

Sunday October 16th, 2016--- 22nd after Pentecost

Mission and Meaning; Vision and Dreaming

Prayer: Loving God, we seek your guidance to understand the difference between mission and vision. You have called us to be together as a faith community. Now we want to understand what you are calling us to do in this time and place. What is our purpose here as we seek to serve you? Open our minds and hearts to your inspiration for us today. As followers of Christ we pray. Amen.

This is the day we are talking about Mission and Vision. What's the difference, anyway?

When the Transition Team was planning today, we struggled to make a clear distinction between vision and mission. Marie was clear

Mission is action, a verb, something you can do now, in the present. Action purpose.

Vision is more like a dream, a direction for the future. An objective, something you hope to achieve in the future. Clear vision releases imagination, creativity and motivation for mission.

I suddenly had a clear vision!

“ As a Canadian Girl in Training it is my purpose to:

Cherish health; Seek truth; Know God and Serve others.

What about cubs or scout purpose? 4H club?

We know what a purpose is!.... but when it gets into the jargon of today's business world....

“Mission and Vision”

Many companies and organizations put a great deal of time and effort into designing their Mission and Vision Statement. Something short, memorable, distinct.....

Nokia's statement “connecting people”

Maybe it is a good advertising message like Starbucks':

“to inspire and nurture the human spirit; one person; one cup; one neighbourhood, at a time.”

Interesting use of key words.

I am hoping you will think about a church Mission statement.

The one I remember is from St. George's “A church with a heart, in the heart of the city.”

Actually it is not their Mission Statement but a phrase a visiting minister used to describe the congregation and it fits.

Their Mission is “To follow Jesus Christ and his example of love, forgiveness and faithfulness to God.”

Now this does sound like a church Mission statement, using God language.

The Mission Statement is the reason why the organization exists, including the services it offers its users. The Mission is more specific, the next action in the planning process, it expresses the **“what and how”** of your effort. The Mission statement should inspire action, it should be concise, outcome oriented and inclusive. A good Mission statement keeps us thinking about who **we are, why we are here and where we are going!**

“A congregation Mission statement is the first glimpse people may have into the soul of the organization. It lets them know what to expect. It is also a powerful tool for strategic planning and implementation. The mission statement helps the congregation to know what to say yes to and what to say no to in all of its opportunities for mission and service.

Mission is a proactive engagement with the world God loves. *Therefore, the key words you choose to build your mission statement - must be action words.* The Mission statement and the key words that summarize it create a deep sense of shared purpose and direction.”

(Power Surge p. 128)

In Paul’s letter to Timothy, the words and directions are clear like a Mission statement, with this preamble *“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus: proclaim the message; be persistent; convince; rebuke; and encourage with the utmost patience in teaching,”*

Lots of verbs and action words, but a little long to memorize.

Then Paul warns Timothy that: *“ some people will wander away from this sound doctrine... with itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths.”*

You have had that happen, even in the early church new followers wandered away. This happens We cannot keep everyone content or meet everyone’s desires. It takes compromise and patience

Paul continues: “ *As for you Timothy, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of the evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.*” (Sober meaning serious and thoughtful)

Carry out your ministry fully! This is a big responsibility! What action does that require from this faith community?

Have you been at strategic planning meetings where the Vision drives the mission.?

I read several references about Vision first then mission.

Habitat for Humanity is an example of Vision and named values to clarify the mission.

HH vision statement: “A world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live.”

HH mission comes from the vision: Based on Christian principles , we welcome all people without discrimination to join us in building simple, decent and adequate homes in partnership with low income families.

When church folk are asked what they hope for the church the first answer is children and Sunday School, the way it was when I grew up. Really, what is the same as when we were growing up. So many changes in a life time! Often we dream of the good old days. When I was in CGIT there were 100 young teenagers meeting every Monday night at Brechin United!! Can you imagine all the squealing and giggling? We know we can't go back to that time, memories are great though.

I hope you can see how vision looks to the future. It is a source of inspiration and motivation.

When we talk about Vision later today, we want some great ideas about where you want to be in the future. Do you have vivid picture of your dream for this congregation?

Is it realistic and achievable? There are new dreams and visions **hope abounds**. We do need to be persistent like the widow and the judge, with hope, persistence and patience visions can become realities. We are not alone, we are here as a community of faith to do God's work.

Come and join the conversation after church.

Mission let's find our purpose and meaning for ministry now!

Vision, let your imagination take flight and share your dreams. .

Let's have some fun together.