

Call to creation from page 2

holiness we make ourselves a channel of God's blessing in the world. Because God's blessing, care, and promise of renewal extend to all of creation, we can speak today of "environmental holiness" as well. We practice social and environmental holiness by caring for God's people and God's planet and by challenging those whose policies and practices neglect the poor, exploit the weak, hasten global warming, and produce more weapons.

Third, let us live and act in hope. As people in the tradition of John Wesley, we understand reconciliation and renewal to be part of the process of salvation that is already underway. We are not hemmed into a fallen world. Rather we are part of a divine unfolding process to which we must contribute. As we faithfully respond to God's grace and call to action, the Holy Spirit guides us in this renewal. With a resurrection spirit, we look forward to the renewal of the whole creation and commit ourselves to that vision. We pray that God will accept and use our lives and resources that we re-dedicate to a ministry of peace, justice and hope to overcome poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons and violence.

With God's help and with you as our witnesses...

1. We as your bishops pledge to answer God's call to deepen our spiritual consciousness as just stewards of creation. We commit ourselves to faithful and effective leadership on these issues, in our denomination, and in our communities and nations.

2. We pledge to make God's vision of renewal our goal. With every evaluation and decision, we will ask: Does this contribute to God's renewal of creation? Ever aware of the difference between what is and what must be, we pledge to practice Wesleyan "holy dissatisfaction."¹³

3. We pledge to practice dialogue with those whose life experience differs dramatically from our own, and we pledge to practice prayerful self-examination. For example, in the Council of bishops, the fifty active bishops in the United States are committed to listening and learning with the nineteen active bishops in Africa, Asia and Europe. And the bishops representing the United States' conferences will prayerfully examine the fact that their nation consumes more than its fair share of the world's resources, generates the most waste, and produces the most weapons.

4. We pledge ourselves to make common cause with religious leaders and people of good will worldwide who share these concerns. We will connect and collaborate with ecumenical and interreligious partners and with community and faith organizations so that we may strengthen our common efforts.

5. We pledge to advocate for justice and peace in the halls of power in our respective nations and international

organizations.

6. We pledge to measure the "carbon footprint"¹⁴ of our episcopal and denominational offices, determine how to reduce it, and implement those changes. We will urge our congregations, schools and settings of ministry to do the same.

7. We pledge, to the best of our ability, to provide the resources needed by our conferences to reduce dramatically our collective exploitation of the planet, peoples and communities, including technical assistance with buildings and programs, education and training, young people's and online networking resources.

8. We pledge to practice hope as we engage and continue supporting the many transforming ministries of our denomination. Every day we will thank God for fruit produced through the work of The United Methodist Church and through each of you.

9. We pledge more effective use of the church and community web pages to inspire and share what we learn.¹⁵ We celebrate the communications efforts that tell the stories of struggle and transformation within our denomination.

With these pledges, we respond to God's gracious invitation to join in the process of renewal. God is already visibly at work in people and groups around the world. We rededicate ourselves to join these movements, the movements of the Spirit. Young people are passionately raising funds to provide mosquito nets for their "siblings" thousands of miles away. Dock workers are refusing to off-load small weapons being smuggled to armed combatants in civil wars in their continent. People of faith are demanding land reform on behalf of landless farm workers. Children and young people have formed church-wide "green teams" to transform our buildings and ministries into testimonies of stewardship and sustainability. Ecumenical and interreligious partners persist in demanding the major nuclear powers to reduce their arsenals, step by verifiable step, making a way to a more secure world totally disarmed of nuclear weapons. God is already doing a new thing. With this Letter and the accompanying Foundation Document, we rededicate ourselves to participate in God's work, and we urge you all to rededicate yourselves as well.

We beseech every United Methodist, every congregation and every public leader: "Will you participate in God's renewing work?" We are filled with hope for what God can accomplish through us, and we pray you respond: "We will, with God's help!"

May God's grace purify our reason, strengthen our will, and guide our action. May the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit be among you, everywhere and always, so that you may be a blessing to all creation and to all the children of God, making peace, nurturing and practicing hope, choosing life and coming to life eternal. Amen.

¹³ In 2002, Reverend Dr. William Sloane Coffin, referring to a political trio of threats said, "A more likely and far more dangerous trio would be environmental degradation, pandemic poverty, and a world awash with weapons." *The Chautauqua Appeal*, with Joan Brown Campbell and Stephen J. Sidorak, Jr.

¹⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural references are from the New Revised Standard Version published by the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA.

¹⁵ *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739, ¶5.

¹⁶ "When... Christian perfection becomes the goal, a fundamental hope is aroused that the future can surpass the present. And a corresponding holy dissatisfaction is aroused with regard to any present state of affairs—a dissatisfaction that supplies the critical edge necessary to

keep the process of individual transformation moving. Moreover, this holy dissatisfaction is readily transferable from the realm of the individual to that of society, where it provides a persistent motivation for reform in the light of 'a more perfect way' that goes beyond any status quo." Runyon, Theodore, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), p. 168.

¹⁷ A "carbon footprint" is an estimate of how much carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas) is produced to support life activities including travel and home energy use. Carbon footprints are also applied on a larger scale to companies, businesses, and nations.

¹⁸ In support of the many persons who have followed this project of the Council, an interactive multimedia website will have resources, educational materials, downloadable video clips and social networking: www.hopeandaction.org.

Celebrate Human Relations Day Jan. 17

Human Relations Sunday is traditionally observed the Sunday before the birthday observance of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and occurs during Epiphany, the season of manifesting God's light to the world. Human Relations Day calls the Church to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with each other. The purpose of the day is to further the development of better human relations. || (Par. 263.1, *The Book of Discipline* 2008)



























For resources, visit www.umcsgiving.org.

The 2009 Advent Calendar

by Tom Mousin and Merry Watters

Every year, the Rev. Tom Mousin and the Rev. Merry Watters collaborate on an Advent Calendar. During the season of Advent, reflect on the daily suggestions and prayers and consider coloring the illustrations as a meditation in preparation for Christmas.

WINTER WOODS, ALL UNADORNED, STILL SHOW FORTH ABUNDANT GREEN CEDAR, HEMLOCK, PINE, AND FIR, FRESH IN ALL THEIR FULLNESS SEEN EVER GREEN AND EVER NEW, EVER SILENT, STILL THEY SING OF THEIR MAKER'S WILL AND WAY, THESE THE WORDS THEIR BRANCHES BRING:

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>29</p>  <p>JER. 33:14-16</p>	<p>30</p> <p>CONTACT A DEAR ONE.</p>  <p>1 THESS. 3:9-13</p>	<p>WORLD AIDS AWARENESS.</p>  <p>PS. 133</p>	<p>ENJOY MOONLIGHT.</p>  <p>PS. 81:1-8</p>	<p>PLANT BULBS.</p>  <p>MT. 13:1-9</p>	<p>CELEBRATE NEWNESS.</p>  <p>2 COR. 5:17-21</p>	<p>SHOW LOVE.</p>  <p>JN. 13:34</p>
<p>6</p>  <p>MAL. 3:1-4</p>	<p>7</p> <p>SEE THE DAWN.</p>  <p>LAM. 3:22-23</p>	<p>8</p> <p>SEND A NOTE.</p>  <p>REV. 21:5</p>	<p>9</p> <p>CREATE SOMETHING.</p>  <p>JER. 18:1-6</p>	<p>10</p> <p>SEE THE NEW...</p>  <p>MT. 13: 51-52</p>	<p>11</p> <p>SAVOR THE FAMILIAR.</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>MAKE PEACE.</p> <p>SHALOM</p>  <p>MIC. 4:1-4</p>
<p>13</p>  <p>PHIL. 4:4-7</p>	<p>14</p> <p>SHINE LIGHT.</p>  <p>MT. 5:11-16</p>	<p>15</p> <p>CREATE HARMONY.</p>  <p>ROM. 12:15-18</p>	<p>16</p> <p>FEEL POWER.</p>  <p>ISA. 40:28-31</p>	<p>17</p> <p>CHOOSE LIFE.</p>  <p>DEU. 30:19</p>	<p>18</p> <p>CELEBRATE ABUNDANCE.</p>  <p>JN. 10:10B</p>	<p>19</p> <p>SHARE.</p>  <p>elhogar.org</p> <p>MT. 25: 31-36</p>
<p>20</p>  <p>LK. 1:46B-55</p>	<p>21</p> <p>SEE NEWNESS.</p>  <p>ISA. 43:18-19</p>	<p>22</p> <p>FIND JOY.</p> <p>JOY</p>  <p>LK. 15: 8-10</p>	<p>23</p> <p>KNOW LIGHT.</p>  <p>1 JN. 2: 7,8</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>JN. 1: 1-5</p>	<p>ADVENT 2009</p>	

GREEN GROWS FROM THE FROZEN EARTH, LIFE WILL FLOURISH EVEN HERE. GREEN AGAINST THE STEEL GRAY SKY, LOVE WILL ALWAYS CONQUER FEAR. WITH THESE GREENS WE MAKE A WREATH, THESE THE WORDS WE SING & PRAY, "COME, DEAR JESUS, EVER NEW, BE OUR LIFE, OUR LIGHT, AND WAY."

Ralph Craw's legacy

By Bill Lasher

The Trustees of the Troy Annual Conference recently received a check for \$1.3 million dollars from the estate of the late Ralph Craw, an active lay member of the Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church in New York. It was Mr. Craw's wish that the proceeds from the sale of his home and property would be used to subsidize retired pastors' health insurance costs.

Craw died in 2006 but due to the down turn in the housing market, the sale of the property was delayed.

Will Chamberlin, also a lay member of the Saratoga Springs UMC and long time friend of Ralph Craw, is the Trustee of the Ralph Craw Trust Agreement and has given much time and effort to the sale of the property.

Craw was a very committed Christian church member all his life. He was a retired school teacher, never married, taking care of his parents at their farm until they died. The church was his family and was active for many years at the Wilton United Methodist Church and later at the Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church. Chamberlin and the late Bruce Conklin were his "boys," looking after him as he grew older. He was extremely frugal yet very generous. He took tithing to his church seriously, but more than that he considered all that he had to belong to God.

In the early 1990 Craw became concerned about the "unfunded liability" of the Troy Conference part of the Pre-82 UMC pension plan—a plan that provides retirement benefits for pastor's and spouses who had service years prior to 1982. He invited Bill Lasher, the Conference Pension Officer, to meet with him and his lawyer to draft his will so that his entire estate would go to the Troy Conference and be used to help fund the Pre-82 pension plan.

Several years later, when it was announced that the Troy Conference Pre-82 plan was fully funded, Craw came Lasher, at the time pastor at Saratoga United Methodist Church, to discuss other possibilities to assist retired pastors. That is when Craw changed his so that the proceeds would be used instead to help fund retiree health insurance. Ralph wanted to make sure that his gift would be used where most needed to assist retired pastors.

In anticipation of this gift, the Conference voted in 2007 that the 20 percent subsidy for retiree health insurance cost was raised to 30 percent beginning in 2008.

In the allocation of assets to take effect in July, 2010 as conference boundaries, 30 percent of the Ralph Craw gift will be transferred to the New England Annual Conference and 70 percent to the new upper New York Conference and used for the purpose as provided for in the Craw Trust in both conferences. His legacy continues to provide support for many pastors of the United Methodist Church.

Lasher is the Conference Pension Officer

Third Quarter Honor Roll 2009

The following churches are paid in full for the year in all apportioned funds

<u>Adirondack</u>	<u>Albany</u>	<u>Embury</u>	<u>Green Mountain</u>
Dannemora UMC	Albany Emmaus UMC	Brownsville UMC	Bloomfield UMC
North River UMC	Hyndsville UMC	Pownal UMC	Highgate UMC
Portersville UMC	Mayfield UMC	Sandgate UMC	Lincoln United
	Mineral Springs UMC		Walden UMC
	Northampton UMC		West Swanton UMC

The following churches are paid in full for three quarters of 2009 for all apportioned funds

<u>Adirondack</u>	<u>Albany</u>	<u>Embury</u>	<u>Green Mountain</u>
Ausable Forks UMC*	Alplaus UMC*	Averill Park: Church of the Covenant UMC	Adamant UMC*
Ballston Spa UMC	Barnerville UMC	Berlin UMC*	Bakersfield UMC*
Blue Mountain Lake UMC	Brainard UMC*	Boytntonville UMC*	Bethel UMC*
Bolton Landing UMC*	Braodalbin UMC	Brattleboro UMC*	Burlington UMC
Chestertown UMC	Central Bridge UMC	Cambridge UMC	Chelsea West Hill UMC
Crown Point UMC	Cobleskill UMC	Easton UMC*	East Middlebury/Ripton
Essex UMC*	Delanson UMC*	Grafton UMC*	Enosburg Falls UMC
Fortsville UMC*	Delmar UMC	Melrose UMC	Essex UMC
Galway UMC	Dorloo UMC*	Mendon UMC	Essex Junction UMC
Glens Falls: Christ UMC	East Greenbush UMC	Pittstown UMC	Ferrisburgh UMC*
Glens Falls: Queensbury UMC	East Stone Arabia UMC*	Poultney UMC	Grand Isle UMC*
Granville UMC	Fonda-Fultonville UMC*	Proctorsville UMC*	Groton UMC
Hartford UMC	Freybush UMC	Shenendehowa UMC	Hardwick United*
Indian Lake UMC	Gallupville UMC*	South Cambridge UMC	Jericho UMC
Malta Ridge UMC	Grosvenor Corners UMC	Tinmouth UMC	Korean-American UMC of Vermont
Middle Grove UMC	Hagaman UMC	Troy/Christ UMC	Lyndonville UMC
Moriah UMC	Malden Bridge UMC*	Troy/Pawling Ave UMC	Marshfield United Church*
Morrisonville UMC	North Chatham UMC	United Church of Ludlow*	Monkton Federated UMC
Newcomb UMC	Rensselaer: Broadway UMC	West Hebron UMC	Montgomery UMC
Plattsburgh UMC	Richmondville UMC	Windsor UMC*	Montpelier UMC
Quaker Springs UMC	Schenectady: Carman UMC		Moretown UMC
Raceville UMC	Schenectady: Eastern Parkway UMC		Morrisville UMC
Reber UMC*	Schenectady: Faith UMC		North Ferrisburgh UMC
Riparius/Wevertown/Johnsburg UMC	Schenectady: First UMC		Rice Hill UMC
Sanford's Ridge UMC*	Slingerlands UMC		St. Albans UMC
Saranac UMC	Voorheesville UMC		St. Albans Bay UMC
Saranac Lake UMC	Wells UMC		Underhill United Church*
Saratoga Springs UMC			Union Village UMC*
South Glens Falls UMC			United Church of Thetford*
Speculator UMC			Waterville Union
West Fort Ann UMC*			West Addison UMC
Willsboro UMC*			White River Junction UMC*
Wilmington/Whiteface UMC			Williamstown Federated*
Wilton: Trinity UMC			

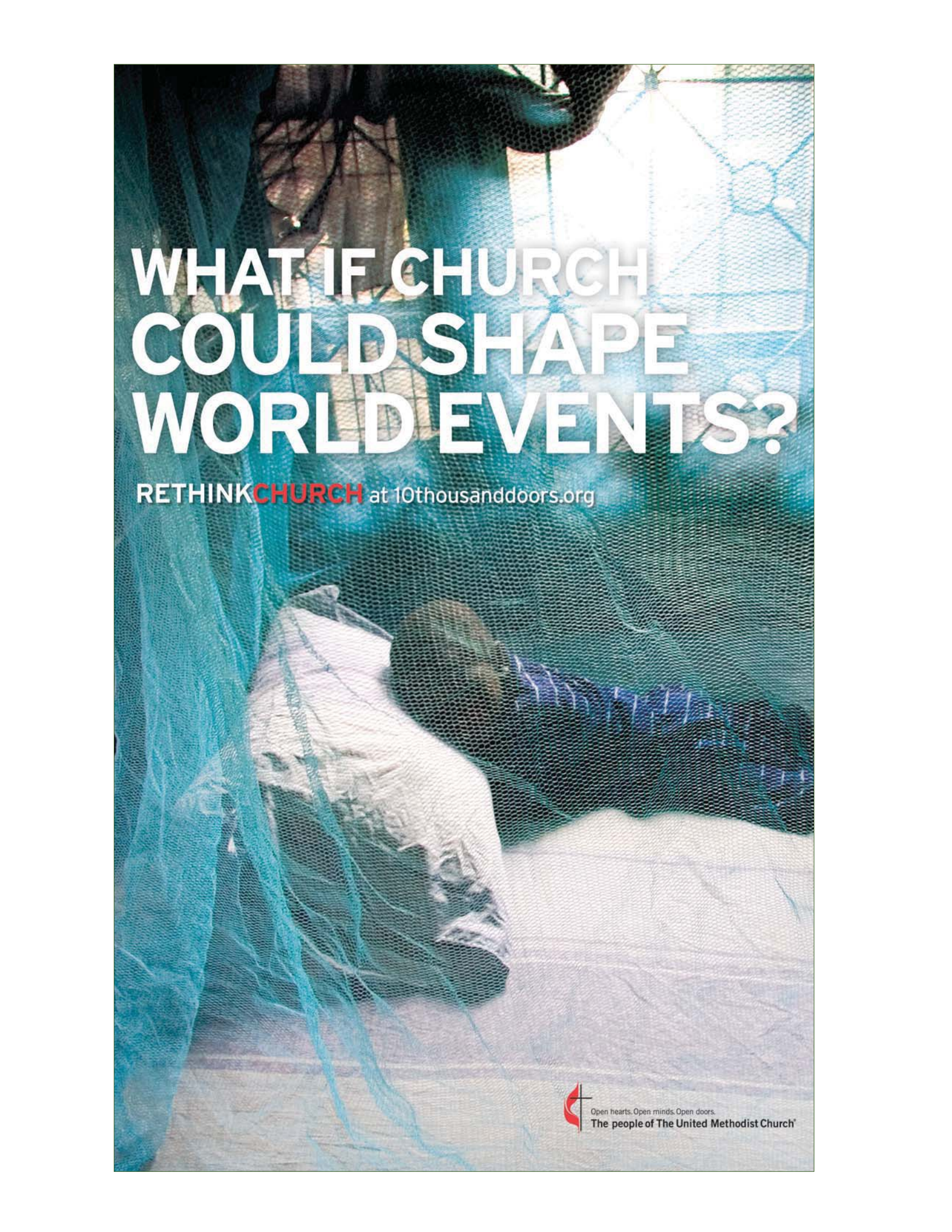
The following churches are paid in full for three quarters of 2009 in the apportioned funds listed

<u>Adirondack</u>	<u>Albany</u>	<u>Embury</u>	<u>Green Mountain</u>
Argyle UMC 6	Albany: McKownville UMC 16	Center Brunswick UMC 12*	Albany UMC 5*
Bloomington UMC 1*	Albany: Pine Grove UMC 6	Clifton Park UMC 13456	Barre UMC 6
Champlain Three Steeples UMC 6	Ames/Sprout Brook 6	Eagle Bridge UMC 6	Binghamville UMC 6
Corinth UMC 16	Amsterdam UMC 6	East Arlington Federated 2345*	Bradford UMC 12345
Hudson Falls UMC 5	Bleeker UMC 13456	Johnsonville UMC 6	Elmore UMC 2345*
Keeseville UMC 2345	Burnt Hills UMC 6	Jonesville UMC 6	Fairfax United Church 6
Lake Placid UMC 6	Center Glenville UMC 13456	Mechanicville UMC 6	Georgia UMC 3456
Lake Pleasant UMC 12345	Edinburg UMC 6	Round Lake UMC 6	Greensboro Bend 1
Long Lake UMC 6	Esperance-Sloansville UMC 345	Rutland UCC 12345	Hinesburg Federated 6
Mooers UMC 6	Fort Plain UMC 345*	Salem UMC 45	Middlesex UMC 12345
North Creek UMC 6	Gloversville: Foothills UMC 2345	Shaftsbury UMC 1*	New Hope UMC 12345
Peru Community Church 345*	Gloversville: North Main UMC 6	Shushan UMC 1*	Northfield Parish 6
Porter Corners UMC 345	Huntersland UMC 1*	South Royalton Federated 3456	Riverton UMC 345*
Rock City Falls UMC 345*	Latham UMC 6	Troy: Cornerstone Community 6	St. Johnsbury UMC 6
Schuylerville UMC 6	Middleburgh UMC 6	Troy: Hope UMC 6	Shelburne UMC 6
South Corinth UMC 126	Nassau UMC 6	Valley Falls UMC 156	S Burlington UMC 6
Ticonderoga UMC 3456	Northville UMC 3456	Waterford UMC 6	Swanton UMC 6
Upper Jay UMC 6	Ravena UMC 6	Wells UMC 23*	Vergennes UMC 6
Warrensburg UMC 1*	Rotterdam UMC 6	Weston UMC 6	West Burke UMC 3456
	Schenectady: Albany Street 6	West Sand Lake UMC 6	West Danville UMC 6
	Schenectady: Stanford UMC 1456		Wolcott UMC 6
	Scotia UMC 6		Worcester UMC 345*
	Sharon Springs UMC 2345*		
	South Bethlehem UMC 6		
	Warnerville UMC 6		

**1=Admin. Apportionment; 2=World Service & Conf. Benevol.; 3=Ministerial Ed. Fund; 4=Black College Fund; 5=African Univer. Fund; 6=Pension Fund.

*Church is not responsible for pension payment because it either doesn't have a pastor or is being served by a pastor from another denomination or annual conference.

The Honor Roll reflects payments received in the Treasurer's Office by the quarterly report deadline. For questions or concerns, contact the Treasurer's Office at (518) 584-8214 or (800) 684-9377, ext. 16; e-mail lrobinson@troyac.org.



WHAT IF CHURCH COULD SHAPE WORLD EVENTS?

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The people of The United Methodist Church®