

Canoeing the Mountains

2018-11-11 - Year B - Pentecost 11-6 - The Rev. Christopher M. Klukas

- In 1803, The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States for \$15 million or 3 cents per acre.
- Lewis and Clark - Set out to explore the land acquired by the Louisiana Purchase
- Specifically, Thomas Jefferson, then President of the USA, asked them to discover "the most direct and practicable water communication across this continent, for the purposes of commerce."
- Everything went really well, that is until they made it to the Rockies!
- How do you canoe your way through the mountains?
- This is the chief metaphor used by Tod Bolsinger in a book titled "Canoeing the Mountains." The idea is that the church is in a similar predicament today.
- Much of the knowledge, skill, and wisdom passed down to us over hundreds of years regarding how to "do" church and reach non-Christians are being taxed and challenged by a rapidly changing culture.
- Another way of saying this is that we are not in Kansas anymore!
- Christendom to Secular Society
 - Previously there was tremendous social pressure to attend a church on Sunday, regardless of your degree of faith in Jesus.
 - Now there is no pressure at all!
 - Previously the people we tried to reach with the Gospel had a basic understanding of the Bible, sin, and of the person and work of Jesus.
 - Today, People might still know the name of Jesus, but they have no idea about the content of the scriptures and they don't know what Jesus came to do.
- How will we, as Christians, navigate through this uncharted territory?

Get Clear on the Essentials

- Lewis and Clark didn't have a map to follow, they were the ones creating the map!
 - But they did have navigational tools to help them know if they were going in the right direction.
- The Gospel
 - Hebrews 9:26b-28
 - Without that hope of salvation, we all might as well pack up and go home.
 - With that hope, however, it changes and transforms everything!
- Our Values
- Our Mission
 - Without looking at the cover of your bulletin, can anyone tell me what our Vision Statement is as a church?

- Our mission/vision statement will help us to get very clear about what God is calling us to do, and it will help us sort out our responses to the situations which will pop up along the way.
- While the specific words may be unique to us at Good Samaritan in Middleburg, FL, you better believe that it will be directly tied to the central mission Jesus gave to his church to “Make disciples of all nations.”

Guided by the Holy Spirit

- Lewis and Clark were guided by the waterways and by various native American guides.
- Psalm 146:3-5
- We might instead say, “put not your trust in the way we have always done things”
- We need to instead trust in the Lord our God to lead us in the way we should go. Jesus ended the great commission by letting his disciples know that he would be with them always.
- He was there for them, and he is there for us, and the way he fulfills this promise is by the Holy Spirit.
- In the book of Acts we see story after story of the Holy Spirit leading the Apostles to places where they had never considered going, and guiding them to use methods in mission which they had never considered using.
- We need to be constantly in prayer for the mission of this church and always open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Hope for Post-Christendom

- As we leave an era where Christianity has been dominant, and participation in church has been the norm, it could be easy to get discouraged or even depressed.
- There are certainly challenges ahead of us, and there will be mountains to climb.
- As we look in the rear-view mirror of Christian history, however, we can see that some of the most fruitful and exciting years of mission in the past have been during times when Christianity was in the minority.
- God is calling us out of maintenance and into mission, and it is going to be an incredible adventure!

Notes from Synod

- A new and expanded sexual misconduct policy will go into effect on January 1
- Church Planting Curacies - Fr. Paul Hassel
- Strengthen existing congregations - Canon Mark Eldredge
- Engage Training in February
- Mission Trip to Parker