

Please read the following letter to your congregation on Sunday morning and include this message in your congregational newsletter and website.



January 2011

Dear Friends,

We invite you to join us on a journey of faith that will lead to the 2012 USA National Conference and beyond. The delegate conference, July 18–22, 2012, in Independence, Missouri, will determine the level of support for

- 1.) Extending the sacrament of marriage to persons of the same sex/gender OR providing a church-recognized way for two persons of the same sex/gender to publicly express their commitment to each other.
- 2.) Allowing people in committed, monogamous, long-term, same sex/gender relationships (legal marriage, civil union, church-recognized commitment) to be considered for ordination.

The delegates' common consent will determine if present policies will remain in place or new policies will need to be written and implemented.

These are difficult issues. We could choose to approach the national conference with fear, trepidation, and resistance. However, as apostles who serve with you in the United States, we choose to approach the national conference in faith, believing the Holy Spirit is in our midst and will show us the way. We also commit to allowing our own perspectives on these issues to be shaped by God's Spirit as we journey together in faith.

Together in Christ, we ask you to join us in the following ways to discover God's will:

- Daily prayer for the church in the United States.
- Allow your own perspectives on these issues to be shaped by God's Spirit.
- Daily prayer that delegates, who will be elected at 2011 fall mission center conferences, will be open to God's will and to the challenge of reaching common consent.

- Engage in a preparation process that will include
 - 2011 and 2012 reflection questions and spiritual practices for individuals and groups.
 - A scripture DVD presented at mission center and delegate preparation gatherings.
 - 2011 reunion/study text on Section 164:6a, b and 2012 reunion/study text on Signal Communities in Mission.
 - *Herald* articles and web updates.

Next month you will receive more information about the preparation process and a timeline of when resources will be released to help us journey toward the USA National Conference. This journey will not end at the conclusion of the conference on July 22, 2012. As disciples of Jesus Christ we must commit to lovingly uphold our common faith in Jesus Christ and commitment to a common mission, even if we do not agree. It is our prayer that our response to the challenges before us will bear witness to the One who calls us into relationship with each other and sends us out in mission for the sake of the world.

In Christ's Peace,



Linda L. Booth, Stassi D. Cramm, Ronald D. Harmon Jr., Rick W. Maupin, and K. Scott Murphy
USA Team of Apostles