“The one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.”

-2Corinthians 9:6b-8, NRSV
Gather these supplies:

• DVD
• DVD player
• Map of Eurasia or a computer with Google Maps application
• Notepads, pens

Prepare:

• Before your event, test the DVD player for production quality and adequate sound. If necessary, use speakers to amplify sound.
• Bring a large map of Eurasia so people can see the areas mentioned in the DVD or a computer with the Google Maps application. Test finding the various areas mentioned in the DVD.
• DVD length: The total length for all four segments is about 12 minutes 50 seconds to watch but you may watch individual segments.

This DVD shares stories of United Methodism in action, featuring comments from the bishops assigned to them.
Eurasia Area—Bishop Hans Växby

- Central Russia Annual Conference
- Eastern Russia and Central Asia Provisional Annual Conference
- Northwest Russia Provisional Annual Conference
- Southern Russia Provisional Annual Conference
- Ukraine-Moldova Provisional Annual Conference

Sancia UMC in Kaunas, Lithuania
Photo: Ullas Tankler/GBGM
Leadership seminars for migrant churches in Europe, Berlin, Germany

Photo: Ullas Tankler

Germany Area—Bishop Rosemarie Wenner

- Germany East Annual Conference
- Germany North Annual Conference
- Germany South Annual Conference
Central and Southern Europe Area—Bishop Patrick Streiff

- Austria Provisional Annual Conference
- Bulgaria Provisional Annual Conference
- Czech and Slovak Republics Annual Conference
- Hungary Provisional Annual Conference
- Poland Annual Conference
- Serbia-Macedonia Provisional Annual Conference
- Switzerland-France Annual Conference (includes Algeria District)
Nordic and Baltic Area—Bishop Christian Alsted

- Denmark Annual Conference
- Estonia Annual Conference (includes Latvia and Lithuania districts)
- Finland-Finnish Provisional Annual Conference
- Finland-Swedish Provisional Annual Conference
- Norway Annual Conference
- Sweden Annual Conference

Hope Center in Latvia
Viewers will:

- Learn about United Methodist work in the Eurasia, Germany, Central and Southern Europe, and Nordic and Baltic episcopal areas.
- Hear the stories of United Methodist bishops whose ministries encompass northern Russia, the Czech and Slovak republics, Denmark, Finland, Norway and many other regions.
- Recognize how the expansive nature of their work challenges and enhances outreach.
- Connect with another level of God’s work and mission as they observe the nature, complexities and simplicities of ministry.
- Understand how United Methodists around the world approach the Four Areas of Focus.
- Understand the work of the Episcopal Fund.
Discussion prompts:
Segment I

1. Given their ministry contexts, what challenges do the churches in Eurasia face?
2. How does living where a turbulent history and an intentional distance from religion affect efforts to grow churches?
3. What methods do they use to face the challenges?
4. How do they sow seeds of faith in new communities?
5. Växby mentions “a special grace of being a connectional church” and that these churches are “in mission together.” Discuss what a connectional church means in the context of his ministry.

Bishop Hans Växby oversees a large episcopal area with 11 countries. He anticipates that the United Methodist Church in Eurasia will grow dynamically, gain social recognition and help people to become committed Christians.

Members and Friends of the United Methodist congregation in Tirana/Albania
Discussion prompts:

Segment 2

1. Given Wenner’s ministry context, what challenges might the churches in Germany face?
2. What ministries does she mention? Do similar ministries exist in your area?
3. She mentions that many people do not know what Christmas or Easter means. Discuss how that might shape ministry goals.
4. Wenner explains that German churches are developing new places for new people. She called them “third places.” Name some places she mentions and discuss what that might mean as people try to build faith communities.

Today 45 United Methodist international and migrant congregations exist in continental Western Europe; 20 are in Germany. Bishop Rosemarie Wenner says the churches in Germany are a very small part of society: among 80 million people, 60,000 attend church.
Discussion prompts:

Segment 3

1. Streiff mentions being more than a “national church.” What is a national church? What does it mean when connection and ministry move Christians beyond national boundaries?

2. In light of being more than a national church, discuss this statement: A growing part of United Methodism is reaching out in creative ways, making a credible and encouraging witness for long-standing border-crossing solidarity and faithfulness. In what creative ways have you seen United Methodists do outreach?

3. These churches face dynamic challenges, such as global migration (give examples for that area), unemployment and secularization, where the distance between an active Christian faith and reality continues to widen. Do you see these churches doing ministry differently from U.S. churches?

4. What can U.S. churches learn from churches in Central and Southern Europe?

The Central and Southern Central Conference covers 14 countries in Europe, including two countries in northern Africa. Bishop Patrick Streiff’s distinct and complex episcopal responsibilities include overseeing Albania, Algeria, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Macedonia, Poland, Serbia-Montenegro, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland and Tunisia.

Children in Kovačica, Serbia
Discussion prompts:
Segment 4

1. One challenge is that the Baltic countries received their freedom in the early 1990s, after more than 50 years of Soviet oppression. How might new freedom affect communities and families?

2. Alsted says, "We cannot preach a personal gospel of Jesus Christ without it having social and diaconal implications." What does he mean by that?

3. Often, in reaching people who live in a society that challenges their survival, one must approach ministry differently. Alsted says ministry with the poor is part of United Methodists' identity. Do you agree with that statement? Does that reflect your congregation's reality? What about churches in other areas of your annual conference?

4. The churches in Bishop Alsted's area deal with the challenges of several different languages and cultures. How does that dynamic affect their ministries and outreach?
Overall discussion:

1. What are common challenges among these four bishops and the churches and communities they serve?
2. The bishops mention doing outreach and connecting with churches and issues outside their areas—in Asia and Africa. Discuss the nature of that outreach.
3. What methods do European churches use to connect with their churches and communities?
4. What can U.S. churches do—individually and as a global church—to connect with and be in solidarity with the many congregations mentioned in this DVD?
About the Episcopal Fund:

The Episcopal Fund supports United Methodist bishops worldwide. Bishops have a special role as they are elected and consecrated to speak to—and from—the church to the world. God calls bishops from many settings. "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone" (1 Corinthians 12:4-6, NRSV).

Why give to the Episcopal Fund? Bishops oversee the United Methodist faith community. Their guidance depends on our financial support. The Episcopal Fund supports office operations, travel, salaries, health insurance, pensions and other expenses of the bishops’ office. The fund supports 69 active bishops and approximately 125 retired bishops and surviving spouses in the five U.S. jurisdictions and the central conferences (Europe, Africa and the Philippines).

United Methodist bishops are responsible for the congregations in their respective areas. They determine pastoral appointments, counsel pastors, encourage congregations and lead in many ways. Supported by your gifts to the Episcopal Fund, bishops not only lead in the connectional ministry of the church but also serve in the forefront of world issues, encouraging secular leaders to incorporate faith in their decision making.

The Four Areas of Focus express the vision and yearnings of the people of The United Methodist Church. The church seeks to focus the work of making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world around these areas of ministry:

- Combating the diseases of poverty by improving health globally;
- Engaging in ministry with the poor;
- Creating new places for new people and revitalizing existing congregations; and
- Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world.
Learn more about the Episcopal Fund at www.umcgiving.org/EF or call 888-346-3862 for other resources.