



THE MINNESOTA CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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WITNESSES... TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH!

MINNESOTA CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST 48TH ANNUAL MEETING
11-13 JUNE 2010
COLLEGE OF ST. BENEDICT, ST. JOSEPH, MN

24 November 2009

Dear Friends:

Throughout Minnesota, members and clergy of our churches, along with our Conference staff, are involved daily in ministries that are changing lives. We are committed to:

- focusing on Christian formation and discipleship of children, youth and adults;
- identifying and nurturing the gifts and leadership abilities of clergy and laity;
- strengthening, building and inviting congregations; and
- increasing our prophetic witness.

These are critically important ministries that can be addressed alone, but are being done much more effectively and powerfully because we are joined together as the *Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ*.

Working together in Christ's name to change lives and transform our world calls each of us to bring who we are and what we have to this work. We bring our talents, faith, energy, knowledge, wisdom, and financial resources to empower us to be the Church Christ calls us to be.

One of the elements that make the vital ministries of our Conference possible is your financial support of *Friends of the Conference*.

As we begin the new Conference fiscal year, it is my prayer that you will continue your financial support by making a gift to this year's *Friends* campaign. The opportunities for ministry in our Conference are continually before us, and your financial support is vital in our ability to respond.

These are the words of the Rev. Désirée Gold, pastor of Cottage Grove UCC, after attending the recent Conference event for clergy new to the Minnesota Conference:

“Events like the New Clergy Gathering are important because they remind us that we are not alone. They remind us that we and our churches have the support of the Minnesota Conference through the pastoral presence of our Conference staff and the programs available. They give us a chance to connect with our fellow clergy and find support and new ideas among them. They help us to think in new ways about the work we do with the local church and in the wider world. I am grateful for the ministry of the Minnesota Conference UCC and that our connection to a wider church body means that we do not need to be lone wolves in a troubled world. Because we have access to these resources, we can do greater ministry.”

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Friends of the Conference dollars make this ministry possible. The Conference – you and I working and giving together – nurtures the gifts and leadership abilities of one of our new ministers.

We know these are challenging times. Being part of a faith community provides the opportunity to find friendship, encouragement, hope and support in a place where love abounds. The Conference is an extension of your local church ministry, enabling us to reach out in love to each other, and to those in need. That is why we are asking you to give to our *Friends of the Conference* campaign, so we can be in ministry together, transforming lives in the name of Christ, so that, as Rev. Gold said, we are not “lone wolves in a troubled world,” but rather a people united in “greater ministry.”

Rev. Jeff Sartain of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis tells his story of being blessed by the Conference in the early days of his ministry:

“The Minnesota Conference saved my life. That is a little dramatic maybe, but it feels true. My first call was a two-point parish in the farmland of Minnesota. I was 27 years old. Veteran ministers in churches throughout the southern part of the state gathered monthly for lunches organized by our Association Minister. I never missed one! Those ministers advised me, prayed for me, invited me to dinner and helped me out when I was in over my head. I was not alone; I was part of a community of churches and clergy, and when the burdens of ministry were too heavy to bear they shouldered them with me. That is why I give as generously as I can to the work of the Minnesota Conference.”

What could your gift to ***Friends of the Conference*** mean to our shared ministry?

- seminary students preparing for pastoral ministry have the care and nurture they need as they prepare to serve
- a church receives the support and guidance of the Conference to find new pastoral leadership or work through a challenging situation
- a young person goes on a mission trip, experiences for the first time the realities of hunger and homelessness, then comes home and helps the congregation find ways to respond to those needs
- a pastor or lay leader from a local church participates in a Conference-sponsored retreat or educational event and returns refreshed with new ideas for strengthened service.

As we move into Advent and a new church year, I hope you will be able to make a gift to our Conference ministries through “Friends of the Conference.” Those touched by your gift will be forever grateful.

With gratitude and blessings,



Rev. Karen Smith Sellers
Conference Minister

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