

May/June , 2015

Hello everyone, hope this note finds you well and at peace with who you are and where you are in life this day. The big pink elephant in our midst, in case you have missed it, is all about the awful building challenges we have finally run up against, thus creating for us a monetary challenges, which in turn reminds us of our attendance challenges, which once again have crept up, or in this case crept down. All in all it looks pretty hopeless if we were to only focus on the problems and challenges we are facing at this moment, it would be very easy to just throw in the towel and walk away.



However, that is not what this church has ever done before, it is not who we have ever been in the past, and it is not who we are today. Problems and challenges are not news to us and clearly as followers of Jesus we are sympathetically aware that we find them scattered throughout all of the pages in the bible. Personally if we have darkened the threshold of any church more than 4 or 5 times in a row, we have surely witnessed our own share of problems and challenges. With that experience in mind, and knowing we have overcome and survived rough times before, we get to notice and appreciate the fact that if our attitudes are right, things will turn out just fine, fine as frogs hairs as some of you might say.

So not panicking, not letting fear prevail, not letting our fear turn into anger, not taking our anger out on each other, not isolating ourselves or creating fractions within the church, these things will be helpful reminders as we move forward in whatever direction I hope we let God lead us. This being the key to a hopeful future...letting God lead us. God knows a little something about problems and challenges. In my mind as well as in my heart I have no doubt that God will give us the opportunity to turn these obstacles into blessings that will glorify not us, but rather God in the end. Please be in prayer these next weeks and months as we move ahead with meetings and talks and make decisions. Understanding fully that even not making a decision is after all a decision. Please know...

Know that if you want to talk and share and pray, there will be a few of us around every Tuesday at 7:30 pm in the sanctuary to do just that.

Know that there will be opportunity for all to give their own personal opinion, so keep an ear out for meetings etc.

Know that I am, and I am sure others would love to sit and talk.

Know that this will not be an easy path, any direction we will take.

Know that even though we are only talking about a building, we are not only talking about a building.

We are talking about a space where memories have been made, both good and bad. Where some of us maybe have had the courage to walk into a church for the first time, ever. Or maybe walked in again after having been gone for some time, having to overcome the memories of being hurt by a place that promised love and forgiveness but instead served hate and anger. Where some of us have said hello or good bye to loved ones, been baptized, shared laughter and tears and many deep conversations around a table. We are talking about a Holly space, where some of us have seen God for the first time. And yet, it is true, we are talking only about a building.

Know that we are not only remembering and grieving that past, but also the dreams and hopes we may have had for this space for the future.

But never forget, you are not alone, and we are not alone. God will be a light unto our path. So let us not look for a path at all, let us find the light instead...amen.

Five Guidelines for Doing Good Well

by David McAllister-Wilson

A few years ago, I ran into Tony Campolo, prominent leader in missional evangelism. He had been at the Clinton Global Initiatives meeting. We sat down for lunch, and he was fuming. "David, do you know how many Christian organizations are at work in Haiti today? There are 900. And after 40 years of all that mission work, Haiti is no better off today." "Why do you think that is?" I asked. He said: "Because they aren't there to *do* good. They're there to *feel* good."

He meant to provoke, of course. But it made me think about my kids' mission trips to Appalachia. Church volunteers have put enough paint on those houses to hold up in a hurricane, but destitution is as deeply rooted as the Kudzu they pull out each summer. The good feeling we experience in mission is important. It is an experience of the Holy Spirit. But we must also care about results.

The church used to do its good work at the denominational level — deploying missionaries, establishing colleges, orphanages, and hospitals. Through agencies like the United Methodist Committee on Relief, Lutheran World Relief, and Catholic Charities, the church collected funds for poverty and disaster relief. It also spawned the creation of large-scale para-church organizations like the YMCA, Goodwill Industries, and World Vision. All these structures are still often the best way to deliver services fast and efficiently. But now we see congregations of all sizes becoming generators of both local and international mission. And we see the rise of the missional Millennials. These are the people we sent on youth mission trips, and they learned the lesson. Now, they aren't interested so much in saving the church; they want to save the world.

This means congregations must change some fundamental assumptions. "Missions" is not a program we take on once we are strong enough. It is not discretionary spending. It is the basic need of the church. We have to prepare church leaders to be mission entrepreneurs and to acquire new knowledge and skills.

Let me suggest five guidelines to help us all do good well.

We are volunteers but not amateurs. The church is the world's oldest corporation. The term "corporation" derives from the Latin *corpus* as in *Corpus Christi* — the Body of Christ. As the world's oldest corporation, we should be the most serious about doing our work. Our strategies should reflect careful research and training. We must hold ourselves accountable to high standards.

The fruitfulness of our endeavors must be as important to us as the good feeling they engender in us. Fruitfulness is a key requirement of God found throughout scriptures. Time and again, God does not give points for trying or for good intentions. The barren tree is cursed, and the grapevine is pruned to produce fruit. This means we must establish metrics that matter and evaluate our work.

Don't reinvent the wheel. Let's learn from the successes and failures of those who have already been laboring in the mission field. The odds are that a good 501(c)3 has already been formed that can help us do good well.

Relief begets development, and development begets advocacy. Those who reacted to Hurricane Katrina, after they helped shovel mud out of living rooms, began to ask how to help rebuild communities. And then, they began to ask about why poor communities remain food deserts. Let's minister to whole communities.

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Our goal should be missional relationships, not mission projects. A project is something done *to* someone else for a limited time. Mission is about relationships. When youth come back from an Appalachian mission trip, they consistently say that they learned more and received more from those they were serving than they gave. This is important spiritual insight and good practical advice. The school principal, the homeless man, and the director of the clinic in West Africa know much more than we do about what they need. And, there is no problem I can think of that is simple and can be solved in a few years. Don't adopt a school one year and drop it two years later. The people who come to the soup kitchen on Thanksgiving are there the following week too. Preventing the next Ebola outbreak, or the next Ferguson, requires decades-long relationships. We live in a time of great opportunity and spiritual revival. Where the need is greatest, the Christian movement is strongest and the Holy Spirit is most evident. God is at work offering hope in desperate places and calling us to "proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." But, if we are serious about discipleship, then we should seek change and care about effectiveness.

Portland Gay Men's Chorus

We are very excited to have The Portland Gay Men's Chorus performing at our church at 3:00 on June 21. Tickets will be available soon and will cost \$8 or 2 for \$15. Proceeds will go to support the Lower Columbia PFLAG, an organization that supports families and friends of gay, lesbian and transgender people.



PFLAG meets monthly at LUMC. The chorus has performed at LUMC several years ago to a standing room only crowd, we look forward to having their rich sound fill our sanctuary again.

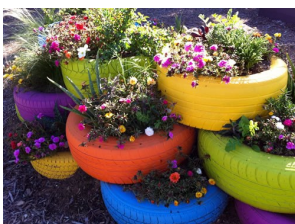
Everyone Can Do a "Small Part" in the Garden

Do you want to help with the garden but not have to make some huge commitment in time and effort? Could you give 15 minutes to keep up a couple of feet of garden space 2 to 3 times week?

Here's your chance! **Adopt a Tire!**

What do you get? An already planted and weed free elevated bed the size of a tire. What do you have to do? Take a seat in a chair and water your tire, plucking the occasional weed, until harvest time. That's all it entails.

A sign-up sheet will be passed around during worship on the next 2 Sundays and all you have to do is say yes and sign up. If you prefer to speak to a live person, call Sarah at 270-5352 at any time, day or night!



We will even have a community time to tend our tires. You are free to come then or at a time of your convenience. A calendar will be posted on the corkboard in the sanctuary.

Memorial Fund

The Memorial fund is an account to which donations are made in memory of a loved one. These funds are used to purchase an article or gift in that person's name and a plaque is placed on the Memorial Board in the narthex.

There is a memorial committee that records the giver of the donation and the amount that is given. A thank you note is sent to them in the church's name. A note is also sent to the family of the loved one to let them know who sent the donation.

When there is a request to use money from the fund for a special purchase the memorial committee will meet to approve the request and they will so inform the church council.

Many of the memorial gifts you see every Sunday – the cross, the candlesticks, the offering plates, the Bible, hymnals, the music and sound system, the shrubs, roses, and much much more. All are very special.

We are in the process of obtaining a plaque for the new wireless, cordless mic system in memory of Roy Clifton and John Polm. Also a plaque will be placed by the pulpit window in memory of Roy and Margaret McCrady.

The Memorial committee members are Vernetta Deckman, Chairperson, Sharon Klump and Mona Petersen.

April 23, 2015

Minutes from meeting with David Nieda, District Superintendent

Attending this meeting: Richard Dillman, Garrett Harrison, Ilene Arnold, Vernetta Deckman, Shirley Patterson, Cynda and Frank Webb, Ed Hilliard, Barb Vining, Niis Bue, Leona Bovard, Mona Peterson, Willis Williams, Gene Fosburg, Rene Devantier, Dave McCrady, Sharon Klump and David Nieda.

Rene Devantier, opened by giving the parameters of this meeting and said David Nieda would be the sounding board.

Cynda Webb wanted all to know two things:

Roof problem is long term and fixing it would not be covered by Insurance, but the adjustor said we have a fairly sound building.

We need a replacement furnace for the Fellowship Hall.
Ed Hilliard said he needs to know what "sound" building means.

Barbara Vining wanted to know what was the furnace problem.

Some one said the roof and wall with mold in the Fellowship Hall need to be replaced. Specifically the "headers" need to be replace due to rot. Also should be considered replacing the windows in this end of the church.

David McCrady said in his opinion we need 90 persons attending to be self sustaining to fund a church. Otherwise there is a financial strain on all persons supporting the church. He is unsure what the problem is at this time.

Niis Bue wanted to know what the costs are to keep this end of the building going.

Cynda Webb said some other ideas thrown out are: Use the parsonage for a Fellowship meeting if we replace the building and have the minister get a housing allowance. Also consider finishing the #1 classroom into a kitchen. Consider selling some or all of the property.

David Nieda said in general churches are aging and the life span of a building is about 50 years average. It is hard to imagine a church ministry separate from a building. Two new start-up Methodist churches have failed and neither had buildings.

Barbara Vining said our mission statement of diversity and inclusion needs to have a building.

Niis Bue said if we did not have building cost and time and energy we could be free to do something else in ministry.

Garrett Harrison said fear in conversations is all about the "building".

David Nieda said we think of the church as our home and what we are.

We can fix a building. Our challenge is to the congregation to imagine what else there is.

Willis asked Gene Fosburg to share figures on repairs/replacements.

- Furnace: \$5,670.00
- 20 windows for \$10,200.00

roof for \$27,000

There are some variables and all amounts are estimates.

David Nieda said a loan could be possible from the church conference who would look at our church finances to determine if we met criteria for a loan.

Eileen Arnold said we should look again at our church mission. We need to have a 5-year plan.

David Nieda said if building and property sold the capitol/capitol is the rule. If we close the church the money would revert back to the church conference. Any selling needs conference approval.

Planning meeting must have a deadline by mid August and be wide open to the congregation. It is possible to have help of a facilitator from the conference. An email request for a facilitator needs to go to David Nieda.

Ed Hilliard wanted to know if grants are possible.

Tom Wilson is knowledgeable about church financing.

Rene said to put in our vision sharing a building with another church as the Episcopal Church, Kelso First United Methodist Church or some other church. Remember we have another building decision meeting on April 30th at 10:30

David Nieda closed with prayer.

Sharon Klump, acting secretary

Deferred maintenance in the church is like an onion; it has layers and it stinks.

Deferred maintenance is defined as “the practice of postponing maintenance activities such as repairs on both real property (i.e. infrastructure) and personal property (i.e. machinery) in order to save costs, meet budget funding levels, or realign available budget monies.”

In the church, we tend to encounter the practice of deferred maintenance in three distinct ways.

The first way we defer maintenance in the church is the one that comes most easily to mind. As church membership and attendance fail to keep pace with escalating maintenance costs of aging buildings, putting off needed upkeep and repairs is an all too common strategy for balancing a church budget. For a season, this practice allows the church to put off hard decisions about program and staffing but with each subsequent year the hole that is dug gets deeper and deeper.

The problem with deferred maintenance is that it is borrowing upon the promise of the future for the sake of the present. A broken physical plant is a terrible thing to gift upon the next generation.

Understanding the second way we defer maintenance in the church requires us to think about the nature of change. In a healthy system, change occurs over time in incremental steps. This doesn't mean that healthy churches don't change dramatically but moments of quantum (transformational) change become part of the natural progression of the community. A certain level of discomfort is valued in a healthy system as is diversity. Each aids in keeping the system on its feet, so to speak, and in developing a culture that asks good questions about its communal assumptions.

Deferred maintenance in the church is like an onion; it has layers and it stinks.

In churches that defer their maintenance, necessary, incremental, change is avoided because it might cause conflict or some amount of tension. Such communities grow very set in their ways, comfortable, but also increasingly insular. New ideas may be welcomed but only if they don't threaten existing activities or force

When change inevitably rears its head in such communities, it is typically prompted by external forces: a new pastor or members, a budgetary crisis, larger church or societal pressure. Very often, the people initiating the conversations about change are seen as the enemy with little regard for intent. Without the practice of incremental change, discomfort and ambiguity are experienced as threatening and, particularly in religious communities, seen as schismatic and unorthodox as uniformity, and comfort, are held sacred.

The problem with deferred maintenance is that it is borrowing upon the promise of the future for the sake of the present. Nostalgia for the past is a poor substitute for an engaging spirituality in the present.

The final way we defer maintenance in the church is on a personal level. As disciples, we are called to live into the abundance that Jesus promised but instead we adopt a scarcity perspective that drives us toward over-consumption, anxiety, and busyness. Our desire to have all of the possessions we are told we need, and our chasing of things like success and the respect of others, deviates us from the tasks of our own spiritual maintenance/discipline. It also undermines our witness to a God who is bigger than the next big thing and equally concerned with all of humanity and creation.

Borrowing upon the promise of the future for the sake of the present is the opposite of hope.

Because of our deferred spiritual maintenance, we find ourselves in a difficult place when life starts to throw us curveballs. The equilibrium we maintain on good days is shattered when we haven't cultivated the spiritual infrastructure requisite for the challenges (and opportunities) we now face. Instead of feeling grounded like a well rooted tree, we encounter these seasons of life as leaves desperately clinging to branches when the autumn winds increase. Again, the problem with deferred maintenance is that it is borrowing upon the promise of the future for the sake of the present. A full stomach today is not as beneficial as a practice of contentment for every day.

Tide Me Over items for the month of May are spaghetti sauce and paper towels.



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Check out our website!
www.umclongview.com

High Five

"Prayers, presence, gifts, service, & **witness"**

A Longview UMC Class

Last Sunday of the month

In the Library from Noon to 1pm

May 31st United Methodist Church History

June 28th The Reconciling Church

August 30th Church Membership

(continuing through April 2016—Come to one or all!)