



The United Methodist Church

Alabama-West Florida Episcopal Area
Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference

Paul L. Leeland
Resident Bishop

Linda C. Swayne
Administrative Secretary

March 2, 2009

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

This letter is being sent to all clergy serving local churches in our Alabama-West Florida Conference. First, allow me to express my gratitude to each of you for the personal ways in which you have welcomed my wife, Janet, and me into our conference. Your personal phone calls, notes, cards of welcome, and your invitations to be with you have been pleasing and appreciated. Thank you.

Second, I share your personal understanding of what it means to be called into ministry and follow Jesus. Like you, I love Jesus and honor the privilege of being ordained into this common ministry. I have already written each of you about the importance of being ordained not only to Word, Sacrament, and Service, but also the importance of being ordained to Order the life of the Church. Like the Apostle Paul who traveled among the local churches of Corinth and Galatia, he never doubted there was but one Church.

Our Annual Conference several years ago began a campaign to make Blue Lake a stronger, more vital part of our conference. We are now in our last few months of this campaign. I want to personally encourage each of us to set an example for our congregational families by making a personal contribution to this campaign.

Janet and I have made a personal contribution to the Blue Lake Campaign, our cabinet and extended cabinet have made personal contributions, and I have asked that our Annual Conference Special Offering this year be given to this campaign.

I am asking each congregation to make sure we have 100% participation. Please note, I have not asked you to send a particular amount. I am asking for 100% participation by every congregation. Our goal, as I understand it, was one dollar per member. I trust over the last three years this was an easy and obtainable goal.

Many of you have already given your contribution. Thank you. For those congregations that have waited, I want to ask you to do what you can so all of our churches participate, and we finish well.

Blue Lake is a wonderful resource. If someone were to give us this property today, our entire Annual Conference would be ecstatic with excitement. This present campaign will be the step we need to position ourselves to raise the Kingdom vision for our conference and how we can fully utilize Blue Lake.

Alabama-W
March 2, 20
Page 2

100 Interstate Park Drive, Suite 120A Montgomery, Alabama 36109
(334) 277-1787 FAX (334) 277-0109

I have encouraged the Board of Directors of Blue Lake to continue developing a Kingdom Vision for Blue Lake. In the coming years, we will need to come back to this great resource for our church families in order to serve all persons in a setting where many have found their own calling into our United Methodist Family.

Please do all you can to finish well. We are depending upon you to make sure your church joins every congregation in our conference so we can claim 100% participation regardless of the amount contributed.

Thank you for all you have done and are doing to make Alabama-West Florida Conference a stronger conference, a greater Church family, and a place of service where we can claim the soul of every person within our area for Jesus Christ.

With Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul Leeland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Paul L. Leeland