

Greetings to the Saints of Mission Presbytery!

Last week, I started down the path with you of the “7 Marks of Congregational Vitality” that our friend the Rev. Kathryn Threadgill from the Presbyterian Mission Agency told us about at the October 2017 Presbytery meeting. The first mark was “LIFELONG Discipleship Formation:” in short, “from the cradle to the grave, seeking to be formed for right living with God and with all people.” Now let’s look at the next one.

Mark 2 - Intentional, Authentic Evangelism

If we follow the marks as given, it is the lifelong discipleship formation which will prepare us, enable us and energize us to do intentional, authentic evangelism.

Butterfly nets are not involved. It’s not about going door to door and capturing people to add to our numbers. Nor is it just about doing mere acts of kindness, and calling it “done.” What it does is to take us beyond our comfort zones, to people who may not live near us and who may not look like us or live life like us. We’re being called to the place where Christ is already living and present, and calling us to dwell.

This kind of intentional, authentic evangelism makes it impossible for us to live only in the shelter of our sanctuaries, to try and protect not only our resources but also our hearts. It forces us to go beyond where we are comfortable into the place where God is calling us to go. It also takes us into the world of authentic relationships - not just a “one and done” with people, but building a foundational relationship which will make space for God to impact the lives of all persons - even our own.

Kathryn cites this verse from 2 Corinthians 4:7 - “We have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God.”

How is your congregation manifesting this mark? Is your congregation involved in authentic evangelism, or is all the church’s “evangelism” relegated to a committee? Is the life of your congregation causing the faith of your members to overflow? What percentage of your congregation’s life would you say happens within its walls, and what percentage outside its walls? And, what percentage of your own life of faith happens outside of Sunday worship?

PRESBYTER SIGHTINGS

March 1 - Lunch with students, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

March 2-3 - Presbytery meeting, Austin Westlake Hills

March 8 - Lunch with Corpus Christi region members

March 9 - Meet with Church Development and Evangelism with Kathryn Threadgill

March 10 - "Anxious to Talk About It," Carolyn Helsel, San Antonio Crossroads

March 11 - Preach for Georgetown San Gabriel

March 13-19 - Vacation!

March 22 - Brown bag lunch with San Antonio region

March 25 - Preach at Yorktown First