

**“REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE”**  
(Ephesians 2:12-14, 19-21)  
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**[PROPS NEEDED: “ECUMC is...” Video]**

[East Cobb U.M.C.; 10-18-09]

-I-

1. [Traditional Service ONLY:] Read Text: Ephesians 2:12-14, 19-21 and Pray.
2. [WATCH VIDEO “*ECUMC is...*” (Time 0:40)]

A—When you think of East Cobb United Methodist Church, what is it that *you* think of? I hope that it’s at least some of the things you just saw.

B—But what exactly is it that we do as a church of Jesus Christ?

1—Is our church just another philanthropic organization or community civic club?  
(People often treat it that way!)

2—What is the purpose and calling of a church? And more specifically, what’s the purpose and calling of *our* church here at East Cobb United Methodist? So, *who* are we, and *to what* are we called as God’s people.

3. For the last year or so we’ve articulated the answer to this in the form of our mission statement that’s found on the front of our bulletin, ...

A—...Which reminds us weekly that East Cobb UMC is called to be (say it with me, please)...  
“*A Mosaic of God’s Family... Gathering, Growing, and Going.*”

B—But what exactly does that mean? Today, I want us to take time to remember our identity again by thinking about our mission one phrase at a time:

-II-

4. The introduction is really meant to serve as an overview of what we believe is our basic identity and calling as a church: ...to be “*A Mosaic of God’s Family.*”

A—In today’s scripture from Ephesians 2, the apostle Paul actually shares how a community of faith can be a “*mosaic.*” [Contemp. Service ONLY: Read MSG Ephesians 2:11-14, 19-21]

1—In other words, he’s reminding the Christians at Ephesus that they were called from different races, backgrounds, and theological and political persuasions to be part of the *one* faith in Christ Jesus,...

2—...And that being one didn't mean they had to give up those differences, but instead that they allowed Christ to assemble their uniqueness *together* in a way that displayed collective cohesion and beauty.

B—*That's* a “mosaic”! And it's precisely what God is calling not only *our* church, but in fact *every* Christian community to be and to become... a mosaic of His family – one that reflects the wonderful and unique diversity and beauty of His kingdom.

C—Now, it used to be that our church was almost all white/Anglo, came mostly from a certain economic background, out of a particular theological persuasion, and enjoyed worshipping one way (and one way only!).

1—But not only are those days gone, but as a church we've grown to recognize that God's family is bigger than the “one-size-fits-all” mentality that we used to have.

2—And as a result, here at East Cobb UMC today we are young and old, white and black, newcomers and old-timers, American and African, traditional and contemporary, liberal and conservative, Democrat and Republican, “well to do” and “not-so-well-to-do,” and everything in between!

D—No, we're not totally diverse by any stretch of the imagination; but we've taken our first steps towards becoming the “Mosaic of God's Family” that we believe we're called to be!

–III–

5. So if we *are* – and are increasingly *becoming* – a mosaic, then what is it that we *DO*? How do we as a mosaic carry out the mission to which we believe God is calling us as a church?

A—This is where what we call the “three G's” of our mission come into play: Gathering; Growing; and Going – notice that all three of them are words of *action*.

B—And it's important to understand that the three words, by themselves, are *not* our mission, but merely memory aids to help us *remember* our mission... which is for us to be about...

6 First, “**GATHERING to embrace God and all people**” – in other words, to share in worship (“embracing God”) and Christian fellowship (“embracing all people”).

A—Do you recall that in Vs.13 of today's scripture Paul talks about groups that were “*far off*” being “*brought near*” to one other? ...essentially *gathered together* in one “household”?

B—Well, that's what God does for us – gathers us together into His house to develop meaningful relationships with both Himself and with others.

C–So, whether its through our HeartLight Contemporary service, our spirited Traditional service, our weekly Kenyan service, or through Sunday morning café or Wednesday night Fellowship Supper, our church carries out Jesus’ “Great Commandment” to “*love God & love our neighbor*” through the opportunities we offer for worship and fellowship.

7. Second, as a church we’re also to be about “**GROWING in Faith, Love and Joy**” – in other words, to practice what we call Christian Discipleship, Stewardship, and Spiritual Growth.

A–Verses 20-21 of today’s scripture uses the metaphor of the building of a temple as a way to describe the necessity of God’s people to be growing and maturing in their faith.

B–...Because as important as worship and fellowship are, if you and I don’t take time to participate in a Sunday School class, a Bible Study, a Men’s or Women’s group, or some other small group, then according to Paul, we’ll never really “grow up” in our faith the way God intends.

C–And in addition to that, he also saying that if we’re not generous stewards of our time, our talents, and (yes) our money, then we’ll never discover the full joy of life in Christ.

D–He’s saying that all of these things are merely *tools* which – when actually *used* – will help us to be “*built*” into a “*holy temple*” of the Lord – or in the words of our mission, to “*grow in faith, love, and joy.*”

8. But, of course, spiritual growth has no meaning if we don’t *do* anything with it. That’s why, as a church, we’re also called to be “**GOING into the world to serve and share Jesus**” – in other words, to engage in what we call missions and evangelism.

A–Now, even though today’s scripture isn’t as specific on this point, it’s clear from other writings of Jesus and Paul that going into the world to share the gospel as we serve others is one of the primary tasks of all Christians (e.g., Read Matthew 28:19-20) .

B–After all, you’ve heard me remind us before that biblical Christianity is *not* simply something we *receive ourselves*, but something we’re also called to *give away to others*.

C–So, one of the functions of a church is to provide opportunities for its members and friends to “give away” their faith by tangibly demonstrating God’s love for those around them.

D–Our annual “Great Day of Service,” our mission trips to Kenya, Honduras, and the Appalachian mountains, community events like Trunk-or-Treat and our Christmas Musical, and even our “Lighthouse Academy” (community day-school) – these are all concrete examples of ways we as a church provide opportunities for each of us to “*go into the world to serve and share Jesus*” with others.

9. Now, if you think about it, when we do these three tasks right (Gathering, Growing, and Going), they form an active circle:

A–E.G., We GATHER for worship and fellowship of the one living God, ...

1–...So we can GROW closer to Him and to each other, ...

2–...Giving us the tools we need to GO into the world to serve & share Him,...

3–...Making disciples for Jesus, so that *they too* can “Gather, Grow, and Go!”

B–That’s the nature and process of biblical Christianity.

C–And as a church, it’s a process we’re called to practice every time two or more of us are together as believers.

D–It’s our identity – it’s WHO we are! Let’s remember and practice it as God’s church!

10. [PRAYER]