

## Brandywine On The Move, 5/21/23

Twice a year, in May and November, we have Congregational Sundays for three reasons: #1 Share our Vision- Where are we headed and what is this church about? #2 State of the Church- take a moment to hear from our ministries, Deacon Board, Finance or other committees, celebrate what God is doing, #3 Present and Vote on our church leadership (Nov), and our Budget (May). So today that's what we are going to do. I'm going to share our Vision and along the way you are going to hear from some of our leadership team to learn how we are living out our vision and get some updates from specific ministry areas. And then after the second service, we want to ask all of you, members and attendees, to stay for a brief meeting to vote on our budget.

Let me remind you of our vision and if you know it say it with me- **To introduce people to Jesus Christ and help them follow Him.** Right from the Great Commission **Matthew 28: <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.<sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,**

**<sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."** In order to "Go" in following the great commission we must be a church **On The Move**. Intentional not passive, on our toes not our heels, taking risks in the power and leading of the Holy Spirit like the early church, not circling the wagons with the conventional wisdom of man...we paid our debt, let's just sit and soak. Rejecting what is easy and comfortable, pursuing what is difficult but essential if we are going to carry out the reason we are here in the Brandywine Valley. You may recall in our last congregational Sunday in November I laid out for you our three On the Move Initiatives over the next few years. **Building Our Faith, Reaching Our Community, Shaping our Future.**

**Initiative #1 Building Our Faith. We are committed to building resilient disciples of Jesus in an increasingly post-Christianized culture.**

When you hear the phrase building resilient disciples, what comes to mind? For me it is one of my fighter verses. **Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.**

**<sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

Paul was writing this letter to a fledgling group of Jesus Followers within a massive pagan, pre-Christian city of Rome...Christianity was a tiny, powerless minority in the culture. And in verse 2 he uses a powerful image: don't be conformed to the pattern of this world. Playdoh- squeeze into molds. The Roman world system (vision, values, beliefs, behaviors, identity) was trying to

squeeze them into their mold just like everyone else. In order to resist the powerful world system, they needed to be transformed by the renewing of their minds (Jesus' vision, values, beliefs, behaviors and identity). This is Resilient Discipleship to Jesus. Conform is pressure from the outside in. Transform is change from the inside out...something only Jesus Christ can do. What the church in pre-Christian Rome needed to resist being squeezed into the world's mold is the same as the church in an increasingly post-Christianized America needs. Our modern secular American culture is making disciples. We need to build Resilient Disciples of Jesus: training, gospel counter-formation that transforms from the inside out. In November, I told you that you can expect us to develop a pathway of what resilient discipleship to Jesus will look like. I'd like to share with you high level pathway. I believe Jesus gave us a paradigm to resilient discipleship in **John 14:6 I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

**Following Jesus as the Way, #1 Rhythms:** spiritual practices such as prayer & solitude, Scripture reading, fasting, rest. **#2 Calling:** learning to serve others, being equipped to share the gospel and living on mission to make disciples. **#3 Grit:** rejecting comfort and embracing suffering, **#4 Community:** learning to care for one another and live in authentic relationships as members of the body of Christ for our mutual spiritual progress.

### **Following Jesus as the Truth**

Becoming a resilient disciple means that we look to Jesus to define the ultimate reality of God, ourselves, our world and salvation. Resilient disciples therefore must have a strong grasp of **#5 Gospel:** the faith and practice of the gospel in everyday life, **#6 Bible:** reading, understanding and applying the Scriptures, **#7 Essentials:** clarity and conviction on the core beliefs of God, sin, salvation, the church and the afterlife and **#8 Worldview:** discerning truth in the midst of competing narratives in our world.

### **Following Jesus as the Life**

Resilient disciples will see Jesus as the only one who gives true life that is worth living. This life comes from abiding in a sustaining, intimate relationship with him. Jesus has given his followers the Holy Spirit to experience the presence and power of Jesus in their lives. Resilient disciples find life in Jesus through **#9 Humility:** seeing ourselves accurately before God and others, practicing a life of repentance and living transparently, **#10 Surrender:** resisting temptation, identifying idols of the heart and following Jesus as Lord. **#11 Restoration:** dealing with your past, building your identity on Christ and living out the gospel in relationships. **#12 Fruitfulness:** learning to walk by the Spirit and bear fruit, especially love. Our goal over the next several years is to provide a pathway for each of us to be trained as an apprentice of Jesus, grow in each of these themes and disciple others to become more like Jesus.

I'd like to invite our **Director of Childrens Ministry, Kristi Pullig** to come share how our Childrens Ministry is building resilient disciples of the next generation and some updates from this vital ministry.

**Initiative #2 Reaching our community.**

**We are committed to mobilizing our church to demonstrate and declare the gospel of Jesus.**

We have begun multi-year, multi-pronged initiative to stir our sense of urgency, excitement and empowerment to reach our community. Equipping you with tools to share your faith, we launched Alpha- currently going strong with about 30 people. And of course, we just wrapped up **Go Week**. Give a short report.

- Over 200 people served in a Go Week Project!
- Many went to personally to their neighbors in creative ways, demonstrating the Gospel in tangible acts of love
- A week-long construction project successfully enlarged the Sunday Breakfast Mission Vintage Thrift Store, expanding its impact in the community. Eight Meal Shifts were covered at the Sunday Breakfast Mission, as we had a team at the mission every day of the week! A men's team and a women's team led the men's & women's chapels.
- Six teams served at Urban Promise and after school camps throughout the week
- A team organized and prepared furniture for foster well
- A team did yard work at the Ronald McDonald House
- Three teams picked up trash and weeded in city parks
- A team prepared decorations for summer VBS
- A team sorted clothes at Friendship House
- A group sewed quilts that will be sent around the world
- One small group prepared two chapel services for Maris Grove Residents; Members from our choir and residents from Maris Grove that attend Brandywine Valley Church sang hymns with people who cannot come to church.
- A small group rebuilt a deck for a family in need
- A group put on a lemonade stand, involving the children in the ministry - and proceeds will help a family with a medical need
- A group selected 5 foster families, and served a meal to each family throughout the course of the week, involving the teenagers in the food prep and delivery
- A group cleaned a home of a disabled caregiver within the city limits of Wilmington
- Twelve scouts, parents and leaders tackled a list of outdoor chores for a local church and dug a drainage ditch, installed new signage, painted outdoor railings, repaired screens, repositioned concrete parking stops and pulled weeds.
- One family put out a simple Facebook post that read: "Anyone know of a neighbor in need of some help around the yard/house? My family and I would like to volunteer our time to help someone as part of our Church's Go Week." Within a day the family had 3 requests come in from 3 different people for yard work and small repairs that were able to involve the entire family.

**Video**

Over the next three years you can expect us to focus on equipping and empowering you to be the church in our community, and we are going to be making a strategic shift to be even more focused where we live, work and play. We want to be more engaged in our local schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, teams, peer groups- where we have the greatest influence.

**Initiative #3 Shaping Our Future.**

**We are committed to repurposing our building to align with our current and future ministry priorities.**

If we are going to be effective at our mission, introducing people to Jesus- we need to see our building as an incredibly powerful tool and asset for ministry, evangelism and hospitality. While our sanctuary is only less than 15 years old, many of you know that large portions of our East and West wings have had few to no updates and renovations since they were built in the 70s. There are major sections of our building that are not being optimized for ministry, evangelism and hospitality. We want the people of our community, families, teens, your co-workers and neighbors as they are coming into our building to think, “You thought of me when you designed this space.”

**Pastor Todd shares an update.**

**Church on the Move- Building Our Faith, Reaching Our Community, Shaping Our Future.**

Engage with the vision.

**Transition to Financial Stewardship, Kevin Dombrowski.**