**United Mission is the Vehicle
Meeting Devotional 2: Luke 2:41-42, 52**

Luke 2:41-42, 52 (NRSV)

41 Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

It doesn’t matter whether you live in a teeny-tiny town or a bustling city – sometimes the things you want simply aren’t available where you are. (*Make local reference here.*) This is something Jesus understood first hand. As a young man, he was developing his theological knowledge, perhaps by studying in his local temple. But, unsurprisingly, he wanted to know more.

As Luke tells us in the Gospel, when Jesus went with his family to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple, he took advantage of the opportunity to study with the teachers there. This was such a pivotal moment in Jesus’s life – in fact, it’s one of the only canonical references we have to his adolescence. Having the right teacher can make such an impact. It’s easy to imagine that Jesus felt that these rabbis, who were definitely more urbane and perhaps more sophisticated than his hometown teachers, had something that would help him grow in both his own understanding and in his ability to lead others to God.

Today, pastors and lay leaders emulate Jesus’s example by traveling, sometimes a great distance, to further their education. (*This may be a good place to talk about your own seminary education, or the experience of seminarians your church is involved with.*) United Mission is the vehicle we use to support this training, whether that means sending people to conferences and summits or a more extensive commitment in the form of seminary training. United Mission also provides continuing education for our pastors, equipping them to help us navigate an ever changing world. (*This may be a good place to talk about continuing education experiences you’ve had or would like to have.*) When we support United Mission, we’re doing our part to help ensure that American Baptist Churches USA has the pastors and lay leadership we need as we strive to serve as the hands and feet of Christ. The more we know, the more we will grow – and it’s all for God’s glory.