



Chapter 4

What is the church ?

In small groups, discuss these questions:

1. "Why do you go to church?"
2. "What is the church?"

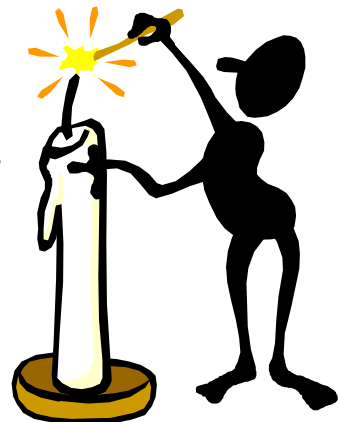
BIBLICAL IMAGES AND NAMES FOR THE CHURCH



"You are the **salt** of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

"You are the **light** of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

—Matt. 5:13-16



"If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled himself through Christ and has given us the **ministry of reconciliation**; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are **ambassadors for Christ**, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake He made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain." —2 Corinthians 5:17-6:1

"The **body** is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

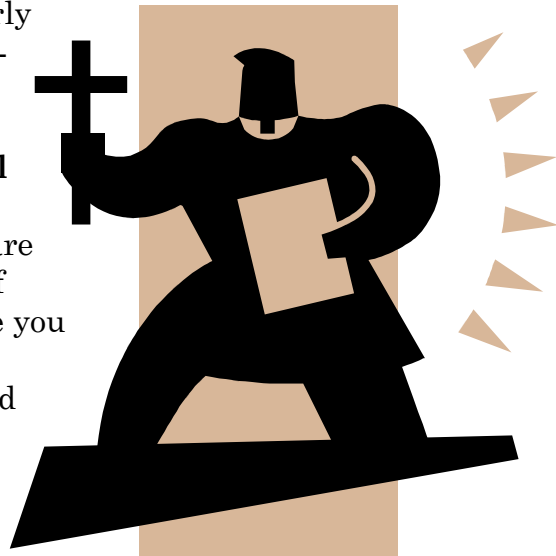
Now the **body** is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are **the body of Christ**, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church, God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts." —1 Cor. 12:12-31

"But you are a **chosen people**, a **royal priesthood**, a **holy nation**, a **people belonging to God**, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

-- 1 Peter 2:9-10



“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with **God’s people** and **members of God’s household**, built in the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling which God lives by his Spirit.”

—Ephesians 3:19-22



THE CHARACTER AND ACTIVITIES OF THE CHURCH

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ **teaching** and to the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and to **prayer**. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were 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

“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.”

—Acts 5:42

Conclusion:
The church is not a building where people go, it is god’s people doing what he has called them to do!

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Our Mission at College Heights was given to us in Scripture by Jesus Christ. The Great Commission and the Great Commandments is the mission that Jesus Christ has given to all churches.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **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, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’ — Matthew 28:18-20

THE GREAT COMMANDMENTS

“Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ Jesus replied: **‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’** This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: **‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’** All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” —Matthew 22:36-40

You will see the mission statement of College Heights church in the bulletin, in the monthly newsletter, and in church correspondence. It is a mission that is based on the Great Commission and the Great Commandments.

At college heights, we're on a mission.
To Reach people...
To develop and deploy mature and passionate
Followers of jesus.

Let's look into this mission statement. Our mission at College Heights is to reach people. We need to GO (the Great Commission) outside of the walls of our church and outside of our comfort zones to reach the lost for Jesus Christ. We need to bring them the gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that is effective at leading them to give their lives to the Lord. We need to reach people with love, helping them with their felt needs so we can tell them about Jesus Christ who can help them with their deepest needs.

Our mission at College Heights is to develop mature and passionate followers of Christ. Being mature involves knowing the Scriptures and developing the Christ-like character in our lives. Being passionate means loving the Lord with all that we are and experiencing His incredible joy. Our

mission is to give the opportunities for training, worship, and support that you need to be a mature and passionate follower of Jesus.

But it doesn't stop there. Our mission is to deploy you as a believer into the world to minister in your workplace, your family, your neighborhood, your world. That is because the Christian life is not about ourselves, it is about reaching out to others.

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH?

The Church is an organism... it is ALIVE! Like all living things, specific elements contribute to its health and well-being. At College Heights, these elements are prayed for, and ever-developing.



1. empowering...leadership
The pastoral staff equips, supports, motivates, and mentors individuals, enabling them to become all that God want them to be. Rather than handling the bulk of church responsibilities on their own, leaders invest the majority of their time in discipleship, delegation, and multiplication.

2. Goal-oriented...ministry
Persons are involved in ministries matched to their giftedness and area of passion. Individuals receive training for their tasks.

3. passionate...spirituality
Christians at College Heights are "on fire". They live committed lives and practice their faith with joy and enthusiasm.

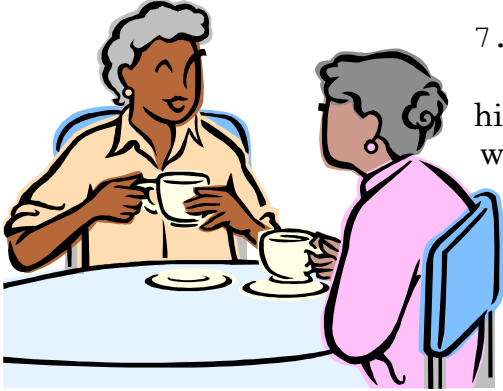
4. functional...structures
Leaders don't just lead. Leaders develop new leaders in their area of ministry. Structures are adjustable for the purpose of channeling life.

5. inspiring...worship services
In worship we encounter God who transforms us, empowers us, and comforts us.

6. holistic...small groups



Participants go beyond just discussing the Bible. Applying the message of Scripture to life is vital. There is freedom to bring up issues and questions of immediate personal concern. There is a conscious promoting of small group multiplication within the church body.



7. need-oriented...evangelism

It is the task of each Christian to use his or her gifts to serve Pre-Christians with whom one has a personal relationship. It is every Christians responsibility to see to it that they hear the gospel, and to encourage attendance with the local church. God particularly gifts some for evangelism, yet it is everyone's task. Existing relationships have built-in

contact points for evangelism.

8. loving... relationships

Unfeigned practical love has a divinely generated magnetic power far more effective than evangelistic programs which depend almost entirely on verbal communication. People do not want to hear us talk about love, they want to experience how Christian love really works. Living faith encompasses moral standard within the context of loving relationships

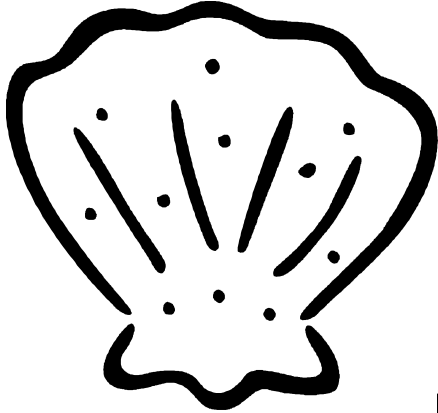
We are so glad you asked! There are three important reasons.

SO IF I CAN ENJOY ALL THIS WITHOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP, WHY JOIN?

1. Express your COMMITMENT (Matt. 33:37; 6:24).
Ultimately, this helps strengthens your commitment to God.
2. Experience Christian UNITY (1 Peter 2:5; Phil.2:2).
No "Lone Ranger" Christians!
3. Exercise your GIFTS (Romans 12:5; Eph. 4:11,12)
You are an important part of the body.

1. Attend the Firm Foundations Class.
2. Enjoy a "one –on-one" time with a pastor. (You will be contacted)
3. Participate in a New Member's welcome at a Sunday service.

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP



1. You must be born-again—having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
2. Christian baptism (if previously baptized, your baptism will be honored).
3. You are in agreement with the vision, values, and mission of College Heights, and wholeheartedly commit to the membership covenant.

MEMBERSHIP VOWS... JOINING COLLEGE HEIGHTS CHURCH

What follows are the traditional questions asked by a pastor of persons taking membership vows in the United Methodist Church:

On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you: Do you reject the spiritual forces of wickedness, the evil powers of this world, and the bondage to sin?

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

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?

According to the grace given to you, will you remain faithful members of Christ's holy Church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world?

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

As members of this congregation, will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service?

As members of this congregation... *How do we live out “faithful participation” in the ministries of College Heights United Methodist Church? Our understanding of “Prayers, Presence, Gifts, and Service” are fleshed out in the following **Membership Covenant**:*

The Membership Covenant

I Commit myself to God, and the other members of College Heights United Methodist Church, to do the following:

1. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH
 - By acting in love toward other members
 - By refusing to gossip
 - By supportively working with the leaders
2. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH
 - By praying for its growth
 - By inviting the unchurched to attend
 - By warmly welcoming those who visit
3. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH
 - By discovering my gifts and talents
 - By being equipped to serve by my pastors
 - By developing a servant’s heart
4. I WILL MATURE IN THE FAITH PROFESSED BY MY CHURCH
 - By having a quiet time with God.
 - By reading the Bible
 - By regularly participating in small group for study and fellowship
5. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH
 - By attending faithfully
 - By living a godly life
 - By giving regularly and systematically, in proportion to my income

By living out these habits, we grow in our faith and we enable the ministry of College Heights to move forward.