

## Christ's Mission, Our Mission...

### Invitation, Hospitality, and Witness

by Linda Andrae, MCISM

"There are many lives waiting to hear the redeeming words of the gospel, or to be lifted from hopelessness by the hands of loving servants. But they will be lost to you without the generous response of disciples who share from their own bounty that others may know the joys of the kingdom." -Doctrine and Covenants 162:7a

As disciples of Jesus Christ, when we read this scripture, what do we hear it saying to us individually and as congregations? As disciples of Jesus Christ, how do we respond to this scripture, individually and collectively? How do we become the "hands of loving servants" generously sharing our bounty with lives drenched in hopelessness? And what is our bounty anyway? Is this a call to mission? What is our mission?

<sup>16</sup> When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

-Luke 4:16-19 NRSV

Christ's Mission is our Mission. But what is mission? What does that look like for each of us and each of our congregations? According to *Leading Congregations in Mission*, a pilot in the United States, Canada and Australia for the Community of Christ, mission is made up of eight principles.

1. **Mission begins with encounter.** We encounter God, God's love, and God's mission in Christ through missional practices in our relationships in community, in ministry with others, and in situations where no one expected God's future to immerge.
2. **We live Christ's mission through Jesus' proclamation in Luke 4: 18-19** and our five **Mission Initiatives**; Invite People to Christ, Abolish Poverty and End Suffering, Pursue Peace on Earth, Develop Disciples to Serve and Experience Congregations in Mission.
3. **Mission is relational.** We deepen our relationships with God, ourselves and our neighbors by creating safe, loving, communities of belonging.

4. **Mission is disruptive.** We are willing to allow our conventional understandings (ways of being and doing ministry) to be disrupted by the Holy Spirit and risk seeing something new.
5. **Mission is risking something new.** God is constantly creating something new in Christ and we are called to be co-creators of that vision for the sake of the world.
6. **Mission is contextual.** We creatively live out the *mission and message* of Jesus Christ in language and form that gives fresh expression to our timeless call and message.
7. **Mission is a unique expression of giftedness and calling.** Mission emerges from our collective and unique giftedness *and* when we use our gifts for the sake of others.
8. **Mission is a long journey in the same direction.** Lasting change occurs when we live into the strange and new behaviors of the peaceable kingdom that cultivate hope, discernment, discovery, and missional invitation.

-Leading Congregations in Mission, Community of Christ

**A working definition of “missional” summarizes our Eight Foundational Principles:** A sacred community that is shaped and sent by their ongoing encounter with the living Christ in relationship with one another and their neighbors, locally and globally. (Leading Congregations in Mission, Community of Christ.)

A sacred community shaped and **SENT**. Our first mission initiative, **Invite People to Christ**, beckons us to go into the congregations, communities, and neighborhoods. Invite People to Christ encompasses Invitation, Hospitality, and Witness or sharing our sacred story. While all the mission initiatives are important, Invite People to Christ, must be who we are as a people and must resonate throughout all the mission initiatives as we strive to be the people God has called us to be.

“Reach out in understanding, clasp their hands, and **invite all to share in the blessings of community** created in the name of the One who suffered on behalf of all. ... Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant **witnesses** to transform the world.”

--Doctrine & Covenants 161:3a,c