

... May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing and of you, who are ROCK, REDEEMER, and COMFORTER of us all. Amen.

Genesis 12: 1-4a ...Each week we are visiting with a familiar biblical story...which invites us to hear and respond with courage, trust & hope. Today the focus is with a well-known story...Abram & Sarai leaving home! He was 75 years old, she was ten years younger. And God called them to do something unthinkable...leave home! Leave the land they owned, farmed; leave the town they knew and take everything to an unknown place and people.

Who would they know? Who could they trust? To whom could they turn for support? Well, if you've read through Genesis, you know it works out... and there are promises kept for heirs and abundant life.

Have you done something that God told you to do? Have you just picked up and moved on?

Sometimes the command/directive/nudge to do something is so out of step with convention... like Noah; like Abram & Sarai. Sometimes the word of God comes as a whisper... sometimes it comes in a word from a stranger or from a friend.

When I moved to the Frederick area, I had already left the tradition I grew up with and I had found welcome in a UM church in Gaithersburg. The church I settled with in the Frederick area just 'felt' like a good fit... friendly folks, engaging, but not strong arming me into doing things. Eventually, these folks would encourage me to follow my calling to ordained ministry, even though it would be painful separation and leave a hole in their music ministry and leadership. Funny thing is, those holes were filled in not too long a time.

I learned/ we learned... God provides... God equips.

Just the other week at a Parking Lot Conversation, the question came up what does it take to change membership to this UMC? There is learning about what it means to be a Methodist and commitment to engage in faithful ministry by prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness.

Following a nudge, Jane Ohlmacher sent a note to her church to inform them that she would transfer membership and be received into Saint James UMC. Jane will you come forward.

In this season, we are doing sacred acts of the church in new ways. So today, we will receive Jane as a member of the SJ faith community.

Is there anyone else, whose heart is called to make such a commitment?

Excerpted from BOW/UMH:

Since the earliest times, the vows of Christian baptism have consisted first of the renunciation of all that is evil and then the profession of faith and loyalty to Christ.

Let us REAFFIRM our Covenant made at Baptism...

Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness,
reject the evil powers of this world,
and repent of your sin?

I do.

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you
to resist evil, injustice, and oppression
in whatever forms they present themselves?

I do.

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior,
put your whole trust in his grace,
and promise to serve him as your Lord,
in union with the Church which Christ has opened
to people of all ages, nations, and races?

I do.

**Let us join together in professing the Christian faith
as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.**

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
[who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
[the holy catholic* church, **universal*
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.]**

RECEPTION INTO THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

As members of Christ's universal Church,
will you be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church,
and do all in your power to strengthen its ministries?

I will.

RECEPTION INTO THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

As members of the congregation known as Saint James,
will you faithfully participate in its ministries
by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness?

I will.

COMMENDATION AND WELCOME

16 *The pastor addresses the congregation:*

Members of the household of God I commend these persons to your love and care.
Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love.

The pastor addresses those baptized, confirmed, or received, using an appropriate gesture of blessing: The God of all grace,

who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, establish you and strengthen you
by the power of the Holy Spirit, that you may live in grace and peace.

Let's pray... Lord, help me listen for the promptings of your Spirit. Grant me discernment to know when it really is you calling. And help me to trust you, and to follow your call where you may lead me. Amen.