



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

PITTSBURGH EPISCOPAL AREA

Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference
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RESIDENT BISHOP

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ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP

Dear Members of the 2013 Annual Conference,

Grace and peace to each of you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and welcome on board as a voting member at this year's Annual Conference session.

The theme of our 2013 session is *Disciples Making Disciples*. We will explore what it means to dive into the heart of God, reaffirm our commitment to Christ and show that commitment by sharing our faith with the world.

Historically, Annual Conference has been a time of reports, legislative action, approval of a budget, and recognition. This year will be no different. However, our goal in planning this session is to acknowledge that the ministry of making disciples is not only a lofty and worthwhile goal; it is also a difficult and uncertain undertaking. In order to reinvigorate a declining denomination, we, as the children of God, must earnestly seek ways to revive our passion for Christ and find effective means for each of us to introduce Christ to others where we live, work and play. Our hope is that we will find a way for each of us to not only vote on petitions, but to enthusiastically vote yes once again for Jesus.

As you read the contents of this packet and the Pre-Conference journal that will follow, know that you have been prayed for and that we who are planning this conference have committed to praying for you and our Annual Conference each day leading up to our session. Our desire is to see a spiritual revival take place, even on the floor of our annual meeting. Our hope is that it will not be business as usual. Our dream is to see people encouraged, empowered, and inspired to do the work we have been called to do in the name of Christ.

What is that work? It is the work of nurturing our souls to be ready recipients of God's blessing and inspiration. It is the work of inviting others into the heart of God so that they too might be touched and transformed as we have been.

What is that work? It is the work of "*Disciples Making Disciples*."

Won't you join us?

The Journey Continues, . . .

Thomas J. Bickerton
Resident Bishop

Sharon Gregory
Conference Lay Leader

Rev. Barbara Moore
Chair, Conference Sessions Team