

## **“Discipleship Leads to Transformation”**

September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014

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Fair Oaks United Methodist Church

I want to thank Joy for her message about discipleship. The spirit of discipleship is essential not only to the life of church but also to our individual life. Truly, discipleship is about following Jesus as an example of generous self-giving. I want to make sure with you that discipleship doesn't merely mean giving money, but it is more about your personal choice to become a follower of Jesus Christ by providing hope to those who are in despair, helping people find the meaning of life in God and extending your care and consolation to those who seek God's mercy and grace. Let us not forget this call: We and our Fair Oaks United Methodist Church are called to be disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world around us. We do this mission through our church ministries. Our stewardship campaign is the annual reminder of our commitment to Christ and generous support to the church. Do you see three different color train cars on the left wall? Right after my message, we are going to ask you to join an activity. Karlene will instruct you on how to participate and support your church.

The ultimate goal of discipleship is for the work of transformation. We don't want to remain in the past. We press on towards the goal. Our stewardship campaign team set our campaign theme of “embrace change”- reality check, putting God first and leading to transformation through ongoing practice of discipleship. We started an image of old steam locomotive and today's image is a super train- more powerful engine, energy efficient and more comfortable to travel on our journey. We wish to transform our church into an effective and powerful church like a super train. We need your continued sharing of your time, talent, gift and many different ways of support to make this change happen. Don't get me wrong. I don't think that we can make this wishful change to happen in the next year. It will take a while. Spiritually speaking, transformation process is not an overnight conversion type of event, but it is an ongoing process through our life journey.

Regarding the transformation process, my son, Jacob, recently shifted his interest from airplanes to robots. He especially likes a robot in the animated movie The Transformers. The robots can be converted into cars. He seems to be very fascinated by the transformational process. Do you remember Jacob when he came to this church almost three years ago? He crawled into my house with his hands and feet, but now he runs here and there! I even can't catch him anymore! He is being transformed into a boy now! Recently, he watched an

animated movie, “Transformers”. He seemed to fall in love with the robot characters. One day, when we were about to get into our van in the garage, he pointed at our old 1992 year model, Toyota Previa van and said, “Daddy, can this old van change to a transformer?”

While I was watching him play with those robots, I thought about a metaphor of ‘transformation’ in our spiritual life. The purpose of our Stewardship campaign is not only preparing our next year’s financial budget but we want to invite you all to work together for the transformation of our church towards a positive direction in the next year and more years to come. Truly, we Christians are people who live in the future discerning God’s will for us and trusting God’s guidance on our way. Transformation is not a single event, but it is a lifelong commitment and process for all Christians. For sure, we can’t make this happen, but our God make this miracle happen working in us.

Bishop Rueben P. Job shares his wisdom with us about the meaning of a transformed life in our spiritual life. He writes, “Living a transformed life is not possible on our own. Most of us do not live up to the best that we know how to live. Deep within we know that there is room for improvement. We can do better. Connecting our desire to do better with God’s amazing grace creates a partnership that leads to transformation. We know that living a transformed life means living at God’s direction with grace-filled capacity. This is more than we can do on our own, and in fact, living the transformed life does not mean trying harder. It means trusting more and staying close to the only One who can make us more than we are. As we learn to put our trust and faith in God, we become open and available to receive God’s forming and transforming power in our lives. In our better moments we know that it is God at work within us that provides the transformation.”

May God bless our church and give us God’s transforming power in our church ministries that we continue to carry out our mission and serve the community and the world through our Fair Oaks United Methodist Church. Amen.