

# Amity

Believe . . . Belong . . . Become . . .



## Pastor's Message Newsletter, September 2009

Those who hear me preach on a regular basis have certainly heard me refer to a dear mentor of mine, Bishop Kenneth Carder. Bishop Carder served as bishop for Tennessee and Mississippi before his retirement a few years ago. He is a spiritual giant in my eyes and I have learned so much from his wisdom and generous teaching. I would like to share with you some of his intellectual and spiritual wealth regarding small membership churches.

“Some church-growth specialists contend that the future of United Methodism lies in the megachurch, the large membership, multi-service, seven-day-a-week, something-for-everybody church. Small membership churches are seen as being outdated, a sentimental reminder of a bygone era.”

Bishop Carder goes on to say, “I spend time in both large and small churches. I have concluded that when it comes to being a church, the size is irrelevant. Faithfulness to the gospel, forgiveness and genuine love among diverse people, a willingness to seek and welcome the alienated and broken, the presence of God’s grace incarnate in people, authentic praise and exuberance in God’s presence, a commitment to follow Jesus Christ into the messy places of the world – these are among the signs of a great church.”

**“The future of United Methodism lies in congregations that live God’s dream for the world – whatever their size.”**

As we enter into the fall of the year with a full calendar (*Disciple Bible Study, 5 Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, monthly service projects and a mission trip to the Dominican Republic in November), I pray that we keep our faces turned toward God’s dream for the world. We do not engage in all the activities of the church for our own fulfillment or even to build a large church. We engage in study and mission for the fulfillment of God’s dream for the world. We pray weekly, “thy Kingdom come”, but we do not sit idly by waiting on the Kingdom for we are called to be a part of ushering in the Kingdom, pointing to the Kingdom, reflecting the Kingdom. May Amity be a church that leads the United Methodist church into the future, fulfilling God’s call and God’s dream for the world: faithful to the gospel, forgiving, loving, welcoming all people and even seeking out those who are alienated and broken. Let us go to the messy places – Jesus is waiting for us!

Love and Blessings, *Tuck*



**AMITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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