

Something to Believe In

In his now classic book, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, Marcus Borg points out that the word believe did not originally mean mental assent to a set of doctrines or teachings; in both Latin and Greek its roots mean "to give one's heart to." "Believing in Jesus does not mean believing doctrines about him," Borg writes. "Rather, it means to give one's heart, one's self at its deepest level" to God in Christ.

This is, at least in part, why United Methodists in general tend to be short on dogma & doctrine, and long on love. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, said, "If thine heart is as my heart, take my hand." Wesley was not especially concerned with dogma. His ultimate concern was for every Christian to experience and practice the love of God in Christ.

At The Fountains, we will continue that "warm-hearted" Wesleyan experience. The life of a disciple is grounded in relationship – with God and with one another— it's not whether everyone agrees on what to believe in. Unlike other traditions, we are not a "creedal" church. There's not "dotted line" at the bottom of a doctrinal statement for you to sign on. Like Wesley, we "think and let think."

"The Christian life is not primarily about believing the right things or being good. The Christian life is about being in relationship with God which transforms us into more and more compassionate beings, "into the likeness of Christ."

-Marcus Borg

Some books for your consideration on the journey:

Borg, Marcus. *"Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith"* Harper San Fransisco, 1994

Felten, David and Jeff Procter Murphy. *"Living the Questions: The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity"* HarperOne, San Fransisco, 2012

Laughlin, Paul Alan, *"Remedial Christianity: What Every Believer Should Know about the Faith, but Probably Doesn't"* Polebridge Press, 2000

Shorto, Russell, *"Gospel Truth: The New Image of Jesus Emerging from Science and History, and Why it Matters"* Riverhead Books, 1997

Spong, John Shelby, *"Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism: A Bishop Rethinks the Meaning of Scripture"* Harper San Fransisco, 1991