

## "Adaptive Leadership"

I am grateful for the way that our congregation continues to respond to the emerging needs presented to them. This past Sunday, nearly \$5,000 was raised in worship as a Special Offering to meet the needs of people beginning the recovery process from Hurricane Harvey. Wow! What an amazing response! I'm so proud of you for stepping up! Unfortunately, as I write this article, it seems that many more people are going to be affected by Hurricane Irma, which seems to be making its way toward Florida.

One of the big takeaways I had from the book "Canoeing the Mountains," which I read on my spiritual retreat in August, was that a major key to leadership in such chaotic times is **adaptability**. People who are adaptable, like Merriweather Lewis and William Clark on their long journey westward, will be able to lead well in times like these. Simply put, we have to be flexible and willing to adapt our methods in a changing and unfamiliar world.

Now, it doesn't mean that we have to change everything, though. Quite the opposite, actually. In times like these, we cling tightly to our core values, those things that define us, that make us who we are. And when we do that, we soon realize that it's ok to let go of everything else. In a time of chaotic weather, we see people finding a way to give of their time, their finances, their resources to help others. Why? Because it's a core value of ours as followers of Jesus (and as Americans, I hope), that we help our brothers and sisters in their time of need.

A big part of our congregation's story recently has been our willingness to adapt to changes in our staff leadership. I've been amazed at how God has led us to assemble a great team of paid staff who will help us move forward together. With that in mind, I need to share some more news with you.

Rhonda Johnston, who has served as our Director of Discipleship, has prayerfully decided to resign her part-time paid staff position with us effective Sept. 23. One of the messages I took away from her communication with me is she felt that her main focus needs to be on completing her seminary degree at Ashland Theological Seminary this school year, while also working part-time at the Counseling Center and tending to family needs. She simply needed to let go of something in her life to keep from becoming overwhelmed, and this made the most sense for her at this time.

However, please know that Rhonda is still planning to be involved in our congregation. She will teach the new Grief Share class on Thursday evenings, support the singles ministry, deliver communion to shut-ins, and preach on occasion. More importantly, she will continue her journey toward ordination in the UMC as a member of this local church. Please hold Rhonda in prayer as she makes this transition.

As of right now, there are no plans to post this position as a job opening. For now, I will take on the role of oversight for Adult Discipleship and Community Night activities. Be reassured that Community Nights programming will go forward as planned for 2017-18, with meals, activities for children and youth, and classes for Adults.

Grace and Peace,  
*Pastor David*

September 7, 2017