

Go Make of All Disciples - II

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

—Matthew 22:36-40, NRSV

Picture this scene. The family is together in the living room. Cluttering the room are schoolbooks, dirty clothes not put in the laundry room, clean clothes waiting to be folded, dirty dishes, DVDs not put away, videos not put away, overflowing trash. Are you getting the picture?

Mom walks in on the scene. She says, “All right; it’s time to clean up. One brave child (not the husband, mind you, he knows better) asks, “Who are you talking to?”

What is the answer? Mom is talking to the family. Not just to one or two people, but to that unit that is the family.

Christ said, “Go make disciples of all nations.” Who is Christ talking to? The family of faith. The body of Christ.

Paul, very early in his ministry, described the body of Christ. I often use that phrase because I view these words of Paul to be among the most important words in Scripture, second only to the words “Christ

is risen.” The image of all of us, in all our diversity, made one in Christ, is what the church is supposed to be about. Christ is risen. Through the power of the Spirit, Christ is present in the world. Through the power of the Spirit, people are supposed to be able to look at the church and see the presence of Christ in the world.

The tragedy of the church today is, so often, people fail to see the body of Christ when they look at the church. The church treats itself like a collection of individuals. People talk about being “born again” as if it were something they did for themselves. People talk about the church as though it were a service organization in place to tend to their needs. A place where they can feel close to God, where they can get a spiritual high, a place where their children can be taught the right things. In part, those things do happen and are supposed to happen.

First, however, the church is a creation of God, a creation of the Spirit. A unit, a family, forged together out of individuals. We summarize the vision of the church in the liturgy we use when we celebrate Communion. We are a creation of the Spirit, one with Christ, one with each other and one in ministry with the world. Did you ever hear someone say he or she hates organized religion? If you are Christian, that is the only game in town. There is no such thing as a Christian all by oneself. A Christian always sees himself or herself as part of other people’s lives—the body of Christ.



Love—of God and for one another—enables the Spirit of God to hold us together. We can choose to resist the Spirit of God. We have free will. In order for the Spirit to make us one, we need to cooperate. We need to love God and one another. To understand how the Spirit uses our love, consider the observations of an eighth-century Christian monk Dorotheos of Gaza.

Dorotheos was troubled because, in his monastery, a community devoted to God, there was little love. Brothers fought with one another, stole from one another and were jealous of one another. This community, devoted to God, had all the problems of the world.

“How,” thought Dorotheos, “can people who claim to love God have such trouble getting along?” These thoughts led him to consider the command to love God and one another. “Surely loving God and loving one another must be connected,” he concluded, “for doesn’t Scripture say we don’t really love God who we cannot see if we don’t love those we can see. As he studied this problem, I think the Spirit led him to contemplate a wagon wheel—to consider its solid center, the spokes radiating out and holding the rim firmly in place. As he studied the spokes, he noted that the closer you get to the hub, the closer the spokes are to one another. At some point, the Spirit led Dorotheos to see that wheel as a model for our relationship with God and one another.

Imagine that the universe is like a great wheel. At its center is God. Radiating out from the center are the spokes, one for each of us. We live our lives along those spokes. In our lives, we can move closer to God or move away from God. As we move toward God, toward the center, we come closer together. If we set out to move more closely together, we move closer to God. If we move away from God, we move away from one another. If we move away from one another, we move away from God.

The body of Christ is meant to look like that wheel, made up of people who love both God and one another, people constantly trying to move closer to God and one another. When we offer the world that love, when we offer God that love, God can use it to knit us together—to make us the body of Christ.

Loving one another does not mean you must feel affection toward everyone. People often misunderstand the nature of Christian love. Christian love is not the same as affection. Christian love cares about the needs and lives of other people, even people we might not like. Christian love is about being concerned for another and another’s welfare, even if that same person does not care about you. Loving your enemies does not mean you like them. It does mean you acknowledge your oneness with them, even when they will not acknowledge their oneness with you. They are children of God, just as you are a child of God.

This brings us back to Matthew 28:19. When Jesus says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,” he is speaking to the body of Christ. As creations of the Spirit, we understand we are one with Christ, one with each other and one in ministry with world. The body of Christ is to make itself available as a tool God can use to make disciples.

The call to the church is not to grab people by the lapels and scream in their faces, “Are you saved?” The call is allow God to show the world Christ’s presence by showing the world the body of Christ. We are called to allow ourselves, as the body of Christ, to be used by God to make disciples.

God uses the body of Christ to make disciples by showing Jesus Christ in us. God makes us disciples by showing us the body of Christ in one another. The closer we move toward God and one another, the greater is God’s work in our lives and in the world.

Jesus, like Mom speaking to the family, is speaking to all of us, “Go . . . make disciples of all nations.” For God to use the church, we must forget the idea that we are individuals, focused on insuring our own salvation. Only when we open ourselves to be the body of Christ, loving God and one another, can God use us to make disciples.

—The Rev. Dennis Meaker



Missionary Cherie White to visit September 6

On **Sept. 6**, Cherie Velazco White, the mother of José Velazco, our volunteer Sunday-morning translator, will visit West Nashville UMC to preach and to share information about her mission work in Mexico. She said, “I’ve been at the seminary for 17 years, but have been in Mexico since 1975, serving in other capacities. I was in Chile for three years prior to that, and I am a missionary kid. I’m also a graduate of Scarritt College, where my father was a professor.” Here are excerpts from her recent newsletter.

“You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.’”

—Psalm 91:1-2, NRSV

These words of trust in God are so apropos for the things I want to share.

On June 20, eight students graduated from our seminary residency and extension programs. As a teacher and academic dean, I know the words of this psalm have been an important part of their faith as they chose to respond to God’s call, studied four years, and now accept the reality of being in ministry full time. Some had serious health or family situations that almost kept them from finishing. Others encountered the usual challenges to ministry as they carried out their student practice. Yet, they persevered because they believe God is their refuge and fortress.

Recently we traveled to Morelia, Michoacán, so José Luis could preach at the 60th wedding anniversary of friends, also in ministry. It was a lovely occasion; yet while we were there, drug lords attacked the federal police headquarters there and in six other cities. The war against the drug lords is a violent reality with up to 30 or 40 deaths per day in different areas of Mexico. While this reality has not affected us directly, it must concern us as Christians. In one part of the state of Guerrero, where the Methodist Church of Mexico has a couple of missions, the current minister and former pastors were threatened. One

young woman minister was killed. Why? They opposed the growing of drugs by people in their congregations. The drug lords make it impossible for the impoverished peasants to refuse to plant such crops; yet, their lives do not improve. I have heard several ministers mention their faith and trust in God, and the importance of accompanying the people despite everything.

Finally, we have found comfort and refuge in God over these past months since the death of our 19-year-old son, Roberto Byron. We are grateful to everyone who shared love and condolences.

I will visit as many supporting churches as possible from September to mid-December.

—Cherie White, Mexico City

What is a charge and why do we need a conference?

On Tuesday, **Sept. 29**, the church will hold its annual charge conference presided over by District Superintendent John Collett.

A charge—United Methodism’s main organizational unit—is a church, or group of associated churches, served by one or more appointed pastors. Before coming to West Nashville UMC in 2001, I served the Santa Fe Charge in Maury County. It included four churches who shared me as their pastor. West Nashville UMC is a station charge, which means there is just one church.

A charge will have many different meetings throughout the year dealing with the operations of the church. For instance, here at West Nashville, the administrative board meets monthly and other committees—trustees, finance, staff parish—meet as needed to work on the business and ministries of the church. However, the charge is also part of the annual conference (in our case, the Tennessee Annual Conference).

The annual conference is composed of many churches in a region. These churches are connected for purposes of governing activities and facilitating ministries within a region. Part of every dollar given to West Nashville UMC supports annual conference



ministries. The Tennessee Annual Conference has about 300 charges.

The United Methodist Book of Discipline requires each charge to meet annually under the supervision of the district superintendent. At this meeting, the church reports to the conference on its ministries and activities for the prior year. Participants elect officers for the next year, and set and approve appointed pastors' salaries. Some of the reporting that takes place is on forms specified by the conference. However, a charge conference is also an opportunity for the church to celebrate its ministries and discuss plans for the coming year.

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the charge conference **Sept. 29**.

Wednesday night opportunities continue!

Do you need a midweek pickup? **Energy**, a Wednesday-evening program for adults and children (including a community meal)—began in August and will continue throughout the year. Here is the schedule:

6-7 p.m.: Community meal

7 p.m.: Programs begin

8 p.m.: Community gathering in the sanctuary for closing prayer and sharing in song.

We have exciting programs planned for all ages:

Spark - play, sing and act - for children

Alternative - chat, lead and inspire - for youth

Renew - discuss, support and believe - for adults

Create - make a joyful noise - adult choir

For more information or to volunteer with programs or food, please contact Angela or Sherry.

Sunday school

Every Sunday, we offer classes from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.:

Spanish-language class for adults, Gothard Room.

Media class for youth and adults, Memorial Hall.

Childcare for ages 3 and younger in the nursery.

Younger children meet in the classroom next to the nursery.

Older children meet in the room behind the choir room.

New Sunday school class begins in September.

Sherry will lead a new, six-week adult Sunday school class on the book of Colossians. She will write the curriculum and film part of the class as an integral part of her commissioning process. Please consider being a part of this experience.

Prayer concerns

Joan Berg, Barbara Dunlap-Berg's mother

Diane Luton Blum, sympathy for the loss of her sister, Beth Luton

Tom Brucker's mother

Mary Ellen Carney, Helen Dozier's daughter

Gloria Cardona, Myriam Cortes' mother

Al T. Cobb, recovering from accident (he is A.J. Cobb's father)

Albert E. Curtis, Mabel Jackson's friend

Danny and Angela Flanagan – many members of their extended families are in ill health

Louise Gafford, in hospice care

Julia Hedgepath – sympathy for the loss of her sister, Pam Stout

Robert Hendrickson, Dot Hendrickson's son

Mabel Allene Jackson

Dorothy Lish

Mary McKnight, recovering from a stroke.

Sean Michael Mevis

Susan Rodgers, sympathy for the loss of her mother, Doreen

Helen Sellers

Mitzi Stafford and family, sympathy for the loss of her grandmother

The Velazco-White Family, sympathy



Attendance and offerings

Average worship attendance for August: 70
Average Sunday school attendance for July: 22
July giving: \$6,643
Year to date as of July 31, 2009: \$47, 839

Joys

It is a joy to see pictures of church families popping up on the bulletin board. Take time to learn names and faces. If you are not there, give a photo to Angela Flanagan.

It is a joy to welcome back Nashville-area college and graduate students who participate in the ministries of West Nashville UMC.

Congratulations!

We celebrate graduations for two of our young adults.

Nicole Lee, daughter of Jere and Evon Lee, graduated from the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Program and now has a Master's of Science degree in nursing. Her formal pinning ceremony was Aug. 2, 2009.

Julian Chatham-Tombs, son of Beth Chatham, graduated Aug. 8, 2009, from Middle Tennessee State University. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in nutrition.

Back to school

Over the summer, we enjoyed the presence of many of our young adults who recently returned to college. Please be in prayer for them as they continue their academic careers:

Amy Cover – Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas;
Leah Cover – Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa.;
Michael Cover – Case-Western Medical School, Cleveland, Ohio;
Kristen Dunlap-Berg – North Central College, Naperville, Ill.;
Kelsey Horick – Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas;
Tom Hormby – John Cabot University, Rome, Italy;

Katie Lee – Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.;
Sarah Leis – Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, California;
Susanna Meaker – University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, Tenn.;
Bradford Norton – Middle Tennessee State University – Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Wes Osborn – Nashville [Tenn.] Tech; and
Jennifer Russell – Columbia [Tenn.] State Community College.

Transportation to church

Do you need a ride to church – or know someone who does? Nat Roache has offered to provide transportation on Sunday mornings to anyone who might not otherwise be able to get to church. Contact the church office (297-3216) if you or someone you know needs help getting to Sunday worship.

Childcare helpers

We provide childcare for children under age 7 during worship. Childcare helpers during worship for the month of September are:

Sept. 6—Ryan Murphey
Sept. 13—Danny Flanagan
Sept. 20—Andrea Bachus
Sept. 27—Evon Lee

Our caregiver for children is Alicia Hickman. She is a wonderful caregiver. However, some Sundays there are more than she can manage. The additional help keeps our children safe. If you would like to volunteer for a ministry that gives great joy, contact Angela Flanagan, and she will be glad to put you into the childcare rotation.

Meetings and Events

Sunday, **Sept. 6** - Love Feast following worship
Tuesday, **Sept. 15**- Church Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Gothard Room
Saturday, **Sept. 19** – Church Work Day 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.



Sunday, **Sept. 20** – Church Ladies – 6-8 p.m.,
Memorial Hall

Tuesday, **Sept, 29** – Charge Conference – 6 p.m.,
Sanctuary

September Calendar Notes

Every Sunday

Sunday school, 9:30 a.m.

Worship, 10:30 a.m.

Youth, 5:30 p.m., Blakemore UMC

Every Wednesday

Wednesday night Energy, 6 – 8:15 p.m.

Every Thursday: Church supper, 5:30 p.m.

Every Tuesday and Friday: AA, Memorial Hall,
8 p.m.

Youth news

With the departure of Nate Sawyer, our youth program is in transition. Please note these opportunities:

Sunday morning Sunday school – Youth and adult class, Memorial Hall.

Sunday night youth group – West Nashville UMC youth are still included in the Sunday night program and special youth events at Blakemore UMC. Sunday night youth meetings are from 5:30 to 7:30 and include supper, recreation, study and fellowship.

Wednesday night Energy - We invite youth to be part of the new Wednesday night Energy. A specific class for youth of all ages meets each Wednesday night.

September birthdays

5—Beth Chatham

6—Rudolfo DeLoera, Bo Hoskins and Fiona Murphey

8—Ruth Salamanca

11—Cadence Cobb and Maria Mercedes Gomez

12—Nicole Lee

18—Arthur Bachus and Erin Meaker

20—A.J. Cobb

24—Carla González and José Valazco

25—Leah Cover

27—Garrett Hedgepath

30—Margaurita Alvarado and Grace Renshaw

Super-special shut-ins

- Helen Dozier is faring well and happy living in her apartment. However, she is concerned about her daughter Mary Ellen Carney. In addition to an unmovable neck, Mary Ellen also suffers from multiple other medical problems. Mary Ellen is now driving, but with difficulty. Imagine driving when you cannot move your head! Helen would appreciate prayers for Mary Ellen.
- Mabel Alleen Jackson appreciates our contact. Although she spends most of her time in a wheelchair, she is always upbeat and navigates her home with ease. Fortunately, her friend Albert Curtis is no longer in Richland Place rehab center and is now available to help when she needs someone who can do chores for her. She appreciates our prayers and is praying for West Nashville.
- Although her health continues to plague her, Helen Sellers remains our poet in residence. She is also praying for our church.
- Mary McWright continues therapy to cope with her recent stroke. She would appreciate your prayers and cards. Her new address is 4802 Michigan Ave, Nashville, TN 37209. Now that she is coming home, we can surround her with our love.
- Ed Zinkiewicz reports that Louise Gafford needs our continued prayers and expressions of love and concern.

Church classifieds board

Check out the new Church Classifieds bulletin board in the narthex next to the collection bins! On this



board, you can post items you no longer need that might be of use to someone else. For example, that old vacuum cleaner in your basement works fine, but maybe you have a new lighter vacuum and never use the old one. You can post the item on the board, and that might be just what someone else needs!

Remember: one person's junk is another person's treasure.

Please write a brief description of the item (preferably with a photo) and your name and phone number; then someone who needs that item can contact you. The reverse is also true. If you are looking for a particular item, post that on the "needs" side of the board. Perhaps someone can meet that need! This is just one more tool to connect members of our faith community. What a great way to be in ministry with one another!

In addition, do you have a good paperback book you have read and would be willing to share? Bring in your books and place them in the designated area near the board. Others who are looking for books can take, read and return.

A monthly breakdown of happenings

August

- We successfully launched "Energy," Wednesday-night programming for all ages with food, fellowship and fun. It begins with a community meal, followed by classes for children, youth and adults, and closes with a brief time of sharing and communal worship. The first week of Energy attracted 50 people to re-energize midweek with the ultimate renewable energy resource of God's love. If you have not yet felt the Energy of Wednesday nights, come at 6 p.m. Wednesday to check it out!
- Pros Allie Horick and Katie Leis trained several new acolytes after worship on Sunday, Aug. 16.
- Great Back-to-School Water Party at the Lipschutz house Aug. 15. Many thanks to all who helped make this event possible.
- Our newly formed Children's Council met to work on planning these and many other great events.

- Fiona and Ellie Murphey were baptized. Mom and Dad (Francie and Ryan) renewed their baptism and all joined WNUMC. Welcome!

September

- Sunday, **Sept. 13** - special worship service to welcome several other new members into our congregation and celebrate the baptism of several children. We will conduct the liturgy in both languages, and it will be a special celebration of the diversity of our church family.

October

- Get ready for a big fiesta the first weekend of **October (2-4)**
 - 2009 celebrates the 120th anniversary of West Nashville UMC. This October we celebrate the second anniversary of our Hispanic Ministry. In addition, we will observe Hispanic Heritage Month and World Communion Sunday. Don't miss the biggest fiesta of the year!
 - Friday, **Oct. 2** - Spanish-language worship service in celebration of our anniversary. Translation will be provided into English through our headset equipment. This is a great opportunity for our English-speaking members to join in solidarity with our Hispanic brothers and sisters and worship via translation.
 - Saturday, **Oct. 3** - cultural celebration with food, live music and fellowship with the larger community.
 - Sunday, **Oct. 4** - Along with millions of people around the world, we will celebrate World Communion Sunday, as we receive the elements with our brothers and sisters in the congregation at West Nashville UMC, who come from many different countries. After the service, the love feast lunch will have plenty of food from Hispanic cultures, as well as crafts and cultural souvenirs from countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.
- * Note: We observe Hispanic Heritage Month **Sept. 15 – Oct. 15.**



Food-assistance programs update

The Thursday Night Community Meal (weekly, 5:30 p.m.) continues to respond to a rising need among the homeless, unemployed, and working poor in our area of the city. The number of individuals served each Thursday has been in the 50–70 range through the summer months.

We get our food supply, at a reduced price, from Second Harvest of Middle Tennessee. The food is picked up on Tuesdays at the St. Luke's Community House parking lot and at Second Harvest's warehouse.

Volunteers include many of West Nashville UMC's members and family, and a wide variety of individuals and groups from the larger community. During the summer, it was difficult to locate volunteers because many student groups that helped so much over the past year were not available. Hands On Nashville has begun sending a team on both the first and second Thursdays of the month. Several students from Meharry Medical College have been repeat helpers. In addition, Vanderbilt's chapter of the Sigma Chi fraternity will be on the schedule for the third Thursday of the month through the school year.

Supplemental food assistance (sack lunches and food boxes for families) from the pantry is also provided to those who request it throughout the week. The demand for food assistance has increased steadily over the past year or more, while the network of churches, social service agencies and non-profits struggle to find the resources in their budgets to respond adequately.

There is an ongoing need for volunteers. Please contact us if you're interested – bradwright54@yahoo.com. (615) 297-3216, Ext. 22.

If you have any nonperishable goods to contribute to the food pantry, particularly canned meats and ready-to-eat meals/soups, those would help a lot too.

Church Ladies seek help with Honduras mission project

Beth Chatham shared information on a mission project that we have adopted for this autumn. We also think many in our West Nashville family might like to participate in this project. The purpose is to provide Christmas gifts for children in Honduras.

Through her church in Mississippi, Beth has participated in mission teams going to Honduras and giving medical aid and supplies. For the "shoebox project," people place items into shoeboxes, which are delivered to the children for Christmas.

We will have a bin to collect items at church. These must be delivered to Decatur, AL, by October so think of this as Christmas in September! Items must fit into shoeboxes so cannot be larger than a typical shoebox.

Here are the items needed: Hot Wheels cars, McDonald's toys; small dolls; small balls; wash cloths; soap; lotion; shampoo; toothbrushes and toothpaste; combs and brushes; small hand mirrors; flip-flops (each box needs one pair); underpants and t-shirts; shorts and t-shirts (for boys and girls); socks; hard candy; bubble gum; school supplies; pencils (limit of four); paper; crayons; colored pencils; small sharpeners; and, for little girls, barrettes; ribbons, bows, headbands and scrunchies.

All donations will be used to create the gift boxes. Boxes will be marked for boy or girl and by age (ages 2-12). For further information, please talk with Beth Chatham. Thanks for your help!

Curtain call for *Good God Theater*



"Don't be afraid!" With that word of hope from Revelation, the curtain will fall on Act 2: New Testament. But before then, we'll go to jail with Paul. Life is never dull in Sunday school! Join us in Memorial Hall at 9:30 a.m. Youth and adults welcome!

