

Rev Dr Debby Brincivalli - West Jersey Presbytery - June, 2017

### "Caution Construction Area"

Our scriptures are filled with so many images of building - description in detail of the ark and the temple - building up the body of Christ.

Anytime I see tape like this my eye looks at it (I am a former cop and for you NCIS folks this is not crime scene tape!!!)

This tape makes you wonder what is going on - when I see it around a pothole - I hope they will fix it - sometimes it is around a building about to be demolished - but other times the tape is around new construction - always wondering what it will like when it are finished - well for most of our congregations we are heading into the dreaded summer months - where most of our churches take a hiatus from ministry as usual and a few like Brigantine, Ocean City, Cape May, and Wildwood have attendance surge and out two summer chapels in Cape May Point and Avalon open their doors only a few months a year.

I have a gift of 40 feet of this take for all of you - where would you like to put it at the congregation where you worship? On a door? In the session meeting room? In the Christian education areas? On a mission that needs new life? How would you begin to engage members and visitors on what might be "under construction"? If we think we've been there, done that and have the t-shirt to prove it then we might be using this tape at a later time in a different way.

During the summer I challenge you as leaders and members - have the session do a prayer walk in their neighborhood and then start from the street and see what the neighbors see - are the lights on only 2 hours a week and then dark? Look at your sign - what is the message that is conveyed. Can you walk in or is it a secret door that members only know which entrance to use. Walk in - what do you see - smell? Do we use words that people do not know? Walk through the building and pray for each space - is it being used for the glory of God or only for us? Share this with the congregation - invite them to a prayer walk and see what ideas come up.

Bring out the dusty Blueprints - pray over space

Not just for buildings - if we wear it as a stole as I am doing what needs construction - where is our spiritual depth in heart, body, mind and strength - our vows to serve with energy, intelligence, imagination and love - what else needs construction

It is a reminder that every church in their MIF - ministry information form to a church says that they are a warm and welcoming congregation. I know we think we mean that - we are - to each other - but preparing for welcome is intentional - does this need construction? What about pastoral care not just by teaching elders - our youth and education - our worship - our music - our missions - where is your passion? If you feel that the passion is waning claim the tape as a reminder. This tape is an invitation to conversation.

The tape includes the word caution - be careful - you never know what will come out on the other side - but it can be fun to try. I hope in September news from the pews you will share any outcomes from this. By the power of the Holy Spirit may this be to the Glory of God.

See you in September

Debby