



Trying Hard...Part 2

by Bill Blizzard
 Vestry Liaison: Communications

Last month my article on embracing change ended with, *“Apparently, I just need to chill and not “try so hard”. Is that possible? Not sure. We’ll have to see.”*

Turns out chilling was not to be. Mulling this over, the thought of change reminded me of the ‘prophetic movement’, a movement that changed the epic story of Jewish people, and their character. From the Old Testament word *nabi* meaning “one called” and the Greek word *prophetes* meaning “spokesperson”, it would seem that the prophet’s role was to be a spokesperson and change agent for God.

- It was the prophet, Nathan, who confronted King David about his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and his subsequent murder of her husband, Uriah. Nathan gave birth to the idea that even the king was bound to God’s moral law.
- The prophet Elijah institutionalized the prophetic role in the 9th Century BC when he challenged King Ahab and Jezebel on the unlawful seizure of Naboth’s vineyard.
- Then came a minor prophet, Amos, who drove the values of the Jewish people into the social arena – the poor were never again allowed to be invisible. *“...I know your manifold transgressions, and your mighty sins, afflicting the just and taking bribes, diverting the poor from justice...”* (KJV Amos 5:12).
- And another, it was Micah who asked, *“What does the Lord require of you but to do justly (justice), to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”* (KJV Mic 6:8)
- Isaiah was the most dominant figure of the movement. He prophesied to the rulers of his day, *“[C]ease to do evil, learn to do good, seek justice, rebuke the oppressor ...”* (KJV Isaiah 1:16-1)
- Jeremiah came next. He was the prophet who lived during the time of Judah’s defeat by the Babylonians, and with King Josiah was likely the driving force behind the Deuteronomic reform.
- Ezekiel the priest/prophet then took up the torch. He went into captivity in Babylon and was the major player behind the priestly literature found in Leviticus.

Change is not easy or fast. But I’m now thinking that it may be okay to try hard ... they did for about 450 years!



Ubuntu *

by Mary Ratliff
 Connect Team, Co-Team Leader

* *“I Am Who I Am Because of Who We are Together” – Exodus 3:14 and Desmond Tutu*

This Month We Welcome Janet Williams



Janet, we’re so glad that you decided to make our family a part of your life. We’d like to get to know you a little better, so tell me, how long have you attended services?

I started coming to the Church of Good Shepherd at the beginning of 2019. I adore our priest, Becky!

Are you coming to Good Shepherd as an Episcopalian? What other churches have you attended?

I was born and grew up in Jamaica, in the Anglican Church. My husband and I met at USF in Tampa where we both attended. I became an Episcopalian in 1974, when we had to find a church to baptize our first born son. We moved to Pinellas County in the early 80’s, where I was a special education elementary school teacher. We attended St Dunstan’s Episcopal until our priest died, then moved to Calvary Episcopal. Seven years ago, when Fr. Bob retired, we left Calvary and went back to St. Dunstan’s. My husband passed away 4 years ago and I remained at St. Dunstan’s for a couple more years then started looking for a larger and more active church. I attended St. Anne’s for about a year and then tried COGS.

What inspired you to attend?

I love all the stuff the church is doing in the community, the friendly people, and the full pews! Another plus is that there are 4 other Jamaican’s here. I felt welcomed from the first day I visited.

What would you want to tell others about Good Shepherd to encourage them to come and explore our parish?

This church has such a diverse congregation and many activities. Becky is very charismatic and gives inspiring sermons. The leader sets the tone and feel of the church, and Becky has the unique mixture of strong leadership skills, an inspiring speaker and someone who motivates her congregation to get involved in the community. COGS is lucky to have her and I look forward to getting to know my church family more!

I also look forward to getting more involved in COGS when I am in town. At St. Dunstan’s, I was the main Altar Guild person and I have also helped with the food pantry in the past.

Please tell us a bit about yourself outside Good Shepherd - family, jobs, and hobbies, whatever you like.

My son lives locally and my daughter and her family live in Texas where she just retired from the military. My 92 year old mother and family still live in Jamaica. Since I am retired, I am able to travel more frequently such as visiting my daughter and grandchildren in Texas and my mother in Jamaica.

I am a fairly active person. I practice yoga and meditation, I work out at a gym and swim and I love hiking and traveling. I also volunteer at Heritage Village. I rarely watch TV and like to read. I belong to a book club of retired teachers.



Surveying the Meadow

by John Russotto
Vestry Liaison: Worship & Music

A SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY

In the spring of 2017, Michelle Schombs and John Russotto had a “what if” conversation while weaving palm donkeys. What if, they pondered, we offered a program geared specifically to meet the needs of our senior adults. Would anyone attend? What would such a program look like? Who would oversee its development and achievement? And, how would it be funded?

Both Michelle and John are no strangers to program development and implementation. Michelle is a retired school administrator. John is a retired mental health consultant. As they continued to brain-storm ideas, they began to imagine a program that would offer attendees a safe and confidential place where they could share life experiences, engage in fellowship and participate in group discussions to discover ways to live a life of joy and dignity well into retirement.

Surveying the Meadow was born. It became our meme for senior adult spiritual and emotional growth. Now all that was needed was a way to fund the ministry.

The Diocese of Southwest Florida was seeking proposals to fund innovated programs within a parish. Together, Michelle and John developed and submitted a proposal with the approval of our clergy and vestry. In late 2017, we were informed that our proposal was accepted. A generous grant followed.

Surveying the Meadow was launched in the spring of 2018 with a study of *Traveling Light* by Max Lucado. More than 25 participants signed-up for the six weekly sessions, and were given a copy of the book at no cost. Refreshments were offered. At the final session, participants were asked to provide anonymous reviews of the course material, format and style. Reviews proved to be positive, and interest in future sessions was strong.

Since its inception, there have been four opportunities to engage our seniors. The focus of each group discussion was

relevant to living in today’s challenging world.

In the fall of 2018, a second group met to read and discuss John Ohmer’s *Slaying Your Goliaths: How God Can Help*. Again, attendance was strong.

Then in the spring of 2019, another turn-out crowd came together to better understand how to find calm in a chaotic world. Max Lucado’s *Anxious for Nothing* was the focus of discussion. Not only were these sessions accompanied by videos of the author, but it also included an engaging, out-of-town speaker. She expertly addressed our audience using biblical passages and visual props to drive home the concept that God is in control.

We are now rolling out another full-house program this fall. The focus of discussion will be Henri Nouwen’s *With Open Hands*. We think it is a fitting choice for the challenges we face in our society. We will learn what it means to pray, to find a stillness in God’s promise, and to find hope for ourselves, our neighbors, and our world.



Connect with Realm

by Joe Nixon,
Vestry Liaison: Finance and Admin

REALM is an easy way to communicate and stay connected with your fellow parishioners. It’s a single place where you can sign in, stay informed, privately track your pledge and gifts, and stay connected to our growing church community.



To join either go to COGS’ website at www.cogsdunedin.com and click on **Realm** at the top right hand corner or send an email to info@cogsdunedin.com. You’ll be glad you did!



COGS Cares

by Phil Beachamp
Vestry Liaison: Loving Neighbors

Did you know that Good Shepherd has numerous **Outreach Ministries** throughout our Community?

Indeed, more than 15 ministries are engaged for Outreach by Feeding and Clothing and Loving our Neighbors. Last month the ministry leaders met for a round table discussion of what is working and how we can do even more for our community. It was wonderful to enjoy the fellowship of these caring people from COGS.

Our ministries focus on Jesus’ commands to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, clothe the naked and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Some examples at Good Shepherd include Bagzilla, a ministry which brought over 4,000 pounds of food so far this year to the Dunedin Cares Food Pantry for distribution to the hungry, Pack a Sack, which prepares over 100 bags each week of healthy snacks to local elementary school children who would otherwise have nothing to eat over a weekend. Our Cold Weather Shelter ministry works in conjunction with other area churches to staff a shelter in Clearwater when extremely cold weather is expected, and our Clothes to Kids provides clothing to students in our County, to highlight a few.

Why do we have Outreach Ministries you ask? As we aspire to seek Christ, outreach ministries help us to bring our God given talents and gifts to those less fortunate and to unite in Christ’s love. A famous author once wrote: “Balance, peace, and joy are the fruit of a successful life. It starts recognizing your talents and finding ways to serve others by using them.”

How can you be involved? Take a copy of Good Shepherd’s **Mission and Ministry Directory** from the church pews in front of you. Each Outreach Ministry and Leader is listed along with their contact information.

And for those of you who love to surf the internet, log into www.COGSDunedin.com Click on “Share” (Generously), then click on: Feeding or Clothing or Loving, and contact Jim Ratliff or me. We’ll help you!

“All are welcome, no exceptions.”