

## The Road Less Traveled – October 5, 2018

This Sunday we will kick off a new series in worship called *This Is Us*. This four-week series will serve as the backdrop for a discussion of stewardship in our church family. Now I know what you are thinking. *Stewardship! Ugh! Just be honest and tell me you want me to give more money.*

I say I know what you are thinking because I used to think the same way. I dreaded the annual stewardship campaign when I was sitting in the pews. I found it manipulative and insulting and avoided those sermons when I could. Even when I first became a pastor, I considered the annual stewardship drive as a necessary evil, something we had to do to make sure the church could continue to function. Little if any of the process felt like ministry to me.

But as my faith has deepened and matured, so has my understanding of stewardship. So stick with me here. There is a financial reality to being a church. For all of the sacred things we are part of, we are still an earthly institution. In addition to funding the various ministry initiatives to which we are called, we also have to pay the mortgage, the light bill and salaries. It would be naïve of me to suggest that money doesn't matter. It does.

But that's not stewardship. We could charge dues of all of our members and ensure that everything we want to do gets funded, but that is not stewardship. And if we confine our discussion to money – as often happens this time of year – that's not stewardship either. Stewardship is about how we as individual followers of Jesus use our resources for the advancement of God's Kingdom.

And that's what we are going to talk about over the next four weeks. We talk about, pray about, God's Kingdom a lot. We talk about being Kingdom-builders and God using us as instruments in the construction. But I fear sometimes that *God's Kingdom* is one of those terms that we use in church assuming we are all talking about the same thing. And the truth is that often times we are not.

What is this Kingdom that we are called to build? What does it look like? Where does it start? How will we know when we get there? And what does it have to do with stewardship?

Wrestling with those questions will be our task over the next four weeks. On Sunday, Oct. 28, we will all have an opportunity to recommit ourselves to the life and ministry of our church family. But we are not there yet. We are called to be Kingdom-builders. On that much we agree. For now, let's take this time to examine the blueprints together.

See you Sunday.