

Two weeks ago, Pat introduced our plan for the season of Easter. The ministry team planned, that for the seven (7) weeks of Easter, we would look back at the Visioning Plan and the vitalities that we developed last year, modifying anything that has changed.

Most of the time we use the common lectionary for our scripture references, but for these 7 weeks we have chosen scriptures that pertain to the vitalities that we have discerned. The 7 weeks will culminate on June 5 as we celebrate communion on Pentecost Sunday with Dale Woods as our guest preacher.

Last week Laurie tackled the first vitality, relational and as I watched it in Scotland, she did an excellent job, in spite of the technical and marathon difficulties. As I watched, I think I heard her say, Cal is going to do an excellent job next week – organizational vitalities, not quite as exciting as relational vitalities, I'm thinking. I must have stepped out of a meeting when topics were being allotted and this one was assigned to me.

Organizational Vitalities, now I have read the Visioning Document, just like all of you. But as I began to think about this week's sermon, those two words struck me, what exactly do the words Organizational Vitality mean?

According to google:

organizational is an adjective meaning

1. relating to an organization or the way it is set up. "organizational heads"
2. relating to the action of organizing something. "she has great organizational skills"

vitalities is a noun

1. physical or mental [vigour](#), energy, etc
2. the power or ability to [continue](#) in [existence](#), [live](#), or grow *the vitality of a movement*

As we reflect the meanings of those two words and what the three churches have been doing for the past three years, I think that we are really wanting to grow and continue as we organize into **one church with three doors**.

Something to think about on this Mother's Day, as you recall the explanation I just gave for organizational – who do you think of when you think of a category of people who are organized. Now I know that when we ask questions like this, we sometimes paint people with a brush that doesn't apply to 100 % of all the category, but I'm thinking that mothers are generally very organized, they have to be, to look after us folks when we were little munchkins, running around causing havoc in the house.

You all know that I was married to Robin, she was an only child and really loved babies and children. I really enjoyed spending time volunteering at the adventure camps at the local community centre at Christmas and Easter. Before we were married, we had discussed how big our family should be, Robin wanted more than one and I thought five (5) was a good number. After our fourth one, we stopped. We only had four hands and it would be difficult to hold a fifth little person's hand, trying to keep the rest of the body out of any mischief they might get into as we walked through a mall or store.

From the Exodus reading this morning, we are reminded that Moses has led the people out of Egypt, with God's help and guidance. He has begun to arbitrate conflicts between the people. He is sitting in judgment and his father-in-law can see a problem arising. Moses **cannot do it all**, he needs help. The Hebrew people need help in settling their differences and Moses cannot solve every little squabble between the people. Jethro suggests appointing and training others to settle the simple problems. That would leave Moses to deal with the major disagreements.

Moses had led the people of God's household out of Egypt with God's help and guidance. He **couldn't do it** all by himself before, he **couldn't do it all** now, he needed help and Jethro suggested a solution.

Now let's recall something from last week, when Laurie asked about groups, TEAMS within our church. Let's name them: Personnel Team, Property Team, Visioning Team, Transition Team, Worship, Finance, Joint Session, Choir, DGH, Men's Breakfast, Bible Study, Coffee and Conversations, etc. At the beginning, I think Laurie and I participated on many of these teams/committees. The Joint Session decided that we **couldn't do it all**. The Joint Session suggested that we not be on all of them but that we concentrate on worship and the pastoral care of the people, our congregation, our family, our household. We **couldn't do it all**, just like the Session **can't do it all**. We are a household, a community of faith that worships together, that plays together, that works together.

We are in a time of transition, a liminal time, when we are not three (3) individual churches or **one church with three doors**. Some of the groups have transitioned together, some are on the way. Let's take as an example the sessions. Each church had a session comprised of 8 to 12 people. At the beginning of our discussions, the individual sessions met, a joint session was created and many of the elders were on many of the teams/committees that we have just reviewed. Trying to arrange meeting times has been difficult, organizing a schedule that works best has been problematic. The members of the session **can't do it all**. The pastors do not want the session members to get burnt out doing more and more, just like the Joint Session didn't want to burn out the pastors.

Let's return to the New Testament reading, we heard today. The followers of 'the Way' included Jews and Gentiles. Now some of the Gentiles, were a little upset that the twelve (12) disciples were not caring for their people; they felt their fellow Gentiles were being neglected by the apostles. The apostles "**couldn't do it all**". The 12 prayed about this concern and as a result, seven (7) were appointed to look after the needs of the widows. Stephen was one of the appointed 7 and I believe that this is where the *Stephen Ministries* got its name.

Now, I know that not everyone feels comfortable standing up in front of a group of people to teach or preach to them. Not everyone has been given the gift of a voice to sing, take me for instance. But we all have some gifts that we can put to use that we are able to share with our households, our families. Sometimes it takes time to recognize what our gifts are, sometimes we have to have them pointed out to us; but whatever we do, we can share our gifts.

Think back to that family I began describing at the start of today's sermon. In today's world, we are a little concerned about the rising cost of food, gas, sunscreen (more on that during announcements); just about everything. The same was happening as my children began to enter their teenage years. Their appetites were growing and mortgage interest rates began to climb in the early 1980's, 15-16%. That's when the gifts that Robin and I had been given were used to their fullest. Robin began a home day care and I began to teach night school. We began to use our gifts to share with our family, our household.

Together with our pastors and elders, we focus on organizational vitality and leadership that seek to be collaborative, spirit led, patient, and trustworthy. We live out our values in our collaborative discernment that embodies our desire to follow the spirit and discern the ways God is leading our community – a path forward requiring faith and hopefulness.

Laurie and I can't do it alone.

Moses couldn't do it alone.

The Joint Session can't do it alone.

The disciples couldn't do it alone.

But **WE**, the people here in the sanctuary, those of you worshipping on ZOOM, we can git'er done, when we all work together.

We need everyone to do what they can do, no matter what your gift is, large or small, everyone has gifts that can be shared to reduce the work load on everyone. As a church, we want to set up a well-organized church, with three doors, that lives and grows as Christ's light in south Burnaby and New Westminster.