

Kevin's Korner

Last Sunday, in my sermon, I talked about how we know what God wants for our lives and for our church. Discernment is the word I used, and I used a quote from Rueben P. Job, which asked, “Do I want to know God’s will more than anything else?” Even more than my own will? Even more than the desires of this church?

I know that our First Christian Church ancestors have been asking for over 145 years, “What does God want for our lives here in Grand Junction and for our church?” When we announced the Vision to Action Retreat back in March, with Dale Matherly offering to come and lead us in a process of discerning God’s will for our church, I’m sure some of you thought, “We all want to know God’s will and we’ve been asking for God to share it with this church for over 140 years. What has changed? Did we get it wrong in the past? Why is it so hard to know God’s will?” Yet, here we go again.

At the Retreat, we decided that God wants us to focus this year on five different directions for FCC: **Connection, Belonging & Hospitality; Strengthening Worship, Prayer Life & Welcome; Outreach & Community Engagement; Nurturing Spiritual Growth; and Building Community & Teamwork.** This focus has led us to develop projects, or “smart experiments” as I like to call them. These have added excitement and generated some meaningful projects and ministries already.

The Retreat also started us on the road to asking “Who are we at FCC? What is the Mission that God is calling us toward? And how will we decide between important ministries and the use of our resources of people, money and building?

Last Sunday, I reminded us that if we do keep God and God’s will as our top priority, “our treasure,” then we can trust that God will do great things with us, for us and through us. We hope that God has and will use the renewed focus from the Retreat on what we think God desires for FCC. We have prayerfully lifted up an Identity and Mission Statement, which we have been using as a prayer during worship to remind us of who we are and our primary mission as a church. And recently I’ve been sharing the tools for making important decisions about our ministries and how we use our resources for ministry. Those tools are our “Core Values,” which also have been prayerfully identified and lifted up as a leadership guide. I’ll list them for you once again. **Core Values (Tentative): 1) Loving Kindness, 2) Deep Rooted Welcome & Belonging, 3) Deep Connection & Community, 4) Faith in Action (Evangelism and Outreach); 5) Spiritual Growth & Transformation, 6) Shared Worship & Leadership, 7) Commitment to Lifelong Learning, Care & Support for All, 8) Teamwork & Shared Purpose – “Everyone has a Place in the Choir,” and 9) Growth without Judgement.**

Our Vision to Action Team is working on finalizing these Core Values, to present to the Board for Congregational discussion.

Our hope is that we will consider these Core Values for all important decisions within the life of First Christian Church. We believe this is God’s will for our church. That doesn’t mean we won’t ever change our Core Values. It doesn’t mean we won’t make mistakes along the way or just make a wrong decision. But, we will be doing our best to hold God’s will as our highest priority and we will trust that God will use our desire to serve His will to accomplish great things through God’s power, presence and love.

To keep this all in perspective for me, I’m reminded of Thomas Merton’s prayer from his book, Thoughts in Solitude: “*My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.*”

I invite you to join me in this prayer for our church and for ourselves. Then, let us place our trust and our very selves into God’s loving hands. God bless you!

Pastor Kevin