

## Our Mission

*Canton First United Methodist Church exists to glorify God and make disciples by sharing our lives with others so that everyone will find hope-filled life in Christ.*

The scriptural basis for our mandate is:

- *Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. 1 Thess 2.8 NIV*
- *Even though we had some standing as Christ's apostles, we never threw our weight around or tried to come across as important, with you or anyone else. We weren't aloof with you. We took you just as you were. We were never patronizing, never condescending, but we cared for you the way a mother cares for her children. We loved you dearly. Not content to just pass on the Message, we wanted to give you our hearts. And we did. 1 Thess 2.8 The Message*
- *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mk 10.45*
- *Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper. Jer 29.7*

This mandate addresses two particular theological concepts:

- Incarnation – God came in human form to live with us and serve the Father and humanity by giving His life.
- Redemption – since the fall of humanity God has been actively redeeming all of creation and to restore His kingdom on earth
- These two concepts come together in the call for Christ-followers to *live missionally*, intentionally aligning our lives to participate in God's redemptive act. Stated simply, our call as followers of Christ is to look for what God is doing and join Him in it.

As we unpack this missional mandate we realize:

- "Sharing our lives" means:
  - We believe that It is not a mistake that people are in our lives
  - We must reflect on and be willing to share our experiences and faith story in both our actions and our words as God makes opportunities to do so
  - We cannot give something we do not have – if we don't have a hope-filled life in Christ we cannot help others discover it.
  - We must not only be open and willing to share our faith story but we must be intentional to look for opportunities to do so.
- "Others" and "everyone" means:
  - Those with whom we come in contact as we live out our lives, in our home, workplace and places of recreation.
  - We believe and embrace that God brings people into our lives for a reason and purpose.

- These terms are all encompassing, meaning everyone, everywhere, all the time (Acts 1.8 as framework)
- “Hope-filled life in Christ” means:
  - That we are most fully alive when we find Identity, purpose and belonging in Christ
  - This ministry is completely dependent on relationships and Christ-centered community
  - Is both eternal life and the kingdom realized in the here and now
  - Following Christ’s example, we are called to meet people where they are but love them too much to leave them there.

Intentional, Christ-centered community is the foundational, essential element of our missional mandate. It will be realized as we equip and support Christian servants to live as everyday missionaries who meet people in their place of need and help them find identity, purpose, and belonging in a life-giving relationship with Christ.