

**PRAYER and DISCERNMENT
at
LEASIDE UNITED CHURCH**

Winter Project 2010



**WEEK FOUR February 7, 2010
Are WE being Called?**

ASK:

Consider your inner desires. You probably share these with most other human beings on the planet. You are not alone!

Are there any of these desires not being fully expressed?

Have you forgotten about any of them?

Can you see a way forward, a path, for any one of them?

Most important: are you being called to follow one of them now, at this point in your life?

What will it take to convince you to follow?

What is needed to help you fulfill this inner dream?

Imagine you are surrounded by God's light, with God's breath whooshing through you. You can do anything at this moment. In prayer, take time to express your gratitude.

Here is Ignatius' Prayer of Surrender.

(You can substitute any of the concepts (eg. my liberty, could become: my creativity) with your own words from the above exercise. Also, you can substitute the words My Beloved for the word Lord.)

Take, Lord, and receive

My liberty,

My memory,

My understanding,

My entire will,

Everything I have and call my own.

You gave me all these gifts,

And to you I return them.

Dispose of them entirely according to your will.

Give me only your love.

That is all I ask.

Hearing our Call as a Church Body

So far, we have been discerning our individual desires, and calls, and practicing our prayer exercises alone.

Now let's start to imagine what happens and will happen when we apply some of these principles to a group, like our congregation.

I'm going to give you some principles this week, and ask you to spend some time in prayer and meditation with these things. Then next week, we'll take another step into discerning our future as a church.

Principles:

(from Farnham: *Grounded in God*)

- 1) The church is a spiritual body.
- 2) When we connect at the spiritual level, our hearts and spirits resonate with God's heart and spirit.
- 3) Resonance and alignment expand us. The spirit is set free. Love flows through us and out from us.
- 4) Paul said: "Have this mind within you: the mind of Christ". If we are Christ's body on earth, then our collective mind is the mind of Christ .
- 5) Each of us has a responsibility to listen for the mind of Christ. We do this best in prayer.
- 6) All of our activities and decisions can be measured against our discernment of the mind of Christ. This takes time, patience, and community unity.
- 7) However, it's usually only in hindsight that we realize we were actually doing "what God would have us do."

EXERCISE (part 2 of last week's exercise)

Can you trace your deepest desires? Once you find them, you will know which direction to follow. (For churches, once a church finds its mission, it will know what steps to take) Following these desires shows you the way.

Follow the INSIDE - OUT PATH:

When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up? Firefighter? Doctor? Nurse? Astronaut? Veterinarian? How would you reframe these desires in spiritual terms?

Do you remember learning fairy tales? What ones appealed to you? Hero stories? Transformational? Just one wish? Free from evil spell? Think of one or two that you remember well. What kind of hero do you wish to be?

What kind of "becoming who I am" story do you need to grow into?

What one wish will deeply satisfy your inner spirit?

What in your life seems to have you in its hold, its spell?

Find your tree picture from last week.

If these inner desires are the branches of your life, what do they look like?

Fully grown, mature, in leaf, bearing fruit?

Or stunted?

Or just beginning to show a few green shoots?

Think about your desires as CALLS. What is being called forth from you? What missions and dreams do you really think you are being asked to live out? Name them and put them on the picture in the branches (or as fruit). You are now starting to visualize your desires, your callings, your true being!

WOW!!!