

Romans 12

We who are many are one body in Christ.

Produced by the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church to communicate effective principles and practices demonstrated by congregations that are actively making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

These congregations are marked by:

- Clarity around the mission and vision of the congregation.
- Practice of spiritual disciplines, both corporately and individually.
- Nurture of growth in discipleship through mutual support and accountability.
- Cultivation of intentional and mutual relationships with the most vulnerable—the poor, children, the imprisoned, the powerless.
- Consistent concern for inviting people into relationship with Jesus Christ, combined with wise practices for initiating them into the Body of Christ.
- Connectional relationships that facilitate participation in God's mission of global transformation.
- Shared clergy and lay leadership.

A United Methodist Connexion

Romans 12:4-5 describes the character of the Methodist movement John Wesley called “the Connexion.” It was an integrated network of societies within the Church of England all with the common mission “to reform the nation, particularly the Church; and to spread Scriptural holiness over the land.” John Wesley and the people called Methodists understood they could accomplish much more together than any of them could do individually.

Common Cup is an example of Methodist “connexion” today. Common Cup is the connection of 15 United Methodist congregations in the vicinity of Xenia, Ohio. Their tagline is “One Body In Our One Lord.” They realized several years ago that this collection of small to mid-sized congregations could accomplish much more together than any of them could do individually. Together they provide supper for the community every Wednesday. Fifty-five volunteers serve 180-220 meals every week. All are welcome, and a donation of \$6.00 is requested.

The Common Cup congregations are: Bellbrook, Cedarville, Eleazer, Evangelical, Faith Community, Jamestown, Lumberton, New Jasper, Oldtown, Port William, Richland-Crumley, Sharon, Spring Valley, Union, and Zoar United Methodist Churches.

Common Cup ministry also involves a shared Habitat for Humanity ministry, mission trips, joint worship services, and several other shared ministries and programs. The Common Cup ministry is guided by a Common Cup Council (CCC) in which pastors and lay people from the churches meet regularly to plan shared ministries. The Common Cup ministry continues to strengthen each church so that they can more effectively make disciples of Jesus Christ. Together they are “one body in our one Lord.”

Some Questions for Discussion

- How does your congregation partner with other congregations in your community to serve with Christ in the world through shared ministry?
- How has “connexion” with other Christians and congregations shaped your faith and helped you to be in mission?

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