's task was to assess the current state of United Methodism in Nebraska and Kansas. We were already aware that our conferences were struggling, but our steady decline has now become much clearer.

Consider that since 1968 United Methodists in Nebraska and Kansas have:

- Decreased membership by more than 170,000 people, more than 43%
- Decreased attendance by 52,000 people, more than 36%
- Decreased the number of local churches by 180, more than 14%

At the same time the states have increased in population by more than 800,000.

We have no doubt that God will preserve the Body of Christ. The sustainability of the Church is not at issue. But we also have no doubt that our current way of organizing as a church is unsustainable. There are many reasons for this decline and there are many measures of church health that are not captured in these statistics. No matter how we consider any of these other factors, however, it is simply undeniable that we are headed down a slow but steady path towards death.

But we should not be afraid of death. In Matthew 16:25 Jesus says, “[T]hose who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” Perhaps we have been living as much for *Our* church as we have for *Christ's* church. Our faith teaches us that in death we have an opportunity for new life. We should be afraid of comfort, safety, and timidity, not death, for we are a resurrection people! As United Methodists in Nebraska and Kansas we have reached a moment in time when we have a clear opportunity to choose between comfort in our old structures or a renewed focus on our reason for being.

The 2008 General Conference changed the formula for assigning bishops so that beginning in September 2012 each of the five U.S. jurisdictions would have one fewer bishop. The College of Bishops of the South Central Jurisdiction decided to accomplish this by uniting our two states into one episcopal area. As a result, just over one year from now Nebraska and Kansas will share one Bishop. It is important to remember that this is a choice that has been made for us. We cannot undo this decision. This means that the status quo is not an option. There will be change in the organization of our conferences. The question that we must answer together is what kind of change will take place.

While this may not have been a choice that we would have made on our own, the Transition Team believes that this decision actually opens a new door to God's plans for the future of ministry in our region. We believe that we have been given an unprecedented opportunity to create a new conference for a new century in a new episcopal area from the ground up. We believe it would be a serious mistake to miss the gift of being able to create a coherent organization for pursuing a unified missional strategy in our region of the country at this moment of history.

We come to you recommending that our three annual conferences create one annual conference for our one episcopal area because the process of creating a new annual conference will help us better adapt our current and future ministries to the altered landscape of twenty-first century ministry in the Great Plains.

## II. The Timid Option: Slow Death

One new annual conference is not our only option. We could choose to retain our current three-conference structure, combine two conferences, or even explore creating additional conferences. In fact, each of these possibilities came up at some point in our conversation. While each of these arrangements has its own unique advantages and disadvantages, there is one very clear limiting factor that all of the options share. When one bishop presides over multiple conferences, administrative redundancies and ministerial inefficiencies are unavoidable. For example, the Bishop will have to work with three separate staffs, three different budget systems, three conference mission statements, three visions, three sets of goals, and three groups of committees. Any area-wide initiative would have to work through a threefold bureaucracy. Additionally, leadership and resources that could be used for ministry would be used instead to manage this redundancy. It is conceivable that each of our conferences could choose to streamline our structures to some degree, but we already could have done so. The evidence of history is that we would rather choose the timid option of minimal change than make more radical, yet more beneficial, changes. Choices such as these have helped to contribute to the slow but steady march away from relevance. We are making fewer disciples, transforming the world in smaller ways, and showing less fruit than ever before.

*"[T]he price of not making deep change...is the choice of slow death..."*

*- Robert Quinn, Deep Change*

The General and Jurisdictional Conferences have mandated that we restructure into one episcopal area. That is the minimal amount of change required. The Transition Team believes that restructuring alone is insufficient. Each of our conferences has restructured in the past and arrived at the same results – continuing down the path of slow death. If we want to be the vital church that we are convinced God wants us to be, then we must refocus on the mission that God has set before us. It is time to die to ourselves and the current form of organizing United Methodist ministries in Nebraska and Kansas so that we can live for the purposes that God calls us to.

## III. The Bold Option: Deep Change

After two years of work, discernment, study, worship and listening, the Transition Team unanimously believes that God desires that we move past mere reorganization and into deeper change including creating a single, new annual conference in the states of Nebraska and Kansas. We emphasize the need for a new, not merged, conference. Merging existing structures into one annual conference is not deep change and is not what we need. "Merging" language suggests that we do the same things we've always done, but do them more efficiently. Doing more efficiently what we should no longer be doing is not a step in the right direction. The language of creating a new annual conference reminds us that our intent is to carefully and prayerfully consider all aspects of ministry so that we can answer the

call that we hear from God. God calls us to be bold. God calls us to take ownership again of God's mission in the Great Plains, to catch God's creative vision, to be a new people for the people of Nebraska, Kansas, and the world.

God calls us to look with care at the functions of each of our structures in light of God's mission for us. This will be difficult. We will likely find that some ministries that we deeply love must be put aside. We might be led to create new ministries in previously unfocused areas. To allow God's mission to guide us is bold, uncomfortable as it may be. To allow God's mission to show us when something can be blessed, thanked, and retired is bold.

The Transition Team believes that such bold change should be guided by values that offer a structure of missional accountability. Such values should imply objective and/or subjective standards by which we can measure the work of the annual conference and hold ourselves accountable. In the creation and living out of a new annual conference, we propose using the following values as our guide:

#### **Thriving ... Instead of Surviving**

We are a people committed to a future that matters! We are done with getting by and making ends meet. We are ready to live boldly into a world that will be different because of our effort, work and energy empowered by God. Growth and health, wonder and brilliance will be our branding. It will frame our work and offer a benchmark of success.

God calls us to work with passion to make effective change and to be churches for mission and purpose rather than people content to cover a salary or count the pennies until mission shares are paid. Our mission field requires us to be a people of action, accountable to the work of transformation rather than the work of upkeep and maintenance of buildings, structures and institutions. Our church calls us to be people focused on supporting effective and passionate leaders over systems of tenure. God's call is too important to keep ineffective methods in place for our own institutional comfort at the cost of God's work for the transformation of the world.

#### **Risk-taking and Creative ... Instead of Maintaining the Status Quo**

We are open to risky and vibrant ministry that is dynamic and fruitful. We will not judge ministry by its nature as inside or outside of the box, but rather we will assess its fruitful growth, its rich connections and its surprising depth. Creative ministry does not mean careless ministry or ministry that is different for the sake of difference. Creative ministry means that we will demand rigorous care and deep preparation to propel real change in our world.

God calls us to send effective leaders and to connect with the mission field that may reside within the walls of the local church just as much as it does in the communities outside our stained-glass windows. We must consider new models, research our communities with great care and be people with the courage to be flexible and wise in our discernment.

### **Spirit-led ... Instead of Institution-driven**

Over the course of time, we have become more focused on preserving the Church as an institution rather than viewing the Church as an instrument of God. John Wesley once said, “I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power.” In modern terms, many people today are concerned that organized religion has become more about the organization than religion. We will not put our structures, positions and individual power ahead of God’s calling. Instead, we will listen closely for the Spirit’s leading and follow that leading wherever it takes us.

Spiritual leaders are those who put the leading of the Spirit first. They put our God-given mission ahead of personal ambition. And at those times when, in their humanness, they and/or the churches they serve cease to follow the Spirit, mutual accountability and support from others will help to bring them back to God’s purpose.

### **Diversity ... Instead of Uniformity**

We see God’s kingdom as one of welcome and wholeness. A whole community is one that welcomes all people, “for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3: 26-28). We recognize that part of God’s call for us is to make disciples “without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition” (*Book of Discipline*, 2008, ¶14).

United Methodists in Nebraska and Kansas are mostly Caucasian, European in origin, physically able, older and richer than others in the region. While celebrating those who are part of our Church today, we will be more intentional in reaching the diverse population that makes up the mission field of our two states. This can only be done by simultaneously continuing our commitment to small and large churches in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

### **Wesleyan Identity and Spirit ... Instead of Denominational Confusion**

United Methodists share a common heritage with Christians of every age and nation, grounded in and faithful to the apostolic witness, which is the root and standard of all valid Christian teaching. Our distinctiveness stems from an emphasis on “practical divinity” – the implementation of genuine Christianity in the lives of believers. As we teach basic Christian doctrine, we also teach intentional methods for putting faith and love into practice (*Book of Discipline*, 2008, ¶101).

We go forward as loyal heirs who adapt all that is best from our Wesleyan heritage to the challenges and opportunities of today’s mission field in Nebraska and Kansas. It is the proper role of the annual conference and its episcopal leader to support and hold accountable the leaders and congregations of our conference to our Wesleyan identity and spirit.

## **IV. Four Mission-Focused Reasons for a New Annual Conference:**

Taking into consideration the goals stated above, we believe that there are four clear and compelling reasons to create a new annual conference.

### **1. Leadership:**

Lay members of our congregations say, “Send me a good pastor.” Pastors say, “Send me to a place with good lay leadership.” Creating one conference creates a critical mass of clergy with particular gifts that can then be better matched with ministry settings. Moving toward one annual conference with a renewed clarity of mission and vision enables us to hold pastors and lay people to higher standards and accompany these expectations with continual training, formation, and accountability.

### **2. Reinventing Connectional Life & Reducing Bureaucratic Barriers**

Creating one annual conference with renewed mission and vision invites us to look at current structures and ask of each, “Is this the best way to serve God’s mission in Nebraska and Kansas for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” In listening events, it became clear that people are interested in the kinds of efficiencies one conference can provide. This is a matter of system-wide stewardship: deploying resources and leaders with excellence, nimbleness, and an eye toward the greatest fruitfulness. One conference will reduce neither the number of leaders needed nor the opportunity to lead. Instead, it is a change that allows our leaders to serve in more effective and fruitful ways.

### **3. Bishop Freed for Vision**

Creating one annual conference allows us to better utilize the gifts of the Bishop. One conference, rather than three, frees the Bishop from performing internal management tasks in triplicate and allows him/her to provide the visionary, spiritual leadership our churches and pastors need and deserve.

### **4. Technology for a Regional Mission**

Creating one conference gives us freedom to better leverage our communication and technological assets to create a larger presence in the mission field and to better resource the communication and technology needs of local churches.

## **V. Together, Where Do We Go From Here?**

The Transition Team brings to you our strong conviction that God desires us to move past mere reorganization and into deeper change including creating a single, new annual conference in the states of Nebraska and Kansas; therefore, we want to gauge your support for creating a single, new conference encompassing the states of Nebraska and Kansas. The Team aims to be both transparent and inclusive of your feelings and wisdom. What our church needs is to discern together the will and direction of God. Holy conferencing will help us to find and pursue God’s will.

### **At 2011 Annual Conference Gatherings**

Following the presentation of the Transition Team report and a time of conferencing, voting members of each Annual Conference will participate in a “Five-Finger vote” to further the conversation about the recommendation of one annual conference and God’s plans for our future (see attached sample

ballot). This is a gauge, not an ultimate decision-making device, meant to extend the conversation. All results will be sealed and reported simultaneously to all three annual conferences.

#### **After the Annual Conference Meetings**

The Transition Team will meet June 13<sup>th</sup> in Topeka, Kan., to review the results of the Five-Finger vote. This will help form the agenda for this and future Transition Team meetings.

Over the next year, Technical Teams and Dream Teams will meet to address specific areas of concern. Teams that are already or in the process of being formed are:

#### **Technical Teams**

Technical teams address areas of concern that need analysis and technical solutions. These are matters that must be resolved prior to creating a new conference but that should not require a rethinking of how we do ministry.

1. The Joint Distributing Committee is studying compensation, health insurance and pension practices of each of our current conferences.
2. The Asset Allocation Team is compiling a comprehensive inventory of properties, holdings and institutional relationships as well as the apportionment formulas and budgets of the three annual conferences.

#### **Dream Teams**

Dream teams are groups that will explore how ministry could be as one new conference. These teams could (but do not) exist in our current structure. Creating these teams now will help remind us all that we are envisioning a new way of doing ministry in a new conference. They also will help us keep our purpose at the forefront of our minds as we consider structure and staffing for a new conference.

- The Small Church Dream Team will explore how smaller churches can effectively share the Gospel across rural, suburban, and urban settings in both states.
- The Youth Ministries Dream Team will examine how youth ministry is changing in today's culture and provide ideas for comprehensive youth ministry at the local level and beyond.

Each technical and dream team will have members from each of our current conferences and a variety of ministry settings. More teams of both types will be created as the need is discerned.

#### **Annual Conference 2012**

The Transition Team is thoroughly convinced that God is guiding us to move past mere reorganization and into deeper change including creating a single, new annual conference in the states of Nebraska and Kansas. Creating a new, single annual conference will foster an environment more conducive to doing the further work of deep change to which God calls us for missional fruitfulness. Therefore, the Transition Team intends to move that we create a new annual conference in the states of Nebraska and Kansas, which will be voted on at each annual conference meeting in 2012 and, if approved by all three conferences, ratified by the Jurisdictional Conference in July 2012.

Additional motions of both technical and adaptive nature will also be presented. These motions will provide for some of the logistics for living as one episcopal area (such as area offices, bishop's housing, etc.) and provide guidance for our continued journey towards one conference.

**After Annual Conference 2012**

Regardless of our action this year or next year, we will become one episcopal area in September 2012. We anticipate that the process of becoming one conference will not end in 2012. We are committed to creating the new conference as soon as possible but acknowledge that it will still take some time before the birthing process is complete.

## **VI. Concluding Thoughts**

The last two years of working together as your Area Transition Team has been a rewarding experience. We have enjoyed learning about each other, discovering commonalities in our lives and ministries, and growing in our understanding of God's will for us. We believe that what we have experienced as individuals also will be true for the annual conferences and states that we represent. Nebraska and Kansas United Methodists have much to learn from each other. We share much in common, both in culture and in ministries. We also share a common need to rediscover the calling that God places on our lives. We affirm that there are United Methodists across our states who are leading ministry as well as they know how. The world is indeed different because of their presence. But we imagine that those ministries could be even more fruitful. We also imagine that in those places where ministry is waning, and unfortunately this is the case in the large majority of our settings, God's work through the United Methodist Church can be renewed, even resurrected, into a better future. We look forward to serving God together as one annual conference until God's greatest plans for us come to pass!

Report submitted by: The Nebraska-Kansas Episcopal Area Transition Team, Mr. Tom Watson, Chairperson\*

\*See following page for a complete list of team members and contact information for each respective member.