



# THE MISSION & VISION SESSIONS

## ST JOHN'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

### Session 1

#### Called to Be the Church: Discerning Our Mission Together

##### **Purpose:**

To help us discern what God is calling St. John's to do and to be in our community and in the world.

##### **Opening Prayer:**

Loving God, Thank you for bringing us together today. As we reflect on who we are and who you are calling us to be, open our hearts, clear our minds, and guide our conversations. Help us listen for your voice and respond with faith. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

##### **Part 1 – Warm-Up Discussion**

*These questions ease us into more reflective discussion while sparking appreciation for the church's current identity and legacy.*

##### **Opening Questions: (around a circle or small groups)**

1. What first brought you to St. John's?
2. Can you share a time when you saw our church make a difference in someone's life, your own, or the wider community?

##### **Follow-Up (as time allows):**

1. What makes our church unique in this community?
2. What are some things we do best as a congregation?

##### **Part 2 – Scripture Exploration**

##### **Read Aloud:**

Matthew 22:37-40

Matthew 28:18-20

James 2:14-17



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### Scripture Discussion Questions:

1. What do the first two passages from Matthew reveal about the core mission of the Church?
2. In what ways are “loving God and neighbor” and “making disciples” connected?
3. How do you see these reflected in what our congregation is doing today?
4. What is the relationship between faith and “works”? In what ways is St. John’s an example of visible, active faith in our community?

### Part 3 – Congregational Identity & Mission

*Consider dividing the class into smaller groups (if large enough), assigning 2-3 questions per group. Then regroup and share insights. Assign a member of each group to jot down thoughts or take notes.*

### Questions for Reflection and Group Discussion:

1. What do we believe God is calling this congregation to do in this community and the world?
2. What are we currently doing that aligns with the Great Commission and the Great Commandment?
3. What needs in the community are we uniquely equipped to address?
4. If our church closed tomorrow, what would the community miss the most?
5. Who are we here for—who is included in our mission field?
6. How do we reflect United Methodist theology and tradition in our mission?

### Part 4 – Wrap-Up and Closing Prayer

#### Group Debrief:

1. What themes or repeated ideas stood out to you?
2. Did anything surprise you or shift your thinking?

**Prayer:** God of love and mission, you’ve called your Church to be Christ’s hands and feet in the world. Open our hearts and minds to your direction. Help us see clearly who we are, who we’re called to serve, and how to live out your love boldly in our community. In the spirit of Jesus, may we be your people on purpose. Amen.

 **Optional Take-Home Activity:** Invite participants to write a brief answer to: “Our church is called to...”



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### Session 2

#### Faith in Action: Visioning for Impact

##### **Purpose:**

To prayerfully reflect on God's vision for the church, consider what transformation might look like in our congregation and community, and to begin naming hopes, barriers, and signs of success.



##### **Opening Prayer:**

Gracious God, Thank you for this church and for calling us together. Open our hearts and minds as we listen for your vision. Help us dream boldly, speak truthfully, and follow you faithfully. May all we do today bring us closer to the church you're calling us to be. Amen.



##### **Part 1 – Warm-Up Discussion**

*These questions help us think about our current identity and values as a springboard for future visioning.*

##### **Opening Questions:**

1. What's one thing you love about our church now?
2. When have you felt the most spiritually alive in this community?

##### **Follow-Up (as time allows):**

1. What makes our church unique in this community?
2. What are some things we do best as a congregation?



##### **Part 2 – Scripture Exploration**

##### **Read Aloud:**

Acts 2:42-47

Ephesians 4:11-16

Matthew 5:14-16



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### Scripture Discussion Questions:

1. What qualities and practices defined the early church? What were the outcomes of those practices?
2. What is the purpose of the various gifts God gives to each of us?
3. What does it look like as we grow into maturity as the Body of Christ? What impact does that have on the surrounding world?

### Additional Points to Consider:

1. These passages show the church as a community shaped by Christ, active in the world, and always growing.
2. Transformation isn't just internal; it's visible in how the church impacts the world.
3. God's vision is never static—churches are called to discern and adapt faithfully over time.

### Part 3 – Congregational Visioning & Impact

*Consider dividing the class into smaller groups (if large enough), assigning 2-3 questions per group. Then regroup and share insights. Assign a member of each group to jot down thoughts or take notes. Since there are more questions than time allows, choose the ones you think will resonate most with your group.*

### Questions for Reflection and Group Discussion:

1. What kind of church do we believe God wants us to become in the next 5-10 years?
  - a. If Jesus walked through our church, what would he hope to see?
  - b. Are there unmet needs we feel called to address?
2. What would our community look like if our church fully lived out its calling?
  - a. How would our neighborhood/school/town be different?
  - b. What would people say about this church?
3. What dreams or hopes do we have for future generations in this congregation?
  - a. What kind of faith community do we want our kids and grandkids to inherit?
  - b. What stories do we hope they tell about this season of our church?



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### Guiding Questions (continued):

4. What are the barriers we need to overcome to become who God is calling us to be?
  - a. Are there habits, fears, or assumptions holding us back?
  - b. What's the difference between a healthy challenge and a limiting belief?
5. How will we know we've succeeded in our vision? What does "transformation" look like?
  - a. What signs of growth (spiritual, relational, outreach) would show us we're on track?
  - b. What fruit do we hope to bear?

### Part 4 – Wrap-Up and Closing Prayer

#### Group Debrief:

1. What themes or repeated ideas stood out to you?
2. Did anything surprise you, inspire you, or shift your thinking?
3. What do you feel God might be saying to us today?

#### Prayer:

God of the past, present, and future, thank you for this church, for your faithfulness, and for the dreams you plant in our hearts. Help us to listen deeply, imagine boldly, and follow courageously as we seek to become the people and the church you are calling us to be. In Christ's name, Amen.

### Optional Take-Home Activity:

Reflect on one of today's questions during the upcoming week and write your personal response.



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### Session 3

#### Living our Faith: Exploring Our Identity and Values

##### **Purpose:**

*To help us reflect on who we are as a faith community, what we value, and how our United Methodist roots shape the mission and vision for the future.*

##### **Opening Prayer:**

Gracious God, Thank You for this time to gather and reflect. Help us remember who we are, who You're calling us to be, and the values that shape us as a church. Guide our hearts and conversations with Your Spirit, and lead us forward in love and purpose. Amen.

##### **Part 1 – Warm-Up Discussion**

*These questions help us name what we value most about St. John's and how we express our identity to others, offering clues about who we're becoming.*

##### **Opening Questions: (around a circle or small groups)**

1. Can you recall a moment when you felt proud to be part of St. John's?
2. How would you describe St. John's to a friend who has never been here before?

##### **Part 2 – Scripture Exploration**

##### **Read Aloud:**

Micah 6:8

Acts 2:42-47

2 Timothy 1:5-7



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### Scripture Discussion Questions:

1. How does/should the Micah passage shape our individual and community identity?
2. Name the early church values discussed in Acts. How does St. John's reflect this model, or where could we grow?
3. The United Methodist faith tradition passed down to us values grace, connectionalism, social justice, and personal holiness. Which of these values do we actively live out, and where could we grow?

### Part 3 – Congregational Identity & Values

*Consider dividing the class into smaller groups (if large enough), assigning 2-3 questions per group. Then regroup and share insights. Assign a member of each group to jot down thoughts or take notes. Encourage honest, story-based sharing – not just abstract answers.*

### Questions for Reflection and Group Discussion:

1. What are the key beliefs or behaviors that define St. John's identity? Are these taught? Modeled? Experienced?
2. When we are at our best, what values are we living out? Can you share a story that reflects this?
3. What do we want every guest or member to experience at St. John's? Think emotionally, spiritually, relationally...
4. How do we make decisions – what values guide us in tough situations or choices? Are these values explicit or assumed?
5. How do our United Methodist roots shape our values?
6. How will we know we've succeeded in our vision? What does 'transformation' look like? In individuals? Families? The wider community?

### Part 4 – Wrap-Up and Closing Prayer

### Group Debrief:

1. What themes or repeated ideas stood out to you?
2. Is there one value or vision you think we need to reclaim or clarify?
3. What word or phrase do you think should be central to St. John's identity going forward?



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### Prayer:

God of vision and purpose, thank You for speaking through Your Word and through each other today. Help us to hold tightly to what is good and let go of what no longer serves our mission. Shape our hearts and our church into a true reflection of Your love and grace. Amen.



### Optional Take-Home Activity:

Reflect on one of today's questions during the upcoming week and write your personal response.



## Want to share your reflections?

If you'd like to share your responses to the discussion questions with the Mission & Vision Revision Team, visit [stjohnsbr.org/mission-vision](https://stjohnsbr.org/mission-vision) or scan the QR code below. *Please make submissions by September 7, 2025.*

If you're participating in sessions with your Sunday School class, you do *not* need to submit responses online. Your class discussion is being noted. However, if you have additional thoughts or reflections, you're welcome to share them online.