

**“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19); “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16); “This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3-4).**

**This fall, I would like to share with you the gospel of the Lord through my preaching series: “Mission and Vision of the Church Followed by Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: 1. Radical hospitality 2. Passionate worship 3. Intentional faith development 4. Risk-taking mission and service 5. Extravagant generosity**

**Recently one of our church members sent me an email, saying that “...It is so important to me, that I fulfill Jesus' Great Commandment. Maybe I will never be able to save anyone, but, hopefully, I will cause someone to stop and think about the Lord and his great gift of salvation.” Her email reminds me that she is living to fulfill her call as a Christian. What is your call given from God through your life as a Christian? What do you think the mission or purpose of the church is to which you come to worship God as well as to serve others?**

**Preparing for the coming church conference, our Methodist Conference requires each local church to submit to them the form of a *Congregational Ministry Plan for Renewed Vitality*. The first two questions are as follows: 1. **Why does your church exist? – mission or purpose** 2. **What does Christ call you to be and do in your community at this time?** How would you respond to these questions; what would your answer be?**

### **Mission-oriented-church**

**Why does your church exist? What does Christ call you to be and to do? The Church, the body of Christ, is the faith community confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Also, the church is a volunteer organization consisted in believers of Jesus Christ. By your volunteer service and participation inspired by the Spirit of God, the church is formed, sustained, and expands its ministry. What is the mission of the church given from our Lord?**

**Our church is called to care for not only our church family but also those who are in need; our church is a continual incarnation of God’s love in our community and in the world; our church is called to reach out to the unchurched by inviting and welcoming them that they might believe in Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord. Do you agree with those words? This church exists not only for us but also for those who are living in our community.**

**At our past council meeting, not only did we share about the mission and vision of the church with one another but we also shared what ministry we are currently doing for Christ and the unchurched. Also we set goals from 2012 to 2015 in the following areas:**

worship attendance, number of new professions of faith, volunteers in mission and outreach for local, national, and global ministries.

This past summer we had a special collection to help one family who lost their mother quite unexpectedly by cancer, leaving behind her three young children and a husband. We came to know that this family could not afford the expense of her funeral. As a result of your generous love offering, we were able to send money to help offset the funeral expenses. This was an act of our love to a family in the community! I received an email stating that one family needs to help in paying their electric bill; father has a very low weekly income and a daughter to raise. Our church tries to help that family through its love fund. I pray that those families might know Jesus through our loving care and the prayers that are offered up in their behalf. We must never forget that Jesus is the provider of not only our physical needs but also for our spiritual needs - for the salvation of our souls. Why does your church exist? What does Christ call you to be and do in your community at this time? Those questions naturally help to remind us of the mission of the church taught by our Risen Lord. What is that mission?

Most companies or non-profit organizations have their own mission or vision statement: McDonald's vision is "to be the world's best quick-service restaurant. Being the best means providing outstanding quality, service, cleanliness, and value, so that we make every customer in every restaurant smile." Wal-Mart Store: People, saving money, living a better life ("We save people money so they live better"). Starbucks' mission is to inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time. *What about the church?* More specifically, what about the United Methodist Church? **"The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world"** (Matthew 28:19-20). That mission was given to the disciples of Jesus two thousand years ago and has been renewed in every generation through His Church. So I want you to keep that in mind, and I pray that we can remember that mission statement every Sunday.

Rev. Adam Hamilton, the pastor of Church of the Resurrection, raises three questions to church pastors and leaders: 1. Why do people need Christ? 2. Why do people need the church? 3. Why do they need *this particular* church? He says, "Jesus Christ is the solution to the deepest longings of the human heart. He is the answer to the most serious problems that plague our society."

I want you to pray for God's mission given your church – Bentleyville UMC or Houston UMC; I want you to pray for yourself to be used as an instrument to fulfill God's mission through your call. Lastly, I want you to pray for someone who needs Christ by showing your Christian love and inviting him or her to Christ.

I decided that I would recite the mission statement each morning when I awaken: my mission is **making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world**. I encourage each of you to join with me in that daily morning prayer. What is the mission of the church? **"Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."** May it be done in and through your life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**“This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need to be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn’t go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again” (John 3;16-17, The *Message* Bible).**