



February 25, 2017

Dear Lay and Clergy Members of the Oregon-Idaho and Pacific Northwest Annual Conferences,

With joyful anticipation I call you to meet in a shared session of the Oregon-Idaho and Pacific Northwest Annual conferences of The United Methodist Church, June 14-17, 2017 at the Red Lion on the River in Portland, Oregon. This will be the 144<sup>th</sup> session for the Pacific Northwest conference, and the 49<sup>th</sup> session since the merger of the Oregon and Idaho Conferences.

In an historic first, these two conferences will meet together to learn about the opportunities, challenges, gifts, and passions of our two conferences. The planning team has created a schedule with times for the two conferences to meet separately to conduct specific business, and also times when we will all be together for shared messages, worship, and celebrations.

I've had the honor of meeting many of you in Threshold Events across Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. We will formally mark the beginning of my assignment to the Greater Northwest with an installation service at the opening session at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, June 14, followed by a brief plenary to call the sessions to order and organize for our work.

The theme for annual conference for the next four years will be "Do This and You Will Live!" taken from Luke 10: 26-28. Jesus' instructions are a rich lesson, "... You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself." In this short exchange with a legal expert, Jesus explains the **why** of our faith, and the mission of the church. The reason Jesus came, the reason we follow and love is so that we can live a truly abundant life.



Enclosed you will find details about the conference schedule and registration. This information is also available online at [www.greaternw.org/ac2017](http://www.greaternw.org/ac2017). This shared conference will follow a different rhythm than either conference is used to. I've encouraged the planning team to make the most of the rare opportunity to learn from one another and celebrate the ministries of both conferences. So, we'll all need to set aside our expectations about what can and should happen at annual conference, and come with a sense of adventure and expectation, ready to experience annual conference, "with all your heart."

I look forward to crossing this threshold together!

Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky