![Hudson United Methodist Church logo] **Hudson United Methodist Church**
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Meeting Minutes

Team Name: **Discipleship Pathway Ministry Team**

Date: 7/8/25
Time: 9:45p
Note Taker: Elizabeth Goodin

Participants

- Marty Hannah
- Steve Hannah
- Dave Rais
- Marcia Rais
- Elizabeth Goodin

Agenda

1. Sharing Learnings from Discipleship Pathway Resources
2. Discussing the WHY of developing a discipleship pathway

Meeting notes:

Steve shared his takeaways from reviewing *A Disciple's Path* Companion Reader and Daily Workbook and the Portico online course: *Creating a Discipleship Pathway:*

As the Discipleship Pathway Ministry Team, we are creating a means for a new way of life. This intention needs to flow through everything the church does, i.e. everything needs to reflect this focus.

This is not a program but a church life-style change.

We need to think first about our vision for the end result – What are we aiming for?

We briefly discussed our WHY: to honor God; to glorify God – we need to expand on what this means.

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On reviewing the Daily Workbook of *A Disciple's Path*, Steve concluded that this resource might be useful in developing a possible class on the Wesleyan understanding of a path of discipleship from the perspective of offering our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness to the ministry of the church. This could be a possible "First Step" offering.

Insights from the Portico online *Creating a Discipleship Pathway* course:

As a team, we might consider visiting with the leadership of a church that has a discipleship pathway in place to gain ideas.

Two changes in terms that represent a shift in mindset:
- Moving from thinking about *volunteers* to thinking about *servants.* A volunteer fills a need, is task oriented; a servant offers gifts toward serving others for a higher purpose.
- Moving from thinking about *fund-raising* to thinking about *faith-raising.* Followers of Christ will generously give. The focus is on building followers over raising money.

Once a discipleship pathway is in place, we would want to give attention to creating a leadership pathway. This would provide easy places for interested disciples to step in and serve in the church – leading a program, church initiative, ministry, small group, etc.

When conflicts arise in a church, it may often be boiled down to a spiritual issue. Logic points to a spiritually healthy/mature church having reduced sources of conflict.

Discipleship is not a linear process. It ultimately represents a change in how one lives their life.

A process for discipleship should be clear and visible to all. If it needs to be explained, it is not yet clear.

We need to create a culture of next steps

It's important to highlight and celebrate signs of successful discipleship steps and progress.

Marty and Steve mentioned a valuable potential resource: Daily meditations offered by Richard Rohr through the Center for Action and Contemplation (CAC). This is an example of something that could be shared with HUMC disciples as a devotional resource. What other resources could fall into this category?

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Elizabeth shared her takeaways from the book, *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples* by Thom Rainer & Eric Geiger. Her notes are attached and may also be accessed on the DPMT's web page within HUMC's website: [Discipleship Pathway Ministry Team | Hudson United Methodist Church](#)

Kallie Beck spoke with Elizabeth on 7/9/25 and shared some of her preliminary insights from the book, *Stride: Creating a Discipleship Pathway for Your Church* by Mike Schreiner & Ken Willard:

Stride consists of 3 parts:
1. Preparation
2. Implementing the Discipleship Pathway
3. Sustaining the Discipleship Pathway

Before embarking on any creative work to define a discipleship pathway for, the authors of *Stride* suggest preliminary steps:
1. Re-aligning around the church's mission and intentions for creating a discipleship pathway.
2. Assessing our current state
3. Determining our desired future state

Kallie suggested our team create a document that clearly and concisely summarizes the above. This will serve as an anchor for our work, and may be shared with the congregation as a communication tool.
- As an anchor, we may use it to assess the usefulness of current programs (Is this still helping us arrive where we want to be?) and to guide us in addressing any gaps that need to be filled.
- After sharing the document, we may also invite the congregation to engage in the process.

We may also ask the congregation for input regarding what may be holding them back from participating in …A, B, C, or what their current barriers are?

Thoughts regarding the work of the DPMT and the function of a discipleship pathway:
- A discipleship pathway is a process of spiritual growth.
- As a church or leadership team, we come alongside our people - providing resources, help, and an environment that supports spiritual growth, and communications regarding those and next steps.

Kallie suggested that it might be helpful if all members of the DPMT read and familiarize themselves with the ideas presented in *Stride*.

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Action items	Responsible person	Due date
Consider the following: **What does discipleship look like?** FILL IN THE BLANKS: **Disciples at HUMC are (doing) ___, __, ___, ___, and ____.** – place in order based on differing levels of commitment – starting point > next step >… Describe the definition of discipleship in process terms: **People become disciples at our church by ___, ___, ____, and ____.** (put in sequential order)	**All DPMT members**	
Give some thought for next time: • The church's mission *(to make and mature disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world)* and our intentions for creating a discipleship pathway. • Assessing our current state • Determining our desired future state	**All DPMT members**	

Next Meeting: TBD

Attachment:

Simple Church
by Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger

ELIZABETH'S NOTES:

p. 22
WHAT the church should be doing:
- Evangelism
- Prayer
- Helping people build relationships with believers
- Seeing people grow deeper
- Serving
- Worship

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WHY: to glorify God

p. 23
Many programs (evaluated by popularity, attendance –),…) but they are not part of a **process** – to make disciples – that moves people toward spiritual maturity (p. 26)
- HOW can we structure all of this to make disciples?
- Everything should fit together to produce life change (p. 26)

p. 26
Church leaders design opportunities for spiritual growth
- We're designers, not programmers, not the producers of spiritual growth > > God
- We can design an environment where life change is likely to occur – a process that moves people through stages of spiritual growth to become a mature follower of Christ

Discussion Question: **Why is it so hard to see the big picture in ministry?**
- Can't see the forest (process) for the trees (programs)

p. 36
What is the church's process for discipleship?
How do you structure your church to make disciples?
How do you set up your ministry programs to move people toward spiritual transformation?

p. 42
Need a beginning point:
- The program you expect the majority of your guests/new members to attend
- The program you teach your people to invite their friends and neighbors to

Programs should not be ends in themselves. They should be used as tools to move people toward spiritual maturity.

The end result of programs must always be about people. Programs should only be tools.

p. 55
Include movement to the next step
- Guest reception
- New member class (guest to member)
- Small groups info booth (joining a small group)

p. 60
Definition of a Simple Church:
- A congregation designed around a straightforward and strategic process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth.

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Goal:
- To partner with God to move people through the stages of spiritual growth.
- Changed lives
- Christ formed in people

p. 68
4 Elements Necessary in a Simple Church Design – critical in a ministry process that contributes to a vibrant church: (compared to *Extreme Home Makeover*)

Clarity > Movement > Alignment > Focus

DEFINITION: A congregation designed around a straightforward and strategic process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth. The leadership and the church are clear about the process (CLARITY) and are committed to executing it. The process flows logically (MOVEMENT) and is implemented in each area of the church (ALIGNMENT). The church abandons everything that is not in the process (FOCUS).

p. 70
CLARITY: the ability of the process to be communicated and understood by the people
- Clearly defined; leadership and people know exactly how the church is structured to move people toward spiritual growth
- The process (HOW) is discussed, taught, and illustrated, and the people get it.

p. 72
MOVEMENT: the sequential steps in the process that cause people to move to greater areas of commitment (e.g. the hand-off in relay race)
- Assimilation/ next steps
- What happens in between the programs – how someone is handed off from one level of commitment to a greater level of commitment

p. 74
ALIGNMENT: the arrangement of all ministries and staff around the same simple process

Without alignment > sub-ministries
- Each ministry has its own leaders that are only passionate about their specific ministry
- Everyone is competing for the same space, resources, volunteers, time on calendar

p. 76
FOCUS: the commitment to abandon everything that falls outside of the simple ministry process
- Often means saying NO
- Without focus, the church becomes cluttered, and the process becomes unrecognizable
- The unnecessary can hide the necessary

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Discussion Questions:
- **What is our church's ministry process? Is it clear?**
- **Does our process effectively move people toward greater levels of commitment?**
- **Is our process implemented in all areas of our church? Are we aligned around our process?**

p. 111
CLARITY

Define your ministry process (strategy) – HOW
1. Determine what kind of disciple you wish to produce in your church – what do you want the people to be? (e.g. passionate lovers of God, servants in the kingdom of God, connected in vibrant relationships to people;)
2. Describe your purpose as a process (e.g. love God, love others, serve the world)
3. Decide how each weekly program is part of the process (programs defined by how they will be used to bring people to spiritual maturation)

Illustrate your process
- Should be reflective of your process
- Should show progression
- Should help simplify

Measure your process – to evaluate if people are progressing through your process
- Learn to view numbers horizontally (used to see movement across the programs – progression) and not vertically (used to see if a program was successful)
- Measure attendance at each level/stage in your process (e.g. worship, small groups, ministry teams)

Discussion Questions:
- **Is there a defined process at our church? If so, what is it? How is each of our weekly programs used?**
- **What is the illustration or metaphor we most often use to describe spiritual growth?**

MOVEMENT

p. 138
What is your part?

e.g. Moses placed himself in the right place to be transformed by God. He discovered the place where God would move in his life, and he put himself there.

Your part as a church leader is to place people in the pathway of God's transforming power.

**Design a ministry process that puts people in the place for God to transform them. The ministry process is not where the power lies. Only God does the transforming.

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The ministry process moves people to greater levels of commitment – with ever-increasing levels of discipleship. People are challenged to progress through the simple process.

p. 140
Strategic Programming

1. Begin with your clearly defined process (matching programs with the process)
2. Choose one program for each phase of your process.
3. Design each program for a specific aspect of the process.
4. Place the programs in sequential order – then the programs become tools to facilitate the process of transformation.
    a. Order the sequence of your programs to reflect your process.
    b. Designate a clear entry point to your process
    c. Identify the next levels of programming

p. 236
Steps to Becoming a Simple Church:

1. Design a simple process (clarity)
    a. On paper – start with blank sheet
    b. Don't try to squeeze the process into your programs
    c. Be sure each program in your process is designed to meet that specific aspect of discipleship effectively.
    d. Discuss what discipleship looks like. Fill in blanks: Disciples at our church are ___, ___, ____, and ____.
       – place in order based on differing levels of commitment – starting point > next step >…
    e. Discuss HOW it happens (progress through the above) – how spiritual transformation takes place
    f. Describe definition of discipleship in process terms: People become disciples at our church by ___, ___, ____, and ____. (sequential order)

2. Place your key programs along the process (movement)
    a. Choose one church-wide program for each phase of your simple process.

3. Unite all ministries around the process (alignment)

4. Begin to eliminate things outside the process (focus)