



July 26, 2022



## *Parable of the Pastor*

Last week I was part of the teaching faculty of the Essentials of Transitional Ministry on South Lake Tahoe in Nevada. 33 Presbyterian, Lutheran and United Church of Christ ministers gathered for a week to look deeply at their current ministry situations.

Persons gathered from New York, Colorado, Georgia, Ohio, Texas and more. Most were struggling with post-COVID questions of churches that have lost significant members returning to in-person worship following the pandemic. Many found themselves dealing with church conflicts over misbehaving leaders, insufficient finances and a loss of vision and energy.

Last week we talked a great deal about liminality when a congregation is between an ending and a new beginning. Seasons where watching and waiting can be difficult, overplanning can be futile, and it simply isn't helpful to pretend that we understand what happens next.

33 persons came to examine why they were feeling stuck, and their congregations were at a loss of ideas and momentum. We examined the roller coaster of change and saw that most of us find ourselves and our congregations in steep dives characterized by turmoil, anxiety, loss, and detachment. Many within our congregations are angry, afraid, and demanding leaders fix our loss of members, money and momentum.

Last week I taught that adaptive leadership happens when there are no clear answers. Adaptive leadership helps manage the conflict without prompting persons to splinter into divisive factions. This is leadership which maintains a non-anxious presence in the face of bitter squabbles and angry protests. This is the kind of leadership that is important to maintain during seasons of liminality.

St. Andrew's must continue to be faithful during this confusing and complex season. The Session is working toward 4 priority areas that must be addressed before a pastor search process can begin. To do otherwise would create a search with more questions than answers. Our key priorities identified by Session are:

\*Key leaders must be replaced ASAP – Our Treasurer and Session Clerk positions are essential to the life, work and health of St. Andrews. We have spent the last several months approaching viable candidates for the Treasurer position but so far, no one has emerged. We are at a critical crossroads here.

\*Major property issues related to the repair, upkeep and maintenance of our building must be addressed. Recently, a Property Team meeting was held in person to prioritize what must be addressed immediately. These meetings will now be a regular occurrence.

\*A long-term financial plan and resources for future ministry.

\* Explore and pursue partnerships with sister Presbyterian congregations in Victoria through open ended conversations, including lay people. What does this mean? It means that we examine multiple ideas where we might collaborate and share resources and programs. There are no certain outcomes other than open-ended conversations. No one is forcing these conversations, but Session is feeling that it is time we work toward a more collaborative ministry within Victoria's Presbyterian congregations and explore what that means.

COVID has drastically impacted the transitional process at St. Andrews. We are and will continue to move toward the calling of a permanent pastor, but we must not ignore the major issues on the table that must be addressed before a viable search can proceed.

I would welcome conversations with anyone who has questions, ideas, or concerns that you would like to discuss at any time. I would be happy to meet you in my office, in your home or over a cup of coffee/tea whenever it would be most convenient.

Last week we embraced the truth, ““During liminal seasons we stand on both sides of a threshold. We have one foot rooted in something that is not yet over, whereas the other foot is planted in a thing not yet defined, something not yet ready to begin.” (Susan Beaumont How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You Are Going) Or as it has also been said, “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” Isaiah 43:19

Faithfully,

Pastor Mitch



**Journey for Hope! On October 1, PWS&D is encouraging supporters to walk, run, ride or do another activity they love to raise money for the vital work we do around the world. Our local team is Together in Motion. To join the ride – contact Laura Kavanagh (lauratodd60@gmail.com); to join the walk – contact Ruth McCowan (pzoom@shaw.ca); to contribute go to this link [WeRespond.ca/support-together-in-motion](https://WeRespond.ca/support-together-in-motion)**



### Join us Sunday, July 31 for a Celebration of Life to honour the life of Betty Barwise

The celebration will happen in our sanctuary following Coffee Hour immediately after worship. The coffee hour will be an opportunity to greet Don, Jim, Glenn and family before re-gathering in the sanctuary for Betty's service. It was the family's wish to hold Betty's funeral following worship and coffee hour when the church is already gathered.

Please join Don and family to express our love and appreciation to the for the life of Betty.

**Remember to drop in and join your St. Andrew's friends in the Laneway on Thursday at 2:00 pm for refreshments and visiting!**



### *Read From Your Bible This Week*

- Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23
- Psalm 49:1-12
- Colossians 3:1-11
- Luke 12:13-21

