



# THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

HOLSTON AREA

MARY VIRGINIA TAYLOR  
RESIDENT BISHOP

January 28, 2015

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Grace to you from Jesus Christ, who calls his Church to care for “even the least of these.” One of the ways we participate in that possibility is to create personal, environmental and social conditions in which each individual can receive good health care. In the Gospel of John 10:10b Jesus says, “I came so that they could have life – indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest.” It is our deep desire that all persons across Tennessee might have the possibility of living the abundant life.

The Social Principles of our church remind us of this truth in its statement on the Right to Health Care. “Health is a condition of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. Stewardship of health is the responsibility of each person to whom health has been entrusted.” [Para. 162(v), 2012 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church]

In caring for our neighbors and allowing more of our fellow citizens to have access to good healthcare, I urge your prayerful support for Insure Tennessee, an initiative that Governor Bill Haslam has recommended to the State Legislature. Its passage will allow 200,000 more Tennesseans to have adequate health coverage. The program will be open to Tennesseans earning less than 138 percent of the federal poverty level (approximately \$16,000 in annual income for an individual or \$33,000 for a family of four).

A special called session of the Tennessee Legislature will be convened on February 2<sup>nd</sup> to consider the Insure Tennessee plan. I encourage you to do the following four things prior to that date.

- 1) Become fully informed and educated about the benefits of the Insure Tennessee Plan. A good website to consult is [www.insuretennesseehow.com](http://www.insuretennesseehow.com).
- 2) Personally contact your Tennessee legislators and give voice to your opinions. Letters, emails and phone calls can all be effective. If you need contact

information for a senator or representative, it is available at [www.capitol.tn.gov/legislators](http://www.capitol.tn.gov/legislators) (Find My Legislator section on right side).

- 3) Share this letter with friends, family members and neighbors as a part of your witness of care for fellow citizens who need better health coverage.
- 4) Pray for our legislators that they might seek God's will as a part of their own discernment process.

The New Testament teachings of Jesus remind us over and over again of his ministry of healing and wholeness. I encourage you to respond promptly and faithfully to this opportunity to join him in this mission.

I invite you to share this with your congregation this Sunday.

God's Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Virginia Taylor". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor