**United Mission is the Vehicle  
Meeting Devotional 3: John 15:4-5**

John 15:4-5 (NRSV)

4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

I’d like you to do me a favor and think back to the last theatrical performance you really enjoyed watching. It could be anything – your kids’ performance in the school play, a Broadway or off-off-off Broadway show, even your favorite guilty pleasure TV. Your memory is likely to be all about what you saw – but now I want you to think about what you didn’t see.

Actors and actresses don’t just spontaneously show up anywhere and create a great dramatic experience. There’s a lot of behind the scenes action going on, from the playwright who penned the script to the stagehands, costume designers, lighting and sound technicians – they each have a distinct role to play, and it all takes place off stage. When the performance is seen, the actors and actresses are in the spotlight – but the true experience is the result of everyone working together.

This reminds me of how we, as American Baptists, are called to serve as the hands and feet of Christ. Some of us are the equivalent of the actors and actresses; we have highly visible roles. And you know that there’s an even greater number of people working behind the scenes, both here locally and all around the world, doing the vital work of connecting and resourcing American Baptists everywhere to do their part to help heal a hurting world. United Mission is the vehicle we use to support the team behind the scenes, including the regional offices and national support staff. (*This is a good place to talk about the support your congregation receives from regional offices, whether that’s in terms of resources, support, etc.*) It takes more than one actor to put on a show. United Mission helps us work together, so we can accomplish so much more than any one congregation could ever hope to do alone.