

# Tuscola United Methodist Church

## Our Disciple Formation Process

### **Mission** (What is the purpose of TUMC?)

The mission of TUMC is to **make and form disciples of Jesus Christ** (Matthew 28:19; *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (2008)*, paragraph 120 [The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.]).

### **Vision** (What will TUMC look like in 5 years?)

The vision of TUMC is to be a community of faith that is **reaching** out to the people in our mission field with hospitality, **responding** to the physical and spiritual needs, and **inviting** them to follow the way of Christ.

### **Description of a Disciple** (What is a disciple?)

A disciple is one who has accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, and who seeks to

- **Do no harm**
- **Do good**
- **Stay in love with God** (deeper love of God and neighbor)

### **Values/Spiritual Disciplines** (What does a disciple do?)

- Works of Piety
  - Prayer (speaking, listening to God)
  - Fasting (denying oneself to be more open to God)
  - Scripture (study, meditation)
  - Worship (Holy Communion, Baptism)
  - Christian Conversation (fellowship, encouragement and support, accountability)
- Works of Mercy
  - Outreach (feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick & imprisoned)
  - Faith Sharing (hospitality, inviting, evangelizing)
  - Stewardship (using gifts of time, talent, treasure)
  - Social Justice (working to change systems that support injustice toward others)

### **Stages of Faith of a Disciple** (How does a disciple grow spiritually?)

Because of the windy corner upon which TUMC sits, the power of wind is something that has meaning for us. The stages of faith are based on wind power.

**Windless** – May or may not be seeking to know God; if so, not sure where to begin; may not have ever made a commitment to follow Christ, or to be a member of a Christian church; needs to understand what journey of faith and following Christ is all about (stage 1)

**Gusts** – Looking for a way to connect to God; ready to begin the journey of faith within the context of a community of believers; needs to understand how to read and study the Bible; what it means to have a personal relationship with Christ (stage 2)

**Light Breeze** – Relationship with God becoming a priority in life; wants to spend time each day in prayer and Bible study; maybe ready to attend Sunday school or enroll in short term course during week (stage 3)

**Steady Breeze** – Ready to understand what it means to serve Christ by serving others; ready to be connected to Christian community by identifying and using gifts for ministry; understands the importance of the mission and vision of TUMC (stage 4)

**Strong Wind** – Realizes the importance of living out of the mission; commitment to investing in lives of others to help them become faithful, growing disciples of Jesus Christ (stage 5)

### **Means to Assist in Moving from Stage to Stage**

Moving out of stage 1, Windless:

This requires personal relationships with people who are growing, vital Christians, inviting them to come to worship, sharing with them about Christ and the Church in their own lives, praying for them regularly.

Moving into stage 2, Gusts:

**The Bible from Scratch** (7 sessions on OT, 8 sessions on NT; beginner class on the Bible for people who are new to Christianity)

**Three Simple Rules** (book presenting what it means to be a disciple, the basic rules of discipleship)

**Unbinding Your Heart** (6 session study using prayer journaling and faith sharing, to get people thinking about how God is at work in their lives)

Moving into stage 3, Light Breeze:

**Disciple Bible Study** (34 week study that covers the entire Bible, but many other thematic/short term studies under the Disciple heading)

**Companions in Christ** (26 week study covering faith journey, prayer, scripture, service, and spiritual guidance, but many other thematic studies under the Companions in Christ heading)

**Opening Ourselves to Grace** (DVD, four session study about practicing spiritual disciplines/means of grace in a way that will help us grow deeper in love with God and neighbor)

Moving into stage 4, Steady Breeze:

**Equipped for Every Good Work** (6 session study that helps people understand their spiritual giftedness, how they are wired for ministry, that they may live a life of grace in the Church)

**Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations** (5 session study that challenges congregations to become places practicing radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity)

Moving into stage 5, Strong Wind:

**Unbinding the Gospel** (8 session study that brings people deeper understanding of the role of prayer in evangelizing, growth in talking about personal faith journey)

Approved/Affirmed by Church Council, January 2010.