

Ten Reasons I Belong to Cherrydale United Methodist Church

1. **“Think and Let Think”** was the title of a little pamphlet that attracted me in 1976, when I first visited Cherrydale UMC. Although I haven’t heard that particular catch phrase recently, I think it continues accurately to reflect that Methodists are both intellectually curious and tolerant of a wide range of human religious expression.
2. **Study and Understand.** The Methodist church provides abundant opportunities to study the Bible and understand its implications for our lives. Steve and I took a 34-week course called Disciple I together in 1991 and I helped teach it a few years later. I have taken several Bible Study classes and taught children in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. In 2001, I took part in a Covenant Discipleship group that focused on living a Christian life. I still keep a list of our purposes handy.
3. **Mission and Outreach.** I’m proud of the way the Methodist church reaches out to the “least and the lost” as Christ did, and strives to make the world a better place. Most of the time the missions of our church inspires me to give money to help others carry out direct services, but in alliance with other Methodist churches I have helped people directly (see #5).
4. **Prayer and Forgiveness.** I make lots of mistakes, but through prayer and grace I can claim forgiveness. Methodists don’t wallow in guilt; we try to do better and move forward.
5. **United Methodist Connectional system.** I am glad we have an orderly succession of pastoral care. It’s wonderful to participate in area conferences and learn from other churches. No one church can offer everything to everybody. It has been a privilege to teach ESL at Dulin UMC in Falls Church, to serve the hungry at Mt. Olivet UMC, and to collaborate with Walker Chapel UMC for Vacation Bible School.
6. **Community.** Methodists are active in their communities. Cherrydale is a long-standing member of the Arlington Interfaith Council, in which I now serve as Cherrydale’s representative and Treasurer. With both participants and contributions Cherrydale supports AIC’s annual fall Crop Walk to combat hunger at home and abroad. Throughout the year it’s always gratifying to encounter Cherrydale members in various non-church settings and appreciate their skills and leadership. Seeing fellow church members at schools, stores, concerts or playing fields reinforces a strong sense of community.
7. **Two Families—my own and my church.** While my father’s family was Presbyterian, my mother came from a long line of Methodists. Both my grandmothers were very active in their churches, one as a pianist and the other, as a teacher and Session leader. My mother played piano and enjoyed women’s fellowship. In the First Presbyterian Church of Borger, Texas, I sang in the choir and played the organ. My husband grew up as a Methodist in Odessa, Texas. After our marriage in 1966, we moved a lot and never found a church we wanted to join until friends invited us to Cherrydale. My children attended Cherrydale throughout their school

years. Though they have not yet found church homes of their own, I have faith that they will someday. My Church Family currently centers on the Choir, but also includes those of us who host the annual Living Nativity, serve and clean up after lunches and dinners, and share life's joys and sorrows. It's hard to imagine not having a church family.

8. **Music.** “To sing is to pray twice” goes the saying and I believe that music imbeds Christ’s message in our brains. I love the Methodist Hymnal. Singing and playing time-tested hymns connects me with earlier generations of my family and with millions of Christians. Hearing the organ and singing classical anthems connects me with Bach, whose music was dedicate *O Soli Deo*—to the Glory of God, to many other composers, and ultimately, to God’s divine nature. Under the direction of superbly talented choir directors, I have enjoyed learning works by more recent and contemporary composers as well.
9. **Development of talent and leadership.** The ministry of the United Methodist Church is carried out by lay people. When we joined Cherrydale in 1977 we were immediately put to work—I on the Education Committee and playing the piano, and Steve, on the Finance Committee and playing a role in one of Emurian’s plays. Over the last 34 years, we have had many and various opportunities to serve and develop our leadership skills. I’ve been active in many other community groups, but none have been so challenging and fulfilling as Cherrydale.
10. **Rooted and grounded in the Christian faith.** That was the main message of the sermon Ernest Emurian preached on the day we joined our church in 1977 and that was what I was yearning for. It had been fourteen years since I had been actively involved in the life of a church as a senior in high school. We had moved several times and sampled various churches. With two young children we were ready to put down roots and experience spiritual growth. After 34 years here, I believe the faith we have developed is unshakable.

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October 26, 2011