

November 5, 2008

Dear President-Elect Obama:

The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church is pleased to join with the chorus of United States citizens and international partners in congratulating you on your election as the forty-fourth President of the United States of America. The Council is currently convened in its semi-annual session at Epworth by the Sea, St. Simons Island, Georgia. The Council includes bishops from the United States, Europe, Africa and the Philippines.

We applaud your willingness to articulate a vision of change for the United States that is based on hope for all the people, especially those who are disinherited and disenfranchised. We are also encouraged by your desire to construct a landscape for the United States that is inclusive of all people. We affirm your desire for a more peaceful and just world.

The United Methodist Church has a long history of publically-expressed concern for social justice based on Christian principles. Our desire for justice extends to the natural world, the nurturing community, the social community, the economic community, the political community and the world community.

We are praying that God will grant you wisdom, courage and protection in your presidential leadership. We are also praying for all the leaders of the world's nations, who will collaborate with you in the arena of common concerns that impact the global community.

In the months following the inauguration, we would like to present you and Mrs. Obama with Bibles signed by the members of the Council of Bishops. A visit with the President by representatives of the Council of Bishops is a tradition which dates back to our first bishop, Francis Asbury, who visited with President George Washington. The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church will convene in Washington, DC, during the week of May 3-8, 2009. It is our desire to meet with you at this time or another.

We pray that God's abundant grace and abiding peace will be with you as you shoulder the mantle of presidential leadership as the first African American.

As you lead the United States of America, the bishops of The United Methodist Church will be upholding you in our prayers.

With our gratitude and hope,

Bishops Gregory Vaughn Palmer, President
The Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church