

Discover Hilliard UMC



God Loves You  No Matter What

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Change the World Conference
Presenter: Rudy Rasmus
TOUCH: The Power of Touch in Transforming Lives (Book Excerpt)
The TOUCH Test

Instructions: Please circle the ones who would be difficult to touch in the seat next to yours next Sunday morning.

- ❖ A heavily tattooed man
- ❖ Person with piercings in their eyelids
- ❖ Person who shouts uncontrollably
- ❖ Elderly male / female
- ❖ A Crack Addict
- ❖ Barefoot man with a strong body odor
- ❖ Teenaged male with gold teeth, baggy pants and cap turned sideways
- ❖ Couple living together, not married
- ❖ Interracial couple
- ❖ A prostitute
- ❖ A Muslim
- ❖ Divorced female / male
- ❖ Non-English speaking male / female
- ❖ New Age seeker
- ❖ Extremely overweight male / female
- ❖ Couple with crying, screaming baby
- ❖ Lesbian couple holding hands
- ❖ Person with noticeable hygiene needs
- ❖ Person who sings loud and poorly
- ❖ An HIV positive person with open sores
- ❖ White, educated, wealthy female / male
- ❖ Persons who are married
- ❖ Woman wearing pants
- ❖ Inarticulate well dressed male/female
- ❖ A person talking to themselves (loudly)
- ❖ Recovering drug addict
- ❖ Caucasian low-income male/female
- ❖ Aging white male with financial resources
- ❖ Woman with dirty bags of belongings
- ❖ Obviously homeless person
- ❖ Man wearing baseball cap or hat
- ❖ Child of upper middle income parent
- ❖ A transgender person
- ❖ Person in wheelchair
- ❖ White person not dressed in fashion
- ❖ A Jewish person
- ❖ Female, more than seventy years old
- ❖ Single male/female under thirty
- ❖ Unemployed male / female
- ❖ White Person on Welfare
- ❖ Person who snores during service
- ❖ Convicted pedophile
- ❖ Illiterate adult male /female
- ❖ African-American person on welfare
- ❖ A practicing Satanist
- ❖ Hispanic male or female
- ❖ Person who answers rhetorical questions during sermon
- ❖ Asian male or female
- ❖ A drug dealer
- ❖ Arabic male or female
- ❖ Mildly disabled (needing walkers, crutches) person
- ❖ Highly disabled person (wheelchair)
- ❖ Gay male
- ❖ Person walking during worship service
- ❖ A homophobic person
- ❖ Person with alcohol on breath
- ❖ Person with many teeth missing
- ❖ A Buddhist
- ❖ A person with unpredictable behavior
- ❖ Retarded youth, child or adult
- ❖ Recent college graduate
- ❖ Smoker
- ❖ Political conservative
- ❖ Agnostic / Atheist
- ❖ Religious fanatic
- ❖ Person with dirt under fingernails and unkept hair
- ❖ Male wearing one or more earrings
- ❖ Female wearing a tight, short skirt
- ❖ Ex-prisoner
- ❖ Recovering sex addict
- ❖ Person involved in a sex scandal
- ❖ Male, more than seventy years old
- ❖ Person with extremely bad breath
- ❖ A convicted felon (former prisoner)

Discipleship Covenants

At Hilliard UMC, we believe that the heart of our faith comes down to the simple truth that **God loves you no matter what**. Our greatest hope for all of us is that we would fully experience, live, and share God's love in our everyday lives. We long for connection with God. Our membership covenant includes practices that help us to move closer to encountering God regularly in the ordinary moments of life. These aren't "shoulds" or things we "have" to do in order to gain God's or the church's approval — not at all! These are simply practices that help us connect with God and receive God's no-matter-what love.

Members covenant to continue growing and learning through regular spiritual practices, which help us know and connect with God, show up to our lives with intention and compassion, foster authentic and honest relationships, and embody God's love in action in us and in the world:

- Prayer
- Authentic Relationships
- Serving & Sharing with Others
- Generosity
- Personal Development
- Worship
- Solidarity with the Suffering
- Engaging Scripture

The Hilliard UMC community covenants to support you in your growth in discipleship by:

- presenting Jesus Christ and teaching about life with God
- providing inviting, inspiring, and challenging worship experiences
- providing opportunities for Christian formation
- enabling gifts-based service
- providing care and spiritual support for persons in need
- managing the resources of the church responsibly and transparently, consistent with God's purposes

Hallmarks of United Methodism

Distinctive Wesleyan Emphases within the Historic Christian Faith

1. Ours is a practical divinity. **Methodism did not arise in response to a specific doctrinal dispute.** John and Charles Wesley and the early Methodists claimed to preach the scriptural doctrines of the Church of England.
 - a. They were not interested in formulating doctrine.
 - b. **Their focus was to summon people to experience the justifying and sanctifying grace of God and to encourage people to grow in the knowledge and love of God through the personal and corporate disciplines of the Christian life.**
 - c. The emphasis is on putting faith and love into action.

2. **Grace pervades our understanding of Christian faith and life.**

By grace we mean the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human existence through the ever-present Holy Spirit.

 - a. Prevenient grace is God's grace that comes to us before we ever realize that we need to accept God's love into our lives. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to the point of committing our lives to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This grace is the "porch" of faith.
 - b. Justifying grace is the grace of God through which we are saved and forgiven of our sins when we commit our lives to Jesus Christ. Through justification, we are, through faith, forgiven our sins and restored to God's favor. We also believe that we receive an assurance of our present salvation as the Spirit "bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."
 - c. Sanctifying grace is the work of the Holy Spirit that continues to work in our lives after we have become believers. It is the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to make us more like Christ in all that we say, do, and are. This is also the perfecting work of the Holy Spirit to help us grow more mature in our walk with the Lord (perfect as in *mature*, not as in *not making in mistakes*).

3. **We acknowledge, however, that accepting God's love and salvation in Christ is not a lifetime guarantee that a person will never drift away from God** (we may drift away from God; God does not forsake us).
 - a. This realization means that the decision to follow Christ is one that we make over and over again, as we pursue our daily lives.
 - b. If we do fall back in our faith, we understand that God's grace is available to us to forgive us our sins when we seek forgiveness.

4. We believe that **faith and good works go hand in hand**.
 - a. We see God’s grace and human activity working together in the relationship of faith and good works. Faith is the only response essential for salvation. Our good works flow from our response to God’s love in our lives (not to earn our salvation).
 - b. We believe that personal salvation involves Christian mission and service to the world. Love of God is always linked with love of neighbor, a passion for justice, and renewal in the life of the world.
 - c. For Wesley there is no religion but social religion and no holiness but social holiness.

5. **Wesley stressed uniting head and heart in faith.** We do not believe that we have to “check our brains” at the church door.
 - a. We believe that **scripture is the primary guide for life**.
 - b. We also believe that our understanding of scripture and of life is informed by:
 - i. **Tradition** (What do we learn from what the church has taught through the ages?)
 - ii. **Experience** (What have been our experience and the corporate experience of the church in a given matter?)
 - iii. **Reason** (What do our minds tell us and what do we learn from others even in other fields of knowledge?)

6. **Ours is a connectional church.** That is to say that each congregation is linked to, or connected with, all other churches throughout the entire organization.
 - a. **Pastors are appointed to serve in churches by the bishop** of the annual conference (the local organizing body).
 - b. We support the wider mission of the church through mission work in many parts of the world.
 - c. The connectional system of the church is very much like the Apostle Paul’s analogy of the Church as “the body of Christ.” There are many parts of each system, each distinct from the other, yet all are interdependent and connected.

Sources:

Affirmations of the United Methodist Church, Discipleship Resources.
Hearts on Fire! The United Methodist Story, Cokesbury.
The United Methodist Primer, Revised Edition, Discipleship Resources.

