

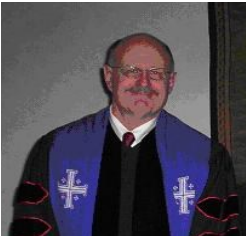


The Grapevine

CONNECTING THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT

April 2011

A Door Set Open: Grounding Change in Mission and Hope



by the Rev. Dr.
Allen D. Timm,
Executive
Presbyter

Dr. Pete Steinke has set the course once again for my thinking about the future of the church. His book, [A Door Set Open](#), is based on a poem by G.K. Chesterton, "Xmas Day." Chesterton writes: "GOOD NEWS: but if you ask me what it is, I know not; It is a track of feet in the snow, It is a lantern showing a path, It is a door set open."

What is a door set open? It is a door that provides intentional hospitality. It is a door through which congregants travel out into the world to join Jesus Christ in service of the world.

Steinke echoes what many have said: the church is in exile. But we can give in to three temptations: denial, despair or magic (39). We can deny we are in exile; we can give in to a fear of failure in despair; we can look for magic that will bring a quick fix. Or we can look in hope to what God will do. Hope is a mood. It is a choice. It is listening to what God wants to do with us in our

time, in our place. Steinke writes, "The challenge of change for a congregation on a steady downward slope is precisely to redefine and redirect its mission" (60). It is to see God is doing a new thing, and that mission is where God calls us to be.

Edwin Friedman says that the mark of a mature person is to have life goals. Steinke says, so it is for a congregation. They must have a mission, a plan, a vision, and expected outcomes. Mission is about joining God's mission in the world, as a transformed person. Doing mission does not guarantee growth in numbers, but it certifies participation in God's sovereign rule in the world.

We have to ask ourselves, are we people of the way, a term often used for the new Christians after Christ's resurrection, or we people in the way? Determining our mission begins with change in our selves, "calm thoughtfulness" (120) in the face of anxiety. Steinke writes, "In the new creation, the future will be where *service* supplants *domination*, *equal sharing* displaces *one-sided advantages*, and *love* trumps

manipulation" (110).

The Apostle John prophesied, "See! I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut" (Rev.3:8) May we see the open door that Jesus set before us in his resurrection from the dead. We proclaim with the Apostle Peter, "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whose great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you" (1 Peter 3:3.4 NRSV).

May we live into hope, hope that says if we live with Christ, and for Christ, as individuals and as a church, we will join Christ in sharing the hope of the gospel with the world around us. Praise be to you Lord Jesus Christ, the hope of the world. And the doors of our church will be set open, receiving the broken of the world, and sending us out to share the light of Christ. From where? A door set open.

Greetings,

Last summer youth from Ohio, Indiana and Michigan joined together in service. One of the service opportunities was the senior ministry. Our youth cleaned, painted, manicured lawns and even built a porch.

On March 21, 2011, one of the seniors, Ms. Orlean Warren, passed away. Everyday we proclaimed "God is Good, All the Time" and truly He is! Not only has Ms. Warren transitioned on to be with her heavenly Father, our Lord and Savior and is in no more pain, we were chosen by God, given the opportunity to serve one of His own!

Please thank your youth for me for their service and love shown to Ms. Warren. (Ms Warren and the youth who served her are in the photo at the right.)

God is Good!
Charon A. Barconey
Youth Mission Coordinator



Clergy Ordination Anniversaries

April

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Hayes, Frances | 20 |
| Kaibel, Kenneth | 30 |
| Olson, Philip | 35 |
| Shih, Sheng-To | 25 |

May

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Francis, Raphael B. | 35 |
| Heinrichs, Thomson | 50 |
| Jansen, Robert | 50 |
| Kerr, Deborah | 20 |
| Krug, Ernest | 40 |
| Larson, Robert F. | 55 |
| Peterson, Leroy J. | 60 |
| Pritchard, Norman | 40 |
| Scribner, Loren | 45 |
| Simons, Scott W. | 30 |

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