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.

In Plain View

We are a community of God's caring people, where the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed; disciples are made; and lives are transformed, equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring liberation throughout the community and world.

We believe God is calling us through the Holy Spirit, to a ministry of excellence, that seeks to reach all persons by providing a warm and loving Christian atmosphere, where children, youth, adults and families are nurtured and equipped to reach their God-given potential; to be an advocate for community empowerment: and, a prophetic voice for all oppressed peoples with love, grace and justice as our guiding force.

When you enter St. Luke "Community" UMC in Dallas, Texas this mission and vision are always in plain view— in the narthex, sanctuary, fellowship hall, and even in the bathrooms.

The mission and vision statements are used each week during worship as a call and response following the opening hymn. As the congregation plans its yearly calendar, the vision and mission are always before the various leadership groups including all external and internal ministries, worship, and special events. As they plan, these leaders always ask, "how does this fit into our mission statement and move us toward our vision for this congregation?"

In addition to St. Luke "Community" UMC, there are a number of other Romans 12 African American congregations for whom mission and vision statements are the guiding force in their planning process. This process supports congregations in keeping the main thing *the main thing*, and it puts them in a posture of being lead by the Holy Spirit as they seek to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Some Questions for Discussion

- Would a visitor have a good sense of the mission and vision of your congregation based on one visit?
- If you asked a youth member to tell you about your congregation's mission and vision, what would he or she say?
- How is your mission and vision in "plain view" through what people see in the church, what they hear, and what they do?

You can visit the St. Luke "Community" UMC web site at www.slcumc.org. Cheryl L. Walker is the Director of African American Ministries at the GBOD. She can be reached at clwalker@gbod.org.

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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 #20. © 2009 GBOD. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to copy this page for use in United Methodist congregations.