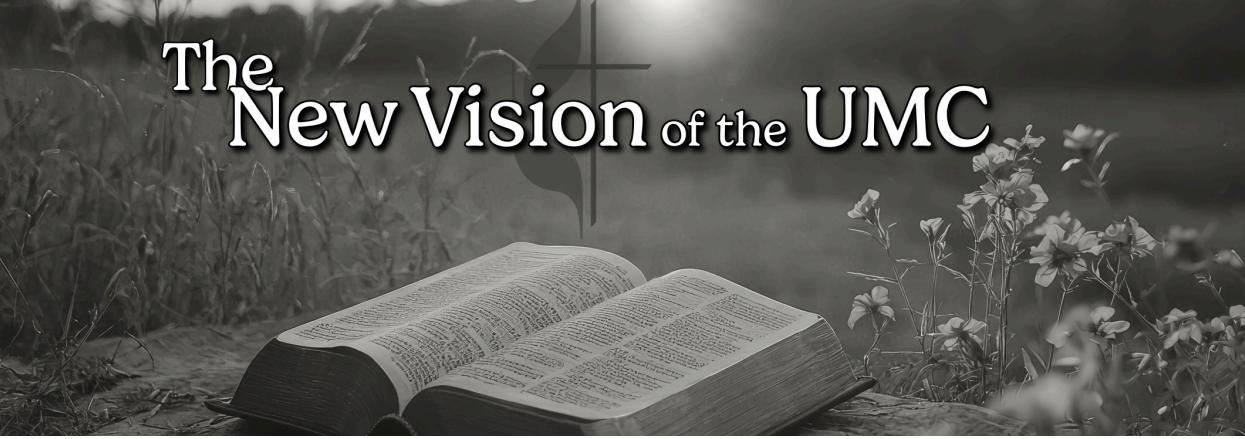


# **SERMON & SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION GUIDE**



# The New Vision of the UMC

## **Background** (resourceumc.org):

One thing that may be helpful to clarify – the difference between mission, vision and the brand promise. These are key statements that clearly define who United Methodists are and who we strive to be. They work in conjunction with each other and unite us in shared ministry.

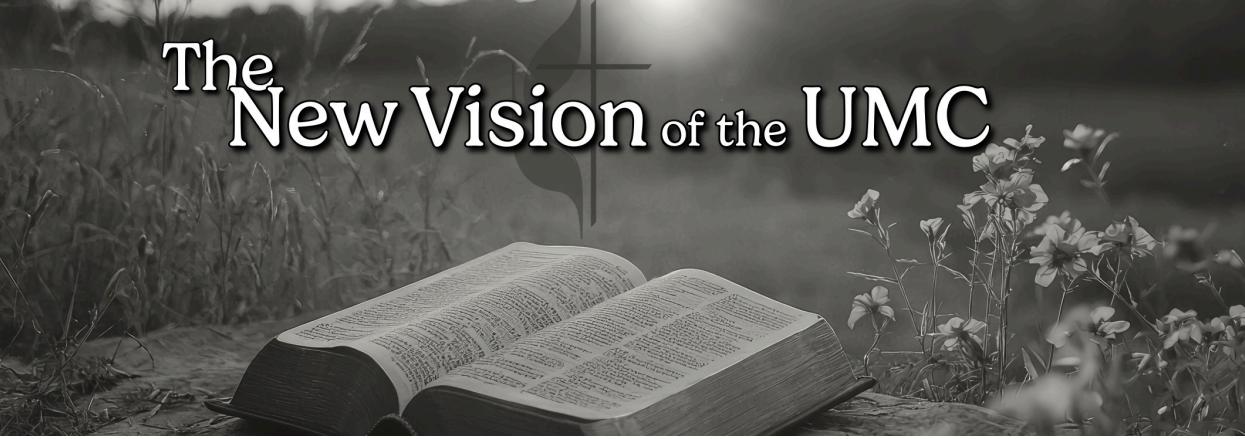
- **The Mission** of the denomination is our driving purpose, our *why*: “The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” This is set by **the General Conference**.
- **The Vision** tells us *where* we are going and *how* we will continue to live into and accomplish our mission: “The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections.” This is set by **the Council of Bishops with the Connectional Table**.
- **The Brand Promise** reminds us of what everyone should expect to find in United Methodist congregations and organizations: “Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.” As it is primarily used in external, seeker-facing messaging, this is set by **United Methodist Communications**.

Every United Methodist around the world is called to embrace the Mission in their daily living, dream of the possibilities that God has placed before us through the Vision, and embody a consistent welcoming presence that is shared in our Brand Promise.

## **For more information and to review sources used for this series:**

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/umc-resources/vision-of-the-umc>

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/church-of-the-resurrection-umc-vision-sermons-and-devotions>



# The New Vision of the UMC

**Week 1:** February 1, 2026

**Text:** Luke 10:25-37

**Topics:** Passion, love, inclusivity, companionship

**Core Value:** Christians are called to be in community with one another.

**Theme:** Love Boldly

*Beginning thought...* Does the new UMC vision statement feel like an invitation to embrace the joy and hope as we live God's mission?

**Bible Study Questions:**

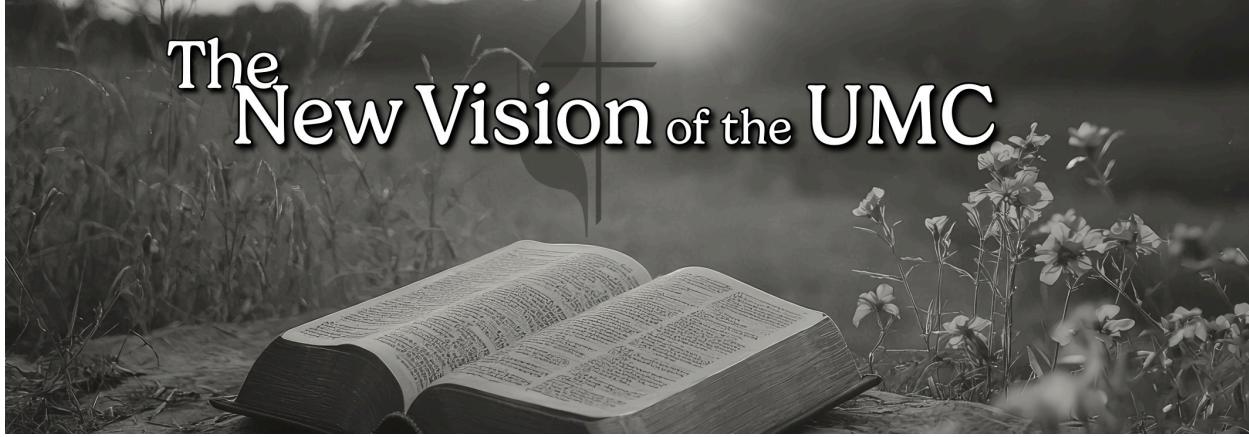
1. What was missing in Paradise? - Gen 2:18
2. What were Jesus's group social connections?
3. What is Koinonia? What are some examples of koinonia in scripture?
4. "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love." - 1 John 4:7-8. What does this mean?
5. Read 1 Cor: 13 together out loud.
6. Read John 13:34-35, 15:9-17. How would you describe the love that Jesus demonstrated in these passages?
7. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15. How must the principle "be patient with everyone" shape the ways you (and the GBUMC congregation) minister to people in 2026?
8. Read Luke 10:25-37. How is this story an example of loving boldly?

**Group Discussion Questions** (As your group discusses these questions, take notes and share your ideas with the Pastor, Lay Leader, or Leadership Board.):

1. How is this new GBUMC vision Christ centered?
2. In what ways is GBUMC loving boldly? 1 Cor. 13
3. How can our church actively embrace and include individuals from diverse backgrounds in our ministries?
4. What steps can we take to reflect Jesus's bold love in our interactions within the community?
5. How can we break down barriers and create spaces where everyone feels truly welcomed?
6. Would you be willing to take a risk and join a small group? Try something new?

*Prayer: Dear God, we have a need for community. Jesus created the church to meet this need. Help us find help, healing, and strength in our church community as we reimagine how to love boldly. Amen.*

# The New Vision of the UMC



**Week 2:** February 8, 2026

**Text:** Philippians 2:1-5, 12-18

**Topics:** Care, compassion, joy, greatness, reluctance, humility

**Core Value:** Christians believe that the Holy Spirit energizes us to serve as the hands and feet of Christ.

**Theme:** Serve Joyfully

*Beginning thought... Jesus didn't come to be served, but to serve and give his life to liberate many people. Real greatness comes through serving.*

## Bible Study Questions:

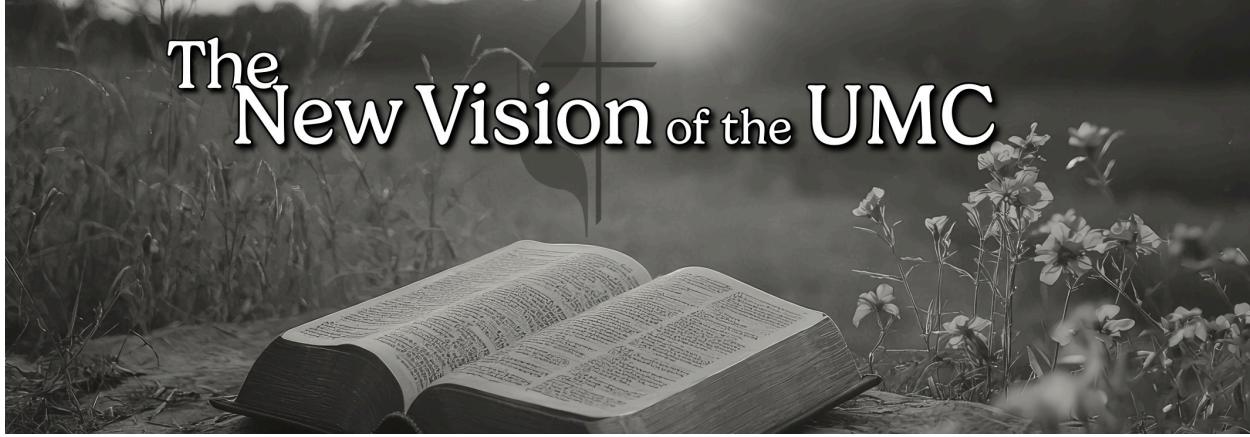
1. Read Isaiah 58:3-8. Fasting is a helpful spiritual practice, whether from food or some other valued activity. But the Israelites' fasting only seemed to be on the surface and never reached their hearts. How do verses 6 and 7 speak to your heart and your life today? What is one step you can take to make your spiritual practices truly life-changing, as the prophet called Israel to do?
2. Read Matthew 20:26-28. What is the paradox of greatness in this passage? How does Jesus redefine what greatness looks like?
3. Moses was a reluctant servant (Exodus 3:11, 4:1, 4:10, 4:13). How? Why was Moses reluctant? What was God's response?
4. Read Philippians 2:1-5, 12-18. Summarize what this passage means to you.

## Group Discussion Questions:

1. Who are the most vulnerable members of our local community, and how can we serve them with joy and compassion?
2. How can we cultivate an environment where serving others becomes a joyful expression of our faith?
3. What partnerships or collaborations could enhance our service to the community?
4. How have you seen your spiritual practices change your heart and lead you to a life of greater service?
5. Do you ever feel reluctant to serve? Why?
6. What does serving joyfully look like? What does it feel like?

*Prayer: Dear God, thank you for opening our eyes and heart to care for and show mercy to your children in need. Help us to serve like Jesus, to care for the nobodies and the marginalized. Empower us to stand in opposition to what the world thinks about greatness by serving joyfully. Make us to be the light that shines in the darkness. Amen.*

# The New Vision of the UMC



**Week 3:** February 15, 2026

**Text:** Joshua 1:1-9

**Topics:** Peace, justice, reconciliation, influence, action

**Core Value:** Christians believe that God is the one we do not have to fear. He is the one we can trust with our lives, our souls, our bodies, everything.

**Theme:** Lead Courageously

*Beginning thoughts...Jesus modeled and taught his followers the importance of leaving behind the human tendency to be afraid.*

## Bible Study Questions:

1. Read Joshua 1:1-9. This is an example of leading courageously. Read aloud the command given in vs. 9. Do you believe this?
2. Which command in scripture is repeated most often? (Matthew 10: 26, 28, 31)?
3. Read Romans 12:21. How can you defeat fear in a Romans 12:21 way?
4. Scripture calls us to be led by God (example of the Israelites). Read Psalm 23.

## Group Discussion Questions:

1. What are the systems of injustice or oppression we feel called to resist and dismantle in our community?
2. How can we lead courageously in addressing issues of peace, justice, and reconciliation in practical ways?
3. What support or resources do leaders in our church need to embody courageous leadership?
4. Fear and hatred destroy; God gives life and love. How must that shape your efforts to “lead courageously”?
5. How might you lead courageously to influence people and move them to action for the kingdom of God?

*Prayer: Loving Lord, in whatever ways we influence others, we want to always lead courageously in ways that draw others to your eternal kingdom of light and grace. Please guide us. Amen.*