

~ Pastor Steve Nofel

Two of the very best theology books ever written for lay people were Rev. Dr. Don McKim's *Presbyterian Questions – Presbyterian Answers* and *More Presbyterian Questions – Presbyterian Answers* which described all things Presbyterian using everyday words and short sentences in easy-to-understand ways. In imitation of Professor McKim, for the next season of our church family life, I presented these *SJU Questions – SJU Answers* in September.

Q.1 What is our name?

A.1 Our name is St. John United Church.

Q.2 Who was St. John?

A.2 We are named for John the Evangelist. John was son of Zebedee. He was the brother of James, whom Jesus nicknamed "The Sons of Thunder." Tradition tells us he was also known as John the Elder, John of Patmos, and The Beloved Disciple.

Q.3 What does Evangelist mean?

A.3 Evangelist means "Teller of the Good News." Evangelist is usually connected the writers of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Q.4 What parts of the Bible did John write?

A.4 We believe John the Evangelist wrote the Gospel of John, the First, Second, and Third Letters of John, and the Book of Revelation.

Q.5 Why did Jesus call John and James The Sons of Thunder?

A.5 We can only speculate. In a few scenes from the Gospels, the brothers reacted emotionally to situations or people. Perhaps they had fiery personalities.

Q.6. Why was John called "The Beloved Disciple"?

A.6 We believe that in his Gospel this was his pen name. Instead of saying, "I, John." He used "the disciple whom Jesus loved." It is believed he was the youngest of the 12. So, he might have held a special place under the protective wing of Jesus and the others.

Q.7 What does it mean to be "United"?

A.7 In the Bible Unity means *unitas*, "oneness." One of the great faith statements of the Old Testament celebrates God's unity. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is ONE. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Deuteronomy 6:4-5. We celebrate the oneness of God, which we call the Blessed Trinity: Three Persons, One God.

Q.8 With whom are we united?

A.8 As believers in Jesus Christ, we are united in faith with all who believe. Also, through Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit we are united with God.

Q.9 As SJU with whom are we specifically united?

A.9 We are a union ministry and church of two denominations: The United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Q.10 What is a denomination?

A.10 A denomination is a distinct religious group with particularly held beliefs or practices. Numerous Christian denominations exist throughout the world.

Q. 11 What is the mission of the United Methodist Church?

A. 11. Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. (*From the Baltimore – Washington Conference website.*)

Q. 12 What is the mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA)?

A. 12 "In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth praying, 'Come, Lord Jesus.'" (*From "A Brief Statement of Faith", on the Presbyterian Church website.*)