

NEWS RELEASE

Society of St. Andrew

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 12, 2008

Petition submitted to General Conference asking the UMC to partner with Society of St. Andrew in ministry to end domestic hunger

Big Island, VA – A petition has been filed for consideration by the 2008 General Conference to designate the Society of St. Andrew as the principal agency of the Church to alleviate hunger in the United States. The Society of St. Andrew is an Advance Special (#801600) of the United Methodist Church. The petition, No. 81308, is currently assigned to the Global Ministries (GBGM) committee.

If the petition, which carries no financial or budget impact on the UMC, is adopted the Society of St. Andrew and the United Methodist Church would work together as official partners in the mission to end domestic hunger. The petition was drafted and submitted by the Society of St. Andrew's (SoSA) Board of Directors, under the chairmanship of Rev. Jim Tongue, Farmville (VA) UMC District Superintendent.

“Ending hunger in the U.S. is the first step to ending global hunger,” said Ken Horne, Executive Director and co-founder of the Society of St. Andrew. “If we can't end it here we can't end it anywhere! SoSA wants to put in front of every United Methodist Church across the nation the opportunity to participate in hands-on food rescue ministry to feed their hungry neighbors. We want to make ending hunger in the U.S. a priority of the Church. Only when we forge a 'critical mass' of people demanding an end to hunger will it become a national priority.”

“In the Bible,” Horne explains, “Jesus tells us many things we must do in order to go to Heaven. On the other hand, he also tells us that we will NOT get into Heaven if we DO NOT feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, and visit the sick and imprisoned. Matthew 25:41-46 issues a clear-cut command if I ever heard one.”

Horne reports that there are 36 million Americans who don't get enough to eat while there is more than enough food available to feed them. “Jesus commands us to feed the hungry and SoSA's biblical practice of gleaning what will go to waste has proved to be an efficient and effective way to fulfill that command,” he continued

The rationale for presenting this petition states: *The Society of St. Andrew puts faith into action nationwide through the proven biblical practice of gleaning with over 30,000 volunteers annually while distributing over 1.5 billion servings of nutritious food. Recognizing SoSA as the principal U. S. hunger-fighting organization of the church will help eliminate hunger in America.*

The Society of St. Andrew was founded in Virginia in 1979 and has grown into the nation's premier hunger-relief organization saving and delivery fresh produce for the hungry. SoSA salvages excess fresh vegetables and fruits that are perfectly good and nutritious but not commercially marketable. Instead of letting this food go to waste, the Society engages volunteers from churches, civic groups and individuals to glean what's left in farm fields after

the harvest and what's graded out in packing houses. The volunteers then package the food for delivery and donation to local feeding agencies in the region where it was gathered.

Today SoSA has six regional offices and 38 other gleaning operations in 21 states, including Virginia, where it maintains its national headquarters. To date, SoSA has saved 543.8 million pounds of food, which provided 1.63 billion servings to the hungry in all 48 contiguous states. More than 364,000 volunteers have worked with SoSA and its vast network of growers and service agencies to help feed Americans who are regularly at risk of hunger, and all at a cost of only about 2 cents per serving.

To fully inform conference delegations on this issue, SoSA has created a presentation that can be webcast directly to them. The presentation was made to the Virginia delegates to the General Conference on January 19 and will be presented to the North Alabama delegates on March 1. Any conference delegation can request a webcast from the Society of St. Andrew by contacting Mike Waldmann at 800-333-4597 or sosausa@endhunger.org.

The petition, which can also be found at www.endhunger.org/petition.htm, reads in full:

Pg 1 of 1 ***Designate Society of St. Andrew as Principal Agency of the Church to Alleviate Hunger in the United States***

Discipline ¶ 1326 Financial Implications: No*

Add: New Paragraph 1326.2.a.(3) Renumber current paragraphs (3) through (6) as (4) through (7)

Add: (3) **To work cooperatively with the United Methodist related Society of St. Andrew (SOSA), a national Christian hunger-relief ministry, as the principal nationwide organization within the United Methodist Church to alleviate hunger in the United States.**

Amend: ¶1326.2.b) as follows:

Financial Support—Sources of funds shall include voluntary gifts, One Great Hour of Sharing offering, Advance Special Gifts, supplementary gifts of United Methodist Women **and United Methodist Men**, churchwide appeals made by authority of the Council of Bishops and the General Council on Finance and Administration, and designated benevolence funds. Sources of funds for administrative functions of the General Board of Global Ministries shall be other than designated funds to the United Methodist Committee on Relief **and/or the Society of St. Andrew.**

*Originally submitted as Yes due to a misunderstanding, however there is no financial or budget impact to the UMC

More information about the Society of St. Andrew and its hunger-relief ministry is available online at www.endhunger.org, by phone at 800-333-4597, or email at sosausa@endhunger.org.

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