

The Road Less Traveled – February 14, 2020

Change is difficult, and I think that is particularly true when it comes to the church. Just about any news is going to be bad news for someone, and in the church, passions tend to run deep. Many of you received an email this week from the group of ladies that have directed Vacation Bible School for the past several years. The email indicated they had been informed that the church was no longer interested in them leading the program.

What was communicated, and what I share with you now, is that we have to make some changes to Vacation Bible School. If you have been involved in VBS – or even just been around as it was going on – then you know that it was wildly successful. Each year for the past six attendance has grown, especially during the daytime program. This past summer we had somewhere between 600 and 700 kids participate between the morning and the evening. The event cost the church somewhere in the neighborhood of \$15,000, and some years that number has been bigger. And it taxed our volunteers and physical campus to the breaking point.

To be honest, the event has outgrown us, and we simply cannot sustain the model. We can't sustain it financially. We spend more on Vacation Bible School than we do for the totality of Children's programming for the year. We have, in essence, given the kids who come a glimpse of Children's Ministry that we cannot sustain, cannot deliver on each week if they come back. And we cannot sustain this VBS model volunteer-wise. In some cases last year a single adult and one youth volunteer were responsible for 20-25 kids, some as young as 3. Most churches try to keep that ratio much lower, for safety reasons. But we only have so many people who volunteer, and that number has remained relatively constant through the years.

So we simply need to make some changes to better bring VBS in line with the overall vision of our church and in line with a program that we can sustain long term. In that vein, your Church Leadership, in consultation with the staff and I, decided to direct the 2020 Vacation Bible School from the Children's Ministry office, with Children's Director Teresa Chisum overseeing the direction, planning and budget for the ministry. As to the look of VBS this year, you will be hearing details soon.

It is my hope and prayer that everyone who has a passion for Vacation Bible School and Children's Ministry will be excited to be a part of it this year. That week of VBS provides a unique opportunity to get up close and personal with the youngest in our community and share our passion for Jesus Christ. It's an opportunity we don't want to miss.

See you Sunday.