

Welcome to Ministry Council: How We Support Belmont's Ministry Process

Welcome to the Ministry Council. We've said yes to servant leadership in our church. We are blessed and called to be a blessing to our congregation and to those with whom we serve. By virtue of our baptism, God calls us with all Christians to faithful discipleship, to grow toward maturity in faith (Eph. 4).

In The United Methodist Church, our shared mission is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" (The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, or the Discipline, ¶120). At Belmont UMC, we articulate that same shared mission a little differently: "a community of Christ-followers growing in the love of God and neighbor" for the sake of the world.

We envision that transformation occurring through a cycle of discipleship (see the Discipline, ¶122) that mirrors movements in Jesus' ministry. Those movements can be described in a variety of ways. The story of Jesus' call to his first disciples in Luke 5:1-11 inspires this approach. With God's help and guidance, we will:

- Engage—reach out and receive people as they are into the body of Christ,
- Connect—enable people's living connection with God, the heart of who we are,
- Grow—create spaces for learning, spiritual practice, growth in the mind of Christ,
- Partner—facilitate and empower our partnering in God's mission to build up the body of Christ and contribute the transformation of the world in love and justice.

In Luke 5:1-11, in the story of Jesus calling his first disciples, we can clearly see these movements at play.

Engage— "Jesus saw two boats sitting by the lake....Jesus boarded one...that belonged to Simon." Jesus engaged Peter, James and John in a surprising way to gain their assistance.

Connect— "Jesus...asked him to row out a little ways from the shore...sat down and taught the crowds from the boat." These fisherfolk made room for Jesus at the center of their boat and relationships; they spent the day together listening to and connecting with Jesus.

Grow— "When he finished speaking...he said to Simon, 'Row out farther, into the deep water, and drop your nets for a catch...their catch was so huge that their nets were splitting.'" Jesus challenged his new friends to trust him, go deeper, and discover the promise in following him.

Partner— "James and John, Zebedee's sons, were Simon's partners... Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid. From now on, you will be fishing for people... they left everything and followed Jesus." With call and demonstration, Jesus transforms fishing partners into a partnership with God for loving people with the same saving, transforming love that flowed through Jesus.

Each ministry committee resources one of the movements for all, while each council resources the whole cycle for a particular generation or constituency. The ministries are intertwined. We all support the whole cycle of discipleship. We lead in a spirit of cooperation.

Let's remember, all of this is the Lord's work in and through us. We can lead our teams prayerfully, in ways that enrich and empower rather than exhaust and deplete. We can turn team meetings into opportunities to grow in loving, learning, and leading. We can best respond to what needs doing when we begin by celebrating where we see God's presence among us.