Setting Sail Toward Abundant Living

Your Course Workbook
Setting Sail Toward Abundant Living

Welcome to our Setting Sail Toward Abundant Living Course Workbook! By giving just 30 minutes of personal reflection time a week, we hope that you will be encouraged, affirmed, challenged, and enlightened. But most of all, we hope that you will rediscover a historic journey of practices that lead Christians to a deep, powerful, and transforming faith in Jesus Christ. This course workbook has been written by members of the staff of the United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay.

Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?

2 Corinthians 13.5 (NIV)
A Model for Christian Living

“How shall we live our lives as Jesus’ disciples?” In the book of Acts it is written

The people devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Amazement came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Acts 2.42-47

Spiritual Disciplines

We call these actions “spiritual disciplines.” Our congregation has identified six spiritual disciplines to assist each of us to grow in our faith as deeply committed followers of Jesus Christ. Through these disciplines, we come to LOVE God, CARE for each other and SERVE in the world, deepening our relationship with our Savior and living our lives as followers of Jesus. The sailing term Setting Sail is used to describe the intentional preparation, anticipation and awareness of the conditions that make a safe and joyful sailing experience. Those who sail say that all the effort that goes into ‘setting sail,’ is all worth it for there is nothing more magnificent than being out on the water. The same is true of our Christian life or discipleship. There is no greater joy than to live fully and abundantly as Jesus has promised us. In similar ways, experiencing the abundant life requires intentionality, commitment, and practice of the spiritual disciplines.

THE SIX SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES ARE:

LOVE God

1. Worship and Pray regularly.

CARE for each other

2. Care for others through meaningful Christian friendships with support and accountability in a small group.
3. Study the Bible and participate in devotional practices to learn and grow in righteousness.

SERVE in the world.

4. Give generously, working toward a tithe.
5. Witness to what God is doing in my life through word and invitation.
6. Serve others through acts of love, compassion and justice.

Our church, the Christian church is fulfilling its purpose when it is engaged in these practices and the people of our church are engaged in these practices.

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is designed for personal reflection and personal assessment of your discipleship. Do not allow yourself to feel inadequate or guilty about what you are not doing; rather, celebrate that God is at work in your life wherever you are on the journey. Through this workbook you will set your sail toward abundant living through discipleship.

STEP 1
Devote 30 minutes once a week to read, reflect, and pray in preparation for weekend worship.

STEP 2
Explore the topic. Sometimes, our tendency will be to breeze through the lesson, but slow down and let God work in you. Each weekly topic has three components:

- Self Reflection
  An opportunity for you to honestly reflect on your spiritual practices. What is the Holy Spirit telling you? Spend time with the “Anchoring” questions as you evaluate your reflections.

- Practice
  Try a new dimension to the spiritual practice. It is meant to challenge you to grow deeper.

- Move Forward
  As a result of the exercises, make a commitment on how you would like to move forward in that practice.

STEP 3
Write your thoughts. Writing will slow you down and open you to the possibilities as you reflect.

STEP 4
Join a small group and meet with them. You do not have to share the contents of this workbook with anyone, but the work you do may be extremely valuable in your small group discussions and in your faith life.
I wonder where God is. What’s my purpose in life? I feel so disconnected from God. Why can’t I have that passionate, intimate, powerful relationship with God? I am in so much trouble I don’t know which way to turn. I don’t get much out of church. I don’t need a small group. I don’t understand the scriptures.

Those questions can be answered with another question, “How is your worship life?” Are you praying? Are you open to God’s presence in worship? The answers to these questions often reveal a powerful truth that steers us to a life filled with meaning.

Richard Foster, in his book *Celebration of Discipline*, says that “To worship is to experience reality, to touch Life. It is to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ in the midst of the gathered community. It is to know that the presence of God is in your midst.”

In other words, worship is a divine encounter with God. It is coming into God’s holy presence. Worship is the place where God promises to meet with us. These daily and weekly times are what allow us to endure difficult circumstances and navigate rough waters. If we are connected to God, we are able to withstand the difficulties of our lives and restore, when need be, the joy of our salvation.

Our ability to worship is by practice. In other words, we learn to worship by worshiping. It begins with preparation. It is hard to feel worshipful after you struggled with your spouse or your children about what they were going to wear before coming to worship. I was impressed by the early worshipers in Jerusalem. To enter into the Temple, one had to take a ritual bath and then walk up uneven stairs. Knowing you couldn’t walk up the stairs by pattern, the intentional thinking about the next step allowed you to clear your mind and think about meeting God. How do you prepare to enter into the sanctuary and meet God?

When worship begins, God wants us to use our whole self. He wants us to praise with song, clapping, dancing and speaking and to receive with humility as we kneel, are silent, or bow our heads. And in the end, if worship does not change us, it has not been worship. To sit, stand or kneel before our God is to change. If worship does not move us into greater obedience, we have not worshiped. Holy obediences changes worship from becoming a relief from the stresses of life to hearing the call of God so clearly that we are willing to say, “Here I am! Send me.” (Isaiah 6:8) into Christ’s service in the world.

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**Self-Reflect**

**My Worship Life**

- Do you worship more than once a month? Yes No
- What is your preference of worship style? (Circle your answer)
  - Casual
  - Traditional
  - Contemporary
  - Taize
  - Other
- What is the most meaningful part of worship? Why?
- Do you feel connected to others in worship? Why or why not? Yes No
- Do you experience God in worship? Yes No
- What experience could be strengthened for you to further meet God?
- Is your prayer life better now than it was a year ago? Why or why not? Yes No
- How long do you spend in prayer each day? (Circle your answer)
  - Less than 15 minutes
  - 30 minutes
  - 1 hour
  - More than 1 hour
- Is your worship more about God or about yourself? Yes No
- If you have children, do you bring them to worship regularly? Yes No
- Do you use a devotional and/or Bible in your prayer time? Yes No Sometimes
- Do you fast? Yes No
- Do you attend church prayer meetings? Yes No Sometimes
- Do you have a quiet time with God where you only listen? Yes No Sometimes
- Do you pray for the hurts of the world? Yes No Sometimes
- Do you ever volunteer to pray out loud in a group? Yes No Sometimes
- Do you have a prayer partner? Yes No Sometimes
- Do you routinely pray for the leaders and mission of your church? Yes No Sometimes
- Do you pray with your children, spouse or partner, family? Yes No Sometimes
- Do you pray for your enemies? Yes No Sometimes
- Have you received answers to your prayers? Yes No
Try This
For one week, spend 5-10 minutes each day in quiet time alone with God.

Attend and experience a worship service that is different from your primary service:
Taize, Women Offering Worship, Children’s Worship, Saturday - Come As You Are, Sunday - Chapel Service, Sunday - Contemporary Service, Sunday - Traditional Service

Sail Forward
In prayer, reflect on what you think Jesus would have you change or adjust with your prayer life in the coming year.

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

In prayer, reflect on what you think Jesus would have you change or adjust with your worship life in the coming year.

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Navigating New Waters - Ideas
+ Pray____minutes before I start each day.
+ Read a daily devotional.
+ Join a prayer group.
+ Volunteer to pray out loud for my small group.
+ Pray before meals (all meals, even alone or out in public).
+ Pray with my spouse/partner, and/or kids, and/or friends.
+ Research prayer methods and try a new one each month.
+ Memorize one prayer a month.
+ Reserve a few minutes of silent listening in my daily prayer time.
+ Increase the number of weeks I am in worship from _______to_______ for the next six months.
+ Volunteer to be a worship leader such as reading scripture, singing in the choir, praying.
+ Volunteer to be a worship leader as a greeter, usher, or Welcome Center staff.
CARE FOR EACH OTHER
Week 2 - Care

One of my favorite stories of all time is about Winnie the Pooh. It contains many
stories that have life transforming significance. One of those involves Eeyore, one
of Pooh’s friends. Eeyore was playing on the banks of the river one day and
accidentally fell in. After struggling a few times to make it out of the water, he
was exhausted and lay on his back to simply float down the river.

Eeyore is anticipating that this is his last ride as there is a waterfall not too far
from where he is. While floating on his back and going underneath the bridge,
he looks up and sees his friend Winnie. Their conversation goes something
like this.

“Seems like you got yourself into a spot of trouble, Eeyore.”

“Yes,” Eeyore replies.

“And it looks like you are going to drown.”

“Yes,” Eeyore laments.

There is then a pleading from Eeyore when he says,

“If it wouldn’t be too much bother, would you mind rescuing me?”

Every one of us knows what it feels like to be drowning. It may be an
emergency, a death of a loved one, a divorce, a difficult child, a stressful job,
loneliness. We also have people who are all around us who are also floating
down that river to destruction.

The apostle Paul says that a Christian belongs to the body where each one
experiences “when one member of the body suffers, all suffer. When one
member of the body rejoices, all rejoice.” 1 Corinthians 12.26 (NSRV) There are
times in our lives when we need somebody to rejoice and suffer with us - to pull
us out of the water. There are other times when we are the ones seeing others in
need and can be the ones who throw out a life preserver. This is the benchmark
of caring Christian relationships. The staff say at all new member gatherings, “In
this church we want you to find the kind of friends whom you would not think
twice about calling at 2 am if there were an emergency.” Have you made those
kinds of friendships and community here?

One of the spiritual aspects of discipleship is to be in community where people
know not only your name, but know you. In a larger church, this means being
in a small group that meets for prayer, study, service, and fellowship. It is in a
smaller group that you form important, caring relationships that keep you
growing in faith and give you strength along life’s journey.

If the small group you are participating in is the first group you have been in,
consider making a commitment to an ongoing group. You will find that your life
is immensely enriched by the relationships and friendships you form. They will
deepen over the course of your life.

Self-Reflect
The Quality of My Relationships

Are you in a small group? Yes No
Do you know the different small groups you could be a part of in this
church? Yes No
Can you name 6 people in this congregation that you consider to
be your friends? Yes No
Do you get together with others from this church to talk about one
another’s spiritual life? Yes No
Have you studied the Bible with others? Yes No
Is there someone from the church that would be at the top of your list
to call for help at 2 am? Yes No
Have you ever received care from the church in the form of
Care Ministry team call Yes No
prayer shawl Yes No
prayer card Yes No
hospital visit Yes No
prayer chain prayer Yes No
casserole committee Yes No
ride to church Yes No
ride to the doctor, to get groceries, etc. Yes No
card from a member of the church Yes No
Care Coordinator who reached out to you Yes No
prayer bead bracelet Yes No
anointing Yes No
prayer from another Yes No
support group such as Alzheimers, Al Anon, Parenting Yes No
book from the library Yes No
funeral ministry team Yes No
wedding ministry team Yes No
homebound ministry Yes No
been called because you had missed worship? Yes No
other_______________________________________
Have you ever offered care on behalf of the church in any of the above
forms? Yes No
Do you feel that you have a person in this congregation that holds
you accountable for your devotional life? Prayer life? Bible reading life? Yes No

Anchoring
Name 3-6 friends you have in this congregation that you would not hesitate to call at
2 am if you had an emergency and needed help? What do you need to do to cultivate these
friendships?

PREPARE YOUR HEART

GALATIANS 6.2
Bear one another’s
burdens, and thereby
fulfill the law of Christ

JOHN 13.34-35
A new commandment I
give to you, that you love
one another; even as I
have loved you: you must
love one another

By this all people will
know that you are MY
disciples, if you have love
for one another

JESSY & BRYAN MATTE
Even the smallest act of
caring for another person
is like a drop of water -
will make ripples
throughout the entire
pond

LANGSTON HUGHES
When people care for you
and cry for you, they can
straighten out your soul.

Self-Reflect
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Try This
Make a commitment to participate weekly in Setting Sail Toward Abundant Living.
Ask one question each week of another person in your group to get to know them better.

Sail Forward
In prayer, reflect on what you think Jesus would have you change or adjust within your circle of caring relationships in the church in the coming year.

Navigating New Waters - Ideas
+ Daily ask yourself the question, “How is it with my soul?”
+ Join a small group after this Lenten study is finished.
+ Volunteer to participate in one of our caring ministries.
+ Volunteer to lead a small group.
+ Volunteer to start a new small group.
+ Join a Bible study.
+ Read a chapter a day in Proverbs for a month.
+ Invite a neighbor, co-worker, friend or family member to join you in a small group.
+ Open your home to host a small group.
+ Explore the concept of Missional communities.
I was confirmed and have grown up in the church; why do I need to study the Bible or join a small group? I go to church almost every Sunday and listen intently to the scripture reading and message; why do I need further study? We may have questions like these or similar thoughts when we are presented with the opportunity to dig deeper into the word of God and the teachings of Jesus. As typical human beings, we are very good at rationalizing why we are not able to do something that challenges us or is out of our comfort zone. When it comes to the study of scripture, small group study, and prayerful meditation on scripture, many of us are overlooking these very important pieces of our Discipleship.

John Wesley, one of the founders of the Methodist Church, gave us three general rules to live by: do good, do no harm, and stay in love with God. The first two are fairly easy to understand but how do we stay in love with God? In truth, “stay in love with God” is a modern interpretation of Wesley’s “Attend to the ordinances of God.” These ordinances, such as worship, communion, family and private prayer, fasting, and Bible study, are basic simple practices or disciplines that are an important part of strengthening and maintaining our relationship with God. When we engage in Bible study and prayerfully meditate on scripture we are plotting our course toward a deep love of God.

“How is it with your soul?” This probing question may have been what started the class meetings that were an important part of the early Methodist Church. These meetings were somewhat similar to our current small group classes, but the question, “How is it with your soul?” was the means for discussion rather than a specific Bible study, devotion, or topic study. The members of these early class meetings gathered to discuss how God was working in their lives and to hold one another accountable for their spiritual formation. John Wesley’s intent for these meetings was not to judge one another but to watch over one another in love. These meetings were somewhat similar to our current small group classes, but were an important part of the early Methodist Church.

Do you study the Bible? How often?

Do you use a devotional and/or Bible during your prayer time?

Do you use a journal to record your prayerful reflections on scripture and to write out scripture verses you are memorizing?

Do you hunger for a deep, real relationship with God and with others? What kind of time are you willing to commit to caring for those relationships?

Have you ever participated in a small group? If yes, how did that experience help you grow in your faith?

If no, how do you think a small group experience might support your spiritual growth?

Who holds you accountable for your faith decisions? Who do you hold accountable?
Try This
Find one or two other ways to study scripture this week. Attend a small group, a Wednesday Night Live class, a Sunday morning class, a Women of Worship class, or read, reflect, prayerfully meditate and/or journal on the Daily Scriptures that are noted in the Joy! Notes. The schedule of small groups and classes is online and in the Jones Narthex before and after worship, or you can contact Joelle at jkarth@umcwfb.org for more information.

Sail Forward
In prayer, reflect on what you think Jesus would have you change or adjust with your study practices.

Navigating New Waters - Ideas
+ Join a class or small group and continue to participate throughout the duration of the class.
+ Invite and encourage others to participate with me in a class or small group.
+ Volunteer to lead a small group or class.
+ Engage in Bible study with my spouse, partner, family, and/or other important people in my life.
+ Commit to studying and reflecting on scripture daily using a journal to notate my thoughts and chronicle (log) my journey as I grow in righteousness
We want to be spontaneous when we hear of needs. But most of us need to plan ahead, since there is rarely a surplus in our checkbook. We tend to be less disciplined than we want to be. So it is good if we can make decisions when we have time to think about our values and what is important to us. Setting a budget for ourselves and our families is an important discipline.

Christians have used the idea of tithing for centuries as a way to evaluate and plan giving. One tenth of our income is seen as a tithe, or first fruits, given to God.

Scripture tells us to tithe first. If something is important to us, we make that payment right away. Hopefully our commitment to God and the work done through the church is a priority. The less important items or expenses can wait until we have money not already designated.

Most of us save for items that are larger expenditures, perhaps a new car or a family vacation. That way we do not need to go into debt when we make a major expenditure.

In our culture we sometimes find that our possessions start to feel like they possess us, as maintaining them becomes more and more time consuming. It is not just washing and dry cleaning clothes, but servicing our auto, mowing the lawn, cleaning the house, maintaining our toys such as boats or vacation homes.

Throughout our lives we accumulate many resources. In earlier years we are more acquisitive, and in later years we find ourselves to be more generative giving away things that we collected earlier in life.

As we get older we tend to ‘downsize’, to part with excess clothing, furniture, dishes and possessions we seldom use anymore. We start to think of our ‘estate’ or ‘legacy’ and want to be responsible in distributing our wealth. Most of us do not think of ourselves as wealthy, so it can be very helpful to inventory our wealth.

Most of us are more wealthy than we think, and may be surprised at what we find. As Americans we generally think that we have worked hard for what we have, and we tend to take all the credit for our accomplishments. But if we are honest with ourselves, we realize that we have been blessed in many ways.

Part of our spiritual growth comes as we learn to trust God to provide for what we need, rather than stressing ourselves and becoming anxious. (Remember the Sermon on the Mount, see Luke chapter 12).

During the season of Lent we are thinking of the image of water and Setting Sail Towards Abundant Living. Do you remember when you learned to swim, how important it was for you to learn to float, to rely on the water to support you, to hold you up?

Part of our Lenten journey is that we learn to float, to be supported by God’s love and providence, and that we acknowledge all that God has provided for us, and respond with an attitude of gratitude that moves us to share the resources God has given us.

We promise this, which means that sharing our gifts will be an intentional part of our daily living. But at times we forget this promise and the things that appear before us (on TV, internet, magazine and newspaper advertisements) tempt us. We often find ourselves to be impulsive buyers. We may go to the grocery store with a list of only 5 or 6 items, but come home with a full bag containing a dozen or more items.

Our attitudes towards money start to develop when we are children. Many of us have memories of our relationship with money, and remember comments or actions of our parents.

My family was very active in the Methodist congregation where we were members, so we attended worship and Sunday school regularly. My dad gave me coins to place in the offering plate. I put those coins in the corner of my hankie, and removed them only to put them in the offering plate when that time came to share. It was a gesture that had meaning for me.

Later in my life I studied the components of worship, and learned that the offering is generally placed after the Word and the sermon, and is seen as a response to the Good News we have heard. It is a part of the natural rhythm of the worship service and our praise to God.

We want to be responsible in our use of our financial resources. One of the ways we can evaluate our spending and our use of money is to take an inventory of our checkbook expenses and create a pie chart.

You may also want to create a pie chart to show your use of time and your priorities in that area of life. Think about tithing your time, and how you might serve God in that way. Years ago I was told that there is no such thing as a one time expense. If you have spent money on something one time, you will spend money on that category or item again.

Housing expenses reoccur, as do transportation expenses. A new roof for the house, a new water heater or washer or dryer, or new carpet are often household expenses after the initial purchase of a home.

New tires, brake repair or battery replacement, insurance, as well as oil changes are expenses related to transportation, other than the purchase of a car.

Most of us want to respond when we learn of persons in need, and we want to support the church institution to help pay for the heat and light and staff salaries, especially the ministries we think are urgent such as feeding the hungry, evangelism, and Christian education (especially for children and youth.).
Try This

Pray for God to guide you in determining what you can give to support the ministry of your congregation.

Navigating New Waters - Ideas

+ Sign up to take the Financial Peace class which we offer on Wednesday evenings.
+ Decide to try tithing for a month.
+ Give up spending money on _________ for the rest of the Lenten season.
+ Skip one meal each week during Lent and give the money you would have spent to the loose change plate offering on Sunday morning.
+ Calculate your worth and meet with someone to plan your will and determine who will benefit from your wealth after you are gone.
+ Meet with a Christian financial planner to determine what changes you might want to make in your spending, saving and giving habits.
SERVE THE WORLD

Week 5 - Witness

When was the last time you had some good news to share?

When did you see a movie or read a book you enjoyed so much you couldn’t wait to tell someone about it?

When did you have a delicious meal at a new restaurant, and you immediately invited a friend to go back with you?

When did you experience love so deep or joy so great that your first response was to invite someone else to experience it?

We are a witness when we share the life-changing positive books, movies, restaurants, and experiences of life. When we have good news, we want to share it; we want to invite someone else to experience what we have experienced. Evangelism is simply sharing the good news of our lives, the good news of God’s grace, and the ways Jesus has shaped us and given our lives meaning.

In “The Character of a Methodist,” John Wesley declared that Methodists “do good to all people” in every way they can. He was emphatic in teaching and living that this went beyond meeting people’s physical needs of food, clothing, and shelter. It meant that Methodists “do good to their souls” by inviting all people to experience the love of God in Christ and by encouraging those who have experienced this love to continue to grow in their discipleship.

The practice and discipline of being a witness can be downright terrifying. We have grown up being taught to not talk about money, politics, or religion. But as followers of Christ who are setting our sails toward abundant living, we must be willing to be a witness to God’s love and God’s place in our lives. James Harnish, a United Methodist pastor gives these 5 tips:

1) Begin with friendship – No one wants to be manipulated. Witnessing that is centered in Christlike love for others begins in honest, nonmanipulative, life-giving human friendships. How many friendships do you have with people who do not yet know Christ?

2) Listen, Listen, Listen – Everyone has needs, joys, and wants. Being a witness for Christ is to first listen and then respond. Jesus’ relationship with the disciple Andrew began with a question? “What are you looking for?” (John 1:38). In his conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus listened deeply to the thirst in her soul (John 4:1-30). Are you more interested in listening to another person's story than in sharing your own?

3) Know your story – The role of a witness in a courtroom is not to argue the case or to judge the outcome, but simply to tell what he heard, saw, and experienced. Whenever the opportunity came, the apostles were ready to tell the story of the way they met Christ and the difference he had made in their lives. Can you tell the story of your relationship with Christ in a simple, clear, and concise way?

4) Offer the invitation – The invitation to “come and see” can take whatever form is appropriate to the situation. It may be an invitation to be a guest at your church, small group or study, or some form of mission or ministry. It is always an open-ended invitation that begins a journey toward a Christ-centered life.

5) Trust the Spirit – The United Methodist Church teaches that the love of God is already at work in people’s lives before they are even aware of it (prevenient grace). We can trust the Spirit to prepare the way, to be at work in the relationship, to open conversation at the right time, and to give us the right way to respond.

Being a witness isn’t nearly as difficult or intimidating as it often seems. It simply means being who we are a followers of Jesus Christ and allowing the spirit of God to use our lives to inspire the lives of others.

PREPARE YOUR HEART

LUKE 14:23

Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in so that my house may be filled.

MATTHEW 5:16

Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

PETER STOREY

We must be transparent people. We must be what we believe.

Self-Reflect

The Integrity of my Witness

Identify and write the names of real persons to whom you have been or will be a witness. Go slowly and reflect deeply.

List your (non-church) friends whom you pray for regularly.

List your family members whom you’ve prayed with.

List at least three people for whom God might be nudging you to be a witness:

1)

2)

3)
Try This
Be the first to bring up your faith in a conversation with a loved one this week. See where the Spirit takes you.

Sail Forward
Through prayer and listening, reflect on what you think Jesus would have you change or adjust with your witness in the coming year.

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

Navigating New Waters - Ideas

+ Initiate a faith conversation with ____________ friends this month.

+ Commit to asking the server at every restaurant I eat in if I can pray or bless him/her.

+ Pray with my family and/or friends at least ____________ a week, other than at meals.

+ Pray daily/weekly for an opportunity to be a witness to ________________________________.

+ Stop doing _______________________________________________________________________

  so that I can do more of ___________________________________________________________.

Notes....
SERVE THE WORLD

Week 5 - Serve

During a Nobel Peace Prize Conference in college, I realized that I can effect change in the world despite being only one person. By working and serving with a community to make change, that community can have a rippling impact on many more places and people. I then traveled to Cape Town, South Africa, to immerse myself in a community, and serve in a way that would make an impact beyond the time I spent there.

Richard Foster says “Service is not a list of things that we do... but a way of living. Just as there is more to the game of basketball than the rule book, there is more to service than specific acts of serving. It is one thing to act like a servant, it is quite another to be a servant.”

Being a servant will lead us to the abundance – fullness, plenty, overflowing - we are seeking. Service in its most basic form is a task on the checklist, or a point on our resume. The service God calls us to is a servant attitude that overflows to every part of our lives and our actions. To serve with our whole being, we must prayerfully take on challenges God presents us. You might ask “How do I know what challenge God is calling me to?” Reflect on the spectrum of service to find where you are now and what are the next steps you can commit to taking.

SERVE THE WORLD

Prepare Your Heart

MATTHEW 28:19-20
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-6, 12-14
There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Self-Reflect

The Reach of my Service

Serve by Participation: Together as the Body of Christ, we can do so much more – a twice a year commitment to service can touch many lives.

How have I participated in service?

What did I most enjoy about the experience?

What brings me joy? What drains my batteries?

Serve by Leading with a Group: This is a time commitment. It is also a chance to learn from others, a chance to build relationships with those who can support you in taking on new challenges, and a chance to build relationships with those you are serving to understand what will make a difference in their lives. (The following reflection is adapted from Serving from the Heart, pg 63-64).

Weigh different service opportunities. Carefully consider the time commitment that is expected in light of the time you have available to give. Depending on your circumstances or stage of life, you may have an hour a month to serve or five hours a day. Various service opportunities, likewise, are going to require different time commitments.

Objectively consider the time commitment required and your ability to meet that expectation for each service opportunity that matches your interests. Eliminate some opportunities as not good matches for you (at least not at this time). Build a list of potential good matches for further consideration or exploration.

What amount of time is God challenging me to set aside for doing His work in my church and community?

What Ministries do I want to know more about?

Serve by Taking the Lead: This is a prayerful process. Carefully consider your time, talents, and spiritual gifts and where God is calling you to take on a challenge. (Questions taken from Serving from the Heart, pg. 86-87).

Have you noticed a need somewhere that you feel compelled to address?

Is there a ministry you were involved with in the past that you really enjoyed? What is it?

Is there one in which you were not so effective or fulfilled, and so have further desire to explore?

What about these experiences made them good or not so good for you?

Do you still not know where and how you want to lead? Sometimes it’s a matter of testing the waters by serving in a ministry area that seems interesting. Once you get involved, you might find something more specific within that ministry really speaking to your heart.
Try This

Take a Spiritual Gifts Assessment:
http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4640/spiritual-gifts-discovering-and-using

Read the descriptions of each of your Spiritual Gifts on the Ministry Matters link. Discuss your findings with family and friends. Often, it's easier for others to see our gifts than for us to see them ourselves.

Sail Forward

Where are you on the service spectrum? How can you prepare yourself for the next "level" of service? Or is God challenging you to the next level now?

Navigating New Waters – Ideas

+ Serve by Participation
Serve our church community: Paint walls as part of Men’s Ministry at Home or help serve food at Wednesday Night Live.

Serve the Milwaukee Community and Beyond: Faithworks, meal programs, or in the Pumpkin Patch.

+ Serve by Leading with a Group
After considering what service you enjoy and the time you have to dedicate, a good place to begin your research on group leadership opportunities is Megan Andrews-Share, director of equipping ministry, or the ministry director in your area of interest. You can also talk to members of the church who are ministry leaders. Ask them about the joys and challenges of their particular ministry. (You could approach this step as in-church networking.)

+ Serve by Taking the Lead
Organize a group of volunteers to serve every month at meal program; lead Vacation Bible School, Church Camp, OR organize volunteers and support to begin a new ministry you are passionate about!
What’s Next?

Are you ready to set sail? At this point, you should have some ideas on how you are growing as a deeply committed follower of Jesus Christ who LOVES God, CARES for each other and SERVES in the world through the spiritual disciplines of Worship, Care, Study, Give, Witness and Serve. It is the prayer of the leaders and the staff of this congregation that you will take the initiative to set sail and intentionally become involved in ways that help you to grow in discipleship. Reflect on this journey: the commitments you are making and the possibilities of the future as you seek to

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. Philippians 2.5

Covenant Prayer - John Wesley

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with
whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside
for thee, exalted for thee or brought
low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have
nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things
to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine.
So be it.
And the covenant which
I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.

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