

## From the Heart of the D.S.



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*Grace and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*May the fragrance of life and endless possibilities that comes with a new year advance itself to reach, touch and refresh your spirit. This missive celebrates you and also celebrates the first issue of our new district newsletter. Hereafter, this section known as "From the Heart of The D.S" is my blog where I will speak to you. In this issue, I have been restricted to a few lines that I am moved to devote in celebration of three things: you, our district and the ministry possibilities that beckon to us as a district.*

### Celebrate and Protect God's Image in You and in Your Church

Firstly, I celebrate you as a committed people that love God and each other. This is demonstrated by your deep commitment to your church and community. The giving of your time, talents and tithes paint a portrait of a selfless people committed to mission and providing service to the least of these. I want to challenge you to protect this portrait of yourself. Repel any negative voice or indication that suggests otherwise. One of my mentors suggests that, in the face of the adversity and turbulent times we exist in, retention of a positive image of yourself or worshiping community is mission critical to personal effectiveness and success in ministry. That mentor suggests that there are three ways to protect that positive image of you or your community: A) Seize the moments to celebrate your personal experiences and the work of God in your midst. B) Learn from other people's successes and failures through reading, observation, hearing and listening; don't repeat it, best it! C) Work on yourself and your community to be better in increasing membership, attendance, profession of faith, baptism, confirmation and your shared commitment to stewardship.

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### We Are Stronger Together!

Secondly, I celebrate that our district is embracing a challenge to live into the Methodist DNA of "Connectionisms" and the "power of the Laity." We are stronger together in spite of our differences. Together, we are building a stronger link that empowers laity, clergy and retirees to live out a vision of shared ministry responsibility. We are aligning local best practices and resources that will assist us to answer the question "How do we do ministry?" where the laity takes ownership for making disciples, assuring discipleship and investing in each other lives. Clergy assumes the role of "resourcing chief," where we glean from the wisdom and experience of our clergy retirees and find effectual and creative medium to impart that information to our people in the pews. I am celebrating the power of our district strategic teams where we are aligning geographically to address and alleviate some of our ministry challenges. I am celebrating leaders that are emerging and seizing the opportunity to advance God's kingdom, equip God's people and using their gifts and graces, positioning to take back the land and reclaim our Methodist identity. I am celebrating a district on the move, powered by its people, dependent on their God. Our possibilities are interminable!

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### **“Pray Together Until Something Supernatural Will Happen Among Us”**

Lastly, I celebrate the ministry possibilities that beckon to us as a district. We will affirm and seek out every moment to celebrate each other since, in Connecticut, after God, we put people first. Our appointment year celebration will culminate at Hofstra University where we will celebrate our retirees and our successes in ministry. We will empower our laity by bringing resources necessary to inform, equip and empower them to do effective ministry and to “self-actualize” as disciples for Jesus Christ. We will create opportunity for our pastoral college to sharpen their spiritual acumen, pulpit effectiveness and administrative ability by learning from each other. Since some of our conference scholars and content experts reside among us, we will create opportunities to sharpen our leadership skills in the process of learning. Most significantly, we will PRAY together until something supernatural happens among us and for our district.

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This is what I celebrate. In love, gratitude and deep humility, it is the desire of my heart for the district God has privileged me to serve. To that end, I say, In Jesus name - let it be so. Amen!