

A Pastor's Profession of "Why I Am United Methodist"

Dear Friends and Inquirers of Our Church,

I find that the term United Methodist can be both an aid and a stumbling block to people seeking a church home. Because there are United Methodist Churches spread across our country in every sized city, most people have had some experience with and some preconceived ideas about us. In the following paragraphs I want to share a few of our Doctrinal Standards as United Methodists and a statement of my personal call and love for this church.

Our United Methodist heritage is Biblically solid and filled with Evangelical passion. Born out of the Wesley revivals of 18th Century England, it spread across North America through the Circuit Riders of the early frontier whose message was to "preach scriptural holiness across the land."

Our vision at Cornerstone is to hold to our scriptural heritage and present that Evangelical message in ways that will penetrate our present culture. Strategically our congregation is able to reach many people who have experienced "church" but never have experienced Christ and the new birth.

Before you embrace or dismiss our church because of preconceived ideas about United Methodists, I would encourage you to come and get to know us.

What Do We Believe?

United Methodists are bound together through a "connectional" system that is under girded by our Book of Discipline. What does our Book of Discipline declare as basic belief? (I am paraphrasing for purposes of brevity and clarity.)

TRINITY

There is one living and true God, the maker and preserver of all things. In the unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power and eternity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

JESUS

Jesus Christ is the eternal Word made flesh, the only begotten Son of the Father, born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. As a ministering servant, he lived, suffered and died on the cross. He was buried and bodily rose from the dead, wherewith he ascended into heaven and waits there until he returns to judge all people on the Last Day. He lives today as our eternal Savior and Mediator, who intercedes for us.

HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit proceeds from and is one in being with the Father and the Son. He convinces the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He leads people through faithful response to the Gospel into the fellowship of the Church. He comforts, sustains and empowers the faithful and guides them into all truth.

SCRIPTURE

The Old and New Testaments were given to us by God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and is our true guide for faith and practice in the Christian life. It contains all that is necessary for salvation and nothing else shall be taught as essential to salvation.

SALVATION AND JUSTIFICATION

We believe God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. The offering Christ freely made on the cross is the perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, redeeming humanity from all sin, so that no other satisfaction is required.

We believe we are never accounted righteous before God through our works or merit, but that repentant sinners are justified (declared righteous) before God only by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe regeneration is the renewal of man in righteousness through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature and experience newness of life. By this new birth the believer becomes reconciled to God and is enabled to serve him with all their being.

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ in the Gospel, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism is not only a sign of profession and a statement of faith by which we distinguish ourselves as separated to Christ, but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. The United Methodist Church also recognizes the baptism of young children whose believing parents covenant with God to raise that child in the faith until they make for themselves a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. We do not regard baptism as the means of salvation.

The Lord's Supper is both a sign of the love that Christians have among one another and a recognition of the grace of God poured out upon us through the redemption of Christ's death. We have been commanded to break the bread and drink the cup until Christ's return.

OUR VISION

Our Mission Statement for Cornerstone UMC is:

The SOLID ROCK. Shaping Our Lives In Discipleship that we may Reach Others for Christ's Kingdom.

There are many of us in the United Methodist Church who believe God is going to use our denomination as a launching pad for a new movement of the Holy Spirit across our nation. The signs are already appearing. In the last year we saw over 70 people commit their lives to Jesus Christ in our church and many more renew their commitment to Him. We are raising up disciples and sending them out to other communities and into the world.

If you are ready to get into the great Harvest for Jesus Christ, I would invite you to check us out and labor with us. May God bless you and use you!

In Christ,

Pastor Roger Spahr