

A Great Resource

This past fall I was speaking at the Pastors School for the two Annual Conferences for The United Methodist Church in Michigan. One part of the program involved some ministers who shared successful programs in which they were engaged in their local church.

I was greatly impressed by the presentation of Melanie Carey who is the Lead Pastor at the Ypsilanti First United Methodist Church in Ypsilanti, Michigan. I ask her to write up this information to share with other pastors. I hope this will be a forum for new and fresh ideas of Kingdom business.

Kingdom Assignment Rev. Melanie Lee Carey

The Kingdom Assignment is an amazing and inspiring way for everyone to understand anew what God's kingdom is really all about. It is made up of three assignments that focus on talents (money), treasures (our stuff), and time (the 24 hours we have in each day). It is also about trusting God and about the true stewardship that happens in God's kingdom. The three assignments have literally transformed our congregation spiritually, financially and numerically. We launched the first assignment on Pentecost of 2006, the second assignment in Advent of 2007 and we just launched the third assignment during Advent of this year (2009).

To date we have raised over \$375,000 for missions and ministries mostly beyond our local congregation! But as I said earlier, the most important results from this assignment has been about faith and our deeper understanding of God's kingdom. The basic question is what is God doing through you? What is God doing through your talents? your treasures? your time?

In our congregation a lay person told me about the kingdom assignment and then she donated \$5,000 to launch it. Without her leadership, this whole thing would never have been started.

All the assignments are based in scripture: The first one on the parable of the talents: Matthew 25:14-30, the second one on the story of the Rich Young Ruler, Mark 10:17-22 and the third one on Matthew 25:31-46.

With the first assignment based on the parable of the talents, I asked for 50 volunteers to come forward after I preached on this text. I didn't tell them what they were volunteering for, and when they came forward they each received \$100 and were told three things:

- 1) This is not your money, it's God's money
- 2) Multiply this money and use it to expand God's kingdom in any way you see fit
- 3) Report your results back in 90 days

The results were incredible! The ministries people did were inspiring and during the reporting back time there were many tears of joy, laughter and amazement at what God had done through these people.

With the second assignment based on the rich young ruler scripture, I asked for 100 people to sell some of their stuff (possessions) worth \$100 and I set a goal for us to raise \$10,000 to give to the poor and needy. We had at least 100 volunteers and our offering exceeded our goal by

\$174! Then the group of lay persons who our church council charged with distributing this money decided to use the offering as a matching grant program and so instead of giving away \$10,000 to those in need, we gave away \$20,000! It was simply incredible.

This past summer members of our congregation, who have been so excited about the results of the kingdom assignment asked me if they could start a fund to seed other churches in launching The Kingdom Assignment. They got together and donated \$15,000 for this effort and in October we began to seed other churches with matching grants.

To date we have seeded 7 congregations, including one group at a local college and a youth group. We have several other congregations who are in the process of filling out the simple application to apply for the matching funds.

I have attached the application as well as some information about how to launch a successful Kingdom Assignment Project with your church, and some other documents that I think are helpful in doing the first Kingdom Assignment.

We really want to give all the seed money away, so hopefully we can seed some churches that are part of the John Ed Mathison Leadership Ministries.

To apply, all people have to do is fill out the application and e-mail it to me. We have a task force set up and ready to review the applications and get the checks to churches. At this time we still have \$11,000 left in the seed money fund.

I am happy to talk with anyone about the Kingdom Assignment and you can put my e-mail address up on the website:

Melanie Lee Carey

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For Advent this year(2009), we launched the third assignment, this time asking everyone to find someone in need and to give them at least 90 minutes of their time. We plan to celebrate the results from this assignment during Lent of 2010. I can't wait to see what God has done through us this time! And sharing our time has been the most challenging assignment by far.

Finally, for anyone interested in the Kingdom Assignment they should check out the website from Kingdom Assignment International— www.kingdomassignment.org. There are three books available, one for each assignment and I strongly encourage anyone interested to purchase the books. This website was started by the founders of The Kingdom Assignment, Denny and Lessa Belessi.

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