Communion, my wife Marsha and I drove from Morehead City, NC to the Motel 6 on the other side of Fredericksburg, VA. A short night of sleep and a dash to the train depot led to semi-comfortable seats on a commuter train into Washington, DC. By 9:30 a.m., we were distributing a copy of the letter to each congressional office on the top floor of the Cannon House Office Building (HOB). Marsha took one side of each hall, and I took the other. That way, we covered all the aisles on both sides of the hall, and then we moved down a floor and repeated the strategy. After completing our task in the Cannon HOB, we delivered letters throughout the Longworth HOB and finally sat down at a time, moving downward. Leaving Longworth, we entered the gigantic Rayburn HOB and handed out letters in the same way until 4:30 p.m. Those who greeted us in the congressional offices graciously and thankfully received the letter, engaged in friendly conversation, promised to direct the letter to the representative or other pertinent staffer in the office, and bid good-bye. It was all quite civil, even courteous.

The lunch break in the Longworth HOB cafeteria was memorably refreshing and renewing. Even so, by the end of the day, both of us were exhausted. The train returned us to Fredericksburg. We walked to the car, which had been parked at the Fredericksburg United Methodist Church. Dinner was followed by a five-hour drive to coastal North Carolina. It was a long day. It was a day we will never forget. As it turned out, our effort was not especially successful. But from the start, we were under no illusion that our effort would change the world (or the fate or shape of health care reform). Even so, this is what citizenship in the United States is all about — participating in the political process, seeking the common good, striving to protect the least of these among us.

Here is an excerpt from the text of our hand-delivered letter:

In the Social Principles, The United Methodist Church officially recognizes not only the sanctity of unborn human life, but also the unborn child (Par. 161J, The Book of Discipline [2008]). So The United Methodist Church claims that the unborn are children and suggests that they are part of the human community. With these moral truths, the Church through the ages and most Americans of our day agree.

Because unborn children are members of the larger society, federal legislation should stop federal dollars from paying for procedures -- i.e., abortions -- that would destroy such children. Since the 1970s, the Hyde Amendment has prevented the federal government from paying for many abortions. By standing between federal dollars and abortion providers, the Hyde Amendment has saved millions of lives.

We strongly urge you to vote for health care reform legislation if and only if it contains permanent, bill-wide language that prevents federal dollars from paying for abortions. Such language keeps the federal government out of the abortion business and protects countless unborn children. On the other hand, the legislation lacks such language, vote No.

 Courage is always required to stand up and do what is right. It took courage for American preachers and politicians to oppose slavery in the 19th century. It took courage for German pastors and priests and people to oppose the murderous anti-Semitism of the 1930s and 1940s. It took courage for American clergy and laity and politicians to join the Civil Rights Movement and oppose racism. Now, courage is required of you to stand up and vote against health care reform legislation that would result in destroying, not caring for, unborn children.

Rev. Stallworth is president of the Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality and Editor of LifeWatch.
Our Situation
In our time and place, the dignity of the human person is under attack. Year after year, horrendously high numbers of abortions are performed in American society. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Also, the proliferation of embryonic stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia and other similar problems exhibit a casual disregard for human dignity. Occasionally, in the political arena and within church circles, the great debate regarding human dignity surfaces. But usually, in the political arena and within church circles, problems exhibit a casual disreg...