



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
214 East Jefferson Street, Iowa City 52240. (At the corner of Dubuque & Jefferson Streets)
Phone 319.337.2857. *Lead Pastor, Rev. Dr. Barrie M. Tritle*

Many Gifts, One Spirit

Sunday morning worship services at 8, 9:15, and 10:30 / Sunday School at 9:15

Growing Deeper and Going Farther by Pastor Jonathan Fell

Scripture for the Week of September 5, 2010

Ephesians 2:11-22

So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called 'the uncircumcision' by those who are called 'the circumcision'—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God.

Centering Quote

Our practices of remembering and connecting, of gathering and gossiping, of singing and preaching and praying, are what constitute us as a church.

~ Thomas Edward Frank

Reflections

For United Methodists community and “the connection” is more than community for the sake of community or denominational structure; it is a means of grace.

Being connected to one another in mission and ministry is a vital part of the structure of The United Methodist Church. We as members and friends of our local church are connected to other local churches in our community and across the world through what we call “the connection.”

While the connection gives us structure and order as a denomination, it does much more. The connection, helps us to remember where we’ve been and who’s been there with us. We hold each other accountable in our work and mission throughout the world. We lift up one another in support and prayer. And we vision together about our future. In short, our connectionalism is a unique expression of community and provides us with a physical reminder of God’s grace.

Our connection with one another, offers us a unique expression of God’s grace. Through our sharing of stories, shared missions and service, through our gossiping, arguments and reconciliation, and through our prayer and worship we learn and grow together as a people of God. And as a physical reminder of God’s grace and love for us through Christ, we share in the meal called Holy Communion.

Communion, reminds us that we are made one in Christ; that we are called to be in communion with God, with one another, and with the world. Communion connects us with all those who have shared the bread and the cup throughout history. It connects us with Christians throughout the world who also share in this meal. And it connects us with all those who will share in this holy mystery for generations to come.

Questions to Ponder

How can you work to grow the connection, the unique expression of God's grace, in our church community?

How can we as a community live in to the greater connection of the church?

What impact does sharing in the bread and the cup have on your faith and how you live out that faith in connection with others?

Resource Recommendations

[The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today](#) - Theodore Runyon

[The Polity, Practice, and Mission of The United Methodist Church](#) -Thomas E. Frank