



# Millville United Methodist Church

## The Dove October 2016

Hello Church,

### Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down in My Heart

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”  
– Galatians 5:22-23(NIV)

If you remember from last month, we talked about love in our discussion of the fruit of the Spirit as described by Paul the Apostle in his letter to the church in Galatia. Next, we move on to one of my most beloved (and often struggled for) things in this list, joy. I hold the idea of joy in such high regard because I believe that aspiring for an ongoing state of joy in your life is one of the greatest pursuits one can have as a follower of Christ. When is the last time you used the word joy, either out loud or in your head? Can you remember the last time you associated any kind of experience with that word? You all know my feelings on how we use the word love and how casually we use it. Joy, by its connotation, isn't one we use or hear quite as often.

The only associations I have, in my recent memory, with feelings of joy come from time spent with our two children. Naturally, I take joy in them and with them in so many ways. If you have or have had small children in your life, ones that you love and are able to take part in their growing up, you know words can't describe it all. Not only do our children cause joy in my life, they are also

the greatest teachers and models of it. On so many occasions I have seen their faces, body language, voices, and very beings become the living embodiment of joy on earth. It is often caused by something seemingly small, such as a small toy or even something ordinary that I've found a way to play with.

Regardless of what I may think of the thing or the activity, I don't know its full potential until I put it before them. Whatever they were feeling or doing before or after this exchange, in that moment the whole world pauses and melts away, being replaced by this sheer and utter sensation of joy that can carry them through a few minutes, hours, and even be revisited later in the day. Although this joy is triggered by a certain something, I don't believe that this state of being is rooted in whatever it is the girls come across. I believe that to be a child, or even to live like one, primarily means you carry around this ongoing sense of joy and possibility in the world that can be triggered by any number of things. Jesus says in the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (18:3, NIV).

There is a wealth of inspiration and guidance that can be drawn from this statement, but I believe that Jesus is imploring with his followers to look upon their lives and world like a child. Imagine if you saw the wonder and hope of God in the smallest of

things? What if you felt the presence, love, and activity of God so powerfully in the most fleeting of moments? To do that on a regular basis would have a profound effect on all aspects of your life. You would never feel alone or that it was all up to you, because you would be continually reminded of how much God loves you and is with you. Like any parent, grandparent, or guardian and caregiver in any sense strives for with their child.

In Psalm 19 we hear these words, “The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul...The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.” (19:7-8, NIV). I believe the joy of the Lord is one of the greatest pursuits, but can be hard to come by, and that it is one of the most powerful testimonies of the faithful, because this joy is not fleeting or circumstantial. Happiness comes and goes. Joy is deep, it burrows down into our being and takes root there, waiting to be released again and again in its full glory and splendor. Through Christ we can know this joy and cling to it in all times, trials, and seasons of life. If you know this to be true, cherish it and rely on it as much as you can. If you don’t think you’re quite there, or it’s been a long time, I encourage you to prayerfully read Psalm 19 as often as you need and allow the Lord to lead you back into this fruitful relationship with our All in All.

Blessings, Pastor Brad

## The Outreach Team

Our Outreach Team had a very productive first meeting of the fall and can report that we have monthly events planned to introduce the community to our congregation and build relationships with those around us! Here is the schedule so far!

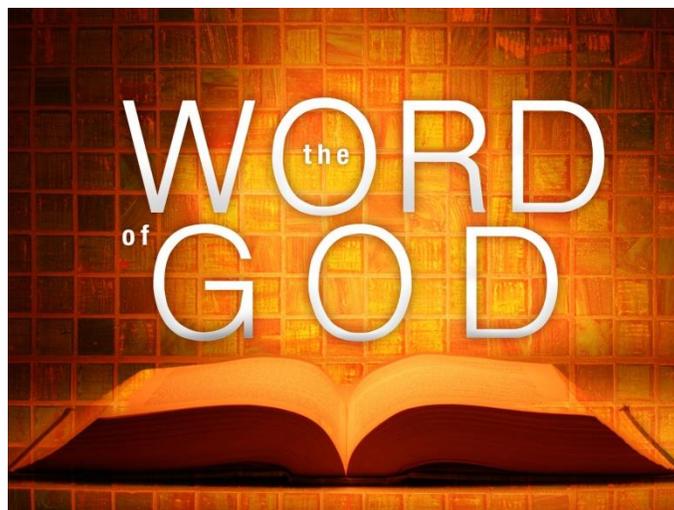
Our first big event will be our Annual Revival happening at the end of October! This will include All4Him, Thom Slaughter, the Sons of Thunder, and other music and speakers! Here’s what the rest of the year looks like.

October – Cops & Goblins in Ocean View (We’ll be giving away goodies for kids and adults)

November – We will have a free community movie night in Wesley Hall, where we will be showing the movie It’s a Wonderful Life

December – We will be having a Christmas Sing-a-Long somewhere in the community!

Stay tuned for more details and get ready to invite everyone you can!



## **Special Banking Benefit From Fulton Bank**

Our church banking relationship with Fulton Bank makes our members eligible to receive a special package of discounted financial services. To make those benefits available, you will need to open a checking account and arrange for a payroll direct deposit. Some of the benefits include:

- No minimum balance interest bearing checking account
- Five no-fee ATM transactions per statement
- On-line banking and bill payment
- Safe deposit box discounts

For a complete listing of benefits, and contact information at the Fulton Ocean View office, see the flyer at the back of this issue of the Dove, or pick up a short-form flyer from the information rack in the narthex.

Rich Spina

## **SAVE THE DATE**

You donated, we shopped, and now it's time to pack our shoe boxes. Join us on Sunday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, in Wesley Hall after our church service. Please come and take the opportunity to fill a box and share our Christian love through the outreach of Operation Christmas Child.

## **Fall Small Groups**

Starting in October Pastor Brad will be leading two small groups, a Book Club that will be meeting Tuesday mornings at 11:00am and a Bible Study/Small Group that will be meeting Sunday afternoons at 1:00pm. The Book Club will be doing a DVD based study of Rev. Adam Hamilton's latest book, **Half Truths: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves and Other Things the Bible Doesn't Say**. The book can be purchased on Amazon.com, Christianbook.com, or anywhere else books are sold. If you need the church to order you a book, please e-mail Pastor Brad and he will compile an order. The first topic of his Sunday Bible Study will be Holy Communion. This study is especially important because it will be based off a curriculum he has created for his Ordination paperwork that will be submitted for approval by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Part of this paperwork involves survey forms completed by church members who have attended the study. Basically, he needs people to come to this and give feedback so he can be ordained. Look in your bulletin for exact dates!

## **Aging Faithfully**

Aging Faithfully will again hold Cookie BINGO on the second Tuesday of the month: October 11th. Come be part of the Christian fellowship, the laughs, the cookies. Wesley Hall at 10:00.

**UMW ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**  
**Saturday, November 19, 8 AM**

**MUMC: Please help us with our Christmas Bazaar**

**We'll take your "vintage" (old) Christmas and fall decorations and jewelry. Bring them to Wesley Hall by Wednesday, Nov. 17. We'll do the rest.**

**Also, we love having your delicious baked goods. Please bring them Friday, Nov. 18 between 1- 3 PM or early Saturday morning.**

**On Saturday, Nov. 19, we'll need as much help as possible. Come help us meet, greet and tempt our guests with goodies and invitations to our church.**

**All our proceeds go to mission work!  
Please call Marie Myers  
@ 539-4623 with any questions.**



**SUNDAY POT LUCKS**

As some of you may have heard, Joe and I are planning to have pot luck dinners once a month on Sunday evenings at Wesley Hall. They will be held the first Sunday of each month at 4pm. We will simply gather, eat and spend a little time together. Each family will be expected to bring an entree, salad or side dish. Be sure to bring at least enough for a medium-sized family. The beverage will be provided.

How many of you remember Sunday dinners at your mother's or with family? I do and I miss it. We, here at MUMC are God's family, let's get together like a family.

This activity has been planned early enough for those who are daylight drivers. If you need a ride, we can accommodate that, too, but you will have to let us know.

The first dinner will be held on Sunday, November 6th at 4pm. Look for a signup sheet at the Sunday service before then. Or call me. Our plans may evolve over time as needed.

**COME BE A PART OF OUR POT LUCK FAMILY. BRING A FRIEND!**

In Christ's Love,  
Elizabeth  
302-732-9684

## UMW United Methodist Women

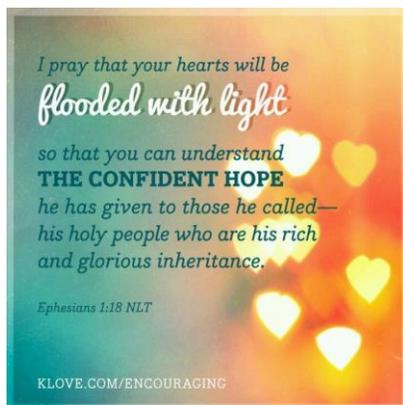
Our summer bake sales were a great success again this year. We had many repeat customers that were delighted with our goodies. A big THANK YOU to all of our wonderful bakers and helpers.

This year's November 19th Christmas Bazaar is coming fast. Marie Myers is our chairwoman for this much anticipated event. The ladies are working very hard on many crafts. We will be trying something new for our lunch menu. Instead of our soup, we will be selling chili, cornbread, hot dogs and sodas. Coffee, tea, hot chocolate and breakfast pastries will be available in the morning. There will be more information to follow next month.

September devotion was a lesson on Gomer, wife of Hosea. Not many of us were familiar with Gomer, but we had a good discussion after learning about her.

We invite and encourage all ladies of the church to join us the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am in Wesley Hall. Our next meeting will be on October 4th.

May God bless us with kind hearts.



## 2016-2017 Charge Conference, Acts 1:8 Assembly

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* (Acts 1:8 NIV)

Time is nearing to gather at our 2016-2017 Charge Conferences, what we have named the **Acts 1:8 Assembly**. This year's theme for our conference is "**Call to Bold Prayers**". I am praying that we may be anointed by the Holy Spirit at this holy conference:

- to know the importance of **PRAYING together with boldness, "bold corporate prayer"**;
- for the sake of our *apostolic witnessing*, as promised in Acts 1:8;
- so that we can honor our Heavenly Father God who honors our **bold prayers**

I prefer holding a church conference so that we can "encourage broader participation by members of the church" (2012 Book of Discipline, BOD, ¶248). (Note the time requirements for publicizing a church conference to the congregation.) Churches who want to have a "charge conference" are also encouraged to do so. Please read carefully BOD ¶247 for *powers and duties* of the charge conference.

As stated in BOD ¶247.3, I will not only receive reports but will look for the "**adopted goals and objectives**" of your own church. I will look for pastoral reports with clear achievements for the past year and future goals. I will explain about this further at the pre-charge conference. I invite pastors and those who prepare charge/church conference reports to attend the pre-charge conference at Avenue UMC, Milford, at 6:30 p.m. on August 23, 2016.

Churches are supposed to submit a master copy--containing all of the reports—to the District Office one week prior to the conference. Churches should then compile participant copies containing only the items that need a vote at the conference. As for the list of required reports for master and participants, we plan to attach them on the website of our conference, along with an **agenda** for our time together, **schedule**, and items (**instructions and forms**) as soon as they become available.

As we did last year, we will continue cluster conferences this year. Clusters were created to join churches within geographical proximity for the following purposes:

- *to maximize our efficiency in communicating and managing our resources as a district;*
- *to offer you the opportunity to share ideas and learn from one another;*
- *to be able to connect/celebrate similar ministries;*
- *to examine challenges together;*
- *and, to embrace united visions as the district.*

In order to give newly appointed pastors additional time to get to know their churches we have planned the schedule to offer later dates to those churches. We will take into account special requests considering each local church's specific situations; however, unless you have a major conflict, we ask that you not attempt to reschedule. As always though, grace prevails.

Please encourage your congregation's participation in our **Acts 1:8 Assembly**. I look forward to the LORD's anointing as we reflect together on this scripture, "*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy*

*Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*" (Acts 4:31).

**Blessings,**  
**The Rev. Dr. Kyung Hee Sa**  
**Dover District Superintendent**

### **The Nominations Committee**

With the work of our Nominations Committee finished for the year and our Church Conference coming up very soon, we have some openings on a couple of our committees that still need to be filled. In this month's Dove you'll find the descriptions of the Nominations Committee, Finance Committee, and Board of Trustees. We still need one person on each of the incoming classes of Nominations and Trustees, and our incoming class of Finance is totally empty! Our church is led by faithful volunteers who offer up their hearts, prayers, time, and voices to lead Millville UMC in the direction that represents all of us and what God is calling us to do. This process works only when we have all the voices we can from all corners of our church involved! You don't need to have an expertise in the work of any committee, just be willing to learn, contribute, and serve. Please look over these descriptions and pray about where you are being led to serve our congregation. If you have any questions or would like to serve on any of these committees, please get in contact with Pastor Brad.

## The Finance Committee

### Result Expected

An effective finance committee proposes a budget; then raises, manages, and distributes the financial resources of the congregation to support and strengthen the mission and ministry of the congregation.

### Spiritual Gifts and Qualifications Helpful for the Job

- The members of this committee benefit from having one or more of these spiritual gifts: giving, faith, wisdom, administration, discernment, helping, leadership, exhortation (encouragement), and teaching.
- Useful skills and experience for this position are the ability to listen to and communicate with people of all ages; skills and interest in financial budgetary matters; a passion for financially supporting the mission of making Christian disciples for the transformation of the world; and the ability to work with individuals and ministry teams.
- The chair of finance needs a strong understanding of biblical stewardship and management of all that God provides. Basic skill with financial matters is helpful and can be supplemented by skills of others on the committee.
- The congregation's committee on nominations and leadership development may establish specific standards for this position.

### Responsibilities of the Chairperson

- The finance chair works with the leadership team chair, the church staff, and other ministry leaders to fulfill the mission of the church. The finance chair works with the trustees to handle designated gifts and bequests in accordance with *The Book of Discipline*.
- This person will guide the work of the finance team through the year, including planning agendas and presiding at meetings.
- This leader will gather all budget requests to be reviewed by the committee, ensure that the congregation and pastor(s) are informed about the church's financial situation, and recommend to the church council any changes that need to be made in the budget after it has been approved.
- This leader is accountable to the charge conference through the church council.

### Responsibilities of the Committee

- The finance committee annually compiles a budget for supporting the mission and vision of the local church and submits the budget to the church leadership team for review and adoption. During the year, the finance team recommends any changes to the approved annual budget to the church leadership team.
- This team is responsible for developing and carrying out plans to raise enough income to support the budget that has been approved.
- Both the finance team and individual members need to engage in spiritual practices that attend to God's will and direction. Team members need to hold one another accountable to decisions and actions that fulfill the mission and vision of the church.

- The finance team (or committee) recommends to the church leadership team proper depositories for church funds and carries out the church leadership team's directions about administration and disbursement of funds and about procedures for the church treasurer and the financial secretary.
- There are three tasks not specifically assigned to the treasurer, financial secretary, or the chairperson of the committee on finance by the *Discipline*. Keeping these responsibilities separate is essential in maintaining segregation of duties. These tasks are: (1) approving payments for expenditures; (2) signing checks; (3) reconciling bank accounts. While the treasurer, financial secretary, or finance chairperson may be authorized to do any one of these tasks, no person should be authorized to do more than one. No persons related to one another should perform any two or more of these three tasks.
- This team arranges for an annual audit of financial records and makes a report of this audit to the charge conference.
- In congregations in which there is no stewardship team or committee, the finance committee has responsibility for teaching disciples a biblical understanding of abundance and generosity and stewardship of all resources.
- The finance leaders of the church are accountable to the charge conference through the church council.
- New language was added to the *2016 Book of Discipline* that expands/clarifies the responsibilities of the pastor in regard to giving. Paragraph 340.2.c.(2)(c) now reads: "To provide leadership for the funding ministry of the congregation. To ensure membership care including

compliance with charitable giving documentation requirements and to provide appropriate pastoral care, the pastor, in cooperation with the financial secretary, shall have access to and responsibility for professional stewardship of congregational giving records."

### **Getting Started**

1. Work to understand how your financial leadership role advances the vision for ministry in your unique congregation, especially how to get funding priorities aligned with your mission and vision.
2. Set aside time for prayer. Express your concerns, joys, and observations to God, and listen for God's direction for your leadership. Ask God for direction about wise management of the congregation's financial resources. Ask God to increase the understanding you and your congregation have for the role of stewardship in forming Christian disciples.
3. Soon after you are elected, convene a meeting of the finance committee to assess the present situation and plan for the year.
4. Talk with people in your congregation who have (or have had) responsibilities similar to yours. Get acquainted with leaders of financial institutions where congregational funds are deposited and keep abreast of the changes in financial processes (institutional regulations as well as cultural changes such as the trend toward electronic money management). Recruit others in the community and church to help you in fundraising, finance management, and teaching financial stewardship.

5. Evaluate the current budget and record keeping processes of your congregation and implement improvements.
6. Study *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation, 2017-2020: Finance* and participate in training experiences.

### **Trustees Job Description** **Result Expected**

Effective trustees will function as Christian stewards of property God has entrusted to the congregation. This includes supervising and maintaining both the physical property of the congregation and gifts made to the congregation so that the ministries of the congregation can be effective and all legal requirements related to the property are satisfied.

### **Spiritual Gifts and Qualifications Helpful for the Job**

- Trustees benefit from having one or more of these spiritual gifts: servanthood, helping, discernment, leadership, administration, and giving. The chairperson should show evidence of prior effective ministry leadership, especially in the area of stewardship of assets, and this leader should exhibit evidence of active and growing discipleship.
- Useful knowledge and skills for this position are knowledge of property and asset management, ability to listen to and communicate with people of all ages and the ability to work with other ministry leaders. The chair should show prior ability to preside over meetings, the ability to delegate responsibility and to follow up to complete tasks.

- Trustees should show genuine interest in responding to the hopes and concerns of people in the community and show willingness to partner with community interests.
- The congregation's committee on nominations and leadership development may establish specific standards for this position.

### **Responsibilities of the Chairperson**

- This leader guides the work of the trustees throughout the year, including preparing and communicating the agenda for meetings, leading the meetings, following up on plans by assigning responsibility for implementation and coordinating both routine and special maintenance of church property, including endowments, trust funds, and gifts made to the congregation.
- The chairperson should maintain a healthy and growing spiritual life.
- This person needs to become familiar with disciplinary and legal requirements related to church property and with United Methodist resources and organization.
- This person should consult regularly with the pastor about property matters.

### **Responsibilities of the Committee**

- This team, subject to the direction of the charge conference, has oversight and care of all local church property, buildings, and equipment to further the mission of the church. This work is done in consultation with the pastor.
- This team and individual trustees need to engage in spiritual practices that build attentiveness to God's will and direction. Church administration and attentiveness to daily affairs can distract the team from the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Trustees need to hold one another accountable to the mission and vision of the church.

- Trustees receive and administer all gifts made to the congregation and make certain that trust funds of the congregation are invested properly.
- Trustees ensure that the Articles of Incorporation of the congregation are kept up-to-date.
- Trustees annually review property, liability, and crime insurance coverage on church-owned property, buildings, and equipment. They also review personnel insurance for protection against risk and consult with the pastor-parish relations team about other personnel insurance.
- Trustees conduct an annual accessibility audit of buildings and grounds to discover and then work toward eliminating barriers that impede the full participation of all people.
- The team submits annual budget requests to the committee on finance for property maintenance and improvement and new property purchases.
- Trustees are accountable to the charge conference and the church council. The term “trustees” as used in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* may be construed to be synonymous with “director of corporations” when required to comply with law.

### **Getting Started**

1. Talk with the nominating committee, the pastor, and others to understand their hopes and dreams for the way that trustees can advance the congregation’s vision for ministry. Talk with people in the congregation and community about

current issues and concerns related to the use of the church property.

2. Set aside time for prayer. Express your concerns, joys, and observations to God, and listen for God’s direction for your leadership and for your congregation.
3. Study *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation, 2017-2020: Trustees* and participate in training experiences.
4. Convene the first meeting of the board of trustees within thirty days of the beginning of the calendar year to get acquainted, assess needs, and make plans for the year.

### **Nominations and Leader Development Committee Job Description Result Expected**

An effective committee on nominations and leader development identifies, develops, deploys, evaluates, and monitors Christian spiritual leadership so that the congregation carries out the ministries for transformation of the community. The committee guides church leaders (whether called a church council or administrative board or another name) on matters regarding laity in leadership of the congregation.

### **Spiritual Gifts and Qualifications Helpful for the Committee**

This committee is made of of no more than nine people, one of whom must be a young adult. One-third of this committee is elected annually by the charge conference. The committee is to elect people who have one or more of these spiritual gifts: administration, discernment, exhortation (encouragement), helping, knowledge, servanthood, teaching, and wisdom. Members of this committee should show evidence of growing discipleship

and willingness to help others identify their places of ministry. *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* states that the pastor shall be the chair of the group and a layperson shall be vice-chair who may represent the committee at meetings of the church leadership team.

### **Responsibilities of the Committee**

- Members of this committee are to be attentive to their own Christian spiritual lives and engaged in biblical and theological reflection about God's call and the mission of the church. This committee
- helps members of the church identify their calls from God, their leadership gifts, and places for Christian service.
- This committee leads the congregation to understand that God gives gifts, skills, and experiences to every individual within the body of Christ for ministry for the transformation of the world. Individual ministry may be lived out within personal relationships, in work or school settings, and in the congregation.
- This committee develops a system for becoming familiar with people in the congregation. It helps people discover their spiritual gifts, name their skills, interests, knowledge, and life experiences in addition to developing a system for tracking this information.
- This committee works cooperatively with other groups or individuals to prepare job descriptions that are adapted to the needs and organizational style of the church.
- This committee becomes familiar with the responsibilities for each leadership position and matches potential leaders with particular opportunities for spiritual leadership.
- This committee invites people to positions of spiritual leadership, receives their

responses, and provides training and support for these individuals.

- This committee presents a nomination list to the charge conference for a church council chair, a committee on pastor (staff) parish relations and its chair, a board of trustees, a committee on finance (to include chair, financial secretary, and treasurer), a lay member to annual conference, and a lay leader. The committee works with the church council (or other leadership group) throughout the year to name other leaders for the ministry that fulfills the mission of the congregation.

### **Responsibilities of the Chairperson (the Pastor)**

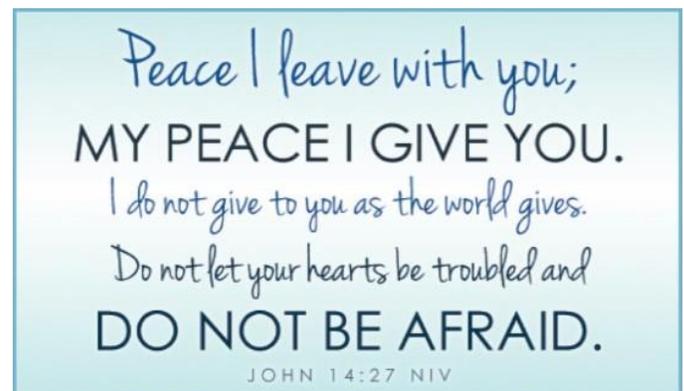
- Work in partnership with the layperson who is co-chair or vice chair to plan agendas and lead meetings.
- Work with the church council to develop a comprehensive plan for connecting growing Christian disciples with leadership opportunities based on the mission and vision of the congregation.
- Report to the church council and the charge conference a list of people nominated by the committee who have agreed to serve in positions that the charge conference elects.
- Provide resource materials and training opportunities for congregational leaders. (See suggestions in other sections of this booklet.)

### **Getting Started**

1. Review this material and read the *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation 2017-2020: Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development*.

2. Meet together as a committee soon after your election by the charge conference to plan your work. Engage the committee in Bible study and theological reflection to understand the work of discerning and articulating God's call to individuals for ministry and leadership.
3. Explore resources for helping Christians understand their God-given gifts and the connection of gifts with a call to ministry. Prepare yourself and the committee for building a congregational culture that links God's call with the mission of making disciples who will be disciple makers. Consider ways to build comprehensive teaching and preaching about God's call of people into the body of Christ to live fully, using their spiritual gifts and life experiences as they participate in God's mission to the world.
4. Check to see what records of potential leaders exist. Update these and plan to gather additional information.
5. Involve all committee members in building a culture of leader development in your congregation. Talk with people about their skills, spiritual gifts, interests, and availability for leadership positions. Begin to think about the best ways to involve new people in leadership roles, paying attention to the rotation of lay leadership.
6. With the church leadership team and others, review the mission and vision of your congregation and the needs of the community to determine which areas of responsibility will require what kinds of leaders during the coming year.
7. Consider ways your committee can plan programs, workshops, and other ways to help individuals uncover their gifts for ministry, support individuals in their

ministry, and provide leadership development training.



## Words of God: Justification 1 By Ed Thornton

### Introduction

Justification is God's act of removing the guilt and penalty of sin while at the same time declaring a sinner righteous. It is a one-time act, a gift from God. Righteousness is the state of perfection required by God to enter heaven. Justification is granted to all who exercise faith.

The teaching of justification by faith is what separates biblical Christianity from all other belief systems. In every religion, and in some branches of what is called “Christianity,” man is working his way to God. Only in true, biblical Christianity is man saved as a result of grace through faith. Only when we get back to the Bible do we see that justification is by faith, apart from works. Without an understanding of justification by faith alone, we cannot truly perceive the glorious gift of grace—God’s “unmerited favor” becomes “merited” in our minds, and we begin to think we deserve salvation.

Holding to justification by faith keeps us from falling for the lie that we can earn heaven. There is no ritual, no sacrament, no deed that can make us worthy of the righteousness of Christ. It is only by His grace, in response to our faith, that God has credited to us the holiness of His Son.

It is the very knowledge of justification and of grace that motivates good works and spiritual growth; thus, justification leads to sanctification. Also, the fact that justification is a finished work of God means that Christians have assurance of their salvation. In God’s eyes, believers have the righteousness necessary to gain eternal life.

What does the Old Testament say about the basis for justification?

Read Genesis 15: 1-6

In its simplest form, the central theme of Scripture can be described as God's relationship with His people. Justification is a term which explains how we enter a proper relationship with God. Justification is the remedy for the problem of sin which separates us from God.

THE BIG QUESTION IS: How can a holy, righteous, and just God declare a guilty sinner to be absolutely righteous? The answer to this question is given for the first time in Genesis 15:6: “*Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him for righteousness*”. That is why this verse is considered one of the most important doctrinal verses in the whole Old Testament. **The single human requirement for justification is belief. God requires faith.**

Let's look at what was involved in Abraham's faith. We notice three things about Abraham's faith:

- First the OBJECT of Abraham's faith
- Second the CONTENT of Abraham's faith
- And third the RESULT of Abraham's faith.

What was THE OBJECT OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH?

The **object** of his faith is clearly given to us in verse 6: **He believed the Lord.** Faith has to have a certain object, it has to be faith in someone/something before that faith is a saving faith. And for Abraham that object was God. Abraham trusted in God.

What was THE CONTENT OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH?

What was it exactly that Abraham believed? He believed in the promises of God. Remember his story in verses 1-5. He knew his age. He also knew that Sarah, his wife, could not bear children. Yet he believed when God came to him and said, "You shall have a son." He believed that God could do what He promised.

Finally what was THE RESULT OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH?

Abraham was justified; he was declared righteous by God. By believing the promise that God who would ultimately give him an offspring he starts a lineage that would produce the Savior of the world.

What was it that made Abram's faith so strong? The answer is that he did not look at the difficulty so much as he looked at the One who had promised. His eye was not resting on the problems, but upon the Promiser. When he saw the greatness of God, the might and majesty displayed before him on that summer's night, he said to himself, It makes no difference how I feel or what difficulties may be involved. The Creator of that multitude of stars is quite capable of giving me an equal number of descendants.

So we read the great sentence, He believed the Lord, and he credited it to him for righteousness. This does not mean that this was the first moment that Abram was reckoned righteous before God—that is, this is not the moment of his spiritual regeneration. The book of Hebrews makes clear that when he left Ur of the Chaldees, in response to God's command, his obedient faith was also credited to him for righteousness. This incident under the stars is simply one instance out of many that illustrates the way in which God credits righteousness to the person who believes. Abram believed God about the promise of a coming son and was reckoned righteous by faith.