

Are You Ready - The Nehemiah Journey* -

Are you ready to discover the hopes and dreams that Jesus has for you and your church? If you are, prepare to receive a vision from God that will require deep faith, abundant trust, and a holy imagination. This vision will not come to you in a moment. Rather, God will give you this vision as you pray, share, and grow together in conversation, scripture, and worship. The process of discovering this vision is based upon the following assumptions:

- Jesus has dreams for the church that are greater than our own. We must simply open our eyes to see what Jesus wants for us and have the courage to follow.
- Every church is abundantly gifted by God with a unique combination of talents and passions, memories, and traditions. These gifts are given to every single member of the body of Christ, no matter their age, background, or ability.
- Every church is in a place where Jesus is present, pouring grace into the life of all people and beckoning us to encounter Him, especially with those who struggle with material, emotional, and/or spiritual poverty.
- The Holy Spirit is actively moving and encouraging Christ's church to participate in what God is already doing in the lives of people around us.

The discernment work that we will be doing together is not about what we want for our church. This work is about discovering what the Holy Spirit has given us, where God is present, and how Jesus is calling to share the Gospel. This process is all about determining what Jesus wants for His church and learning how to follow him faithfully.

The Process

The process is grounded in worship and prayer, and small groups of your making. The small groups would ideally meet weekly for 5 weeks (A meeting outline is available for each week). These could be on-line gatherings by in-person is highly recommended.

The discernment process has five basic steps. We begin with **prayer**, which cultivates a sense of expectation. The prayers that we lift before Jesus "prime the pump" as we prepare to receive the hopes and dreams that He has for the church.

The second step focuses upon all that we have, or **abundance**. We will reflect on all that God has done in the past and consider the gifts and talents that the Holy Spirit has given us in the present as we look toward the future.

The third step looks at the **opportunities** for us to see Jesus in our current situation and location. In other words – connecting to and meeting the needs of our community.

The fourth step considers those places where the Holy Spirit is moving. We will seek out the ways that the Holy Spirit is already working in our lives, in our church, and in the world around us. We will pay attention to the places where lives are being transformed by the Good News of Jesus Christ. We will reflect upon those places where the Holy Spirit is speaking and working through us to offer a uniquely Christian witness in a secular world.

Finally, we will determine where the gifts and the passions of the church intersect with the needs around us. We will pay attention to the Holy Spirit and its **revelation** of a new vision for the future of God's church.

The Preparation

Our process starts Sunday, January 30th and goes through Wednesday, March 2nd, which is Ash Wednesday. **Your commitment to this process is to find/organize a small group of 6 to 8 people that will start meeting following our first Sunday on Jan. 30th.** Please contact the church office to obtain copies of the weekly meeting outlines. Even though this initial process is for 5 weeks, I am hoping you will see, feel, and be strengthened by your small group that you will continue past those initial 5 weeks.

The Possibilities

Jesus has great hopes and dreams for His church. Our job is to pay attention to the leading of the Holy Spirit, look for those places where Jesus is, and courageously live into God's vision. May God bless you and fill you with joy as you discover what He has in store for you and collectively with our other brothers and sisters here at CUMC to make His church here in Ogden a light house of hope and salvation for all!

*The Nehemiah Journey - Phase 3 - Discernment, Visioning & Strategic Implementation
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