



December 2011

Happy Advent!

Advent is a time of shared anticipation, celebration, and hope. We know and have faith that Christ is coming because we know the birth story and anticipate the promises of God. In the spirit of this season, the Committee on Finance and Administration (CFA), which is the steward of our Conference's financial resources, would like to update everyone about mission share progress as we near the end of our 2011 fiscal year.

First, we would like to celebrate the many churches that, in these tough financial times, have continued to strive to meet their mission share giving. We would especially like to celebrate the number of churches that are current in their mission share payments.

As a result of your generosity in response to Christ's presence in our midst, much has been accomplished, globally, in support of emergency response through UMCOR, for instance. Locally, many grants have provided funding after flooding, tornados and for other disaster relief. Also, your mission shares provide health benefits' support for our retired and disabled clergy, provide a variety of educational and revitalization resources for local churches, help churches afford temporary pastoral support during a pastor's illness or death, and help fund our exciting and essential summer youth programs and campus ministries. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

CFA has met throughout the year to reassess and strive to match our spending with your financial gifts; however our "checkbook" currently reflects a collective lag in mission share payments. In other words, for this current year, our spending is higher than our income. We live in hope, as in years past, that these final weeks will see a marked increase in the amount of mission shares received from local congregations and that we will once again find ourselves in good financial stead.

The conference staff and committees have worked hard to be good stewards of the mission shares submitted year-to-date with a focus on being as efficient as possible with the available resources. As we look to the future, the conference staff and CFA will be meeting in January to modify plans for a less ambitious 2012 budget, if necessary. We urge the leadership of each congregation with outstanding payments to pray about their response.

Hope and blessings be with you,

William V. Burnside II
Conference Treasurer