

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.

This CLASS Is For You

The Christian Life And Service Seminar (CLASS), composed of four sessions, provides new members of Saint Mark United Methodist Church in Wichita, Kansas with an orientation to the congregation, The United Methodist Church, spiritual formation, and spiritual gifts. Participants learn to share their testimony and discover ways in which they can be in ministry to the community and congregation. These four sessions are held on Saturday or Sunday every month, except for July and September.

The four sessions are: Membership—Exploring Saint Mark; Maturity—A Closer Walk With God; Ministry—Discovering Your God Given Potential; and Mission—Discovering My Life Mission. The classes are open to anyone; however, they are especially designed for new members or those considering membership at Saint Mark. When people join the church, they are automatically registered for the next session of the first class. They receive a letter and phone call to remind them of the time and date for the class. At the completion of each session, participants are automatically registered for the next class.

Most people take the first class, but not everyone completes all four sessions. Participants particularly enjoy the spiritual gifts assessment, learning more about The United Methodist Church, and the growing relationships with others in the class. The congregation benefits from these classes as it builds a shared vision for ministry and develops strong leadership. Through the spiritual gifts inventory, the congregation is enabled to match people with an appropriate ministry opportunity.

Some Questions for Discussion

- How does your congregation prepare both old and new members for active participation in the ministry of the congregation?
- How are new members incorporated into your congregation? In addition to classes, what other methods do you use or might you use to ensure that every new member is welcomed into the faith community and helped to find a place of ministry in the congregation and the wider community?
- What are the expectations of members in your congregation? How are these expectations communicated?

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