

Imagine!

Why do we need to Imagine our future
as a church?

(Talk Together / Take Notes)

Welcome & Overview

- Imagine
- Congregational Conversation around good questions
- Taking note of our imaginings
- 5D Process: Define, Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver
- Define: September 13 – October 4
- Discover: October 18 – November 15

Our Inspiration

- Jeremiah 29 Prophet's Letter to the Exiles
- Jeremiah 29.11
- *“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”*

Prayer

- Lord, we pray your blessings on our gathering, our breaking bread together, and our conversations. May you inspire our hearts and minds, and may we imagine with you the future you have in store for us. In Christ's name and for his mission we pray. Amen.

Define

- Define ...

Who we are as children of God and disciples of Jesus
and what we are to do
as the mission of God *with* our community.

Discerning God's Plans

- Who is God? What is God like? What is God doing?
- Discerning God's character and actions.
- Genesis 1
- “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very **good**.” v 31
- “God **blessed** (everything).” v 22, 28, 2.3

Imagining Goodness & Blessing

- If God is about creating goodness & blessing ...
**Imagine how we are to help God extend
goodness & blessing.**

Discerning God's Character

- Exodus 34.6
- The LORD passed before Moses (on Mt Sinai) and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in **steadfast love** and **faithfulness** ...

Steadfast Love

- Heseḏ (Hebrew) = loving kindness
- Kind, loving, steadfast, faithful, good, blessed, merciful, gracious, favoring ...
- God wills and works for Shalom = goodness, blessing, peace, health, well-being, happiness, fulfillment, favor, grace ...

Who are we?

- We are created in God's *image*.
- We are co-creators with God.
- *We imagine and create* as part of God-in-us.
- We exist in covenant with God.

God's Mission

- Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you...I will bless you ... so that you will be a blessing ... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Blessing

- Hebrew = barak
- Barak = Shalom = peace, well-being, happiness
- Greek = Makarios = blessings, favor, good will, heart, gratitude
- ...
- Xapis (Gr) = charis = heart, gratitude, charity, love, grace
- Eu-charist = good > thanks > thanksgiving

Imagining the Depth of Blessing

- Grace, favor, well-being, kindness, justice, humility, mercy, peace, good will, good tidings, gospel, gratitude, thankfulness, gladness, happiness, cheer ...

Blessed to Be a Blessing

***Imagine ways we are to be a blessing
to all the people we encounter.***

God's Mission Is Our Mission

- The church does not have a mission.
- Rather the mission of God has a church.
- ***Imagine the difference in our serving God's mission rather than serving the church.***

Other Key Scriptures

- Deuteronomy 6.4-5

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your might.”

- Leviticus 19.18

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

What does the Lord require?

- Micah 6.8

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

- Isaiah 49.6 Not just for Israel:

“I will give you as a light to nations (ethnos), that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

Jesus: Embodiment of God's Mission

- Mary: from peasant girl to Mother of God
- Angel to the Shepherds: “I bring you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah.”
- Heavenly host saying: Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.” (Luke)

Declaring the Gospel *Beforehand*

- ⁶ Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” ⁷ so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. ⁸ And the scripture, foreseeing that God would reckon as righteous the gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the gentiles shall be blessed in you.” ⁹ For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed.

Bringing Good News, Blessings, Favor

- ***Imagine the ways we are to be “gospel” with everyone we encounter.***

Relationships

Where it all happens: goodness, blessings,
justice, kindness, healing, covenant,
reconciliation, gospel, salvation, church ...

Tie a Bow on It

- Wrapping Up
- Notes, notes, notes
- Invite others
- Pray for this process
- Imagine, imagine, imagine!
- Next Week: ***Imagine ways hospitality is blessing.***

Our Priestly Benediction

Numbers 6.24-26

- The Lord bless you and keep you.
- The Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you.
- The Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace.