

According to Mark . . . September 2016

Autumn is upon us and as we contemplate an end to Summer, we start to dig into new possibilities. School has started, the temperatures are falling, and hopefully the rains are as well, as we endured a very hot and dry summer.

We are embarking on the last year of my contract as Designated Term Pastor, and that means our revitalization is maturing into all of us becoming stewards of a vital church. Vital churches are faith-filled, joyous, welcoming, and support one another in both times of joy and trouble. We like to think of that as being ever-learning, action-focused, justice seeking, and community-oriented People of God. Do those words sound familiar? They are ones we committed to before I arrived here, but which still articulate our hopes and passions for not just our community, but ourselves as individuals. Vitality becomes collective when we decide to take our feet to the street and commit to following that new path of living differently—more informed of God’s grace, more willing to engage, and more enjoyed with each other.

What new possibilities will our changed lives bring?

Our Ministry Team is excited about our new curriculum for Church School, our new Bible Studies on Luke and Matthew, and the new missions we have for our Youth and Children’s faith formation. We are reclaiming our motto of “the Church that Does Stuff” and we embody all of this into a new initiative we’re calling “One New Thing”, inviting ourselves and each other to see, first-hand, the changes taking place. But it requires your participation. It means showing up and witnessing our vitality. Coming out and helping with a project or a neighbor. Listening for God’s voice to show our hearts new possibilities.

Because when we change our hearts, we change other’s lives.

And that’s where I’d like to leave us in closing. We are deeply affecting one another each week, each month, and each year we are together. And as we grow let’s share not just our schedules but our stories and souls as we build a community dependent on mutual trust, mutual caring, and God’s grace. We are in a place in the liturgical calendar called “Ordinary Time”, which is that time between Pentecost (late May) and Advent (December). And yet, we are called to do one more thing when we’re seemingly out of time and energy, we are called to discover and study and reflect on our lives when we think we’ve got it figured out. There is nothing simple about the Bible’s messages, for they change as our lives change and we have the power to change others in profound ways. So this fall, what new possibilities will our changed lives bring?

Faith. Hope. Love. These three abide, but the greatest of these is Love.

Come share our exciting journey through this not-quite-so-ordinary time.

Pastor Mark