

Moving On To Perfection

September traditionally is the time when local church programming shifts into high gear, worship hits high notes as choirs return from summer break and children are more in evidence, adding to our joy.

Sunday School resumes a regular curriculum for children, and many of them are "promoted" to a different class. Youth groups too are re-formed, with some older teens moving on and younger members joining in.

Often adult Sunday School classes and small groups begin new studies or shift their focus a bit. But while children and youth may move on to new challenges that help them grow in their Christian understanding, I wonder how many adults are being stretched in their discipleship.

The apostle Paul writes, **"Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and**

perfecter of faith."

Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

I like the image of a race and the starting



line. It is exactly the way we can understand what John Wesley called the Way Of Salvation.

Accepting and entering into a relationship with Christ is only a beginning. It is a starting line; not an end point to our walk of faith. As we come into relationship with Christ, our lives are transformed, but we have a long way to go.

Our discipleship is strengthened as we connect with God and connect with others on this spiritual journey. God call us into a perfect life, and our understanding of what this means grows deeper. The scriptures tell us to **"be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."**--Matthew 5:48

There is always more to be done as our discipleship moves from serving others in our communities and mission fields to inviting them into a relationship with Christ.

How are you challenging yourself to grow into perfection this year? How do you connect with God? How are you connecting with others? How are you serving Christ as you serve others in your mission field?

This Fall, I invite you to run. Don't just settle for a Christian walk of mediocrity. Venture outside your comfort zone. Run the race that is set before you, and, most importantly, run with God. **Take Risks!**

--Greg Cox

Director of Connectional Ministries

Bible Study and Prayer

Join United Methodists throughout Western Pennsylvania in studying these Bible passages from the Revised Common Lectionary and praying for these congregations and pastors.

September 4-10, 2011

Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost--Green

Read: Exodus 12:1-14, Psalm 149 or Psalm 148, Romans 13:8-14, Matthew 18:15-20

Pray for:

- ✚ **Seneca UMC**, Franklin District, William Hastings, pastor
- ✚ **Wurtemberg UMC**, Butler District, Jean Smith, pastor
- ✚ **Manor: First UMC**, Greensburg District, Darlene Williams, pastor
- ✚ **Glasgow Larger Parish**, Johnstown District, Barry Weyant, pastor; Darlene Wiewiora, associate
- ✚ **Washington: John Wesley**, Washington District, Harold Knappenberger, pastor
- ✚ **Walnut Hill UMC**, Connellsville District, Arnold Husk, pastor

September 18-24, 2011

Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost--Green

Read: Exodus 16:2-15, Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45, Philippians 1:21-30, Matthew 20:1-16

Pray for:

- ✚ **Beaver Falls: College Hill UMC**, Butler District, Duk Hee Han, pastor
- ✚ **Jeannette: First and Greensburg: Trinity UMCs**, Greenburg District, Amy Chesla, pastor
- ✚ **Mill Run and Ohiopyle UMCs**, Connellsville District, Randall Newell, pastor
- ✚ **North Clarion: Good Shepherd UMC**, Kane District, Seth McPherson, pastor
- ✚ **Wexford: Salem UMC**, Pittsburgh District, Beth Nelson, pastor
- ✚ **Swissvale UMC**, Pittsburgh District, Dai Morgan, pastor

September 11-17, 2011

Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost--Green

Read: Exodus 14:19-31, Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21, Romans 14:1-12, Matthew 18:21-35

Pray for:

- ✚ **Butler: Christ Community UMC**, Butler District, Jeffrey St. Clair, pastor
- ✚ **Johnstown: Roxbury St. Paul's UMC**, Johnstown District, Wayne Sedei, pastor
- ✚ **Benezette Charge**, Kane District, Timothy Rogers, pastor
- ✚ **Brave and Jollytown UMCs**, Washington District, Cynthia Deter, pastor
- ✚ **Brush Valley Community UMC**, Indiana District, Richard Russell, pastor
- ✚ **Titusville: First UMC**, Erie-Meadville District, Ronald Hipwell, pastor

September 25-October 1, 2011

Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost--Green

Read: Exodus 17:1-7, Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16, Philippians 2:1-13, Matthew 21:23-32

Pray for:

- ✚ **Bridgeport UMC**, Connellsville District, James Fogg, Jr., pastor
- ✚ **Albion: Calvary UMC**, Erie-Meadville District, Melvin Bendig, pastor
- ✚ **DuBois: First UMC**, Indiana District, Lance Tucker, pastor
- ✚ **Smethport UMC**, Kane District, Robert Hernan, pastor
- ✚ **Allison Park: St. Paul's, Epworth and Millvale Charge**, Pittsburgh District, Ronald Hoellein, pastor; Bruce Gascoine, associate; Hyung-Suk Joe, associate
- ✚ **Pleasant Unity UMC**, Greensburg District, Joanie Scarff, pastor

