

A PROFILE OF THE OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

A. Geographical location and description

- The Annual Conference is comprised of the entire state of Oregon and 75% of the state of Idaho, encompassing two time zones.
- The geography is diverse stretching 1200 miles from the Pacific Ocean and Willamette Valley in Western Oregon to the mountains and plateaus of Eastern Oregon and on to the fertile farm lands and high desert of Idaho.

B. Demographics

- There are approximately 190 active clergy members serving 213 churches and other ministry settings. Approximately 27 clergy members are in school or in various leave categories; about 166 are retired. Our total clergy membership stands at 382.
- At the close of 2006, local church membership stood at 33,171, down from 33,752 in 2005.

C. Conference Mission Statement (abridged)

**Boldly Making Disciples of Jesus Christ
Vitalizing the Church, Transforming the World**

The mission/vision is to be carried out following these missional priorities:

Practicing Personal and Social Holiness. (*Mark 12:29-31*) The promise and power of the gospel spring from the personal encounter with God through Jesus Christ... By affirming this priority, the annual conference commits to leading persons to commend their lives to God, nurturing persons to give God their best in Christian living, and reaching out to the world in love as disciples that live compassionately and justly.

Making New Disciples. (*Matthew 28:19-20*) ... Disciple-making is not reserved for those within the fellowship of the congregation, but is extended graciously to those beyond the congregation through respectful invitation, compassionate caring, and words and deeds that heal and free. By affirming this priority, the annual conference commits to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in word and action and to seek, welcome and gather persons into the body of Christ.

Encouraging Excellence in Lay & Clergy Leadership. (*Matthew 5:14-16*) ... The church is vitalized and the world transformed when lay and clergy leaders strive for excellence by recognizing, affirming and developing their spiritual gifts for leadership. By affirming this priority, the annual conference commits to developing lay and clergy leaders that give God their best so that through their leadership, the church may give God its best.

Aligning with Our Strategic Direction. (*Matthew 7:24, 25*) Profound need and abundant grace call the church into action. A vital church is clear about its purpose and is an effective agent of transformation in the world when it "keeps the main thing the main thing." By affirming this priority, the annual conference commits to devoting its energies and resources to its mission and vision, aligning ministries with the missional priorities and freeing itself from those things that distract and detract.

D. Political/Social Make-Up

- Political Atmosphere - With an independent spirit typical of the people of the Pacific Northwest, we are politically, theologically, and sociologically diverse. Though our congregational perspectives and positions are moderate on the whole, urban and suburban areas tend to be more progressive while town and country areas tend to be more conservative.
- Political Issues - The economy (poverty, hunger and employment); conflicts and tensions in the Middle East; education and school funding; economic development and taxes; the environment; and agriculture are among the top concerns.

- Church Trends - 65% of all Oregonians are unchurched. In Idaho, 50% identify with a church but only 2.7% are United Methodists.
- Social Environment - The ethnic and cultural make-up of our region is rich and diverse although our churches do not mirror this diversity. We face the same issues of poverty, health care, and dwindling resources for social programs faced by other areas of the country.
- Ecumenical Environment - In Oregon, we are a part of the statewide organization of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. In Idaho, the influence of the LDS church is widespread. The Northwest House of Theological Studies is a proven success and the Bishop of Oregon-Idaho has signed a partnership agreement with the Bishop of the western Oregon Episcopal Church for joint ministries in United Methodist Camp and Retreat Centers

E. Financial Status

- The average clergy compensation for 2008 is \$48,824 which includes housing. The minimum cash salary for elders in full connection is \$33,200 (not including housing).
- In 2006 we paid 82.9% of our apportionments, up 1.4% from 2005. However, our 10-year average for percentage of apportionments paid is now at 85.4%, and apportionments have not been paid at a rate over 83% since 2001.

F. Issues

- Clergy - Morale is improving due to the personal touch of an inspiring bishop who is free to focus on making connections in just one conference. Our orders have also been working to improve connectedness among those in a profession which experiences high stress profession and low compensation. Increasing support and accountability are a priority, including greater requirements and resources for continuing education. A clergy wellness initiative is gaining wider participation.
- Laity – Laity energy is growing thanks to the bishop’s leadership and presence around the conference. Conference staff morale has risen through a new sense of focus and support. Communication from the conference has improved. Concerns include greater connection and participation beyond the local congregation; financial strains; longevity of pastorates.
- Conference Strengths – Under the leadership of Bishop Hoshibata we are experiencing a rebirth. A focused and useable mission statement has been reinforced through the preaching, writings, and presence of our bishop and through annual goals shared with churches. An newly effective and productive Conference Leadership Team (Connectional Table) now operates under the bishop’s leadership. We are entering a capital campaign to upgrade camping facilities. Other strengths include nationally-known camp and retreat ministries; the Bishop’s hunger initiative which has generated great energy; the conference website and electronic newsletters.
- Areas for Improvement - Financial support at the local and conference level; more lay involvement; ethnic ministries; new church starts; creativity in working together across a broad geographic area as well as diverse theological positions; and the continued rejuvenation of conference-level ministries including outreach to youth and young adults.

G. Conference Episcopal Leader Expectations

- Continuity of leadership as we continue our transition into a conference “Boldly making disciples, vitalizing the church and transforming the world”
- Leadership in completion of the camp and retreat ministries capital campaign
- Spiritual and visionary leadership that gives direction while encouraging participation
- Keep Oregon-Idaho a priority when balancing time in and out of the Episcopal area.