

LISTENING TO THE HEARTBEAT OF GOD – FROM PASTOR LAWRENCE

On President's Day weekend, I stood entranced in the entrance hall of Monticello. Starting with the classical statues and maps at eye level, the extraordinary items from around the world drew my gaze upward. An example of Thomas Jefferson's wry humor, the items from the "New World" occupied a higher and more impressive place than those of the "Old World."

Certainly the moose and elk antlers impressed me. The bison skin depicting a Native American battle scene was equally interesting. However, I found myself drawn in more by the story of how those items came to hang on the top of that little mountain above Charlottesville, VA.

This is the story of how Thomas Jefferson, Meriwether Lewis, and William Clark formed a uniquely gifted team that explored and mapped the territory of the Louisiana Purchase. No maps existed for their journey. No packing list prepared them for the challenges they faced. No life experience could have fully prepared them for the realities of the over 8,000-mile journey.

Yet, Jefferson, Lewis, and Clark were *gifted* – and I will humbly add – *called* for that particular work in that particular time. While you and I may not yet have the historical perspective in which to place our work, I am convinced that we are *gifted for* and *called by* God for a particular work in this particular time.[1]

For Oxford Presbyterian Church to become even more a congregation of *calling* is the goal of the Myrtle Collaboration. You may have heard that name, Myrtle Collaboration, throughout our church life over the last several months. In worship, stories of call have been shared and celebrated.



**MYRTLE
COLLABORATION**

These stories of call take time for us to identify and claim in our own lives. Over the wondrous summer months, the Myrtle Team encourages you to continue reflecting upon and engaging with Christ's call in your life through journals available in worship on Sunday and throughout the week just outside the church office.

In the late summer and early fall, we look forward to engaging the congregation through a series of small groups focused on God's call to us in our particular season of life.

This exploration of call may feel like new territory for many of us. Indeed, like Lewis, Clark, and Jefferson, if we heed our call, we will thrive in a changing world.

[1] Allow me to add a nuance here. While Jefferson championed the work of the expedition as he remained behind in Washington DC, at the same time he balanced multiple calls through his role as President of the United States. So also, you and I may balance multiple calls in any particular season of our lives.