

Your Faith Journey

Knowing, Loving, and Serving God. These are the steps along the path to living the life God hopes for us. As a church community, St. James takes this journey seriously, and we know that people enter the church and begin this disciple's path in different ways.

From the very beginning, the Methodist movement placed great emphasis upon growing into the likeness of Christ - experiencing the full love of God and sharing God's love with the world. Early Methodists frequently assessed their spiritual journey and committed to specific spiritual disciplines that facilitated growth by encouraging them to make time in their lives and space in their hearts for God.

We believe that a disciple of Jesus Christ is Theologically Informed, Spiritually Transformed, and Serves in the World as the Hands, Feet, and Witnessing Voice of Jesus.

Likewise, *Your Faith Journey*, based upon our pathway of discipleship and the membership vows professed by every United Methodist Christian, will assist you in growing in every way into Christ. We believe that a deeply committed disciple is theologically informed, spiritually transformed, and serves in the world as the hands, feet, & witnessing voice of Jesus. *Your Faith Journey* moves from "Believing

in Christ" to living a "Christ-Centered Life." Typically, due to personality compositions, individual preferences, and past experiences, Christians find they have experienced growth in some areas more easily than in others. *Your Faith Journey* will help you identify those areas where more intentionality is needed.

Approach *Your Faith Journey* prayerfully by asking the Holy Spirit to help you assess your progress as you journey and grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Two words of caution: the *Your Faith Journey* discernment process is not intended to create a sense of guilt or failure. Nor is it intended to create pride in one's self. The Church and Scripture have always cautioned against "self-pity" and "vainglory." Rather, we should remember, "There

is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" and "if you are going to boast, boast in the Lord." (Rom. 8:1; 1 Cor. 1:31)

St. James United Methodist Church seeks to change lives and reshape futures for Jesus Christ. Making and nurturing deeply committed and Christ-Centered Disciples is how we fulfill this mission. If you desire guidance on your spiritual journey, please contact one of our church pastors or staff. We consider it a privilege to encourage you in your spiritual growth.

KNOWING
LOVING
SERVING GOD

How Do I Grow in My Faith Journey?

St. James offers a wide variety of programs, classes, small groups, mission opportunities, and events that will help individuals and families grow in their faith journey.

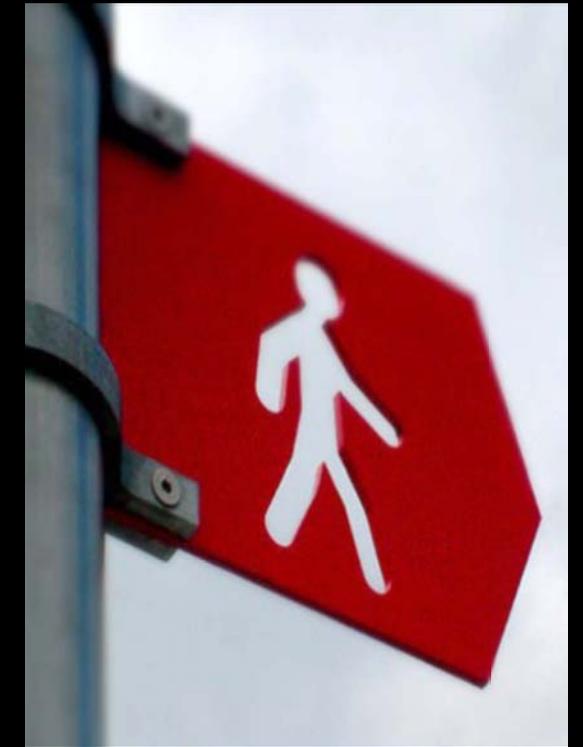
Three times a year we publish a ministry guidebook. These publications highlight the different ways a person can Know, Love & Serve God through Christ. Some programs are at the introductory level, some are advanced, but all are designed to help in one's faith journey.

If there is a specific topic, area, or interest that is not covered in a ministry catalog please contact:

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YOUR

FAITH

JOURNEY

at St. James

		Believing In Christ	Growing In Christ	Close To Christ	Christ-Centered
		<i>First steps for those who desire to learn more about the Christian faith, the Church, and God.</i>	<i>Believer growing in Christ primarily through large group experiences while developing a heart for the needs of others.</i>	<i>Spiritually mature disciple who desires a deeper level of shared discipleship with others and seeks ways to unselfishly serve.</i>	<i>Deeply committed disciple who surrenders to God, reproduces the Christian faith in the life of others, lives a life of service.</i>
Knowing God	Christian Essentials	Is aware of the very basic beliefs of the Christian faith.	Seeks out ways to know more about Christ, the history of the Christian Tradition, and how to have a relationship with God.	Incorporates Christian creeds and beliefs into my faith walk and relationship with God.	Can share the gospel intelligently with non-Christians and nominally Christian friends.
	Bible Knowledge	Acknowledges the Bible is important, but the Bible is not yet a part of my everyday life.	Begins to explore the Bible as the inspired Word of God and understand its importance through small group or Sunday School classes.	Understands the grand sweep of the Bible's story of salvation, including a basic timeline of Biblical events, and applies its teachings in life.	Understands the Bible and knows how to interpret it as a guide and companion for life's journey.
	Church/ Methodist	Believes the church is a way to grow in faith and relationship with Christ.	Begins to understand the importance of regular participation in the life of the church community.	Seeks to grow in understanding of the teachings of the universal church and the tenets of the United Methodist Church.	Committed to the local, connectional, and universal church and is committed to Christian unity even when opinions differ.
	Basic Christian Ethics	Understands and applies general Christian principles to everyday life. Tries to be a "good person."	Continues to grow in awareness of how the Christian faith impacts my life not just on Sunday but every day of the week.	Seeks to grow in understanding & applying Christian ethics through Bible study, worship, and conversations with other Christians.	Understands how to apply my Christian faith to important ethical issues. Is committed to living out Christian ethical principles.
	Knowing God's Will	Is aware but struggles with acknowledging and understanding God's will for my life.	Seeks to acknowledge God's will for my individual life and begins to follow the path.	Develops a growing discernment process for God's will in individual lives	Has a growing sense of how to discern God's will for my life through prayer, Bible study and wisdom from other Christians.
Loving God	Surrender	Acknowledges and realizes that God is in my life, but struggles to turn control of life over to God.	Begins to seek God's direction and will in my life through prayer, Bible study and worship	Repents of sin, sets aside own desires. Surrenders more of self to God's will and plan.	Surrenders control of all aspects of my life to Jesus, repents of sin, sets aside personal desires & sense of importance. Offers my life in obedient service to God.
	Transformation	Moved to accept Christ by the Holy Spirit.	Seeks to grow in faith through regular participation in worship, small groups, and missions	Values and priorities are guided and shaped by the Holy Spirit.	Is continually transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Senses His power molding my values, priorities, and relationships into more Christ-like patterns.
	Spiritual Disciplines	Attends church occasionally, thinks about prayer more than actually praying, buys study books.	Begins regularly exploring spiritual life through prayer, Bible Study, and worship.	Prays daily, worships often, and is engaged in exploring other spiritual disciplines such as fasting, meditation, accountability groups and more.	Practices spiritual disciplines as a means of surrendering to Jesus and opening my life to the Holy Spirit's transforming activity.
	Fruit of the Spirit	Acknowledges that Christians such as me are given gifts by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22)	Begins to incorporate and develop faith disciplines to grow the gifts of the spirit.	Fruits of the Spirit are known internally and demonstrated externally.	Continually grows in the inner qualities and outward actions identified as "the fruit of the Spirit" from Galatians 5:22
	Small Groups	Sees some value of participating in Small Groups such as Bible Study & Sunday School.	Occasionally attend a small group or Sunday School class (2 out of 4 weeks) for personal growth.	Sharing my faith journey with others through small groups, mutual encouragement, and accountability as often as possible.	Shares my faith journey with a group of Christian friends in mutual encouragement, support, and accountability developing spiritual honesty and trust.
Serving God	Service to Others	Serves others when it is convenient.	Participates occasionally in a service project in the church or in the community.	I believe God calls me to be involved in the lives of the poor and suffering.	Is becoming an instrument of God's love in a broken, hurting world. Lives a life of service to others with a strong focus on the Bible's concern for the poor and for justice.
	Sharing Christ	Learning about the Good News but not comfortable sharing personal testimony of God's work in my life.	Developing my faith journey story and can share it with family and trusted friends.	Feels fully equipped to share my faith with non-Christians or nominal Christians. My behavior and actions reflect my faith.	Eager to share Christ's Good News in loving, winsome, and non-judgmental ways. Ready to "give an answer to anyone who asks the reason for your hope" ^{1 Peter 3:15}
	Spiritual Gifts	Interested in taking a spiritual gifts assessment to learn how to serve others.	I know and occasionally use my spiritual gifts to fulfill God's purposes	I regularly serve in ministry using my spiritual gifts.	Understands clearly which spiritual gifts and talents I have. Uses my gifts to bless others and build up the Body of Christ.
	Financial Gifts	Occasionally gives as the offering plate is passed or to a something special that interests me and my family.	I give as I feel I am able. I have a growing awareness of the need for God's direction in my finances, but struggle to balance it with my personal needs/wants.	Moving toward the tithe of my income. I know I need God's direction in my finances as he is the true source of all my blessings.	Tithing at least 10% of my income to the church, recognizing God owns everything, and submitting my financial life to God's guidance and control.
	Time	Being active in Church and practicing my faith on a daily basis is important but a struggle to maintain.	Making time for God and the practice of faith more of a priority in my life.	Decisions on what projects, events, and activities I participate are weighed against how they best serve God.	See time as a gift from God to be used in keeping with God's purpose, avoid compulsive busyness, and submit my calendar to God's guidance and control.