

Proposed Strategic Priorities

Iowa Conference, United Methodist Church

Summary – May 2, 2013

The Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church exists to encourage communities of faithful people who live out the love of Jesus as instruments of God's grace, peace, and justice. We are lay people and pastors, churches of all sizes, ministries and programs, all connected by the Holy Spirit into one body – the Iowa Conference – in order to live out our mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In all parts of the Iowa Conference, God is calling us to a season of resurrection. "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:19 NRSV). God is calling us to be reborn as a conference so that we will grow our number of communities of faith and Christian disciples, develop hundreds of new leaders for God's transforming work, and intentionally focus resources on our common mission. Every step of the way, God is leading us outside of our churches and into our wider communities to build relationships with new people, reaching out especially – as Jesus did – to persons living on the margins of society.

This future is exciting, but it also asks us to take bold steps of faith, together, as we love and serve our neighbors. As United Methodist disciples in Iowa we acknowledge that we are fully dependent on God's grace. Yet with conviction we embrace those spiritual practices of prayer, presence, gifts, service, and witness as we seek – with God's help – to transform the world. To live out our vision and mission, we believe as the Iowa Conference we must focus on these strategic priorities:

- 1. Creating World-Transforming Communities of Faith**
 - A. *Establishing new communities of faith*
 - B. *Increasing vitality in existing communities of faith*
- 2. Equipping Ourselves and Others as Transformational Leaders**
 - A. *Equipping lay leadership to disciple others and transform the world*
 - B. *Equipping clergy leadership to disciple others and transform the world*
- 3. Directing Our Resources to Our Common Goals**
 - A. *Developing and implementing an effective communications ministry*
 - B. *Aligning organizational structures and staffing resources for the sake of the mission and vision.*
 - C. *Increasing the financial health of the Iowa Conference*

We believe we impact lives through the love of Jesus that is reflected in what we do. We do not have all the answers. We are on a journey of faith led by the Holy Spirit. We have entered into a new season of opportunity. As we travel together, we believe we are called to be unapologetically Christian and unashamedly United Methodist. We believe we are much stronger together than we are alone. We believe it is time for us all to unite to make a difference. When we follow and live out Christ's example of generous love and compassion, the world will be transformed.

How do you see yourself engaging these priorities now and in the future?