

There is beauty in being United Methodist.

Here is why I believe it is good to be a United Methodist. This denomination nurtured my faith, led me to my confirmation, and was instrumental in my call to ministry. It is the context in which I love and serve others. It is not perfect, as other traditions have their own strengths, but here is why there is beauty in being United Methodist.

1. We are a People of Grace

We believe that the work of **God's grace is a lifelong process**. It draws us toward God before we even realize it, empowers us to accept it for ourselves, and fashions us every day into the living image of Jesus. Our unique understanding of grace also gives room to believe in human free will. **Our ability to choose God is itself a gift of grace**, lest it become a work necessary for salvation. As the old hymn says, "Grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home."

2. We are a People of the Word

We believe that Jesus is the Word made flesh, the ultimate revelation of God's love for humanity, and we believe the Bible offers the clearest witness to the person and work of Jesus. John Wesley called himself "a man of one book, and a student of many." The Bible serves as our authority in all matters related to salvation, and we can become a living **witness to the power of the Scriptures and the love of God**.

3. We are a People in the Center

Our Wesleyan theological heritage is grounded in the concept of *via media*, which John Wesley's mother Susannah instilled in him in his formative years. It is the "way in the center" which takes **the best of two opposites and forms a creative third way**, a "both/and" in matters of faith and life. This principle frees us from being drawn into dichotomous categories that divide our politics and culture, and seeks a way in the center as a witness to God's inclusive love.

4. We are a People Who Practice our Faith

To be United Methodist means in large part to be methodical, diligent, and intentional about our **spiritual practices**. Since the early days of John Wesley's Holy Club, Methodists have sought a structured, daily approach to the spiritual life. Today, that intentionality is the basis of our [Discipleship Pathway](#): attending worship, being part of a small group, performing acts of mercy and justice, reading the scriptures, praying, inviting others, and giving generously of our means.

5. We are Connected to Each Other

Being connectional is a hallmark of our denomination. We believe that each church and every member are **part of a wider connection throughout the world**. The impact of service and giving multiplies when joined with United Methodists near and far. **This enables us to have a broader and wider reach throughout the globe**, and to care for those who are suffering. Together, we support schools, hospitals, camps, children's homes, social service agencies, disaster relief, missionaries, seminaries, and many other missions of mercy and justice around the world.

It is good to be a United Methodist. And I'm glad to be one with you.

Grace and Peace, *Magrey deVega*