



**Steve James**

*Director of Congregational Development*

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Dear leaders at Ebenezer United Methodist Church,

I heard over and over at Lake Junaluska that this was the best annual conference ever. We had a tremendous teacher in Adam Hamilton and powerful worship that brought us into the presence of God. But equally important in the best conference ever was the positive movement of God's Holy Spirit that raises up Vital Partners such as you. You may not have been able to be with us at Annual Conference, but the generous Spirit of Christ that made this a great conference lives and breathes in you.

There are many ways the churches of Western North Carolina are measuring health and vitality. Signs of life include growing participation in worship, witnessing people beginning a life with Christ, engagement in Christ's mission down the street and across the world. It is also true that every vital local church is a generous church. It is so encouraging to see the growing generosity of Vital Partners like you who support the kind of new work that is bringing people to faith in Christ and developing amazing new faith communities. Thank you for so generously investing in this God-breathed faithful vitality.

Your gifts bear fruit in communities across Western North Carolina. Eighteen new faith communities have been launched through the generosity of Vital Partners like you. Thousands of new people gather each week in these new places. These new faith communities are demonstrating in clear, vibrant ways that God is still building Christ's kingdom through the people of the United Methodist Church. These new faith communities are helping existing congregations discover the new and beautiful ways that God is working right now through the church. I've included in this mailing a story of what one of those new faith communities is like. Thank you for your bold support of this critically important work.

God is still raising up leaders and calling us to reach many more people for Jesus Christ through the establishment of dozens of new faith communities. I am grateful for your generous gifts in bringing such a positive, generous expression of God's Holy Spirit into our conference and assuring a vibrant United Methodist witness for Christ for generations to come.

Yours in Christ,

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