

United Methodist Friends,

I have heard some people say that tough years are ahead for the Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church. This forecast will come true if we abandon our mission as a Church.

The mission of The United Methodist Church “is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (Paragraph 120, 2016 *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* BOD).

Paragraph 121 tells us the rationale for the mission of the church. We fulfill the mission by “proclaiming the good news of God’s grace and by exemplifying Jesus’ command to love God and neighbor.” (121 BOD). These core values surface from the two Biblical texts that are cited in the paragraph. We proclaim the good news of God’s grace because Jesus told his followers to go into all the world and make disciples in Matthew 28:19-20.

The second Biblical text comes from Matthew 22:37 and 39. “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind...love your neighbor as yourself.” Does this text need more explanation?

My top priority is to fulfill the mission of the church. I have reduced the mission to nine simple words. I want to share them with you today. They embody our mission.

Love God

Love people

Make a difference

Make disciples

I added the words “make a difference” after coming to Oklahoma and seeing the active faith expressed throughout our conference in a wide variety of settings. I am in awe of the significant differences that you have made!

I am confident that with God’s help, the UMC in Oklahoma will continue to navigate any difficulties on the horizon.

May God bless The United Methodist Church and may God bless you that we may fulfill our mission.

Bishop Jimmy Nunn