



THE EPISTLE

JANUARY 2017

DISCIPLE MAKING

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

It's what we are called to do: make disciples! So, what IS a disciple anyway? Is it different than being just Christian?

Maybe you believe in Jesus, maybe even claim him as Savior, maybe you said a prayer one time in which you "gave your heart to Jesus." You might also come to church occasionally, even give some money, but is that enough to make a claim to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

The word "Christian" was first used in Antioch (Acts 11:26). It is something outsiders used to describe the early followers of Jesus. But, the early church had other names for themselves, such as saints (Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 16:1, Ephesians 1:1), "brothers" (1 Corinthians 1:9, 1 Peter 3:8, and "disciples" (Acts 13:52, 20:1, 21:4).

The goal of being a disciple as stated by the teacher, is to be like the teacher (Luke 6:40). So, first thing, we have to want to be is like him, and then be willing to follow him, to do and be that which he desires us to do and be—like him. This is a transformation of the self—the whole self—to becoming something more by gradually giving our lives over to him. Now this doesn't happen easily or overnight. John Wesley and we Methodists call it "Going onto Perfection," which is a process and trust that our hearts can and are becoming more like Jesus.

The Greek word for "disciple" used in the Bible is mathetes, which means much more than just "student." A disciple is a "follower," someone who adheres fully to the teaching and example of another. Some things Jesus said about discipleship and following him:

A disciple is one who abides in his words (John 8:31)

Jesus must come first, before self or anyone else (Luke 14:26, Matthew 10:34-37)

We must be willing to suffer and sacrifice for him (Luke 14:27, 2 Timothy 3:12)

It involves baptism: spoken profession of confession of sin and commitment of life (Acts 2:36-38, 8:36-37, Matthew 7:21-27)

A disciple is one who not only loves God but people as well (John 13:34-35)

A disciple is one who's life "bears much fruit" (John 15:1-8, Matthew 5:16)

There are future blessings from it (Romans 5:9, Revelations 21:1-8)

There are also present blessings (John 14:27, 15:9-11, Mark 10:28-30)

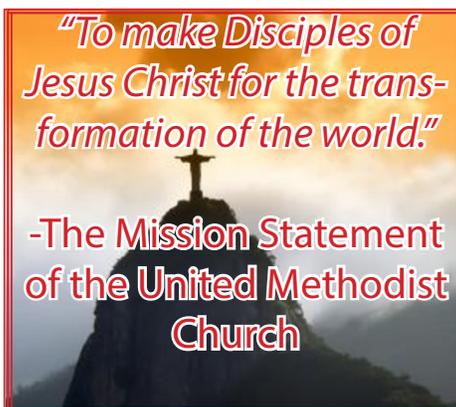
Are you a Disciple of Jesus Christ?

Now, a church that is doing right is one that is all about helping people to do exactly that. St. Paul's is taking seriously this calling to help non-Christians and nominal Christians become fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ. We will still be doing all those other kinds of things that churches traditionally do; worship, fellowship, education, etc. But, we are also going to devote significant resources to helping people to take the next step towards becoming a fully committed follower of Christ...a disciple. Please read through this special edition of our news letter which is devoted to helping you to understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and how your church plans to help you.



"Go and make disciples of all the nations..."

-Jesus giving the "Great Commission" in Matthew 28:19



"To make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

-The Mission Statement of the United Methodist Church



"...invite others to join us in becoming Disciples of Jesus Christ for the good of the world."

From the Mission Statement of St. Paul's United Methodist Church

"We are called to be a community of generosity and love where we invite others to join us in becoming disciples of Jesus Christ for the good of the world."

AT THE GATE

At St. Paul's we have tried to make a great effort to meet some of our financial challenges, and, indeed, we have come a long way... As in every other arena of life, we will have additional challenges to face and overcome-- some foreseen, some not. It is my experience that it will ALWAYS be that way for our church. The only kind of church that does not have financial challenges is the one that is either inactive or focused on self; we are neither, and, consequently, people depend on us to be the "generous and loving people" we are, and have been, and say to the world we will be. It's in our mission statement:

"We are called to be a community of generosity and love where we invite others to join us in becoming disciples of Jesus Christ for the good of the world."

It also says we will be inviting others to join us as we go about our main purpose to make disciples of Jesus Christ. We MUST be about that, no matter what other challenges we face. We have been busy developing our focus on reaching out and making disciples, and I am very excited about what is happening in our church, and what can happen if we do this right. The theme of this newsletter is on disciple-making, what a disciple is, how to become one, and ways we want to help you to do that.

Our stewardship campaign begins shortly, and the main theme will be about getting real about our faith and life. Stewardship is more than committing our money, or even our time and talent and witness-- it is ultimately about a process by which we give our lives over to our God. It is also-- and not coincidentally-- exactly what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

May God bless and help us all this year, and may we all grow as fully committed disciples of Jesus Christ, and more fully into a church that wins others to Him.

Grace Happens,
Pastor Tony

Table Talk

Have you been looking to connect with a group at St. Paul's but haven't quite found what you are looking for? Is a traditional Sunday School class not your "thing"?

We may just have what you are seeking

A new Sunday morning opportunity (TABLE TALK) is being offered beginning January 15th from 9:15a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and again 10:45 a.m. to 12:00 noon. We will focus on current topics facing Christians today and how God might call us to live in this ever changing world. This opportunity is for EVERYONE. We invite you to participate in the worship service of your choice (8:00, 9:30 or 11:00) and join us in the East Room (F1) in Brummet Hall for an open conversation in a relaxed atmosphere. There will be no books to read or homework assigned -- we promise!

Come as you are with your questions, thoughts, ideas and we will have a respectful conversation that will grow us closer to God and to each other. Susie Goad will be our Facilitator in January!

UPCOMING IN WORSHIP

2017 January 1- *"Planning for a New Year"*
Proverbs 16:9
Ezekiel 36-26-28
Mark 12:28-31



January 8- **Pack-a-thon- "Yoda and You Do"**
Matthew 25:40

"When you have done it for the least of these, you have done it unto me."



January 15 - **Stewardship Campaign Kick-off- "No More Bull"**
Psalm 50:9a ("I will accept no bull from your house.")
Galatians 6:7 ("Do not be deceived; God is not mocked.")

These are among my very favorite bible verses. It is a reminder to be very open, honest, clear, and real about our lives, our faith, each other. We will look at the lies we tell God, we tell others, and ourselves. This year my hope is that as we consider our pledge commitments to Christ's Church, St. Paul's United Methodist, we will do so with a true heart and genuine sacrifice for, according to scripture, that is the only one that is really acceptable to God.

1/2 **TRUTHS**

January 22 - **"Hearsay, Half-Truths, and No-Brainers"**
Isaiah 1:18 ("...let us argue it out")
1 Peter 3:13-15 ("...make your defense")

Sometimes we accept things as "the Gospel" when it really isn't because that is what "they" say, or because it feels good, or that we just haven't done our due diligence in thinking it through.



January 29 - **"Lies We Tell Ourselves"**
John 8:31-32; 43-44

"You will know the truth and the truth will set you free."
If I ignore it, it will go away. If I have the approval of the people, that's what really matters. I can only be happy when everything goes my way, and other lies.

PHOTO GALLERY



Dick and Sheri Van Wormer



Susan Mallor



UMW Coffee



Harvey Family



UMW Coffee



Early Bird Choir



Drew Sonleitner



UMW Coffee



Hailey Marie Ashcroft - Baptism



December 2016 Christmas Tree



11 AM Ushers



December Advent Candle



UMW Coffee



UMW Coffee



UMW Coffee



UMW Coffee



Charlotte Bellflower and Joanne Gouldin

SPIRITUAL GROWTH TEAM

Our Spiritual Growth Ministry Team has been called to live out the portion of our SPUMC mission statement of becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. Our purpose is to help guide others in becoming disciples of Jesus by creating new and effectively utilizing existing opportunities for our St. Paul's family and others who have a curiosity and a desire to grow stronger, deeper, and more committed in becoming a disciple of Jesus.

We work from the truth that everyone is created with gifts for ministry and are called by God for service for the good of the world. We believe all ministries of the church should foster spiritual growth and discipleship, to support and encourage one another in their callings whether it is in the church building itself or in our community and beyond.

We invite you to join us in encouraging one another to participate in those opportunities that both "fits" and challenges you to take the next step in our journey of making disciples of Jesus. Our team meets the third Sunday morning of each month from 10:45-12:00 in the Library – next to the church office. St. Paul's Spiritual Growth Ministry Team's current members include:

Pastor Hal and Becky Cowart serve as our Spiritual Directors. They attend the 8:00 worship service where Pastor-Hal assists in leading worship. Both Pastor Hal and Becky serve as Bible study and retreat facilitators in developing disciples. They are deeply committed to prayer, study and mentoring others in God's call to ministry.

Suzanne Cipra attends 9:30 worship, serves on the Welcome Team, raised her 3 sons at St. Paul's and was very active in the St. Paul's Boy Scout Troop. She enjoys bible studies, theatre and attended the Walk to Emmaus weekend.

Claudia Ann Perry has attended the 11:00 service for the past 10 years where she enjoys serving as Scripture reader and providing announcements. She serves on the Welcome team, participates in the United Methodist Women Hadasah circle (secretary), and in Health Ministry. She has also served on Emmaus and Kairos Outside teams. Claudia is a retired registered nurse (44 yr. career) and is a lifelong member of the UMC.

Sherry Hubbard attends 9:30 worship. She started attending St. Paul's in 1977 at which time she was involved with the adult choir. She has served in children's Sunday School and other children's activities. She has been on a Walk to Emmaus and is currently attending the Disciple Bible Study here at St. Paul's.

Rich Rubendall has been a member of St. Paul's since 1994 with a 6 ½ year leave of absence from 2005 – 2011 as the result of a work transfer as a commissioned officer in US Public Health Service to the DC area. He served 10 ½ years as an adult volunteer to St. Paul's UMYF; has served on Staff-Parish Relations committee, Covenant Council, and is currently on the Finance committee. Rich ushers and attends worship with his wife Susi at 9:30. He attended the Walk to Emmaus, is a member of the Voyager's Sunday School class and has completed all 4 studies in the Disciple Bible Study series and Christian Believer. He is a civil engineer with the Indian Health Service.

Nancy Scott came to St. Paul's in June 2011 and has served as Director of Leadership Development for over 5 years. She attends 9:30 worship with her husband Pat. Her passion is developing lay leaders for the church. She works with all the strategic teams and large community events and she supports the program staff at SPUMC. Prior to joining SPUMC, she attended Via de Cristo (similar to Emmaus) and has also served on teams for Via de Cristo, Emmaus and has been actively involved in Kairos Outside ministry for the past 7 years..

Susie Goad serves as Chair for the Spiritual Growth Team and has been a member of SPUMC since 1987. While her daughters were growing up she attended the 9:30 worship service, more recently she attends at 8:00. Susie has served as a Sunday School teacher/facilitator for children, youth and adults. She has served on different church committees, assists in worship when needed, participated in Lay Servant classes, facilitates bible studies, and serves on Emmaus and Kairos Outside ministry weekends. Her passion is sharing the love of Jesus Christ with others through Bible Study, prayer and service. She is a member of Voyagers Sunday School Class. Professionally, she is a registered nurse.



Special Thanks

Dear St. Paul's Church Family,
Thank you so much for the wonderful birthday celebration you gave me! It was the best birthday I ever had. If I would have known how much fun it was to turn 90--I would have done it long ago.
-Betty Ott

Thank you to all for the many cards, phone calls, visits, & prayers for me at the time of my recent surgery, and a special thanks to Rev. Hal and Becky Cowart.
-Joyce Hinman

Thank you to all who provided food for families at our church, Dietz K8, Henry and Robles. Your generosity was overwhelming to the families that received the food. Some of the parents cried when they picked up the food and several mentioned that because of the food, they could now catch up on utilities. We also received a call asking for help with food for a Robles family that had lost everything in a house fire. They were staying with family and needed some extra food. We were able to pull that together and they will have plenty to share.

We provided for 42 families at each holiday and that included 91 adults and 138 children at Thanksgiving and 76 adults and 137 children at Christmas. Robles gave us different families at Thanksgiving and Christmas and the Christmas list had less adults living in the homes thus the difference in number of adults helped.

Thank you again for caring so much about hungry kids and families. We really appreciate the funds you provide for us to purchase extra food. the food you provide for families and all of you who help us deliver. The generosity of this church community is awesome!

Blessings to all.
Genita, Cheryl and Janet

Condolences To...

Condolences to the family and friends of Mary Lou Flanery, especially son Keith; Mary Lou passed away on December 14.

Our condolences to the family and friends of Gary Ackerson. Gary moved to Georgia several years ago but maintained his membership here at St. Paul's. Gary died on April 3, 2016.

New Members

Do you remember when you joined St. Paul's UMC? Was your experience that of speaking with the Pastor, attending an introduction class and then joining the church the following week? If you are currently a member, how have you lived out your membership commitment? Why is membership important?

In 1987 when Susie Goad became a member the expectation was three fold: participate in an introduction class, visit at least one Sunday School class and attend each of the three services in order to be sure St. Paul's was the right church for her. At other times, the new member class included mentors for those seeking membership.

Beginning in 2017 our new member class is changing to a four step process. In addition to the new member class we will be offering current members a "refresher" in what it means to be United Methodist. This will be an interactive class as our current members and those seeking to become members get to know one another. This combined four week New Member and Current Member Refresher Class will begin January 22nd at 12:00 noon in the Life Center Serendipity Room. We will have a light lunch together, followed by a basic overview of what it means to be United Methodist and our membership expectations. This class will end at 1:15 p.m.

New members will be welcomed into the church at the completion of this four week class, Sunday February 26th.

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WORSHIP SUNDAY SERVICES

8:00 A.M.
Traditional

9:30 A.M.
Contemporary

11:00 A.M.
Traditional

SAVE THE DATES

Prayer Walking

What: Yep, we're putting feet on our prayers by being intentional about praying for/in our community.

Who: Exceptionally ordinary folk like you and me, especially those whom the Spirit nudges where 2 or 3 gather together in Jesus' name.

Where: Going into our neighborhoods, our communities, where we live and work and play. You might even invite us into your neighborhood.

When: The first month we will begin on our very own campus and since you will already be on grounds for Sunday worship. Arrive 30 minutes early or stay 30 after worship.

Why: Because in the Great Commandment Jesus invites us to "love our neighbor" (Mark 12:29-31). Also Jesus sent out the disciples in pairs where he himself intended to go. He told them to pray peace to the places where they were going and announce "the kingdom of God has come near you" (Luke 10:1-9).

How: By trusting in God whose name is revealed as Emmanuel, "God with us." Trust in the Lord with all your heart...in all your ways acknowledge God and He will direct your steps." Proverbs 3:5-6 (Plus we will have prayer helps and helpers to assist you.)

One more scriptures to prepare your heart: Jesus' prayer for you in John 17.

Now doesn't that sound like a God plan?

- **Pac-a-thon – 1/8/2017**
10:30 am; Life Center
- **Table Talk – 1/15/2017**
9:15 am & 10:45 am; Brummet Hall F-1
- **St. Paul's Belles' Brunch – 1/19/2017**
9:00 am; Brummet Hall
- **Methodist 101/New Member Class – 1/22/2017**
12:00 pm; Life Center Serendipity Room
- **Rodeo Daze Luncheon – 2/23/2017**
Brummet Hall

For more details on upcoming events, visit
www.stpaulsumctucson.org.