

According to Mark . . . May 2018

May brings the promise of the resurrection realized, as new life springs in many areas of our lives: gardens and flowers planting and blooming, sunshine beaming on our faces and in our hearts as we awaken from the long winter and face forward into what is to be (particularly after this long, cold April!). Let us rejoice with Creation as we begin our own renewal as the people of God.

What does that mean? On April 29 after services, we held a meeting which helped us re-focus what our mission might be now that our church is turning the corner from RE-vitalization to becoming a vital church. We talked about what that means from a church governance standpoint: more openness, more participation for members and non-members alike, and more spontaneous initiatives coming from each of us so that we ALL might thrive. Churches have this funny dynamic: when one person has a good idea and talks to others about it, suddenly an idea becomes an action and a service from one person's heart to help the many. We did this with the community suppers: once an idea in two people's hearts, we talked to other churches about how wonderful it might be to have one of these free, community meals one night a week during the church year. And it happened! Each Wednesday of the month, a free meal can be found at the Catholic, Methodist, Congregational, or Baptist church. What a wonderful service to those in need of food, fun, and fellowship!

But what's our next big idea? What have you heard that Townsend could use? There are many things we as a church undertake but we need your input and help. Talk to neighbors, friends, and community leaders and come back with what might improve Townsend. No idea is too big or too small as long as we have a demonstrated need in the community beyond our church walls. If we need help from other churches or community members at large, that's fine. If we need funding, that's OK too, money exists in the form of grants that can get something started. But first the idea starter - YOU!

So help a small idea to grow this summer and let's figure out the one big thing we can start to do next church year come Rally Sunday. Don't know where to start? That's ok. There are some very talented folks in the church to help organize a plan. And there are lots of willing hands who want to work on something cool and useful.

Church is changing in amazing ways, and one of those is how folks view what they do with their faith and faith communities. Most younger folks and families (I'm talking the under 35 crowd here!) are really interested in doing good in the world, but not necessarily trustful of institutions (government, banks, social service agencies, churches). Our transition to a community-based orientation, inviting people into our church as a de-facto community center for good purposes, appeals to both our current members and those who want to have a place to come and see what good means in a small town.

It's why We Are the Bridge. It's why we love one another inclusively; members and new friends alike. It's why membership is valued, but not the only measure by which we succeed. Because Jesus told us to go make disciples of all peoples: disciples of loving our neighbor in an increasingly fractious world. Let's do

something different. Let's be invitational. Let's start talking about our TryThing. Let's Be the Bridge. Let's be the new growth and spark the community can see!

Happy Spring,

Pastor Mark