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.

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EQUIPPING WORLD-CHANGING DISCIPLES

Opening Doors

Romans 12 congregations demonstrate by words and actions that they have clarity about how they live out the mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world in their congregations. Lake Adirondack Community Church in New York illustrates this by proclaiming on their web site "a United Methodist Church in denomination, a community church in spirit." Further investigation shows how the congregation lives out their mission.

- The church building is open daily for people to drop in for prayer and reflection, with this invitation "wherever you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here."
- Anyone can sign up for on-line Bible study.
- Their active mission program works ecumenically to serve the vulnerable and poor in the area.
- Church members visit the hospital and prison.
- They specifically invite men and youth for weekly gatherings.

A new member reports, "Our church is known as being brave enough to step out of a comfort rut, to try something new and exciting, which in turn opens the doors to many people of many ages. We also work well with the other churches to meet the needs of people for food, shelter, the basics of life."

A long time member says "Our congregation is known for having the church doors open—our Youth Ministry and Vacation Bible School are open to the whole community—our facilities are open for community meetings."

Another member says, "we welcome people with no spiritual background as well as those who are already disciples. There are many opportunities for people to get plugged in."

Some Questions for Discussion

- What do members of your congregation say when asked "what is your congregation known for in the community?"
- What do people in your community say about your church?
- What vision (picture) does your congregation have about the way mission is lived out in your context?

You can visit the Lake Adirondack Community Church web site at www.adkcomchurch.org. For more information about the leadership of laity contact Betsey Heavner at bheavner@gbod.org.

In 2007 church leaders throughout The United Methodist Church in the U.S. were invited to identify churches that demonstrated the vision of discipleship described in the twelfth chapter of Romans. Over 200 churches were surveyed or visited. Issue #13. © 2009 GBOD. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to copy this page for use in United Methodist congregations. To subscribe to this newsletter or for copies of previous newsletters go to http://www.gbod.org/Romans12