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October 21, 2016

Dear Brother and Sisters in Christ,

I am thanking the Lord for you each time I remember and celebrate you in my prayers and each time I preview the monthly giving reports. You, as the giving and tithing United Methodists of the New Mexico Annual Conference, are providing *wonderful* reasons to celebrate.

From January-August of 2016 you have contributed \$1,136,637 towards Shared Ministries. Thus far, your giving represents 54.2% of our annual expected income for the year – an ***outstanding increase of 12.4%*** over the average level of giving from the preceding three years!

Through August, seventy-five congregations (more than half) are *consistently* reporting their operating income and tithing faithfully. Another six congregations are reporting their monthly operational income and contributing in ways to show that, while not a full tithe, they are building towards that goal. Fifty-nine local churches are contributing or reporting, but have missed a month either in their reporting or their contributions. In all, only fourteen churches have yet to contribute anything to our Shared Ministries in 2016, two fewer than last year.

The levels of participation and reporting show that we are all strengthening our ministry of giving together.

*Thank you* to all who have faithfully approved and have adopted our new model for gathering the dollars needed to live out our shared ministry of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. I particularly thank the congregations whose tithing has resulted in additional dollars being given compared to past years. You are commended for faithfully trusting the Lord to provide for your local ministry as you have reached out generously to serve the greater common ministry we share as United Methodists.

We also want to celebrate the ministries that have been better resourced by the dollars left to the direction of local congregations. The recent reductions in the overall Conference budget and the “windfall” created for many congregations as the dollars expected from the “tithe model” are lower compared to our old expense driven model can result in more dollars being made available for the ministry within local congregations. Even as we work to tell the story of how your contributions to Shared Ministries serves our connection, we’d like to hear how and where the “savings” in lower Shared Ministries are being applied to ministry in your context:

What are some of your great stories of changed lives, new disciples, and stronger ministry efforts at the local congregation level because more funds were available to spend locally?

Even as we celebrate the success of our tithe model, The Council on Finance and Administration would like your feedback.

- What do you like *best* about the new model? What kind of positive feedback are you getting from your Finance Chairs, Financial Secretaries, Treasurers, Pastor, Annual Conference representatives, or members?
- What help can we or Cathy Anderson provide to help your financial secretary/treasurer with any reporting challenges?
- If you're one of those congregations struggling to report consistently or contribute faithfully, are there reasons for not reporting or contributing regularly and in full? Is there any help we can provide for your efforts?

Please give us feedback by calling Cathy Anderson (800-678-8786) or Rev. Dan Boyd (575 885-3142).

As we live into this new model, we are encouraged by the rates of participation and by the faithfulness with which so many of our congregations are giving towards our shared ministry. Thank you again for your efforts in strengthening our connection!

Rejoicing because of your generosity, 