

Being United
Methodist

***A Common
Ministry***

August 13, 2023

The Take Home

Today's New Testament Lesson explores God's love, how that defines us and how it inspires our relationships with those around us and our ministry in the world.

See 1 John 4:7-21

“We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God”.
2 Cor. 5:20



When speaking of a “Common Ministry”, we refer to the ways we share the love of God with others and how we spread the good news of God's rescue and renewal of the world. This is a ministry we hold individually and in community with our churches, denominations, and the Church Universal. It is also something which grows out of our first having been loved by God and having abided in that love.

UMC Statements Regarding Our Common Ministry

1. “We see God's grace and human activity working together in the relationship of faith and good works. God's grace calls forth human response and discipline. Faith is the only response essential for salvation. However, the General Rules remind us that salvation evidences itself in good works”. *Book of Discipline*, (§102, p. 53)
2. “Scriptural holiness entails more than personal piety; love of God is always linked with love of neighbor, a passion for justice and renewal in the life of the world”. *Book of Discipline*, (§102, p. 53)

Connectional Levels
in the United
Methodist Church:

Charge Conference:
The local church
under the care of a
pastor or pastors. (St.
Paul)

**District
Conference:**
Collection of
churches from your
county and
surrounding counties
overseen by a
District
Superintendent
(Heartland District)

Annual Conference:
Areas including
states, parts of states,
or parts of countries
overseen by a
resident bishop.
(Kentucky
Conference)

**Jurisdictional/Cent
ral Conference:**
Large regions
comprised of
multiple Annual
Conferences
(Southeast)

**General
Conference:**

All United
Methodists around
the world

3. “The outreach of the church springs from the working of the Spirit. As United Methodists, we respond to that working through a connectional polity based upon mutual responsiveness and accountability. Connectional ties bind us together in faith and service in our global witness, enabling faith to become active in love and intensifying our desire for peace and justice in the world”. *Book of Discipline*, ¶102, p. 54)

In his sermon, *The Reformation of Manners*, John Wesley gave the following definition to the Church: “This is the original design of the Church of Christ. It is a body of [people] compacted together, in order, first, to save each his own soul; then to assist each other in working out their salvation; and, afterwards, as far as in them lies, to save all men from present and future misery, to overturn the kingdom of Satan, and set up the kingdom of Christ. And this ought to be the continued care and endeavour of every member of his Church”.¹

Levels Of Our Common Ministry

We exercise our common ministry as Christians at various levels of organization and community.

Individual: Each of us uses our unique gifts in the situations and with the people in our lives to share God’s love and improve the world. Such actions might include visiting the sick, giving gifts, fixing broken household items, driving someone, and many other things.

St. Paul: A great example of St. Paul acting in ministry is the Mobile Resource Center which meets the 2nd Saturday of each month to distribute clothing and hygiene products to people in need. Another example is our annual involvement in Habitat for Humanity.

UMC: The UMC in Kentucky runs the United Methodist Children’s home providing a loving and supportive environment for displaced children. A good example at the Annual Conference and General Church Level is the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) which works in areas suffering from disasters.

Reflection Question:

1. How can I use my uniqueness to bless others and make the world better individually, in my church, and beyond?

