



THE CLIMB

TUMC Discipleship Pathway

Introduction

At the base of a mountain, a climb is daunting. The journey is long. It's steep. Even treacherous, at times. But every climb begins at the bottom.

So, you stood at the base of the mountain, and you chose to climb. What now?

Christianity is a lifelong climb. The summit of our climb is what theologians call "sanctification," or living a holy life - a life where we love the way Jesus loved, serve the way Jesus served, and hope the way Jesus hoped. Imagine a life where your life reflected the life of Jesus. That seems a bit out of reach, doesn't it? The journey is epic, difficult, and it can even seem impossible; but with God's help, we can become transformed into the people God intended us to be.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, set out to work toward Christian perfection, which includes personal and social holiness - loving God and loving others. Sanctification isn't just another burden you have to carry, but it's the hope that tomorrow can be better than today. It's the hope that we are becoming who God created us to be.

So, we know the goal. But how do we get there?

That's where the Discipleship Pathway comes into play; this is a tool to help you. Not everyone's route toward growth will look the same. Your path will look different from others because your life experiences have brought you to your unique position. That doesn't mean we can't climb together, and it doesn't mean we won't have check points and opportunities for growth along the way. That's what the Discipleship Pathway provides - basic check points that aid you in charting your own growth. Our prayer is that you utilize the Discipleship Pathway as a tool in your faith climb, and that you will encounter God in new and exciting ways as you reach new heights of love for God and others.

The slope grows steeper as you embark on the climb with your team. You take one step at a time with precision, as the crag becomes steeper, and you find the footholds to keep you grounded. You will slip. You might even lose your footing - but your team will pull you up. Climbing involves risk. Teamwork. Sacrifice. But ascending the peak is worth the training; it's worth the peril. It's worth it because after the summit, your life will never be the same.

Join us as we embark on the journey of a lifetime - The Climb.

THE CLIMB

Discipleship Pathway



CAMP

Survey the Mountain

Every climb begins at the base of the mountain - base camp. Potential climbers see the mountain, interact with the climbing team, and survey the journey. Questions arise. Interaction with fellow potential climbers and those already climbing becomes a key factor in their choice to embark on the climb or not. Camp is where waters are tested and exploration is celebrated.

Exploring God and Community

Potential climbers are those of us exploring who God is and what the Church is all about. Maybe we grew up in church and are returning later in life; or perhaps faith has never played an integral part in our lives. Regardless, this is the stage of curiosity and exploration. Potential climbers may be cynical; we may have questions - big questions. We may want to believe in a loving God, but we may never have experienced that. We may have been betrayed by the church in the past or



might question how or why a life of faith even matters. We're asking the why questions, the how questions. We're seeking purpose.

Potential climbers first hear about the climb and about TUMC through community connections; most effectively, from personal and meaningful connections with committed climbers. Potential climbers may also hear about God and the church through social media, local events in the community, and countless other types of connections. The exploration begins with conversations. With visiting our website. Through participating in worship online or in person. The net is wide; the potential climbers are countless. Celebrated. Invited. Loved. Regardless of the decision to embark on the climb or not. Potential climbers can hang out at base camp for as long as they like.

TUMC opportunities for those at Camp:

Conversations, Prayers, Connections with climbers
Outreach events, groups, and classes
External communication platforms
Online worship
In-person worship
Communion

SLOPE

Embark on the Climb

We continue to celebrate exploration as potential climbers choose to embark on the climb. The angle of the climb begins to grow a bit steeper, but our team is with us. Climbers begin to learn to identify and use the basic tools of climbing as we grow accustomed to the life of a climber. The Slope is where new climbers get oriented, and where long-time climbers become reoriented.

Encountering God and Community

Climbers on the slope can be newcomers who have chosen to embark on the climb for the first time, or we can be long-time climbers who value re-learning some of the basic tenets and tools of the Christian faith. We continue to celebrate exploring who God is, while asserting the value of certain spiritual practices to keep us grounded. Climbers on the slope have found value and meaning in worship - we get something out of it, and we continue to engage. We ask questions and seek out people similar to them in belief, struggle, and life stage. We may or may not be ready to fully commit yet, but we're beginning to sense that this "God stuff" just might be the real deal. We're seeking more.

The climb toward personal holiness entails learning about the spiritual disciplines through worship, group studies, personal study, and practice. The ascent to social holiness includes exploring various ways to serve in the community and the church. TUMC offers ways to do this - greeting, caring for others through prayer, making meals for those in need, getting involved in



worship, volunteering at the thrift store, participating in a local service project, the list goes on. As climbers try new ways to serve, they become more aware of their own passions and gifts toward service. Climbing also isn't done alone - Christian community is vital from the Slope onward, as climbers pursue new heights. Community is experienced through Life Groups, short-term studies, Sunday School, corporate worship, and other opportunities provided by the church. It is on the Slope that one begins to encounter the love of God and Christian community in new and exciting ways.

TUMC opportunities for those on the Slope:

All Camp opportunities

Sunday morning service opportunities

Local service projects

Short-term Life Group

Short-term book/Bible study

Sunday School

Practicing Spiritual Disciplines

Trekking Onward

At some point in the climb, it's time for climbers to make the conscious decision to continue trekking onward and upward. They know it is a long and steep climb, but they're in it for the long haul. The climb is worth it. We invite those who have found their home at TUMC to continue the climb with us. For those who are ready to reach new heights, the next steps are simple: attend Pizza with the Pastors to officially join the TUMC family. At Pizza with the Pastors, climbers will learn and discuss the history and beliefs of the UMC and our church in particular, next steps toward membership, and how to get even more involved in The Climb.

After Pizza with the Pastors, climbers will have the opportunity to join the church and commit to the lifelong climb. Adults who have already been baptized will remember their baptism, and those who have not yet been baptized, will be initiated into the faith through water as a symbol of new life.

CRAG

Find the Footholds

The crag can get rocky. It's getting steep and more jagged. Air continues to thin, and climbing takes some hard work. While these obstacles can be tricky, we know it's time to find those footholds that keep us grounded, and hold on for dear life. We rely more and more on our team and the belay that softly but surely guides our way upward. When we slip, the belay catches us; our teammates pull us up, and we reach back to pull another up with us. We're still exploring;

we're keeping our climbing tools sharp; we're pressing onward past obstacles, pushing ourselves to what may seem like our limits.

Engaging God and Community

Climbers on the crag know just how important it is to hold tightly to what we have learned and experienced thus far; we can identify how God and Christian community is continuing to shape and mold the kind of climber we're becoming. Climbers on the crag have a sense of belonging and identity; we can identify times in our lives that God has been at work, and we feel like they are being changed for the better. Crag climbers know we climb best in community. We trust others to lift us higher, and we offer companionship and help to other climbers. We're seeking selflessness.

As the journey continues, it can feel long - there may even be times we don't particularly enjoy the climb. We encounter struggles, slips, and possibly even questions that may lead to doubt. Those who are a few steps ahead reach back to pull us up; and in turn, we press onward and offer that same help to those a few steps behind. This rocky terrain requires solid footing - continuing to worship and practice the spiritual disciplines becomes vital as climbers explore the vastness of God's love and Christian community. Climbing higher means going deeper, exploring wider, and being transformed by God.

TUMC opportunities for those on the Crag:

All Camp opportunities
All Slope opportunities
Practicing consistent community
Accountability group
TUMC team membership

CREST

Reach New Heights

The crest goes higher and deeper. Obstacles remain, but climbers on the Crest remain sure-footed and grounded in our footholds and our team; we even become the anchor for those who may not be as far along as we are. The crest is where things start to get even steeper. Exploration and pushing ourselves and others to new heights becomes a joy. We can look back at our journey and identify the difficult times, the easier times, the sorrowful times, and the joyful times. We can see how the belay and our team formed us, and we're inspired to be that for others along the way. The crest is where we start talking about sacrifice. About sharpening our tools and passing them on. About looking beyond the climb for ourselves, and looking out and around to bring others along the journey of a lifetime.

Expressing God and Community

Climbers on the crest know this is where things in the Christian life begin to really impact - sometimes beneficially and sometimes adversely - the rest of our lives. Climbers are willing to sacrifice time, money, possessions, and even position in the world. The Christian Life has become a way of life for us, and we are committed. This takes sacrifice, and Climbers on the crest know that. We see this kind of sacrifice as expressing gratitude to God and community; we understand how the climb has made us better people - more loving, more grace-filled, and more generous. Relationships flourish; a sense of purpose and meaning shines through all we do. We become intentional in growth, the spiritual disciplines, and leading others by example. We own their sense of belonging in the church and the world. We're seeking God's Kingdom expressed in the world and our personal lives.

This doesn't mean life has magically become easy for us - it is all too often a more difficult life that requires sacrifice - but it is a better life, and it is worth it.

TUMC opportunities for those on the Crest:

- All Camp opportunities
- All Slope opportunities
- All Crag opportunities
- TUMC Team leadership
- Faith sharing
- Mentoring

SUMMIT

Ascend the Peak

The top of the mountain is a glorious sight. On the summit, there's perspective. Clarity. A sense of accomplishment, meaning, and gratitude for the climb. It was all worth it: the slips, the falls, the rocky terrain, even the drifts. It will always be worth it. The sun shines on climbers' faces, and we know what matters. It's all become clear, and our lives will never be the same.

Embodying God and Community

The summit is where the metaphor breaks down. It's not like we spend 90 years on the climb, and the remaining years are spent on the Summit; the church can't offer a class to get us to the top of the mountain, where we stay the rest of our lives; and do we ever really achieve all we can achieve in this life? We don't think so; there's always - always - room for growth because God is just that big.

But we also believe we *can* experience the Summit here and now. We believe that with God's help, we can experience the top of the mountain in this life. That doesn't mean we'll stay there because we're human and in need of a lot of grace, but no matter where we are on the climb, we can experience holy moments. Maybe it's during worship, or while we're serving someone in



need. Perhaps we feel these mountaintop moments in prayer or while we read scripture, or in deep conversations with our Life Group. Summit moments are sanctified moments, where the divide between this world and eternity seems thin. We're seeking holiness.

The more Climbers grow in the spiritual disciplines, worship, and engaging in community, the more these moments become a reality. Sometimes they happen instantaneously, but more often than not, they're the result of a lot of work, climbing, and commitment. Sometimes they feel good; other times, they may even go undetected. But we hold fast to the hope that God is holding us, making us become more and more like the people we were originally created to be. This is the Summit.

TUMC opportunities for those on the Summit:

All Camp opportunities

All Slope opportunities

All Crag opportunities

All Crest opportunities

Sanctified Moments*

* We can't create these opportunities for you - they're moments when you experience and express God's grace in real, tangible ways. These moments can come during any point of the climb, at any level.

The Climb is the journey of a lifetime. There are rocks, crags, hills, and valleys, but we never do this climb alone. Jesus blazed the trail before us, and it is the Holy Spirit who carries and guides us further up. We join a team of Climbers who have come centuries before us, and Climbers will come centuries after us. May you be challenged. May you grow. May you find just how deep and wide the love of God is for you and all of creation. And may you continue to climb until you breathe your last breath in this life and are born into eternity.