

The Five Marks of the Church, which help to guide our life together, are:

Liturgia (Worship): Every Sunday morning we gather to worship God, through singing and prayer, the reading of Scripture and preaching, as well as fellowship with one another, in God's presence. Symbolically, gathering in the morning, on the first day of the week, reminds us that our proper first commitment is to God, made known to us in Jesus Christ, present by the Holy Spirit.

Our worship includes many voices, as members of our congregation lead in prayer, music, Scripture reading, and presiding, reminding us of the importance of the "priesthood of all believers." *Liturgia* is a Greek word that means "a public work, undertaken by some, on behalf of all." In worship, we turn to God, on behalf of this God-beloved world.

Koinonia (Community): From the earliest days of the Church, it is clear that the Christian life is not meant to be a solitary existence. In the book of Acts, we hear that this new community of Jesus followers--members of the Way--"spent much time together" worshiping, eating, baptizing and teaching, praying and learning the rhythms of a new way of life. The community that took shape in response to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead--confirmation that his will and way really is the Divine will and way in the world--sought to live lives appropriate to this new resurrection reality.

This reality we call, as Jesus did, the Kingdom of Heaven: the in-breaking of God's world-renewing hope, peace, joy, and love, here and now--God's will on earth as in heaven. When we gather together, learning to love and forgive, worship and work, pray and play in the wide space of God's grace and love, we seek to align ourselves with the resurrection community through the centuries. Made one in Christ and one with each other, we are called to be a beacon of God's work to reconcile all things in Jesus, crucified, risen, and reigning. In his name, all are welcome!

Diakonia (Service): Scripture tells us that Jesus, "Though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited [or grasped at], but emptied himself, taking on the form of a servant." (see Philippians 2:5-11) On the evening before he was crucified, John's gospel (Ch. 13) tells us that Jesus stripped down, wrapped a towel around himself, and washed his disciples' feet, like a first-century servant would.

Following his example, and his command to serve and love one another, Christians are expected to offer loving service to the world around us. We seek to do that through the ministries of our congregation, but we are also sent out, like seeds scattered by the Sower and blown by the winds of the Spirit, to love and serve beyond our church community, wherever we find ourselves in the world. The goal as we seek to "grow up in Christ" is to do everything, in word or deed, in the name of Jesus, to the glory of the One he calls Father (see I Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3: 17).

Didache (Training): Pronounced "did-a-kay" this is the mark of a Christian community in which members are being trained in the way of Jesus. Followers of Jesus are often called "disciples," which means something like "apprentice." At the end of the gospel of Matthew, Jesus instructs his disciples, to go and make disciples themselves, teaching others to walk in the world as he did. The Christian way of life is not always intuitive; we need to learn the rhythms of mercy and grace, of radical love and extravagant generosity, of justice and righteous aligned with God's dream and work for this broken and beloved world.

We know there are many voices and idols vying for our attention; the goal of Christian maturity is to center our attention, and our lives, on Jesus, and to walk in his Way. We are called to "be doers of the word, not merely hearers" (James 1:22); we are called to embody and live out the good news (gospel) of Jesus, the Word made flesh. As a congregation the "training" to do so happens in a number of ways, including: regular worship, through our Church School (for children, during worship), through weekly Bible study, bi-annual book/Bible studies, preparation for baptism or marriage, personal and pastoral care (with clergy and one another).

Kerygma (Proclamation): The Church has good news to share. Gospel means "good news." It's from the Greek word euangelion, a word that was first used to describe a royal announcement, often about the most recent military victory. When Christians adopted the term (see Mark 1:1) it was at least in part a reminder of a different kind of victory, by a different kind of king. The Christian witness is that in Jesus, God who made and loves all creation, has come into this world in a unique and revolutionary way-- a way of self-giving love, mercy, and grace--a way that ultimately proved too much of a challenge to "the way things are," and for which he was put to death by the authorities of his day. The Scriptures tell us that three days later, he was raised from the dead, vindicating his way in the world. Christians came to believe and know that through his death and resurrection, God was keeping his promise to Abraham, that the whole world would be blessed, restored and made whole.

After his resurrection, Jesus commissioned his disciples to be witnesses of repentance (a new way of life, re-oriented to God and God's way of lavish love) and forgiveness of sins (freedom from and healing for brokenness and guilt; and the restoration and renewal of our relationships with God, ourselves, each other, and all creation). The Church is called to continue in that witness, proclaiming in our words and actions, a different, Christ-centered way of living in the world, and of relating to one another, as we grow in the hope, peace, joy and love of God for us and all things.