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What does it mean to live as Methodists?

This is a frequently asked question in my area. We are challenged to describe our Methodist identity. Several needs cause this challenge. We are, for example, a minority church in Germany. You always have to explain yourself. And we experience a small but constant decrease in membership. Many congregations are uncertain about their future.

I encourage people to realize our gifts and assets. We are focussing on the invitation to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. We read the scripture by learning from the tradition, by using our minds and by reflecting on experiences. We are an open-minded community. We value evangelization as well as diaconal and social work. We are part of a worldwide church; this enables us to welcome migrants. We live in an ecumenical fellowship.

Many congregations use those gifts to make a difference in their communities: They enable members to tell their faith stories to unchurched people; they open their doors for people in need; and they host migrant congregations. They live the Methodist identity. They ask first: "What is our contribution in order to build up Gods kingdom?" and then a second question: "How can we increase our membership?"