

There's a Story Worth Telling

If I asked you what is happening at your church, where would you begin?

You might tell me about an upcoming fundraiser, a new Bible study, a community partnership, or the ongoing mystery of who keeps changing the thermostat in the fellowship hall. Church life gives us plenty to talk about.

And somewhere in the middle of all that activity, something is happening that deserves a little more attention: someone is experiencing the impact of your ministry.

Perhaps a person who recently joined the congregation is beginning to feel known. Perhaps a volunteer has discovered a gift they didn't realize they had. Perhaps a neighbor has found a place where their questions are welcome, their presence matters, and someone remembers their name.

There's a story there. And I wonder what might happen if we became more intentional about noticing it—and sharing it.

With that hope in mind, we will be relaunching the Still Speaking Theology Podcast. Through conversations with people from across the Florida Conference, we'll share these stories and reflect together on how God is still speaking through the life and ministry of our congregations.

Our faith has been carried across generations through stories. A meal shared. A stranger welcomed. A person seen by Jesus when others had passed them by. These stories help us recognize something of God's love, and they invite us to consider how that love might take shape in our own lives.

Our congregations have stories to tell, too. Human, spiritual, particular stories about what happens when people practice love together.

Sometimes those stories become so familiar to us that we forget their significance. Of course, someone makes the phone call. Of course, the doors open for that community group. Of course, there is a place at the table. We (the Church) have been doing these things for years.

What feels routine to a congregation may be deeply meaningful to the person who experiences it.

Sharing that meaning is an act of stewardship. It helps us recognize what has been entrusted to us and what is becoming possible through the gifts people offer. When we describe how someone's generosity helped create a place of belonging, or how volunteers' time helped a neighbor find support, we give our community a fuller understanding of the ministry we share. We also help people imagine how they might participate.

Here is a simple practice to try at your next council meeting, ministry gathering, or coffee hour. Make a little room for these questions:

- **Where have we seen someone experience care, connection, or hope through our ministry?**
- **What have we learned from the people with whom we serve?**
- **Who could help us tell that story in their own words?**

Listen for the details. What happened? Why did it matter? What stayed with the person afterward? Invite those involved to help shape the story and decide how they would like it shared.

A few sentences in a newsletter, a brief reflection during worship, or a conversation over coffee can help a congregation see its ministry with fresh eyes. Those stories can also encourage another church that is wondering what it has to offer.

As we prepare to relaunch the Still Speaking Theology Podcast, I'm eager to hear what is unfolding in your congregation. Is there a story we might explore on the podcast, or someone whose experience could encourage others across the Conference? Please be in touch. I'm enthused about working with you to share and celebrate these stories.

Somewhere in the rhythm of your church's life, love is taking shape. Let's pay attention—and tell the story.