

The Road Less Traveled – July 14, 2017

I've always loved Vacation Bible School. I never went as a child, but I've watched all three of my children stretch the muscles of their faith in the midst of the music, games and lessons of VBS. It's even more meaningful now that my kids are not participants, but volunteers, sharing their faith with the youngest among us.

When I stepped into the sanctuary on Sunday, the first evening of this week's VBS, I was struck by a sense of *déjà vu*. The entire front of the church was decorated as a factory reminiscent of Willie Wonka – the theme this year is Maker Fun Factory. It reminded me of the first time I walked into the Sanctuary. Three years ago, I arrived at Aledo UMC on the Sunday that VBS began, and the entire front of the church had been converted into a jungle. In fact it was more than a week before the decorations were down and I saw the altar and chancel area as it had been designed.

The funny thing is, though, I knew it was there. Even covered with dense jungle, the fire of the Holy Spirit burned brightly from the altar and warmed the entire Sanctuary. It may not have looked like a traditional Sanctuary at that time, but the spirit of God was everywhere.

I was struck by that feeling again this week as I watched the opening and closing activities for Maker Fun Factory. The front of the church doesn't look much like a church. And the volunteers up there dressed in their bright yellow shirts don't look much like ministers. But it only takes a moment to realize that ministry is happening. In their funny costumes and spirited dance moves, these servants are sharing God's love and calling more than 500 kids to a life of discipleship. And a colorful, wacky factory suddenly becomes holy ground.

In Leviticus, the Lord instructs the Israelites that they are to keep a perpetual fire burning on the altar of the Tabernacle. If you want to see it for real, make sure to be in worship on Sunday. You won't see a perpetual flame. What you will see is a group of kids and adults on fire with a passion for Jesus Christ.

That's what we are called to cultivate here. And it happened this week.

See you Sunday.