



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Dear Friends and Colleagues in Christ:

Grace and peace to you many times over as you deepen in your experience with God and Jesus, our Master (II Peter 1:2, The Message).

The current economic downturn in our state and around the globe is frightening and devastating to individuals, families and institutions. All of us know persons who have lost their jobs, homes, pensions or health benefits. Many reading this may be among this number. There is increasing pressure on our state and community leaders to turn to the lure of casino gambling as the answer to our economic woes. The gambling industry is organizing to exploit the current economic pain and fear experienced by so many Ohioans.

The Economist calls this “casino capitalism.” Casino capitalism contributes to an illusion of free money by preying on those least able to afford it. Across America, predatory gambling has helped create a culture based on financial gimmicks, false hopes and pure chance. This culture is at the very heart of the massive economic crisis we find ourselves in today.

We, as persons of faith and citizens who seek the common good for all of God’s people, are the ones to put a stop, once again, to the expansion of predatory gambling in Ohio. I invite you to join the “No Casinos in Ohio” network sponsored by the East and West Ohio Conferences and become a witness against gambling. Begin to pray for this effort. Invite at least 5 other people to join our network with you. Say, “No!” “Casino capitalism” is not the economic or moral engine we want or need to drive economic recovery and vitality in Ohio.

Bishop Bruce R. Ough
West Ohio Conference