

“Search Engine Theology: Why Does the Church...Exist?”

Romans 15:1-7

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(From song “Use Me” by Ron Kenoly and Dewitt Jones) If you can use anything Lord...please use me. Take my hands, take my feet, take my heart. Touch my heart speak through me. Use me Lord.

Do you want to be used by Jesus? Xxxx Oh, but I’m just a child, oh, I’m too old, oh, I’ve already served in the church---I’m retiring from helping in the church (shame on you). God can’t use me I don’t have anything to offer. Oh but God took Moses who scripture says was “slow of speech”, had a speech impediment---possibly a stutterer and with a rod in his hand he stretch it forth and led the people through on dry land.

Oh and a shepherd boy David with a sling in his hand took a rock and that sling and conquered a giant. Who wants to conquer giants? Scripture says we are “more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37)

So I ask can he use you? Xxxxx Are you ready to be used by God? Are you ready for Him to take your hands, feet, and your heart? Are you ready to let Him speak through your voice and actions?

We conclude our Search Engine Theology sermon series search for “Why does the church...exist?”

I wish someone would ask me: “Why does the church exist?” Glad you asked.

We are a United Methodist Church...some of you may not know what the mission of United Methodist Churches are. I am more than happy to share from the United Methodist Book of Discipline (paragraph 121) “The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by proclaiming the good news of God’s grace and by exemplifying Jesus’ command to love God and neighbor, thus seeking the fulfillment of God’s reign and realm in the world. The fulfillment of God’s reign and realm in the world is the vision Scripture holds before us. The United Methodist Church affirms that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and the Lord of all.

Sounds kind of like “Love God, Love All!”

With our scripture as backing let me share 5 reasons the church exists.

**<sup>2</sup>We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord**

**Why Does the Church Exist?**

**1. To help**

To help others. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said this, “The Church is the Church only when it exists for others...not dominating, but helping and serving. It must tell men of every calling what it means to live for Christ, to exist for others.” (Letters and Papers from Prison)

We exist at PHUMC to help others---it’s Biblical! Did you know we have many missions and services teams? All Ages! All In! are involved in helping others in a variety of ways. You have heard about Reindeer Run, our mission of the month is Operation Christmas Child, at the Food Festival you filled a van load of canned goods for the FEAST food pantry. We are to help others.

Did you know that this year we will financially send around \$345,000 outside the walls of this church!!!

Many churches look inward. Some churches look outward. Do we do outreach or do we do congregational care for our members? To be honest there is a creative tension that exists. It is not “no” to looking outward. It is not “no” to looking inward. It is not “no” to outreach and congregational care. It is not a select one of the above---it is a yes to all the above.

Wow, how can we do that. Well to be honest it takes faithful giving of finances. Our Year to Date giving is down about 4% while our budget for this year is up 10% from last year. Wowza! So we are cutting the budget for 2018 the best that we prayerfully can. What can you do? You can continue to give graciously, generously and have extravagant generosity. We should be giving \$345,000 beyond these walls and even more, but we must also be aware and sensitive to operating our ministries on the campus. It’s both and. A creative tension.

This week you will receive a letter from Dennis Briggs, our Stewardship Chairman. Included in that letter will be a commitment card. 1<sup>st</sup> and foremost=Pray. We as a church want to be good stewards, please ask God and say, “use me” and then respond. You can mail those commitments in or bring them with you on Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup> where we will be receiving them in worship.

I can give many reasons as to why to give: To honor God, it’s Biblical, it supports outreach, it provides ministries inward and outward, it helps with the care, upkeep and operation of our facilities so we can continue ministries on this campus, it provides a staff that is passionate about the mission of Gathering God’s people for worship, Growing disciples of Jesus Christ, and Going into the community and the world, we give generously as a way to thank God. In order for the ministry at PHUMC to exist, in order for us to Gather, Grow and Go there must be a 4<sup>th</sup> ‘G’=Generosity. Oh blessed to be a blessing.

You make a commitment for 2018 or even for the rest of 2017 by contacting Michelle Premuto our Finance Manager, just call the church office. You can give by check/cash, by automatic payments from your bank and you give online at our website---[www.phumc.net](http://www.phumc.net). It’s listed in the bulletin.

I am excited about a new way that technology has allowed us to use for God's glory. As of last week we can now receive donations and contributions through Texting. Just as perhaps you have seen on TV where there are relief efforts and they ask you to text a donation. We have established a secure way to do that for the ministries at PHUMC. The first time you text it you have to provide debit/credit card information to this secure service. After that you just text in the amount you feel led to contribute.

That number is: **727-866-4483.**

Now creatively I thought how can we remember this. Each numeral is also indicative of letters, so by using the numbers 4483 I've come up with **727-866-HITD** . HITD, stands for HI Touchdown....score. Okay, Finance Manager didn't like that one either.

But this one does work: **727-866-GIVE  
4483**

So I know we've had the offering, but if everyone would get their phone out and text....just kidding...well, not really!!!!

Why does the church exist? For others---which means we need to have an operational base at our local church.

### **Why Does the Church Exist?**

- 1. To Help**
- 2. To give hope and encouragement**

**<sup>4</sup> Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled.**

The world may give you despair and a sense of hopelessness. You may be discouraged. The church exists to give hope and encouragement as we wait for God.

### **Why Does the Church Exist?**

- 3. To have community**

**<sup>5</sup> May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus.**

You form community by being in Small Groups. You form community by being in service together. You form community by being in ministry together. You form community by being in fellowship with one another.

Now did you know that part of the word community is the word UNITY?

## **Why Does the Church Exist?**

### **4. To have unity**

**<sup>6</sup> Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

What voice? ONE voice---together praising and glorifying God! Unity and uniformity are not the same. We may differ about certain issues---but with one voice I shout out that Jesus Christ is Lord!!!! It's about Jesus! It's about others! It's about you! Oh my. Jesus Others You. J.Jesus. O.Others. Y.you. Acronym of first letters spells JOY!

## **Why Does the Church Exist?**

### **5. To call others**

**<sup>7</sup> Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.**

You have been accepted by Jesus Christ, should we not accept others. To do that means we need to be intentional about reaching out and inviting.

At our Food Truck Fall Festival fliers were handed out about next week's service (**image**)

One service at 9:30, what time??? XXXXX Yes you can dress as a superhero. Adults no full faced masks please. This service will be a sample of what our new service is going to be at 11:05. The music won't be quite as loud as it will be at 11:05, and we will not be in superhero costumes when our 11:05 service begins. We are doing a preview of this service, although it may not be your preferred setting, to let you know and experience this modern.worship.experience Who knows you may meet someone that you could invite that would love this service.

Let me also say this service will be very child friendly. Listen to the following quote, "We will never bring in the Kingdom by simply seeking to save an adult generation. We must give God a chance at the children or the cause of righteousness is going to be defeated. But if we will save the child, we will surely save the world." That was made by Clovis Chappel, Methodist pastor who retired in 1940.

Ah, some things don't change. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me..."

At children's moments you saw displayed how little time we have with children. Did you know statistically up to 83% of all Christians make their commitment to Jesus between the ages of 4 and 14 (Survey by International Bible Society, 2015). Some call this the '4-14 window.' That powerful window of opportunity to reach children for the Kingdom. Thank you Robin, Nan, Leah, Kelly for our children's ministry!

So you might say I am flying high about next week's service at 9:30 (**image**).

The church exists to call others. This means we have a call to reach all generations. We want to reach children, we want to reach youth and young adults, we want to reach seniors, we want to reach the 'nones.' Those that perhaps had parents that never went to church. We want to reach the 'dones,' those that have perhaps even grown up in church, but life happened and they are done. Maybe not done with Jesus, but done with church. Let's help them make a connection. We want to reach those 'spiritual nomads' that are drifting and seeking.

Because of that call we will begin in 2 weeks, 11/05 to begin 3 worship services. Each one with just a little different setting. **(image)**

All worship times change that day. I have contacted the federal government and since we are changing worship times that day they have decided to change clocks and have declared that day the day when Daylight Savings Time begins. So clocks fall back. Likewise our first worship services fall back in time.

Our 8:15 service beginning on November 5 will fall back to 8:05. This worship setting will be similar to what we have this morning but will also include a hymn with piano/organ.

Our 9:45 service will fall back to 9:30 and will be similar to what we have this morning.

On 11/05 at 11:05 our modern.worship.experience begins with a church feel with a modern presentation. There will be a Children's Moments as children 1<sup>st</sup> grade and up will attend the service with their families and will receive each Sunday some sermon/theme helps to engage the children.

It is time for us not to have an Evangelism Day, but to live an evangelism lifestyle and constantly be inviting people to the church and Jesus. Now 3 times to invite them to.

Our scripture said, <sup>6</sup> Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

I have never heard of Duncan Campbell before. Like his quote though. Found out that he was a Scottish preacher in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. Here's his quote with a slight paraphrase:

"The Kingdom of God is not going to be advanced by our churches becoming filled with people (men), but by people (men) in our churches becoming filled with God."

My friends-----that is why the church exists!!!!