



## **The Amazing Pace Moves United Methodists to Better Health**

*Nearly two billion steps (1,719,981,900) or 859,991 miles, walking around the world 34.5 times*

For Immediate Release

COLUMBUS, Miss./EWorldWire/Nov. 3, 2009 --- Methodist congregations in many areas of the country are getting moving and setting the pace to better health with the Amazing Pace program, and a new alliance partner, The Church Health Center in Memphis, Tenn. "On the Move in Congregations" programming (<http://www.churchhealthcenter.org/onthemoveincongreg>) offers congregations turnkey, six-week walking programs with a teaching guide, journey literature and pedometers. It's the first step towards congregation-wide involvement in physical health, supported by church and community.

The Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, led by Bishop Sally Dyck and Ms. Jean Edin, added The Amazing Pace walking program (<http://mnamazingpace.lifebux.com/>) to its wellness initiatives.

The Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference UMC introduced The Amazing Pace (<http://epaumc.lifebux.com/>) to its wellness programming through the encouragement of Bishop Peggy Johnson, Rev. Tim Anderman and Ms. Jo Fielding.

The Mississippi Annual Conference leadership of the United Methodist Church decided to emphasize physical wellness as a part of its ministry of mind, body and spirit. The Mississippi Annual Conference UMC in June 2007 - led by Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, David Stotts, Rev. Dr. Embra Jackson and Rev. Trey Harper - introduced its health plan participants to a Web-based pedometer walking program. Called "The Amazing Pace," the program (<http://amazingpace.lifebux.com/>) encourages health plan participants to increase daily activity levels through walking. Uploadable pedometers track each walker's progress, along with that of the walking team they are a member of, and the walking activity for the entire Mississippi Annual Conference. Conference organizers reported results "have been phenomenal" with friendly competition among district teams and a new greeting, "How many steps do you have?"

Methodist walkers have reported remarkable results from increased activity including stress management, weight loss and better sleep as well as improved health diagnostics - blood pressure, cholesterol and triglycerides - during checkups with their physicians. The Journal of the American Medical Association recently reported that wearing a pedometer helped increase physical activity by as much as 27 percent by adding more than 2,000 extra steps per day (<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/short/298/19/2296>). This study also found "that the use of a pedometer is associated with significant increases in physical activity and significant decreases in body mass index and blood pressure."

Through a collaboration with Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare Center of Excellence in Faith and Health in

Memphis, Tenn. (<http://www.methodisthealth.org>), and The Amazing Pace, a number of Methodist bishops participated in an 11-week John Wesley challenge walk to better health through their participation in "The Life of Leaders" wellness program. Methodist Bishops participating in "The Life of Leaders Amazing Pace Experience" included:

- . Bishop Tom Bickerton - Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference UMC
- . Bishop Warner Brown, Jr. - California/Nevada Annual Conference UMC
- . Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar - Greater New Jersey Annual Conference UMC
- . Bishop Sally Dyck - Minnesota Annual Conference UMC
- . Bishop Al Gwinn, Jr. - North Carolina Annual Conference UMC
- . Bishop John Hopkins - East Ohio Annual Conference UMC
- . Bishop Janice Huie - Texas Annual Conference UMC
- . Bishop Scott Jones - Kansas West Annual Conference UMC
- . Bishop Gregory Palmer - Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference UMC
- . Bishop John Schol - Baltimore/Washington Annual Conference UMC

To learn more about the activities and progress of the Amazing Pace, visit '<http://amazingpace.lifebux.com>'.

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