

# Our Discipleship Strategy

*“Churches with a simple process for reaching and maturing people are expanding the kingdom... Conversely, churches without a process or with a complicated process for making disciples are floundering.”* – Thom Rainer

## Why a Discipleship Map?

- There are two reasons people do not engage beyond Sunday morning worship: 1) They don't know how, and 2) they have not been invited.
- The absence of a disciple-making strategy is the number one cause of ineffectiveness in a *healthy* church!
- Because the pathway is simple and clear, leadership teams share a common goal and no longer compete for resources.

## Our Discipleship Map is:

- ...the process or picture of how we will accomplish the mission on a broad level.
- ...the pattern of how our ministries fits together in fulfilling our mission.
- ...the rhythm of church life.
- ...the necessary steps for growing in faith.

At Canton First United Methodist Church we will grow disciples by asking every person to invest themselves in Christ-centered community, which has three foci:

### Intentional Community

- Intentional Community is a group of people who worship together, study together, pray together, and serve together to become the love of God for one another and others.
- The biblical model is seen in Acts 2.42-47.
  - Rejecting a culture of lies
  - Rejecting a culture of loneliness
  - Rejecting a culture of divisiveness
  - Rejecting a culture of self-reliance

### Experiencing God

- Experiencing God through an intimate, growing relationship is the number one factor for spiritual growth.
- The biblical model is seen in Jeremiah 29.11-13:
  - God first seeks us – *“For I know the plans I have for you...”*
  - We respond in worship and prayer – *“Then you will call on me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you.”*
  - It is a relationship of the heart – *“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”*

- We experience God in corporate worship, Christ-centered community, and personal spiritual practices.

### **Sharing Christ**

- Sharing Christ with others out our own experience is the authentic, natural mark of committed follower of Jesus.
- The biblical model is seen in John 4.39-42 – *“Many...from that town believed in [Jesus] because of the woman’s testimony...They said to the woman, ‘We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man is the Savior of the world.’”*
- We also share Christ by serving others, meeting people right where they are in life, caring for them, acting in mercy, and seeking justice.
- The biblical model is seen in Galatians 5.13 – *“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.”*

Our Discipleship Map is consistent with our theological heritage as Wesleyans. The marks of the early Methodist were threefold: 1) meeting together regularly in Societies, Classes, and Bands (Intentional Community); 2) participating in Acts of Piety (Experiencing God); and, 3) performing Acts of Mercy (Sharing Christ and Serving Others).