

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Matthew 28:16-17

In a recent sermon, we heard the good news that God can and does use us in spite of our doubts, and perhaps even because of our doubts. If the eleven disciples (the twelve minus Judas) could see the resurrected Christ and worship him, yet still have doubts, then why would we expect that we could do better? Our fear and our doubt should not keep us from worship. Our fear and doubt should not and need not keep us from being a part of God's gospel mission.

In fact, God uses us best in our doubt and in our weakness. Moses had a stutter, and no public speaking ability, yet God chose him to confront Pharaoh. It makes it all the more evident that God is at work, and it is not by our own endeavors.

This has been true, and will continue to be true, at Salem Church. There must have been great fear and doubt when the congregation decided to move from worship in German to worship in English. Moving the location of the church building, and building a new large sanctuary in the late 1920's, on the brink of the Great Depression, must have caused fear and doubt. The Sunday school addition that was completed in 1960 cost a huge sum for that time, and no doubt there was doubt about doing it, and how we would pay for it.

Today we are discussing the need for a part-time associate pastor. We are investigating the possibility and community need for a pre-school and/or day-care housed at Salem Church.

We are discerning the need for more than one Sunday morning worship service. We are grappling with the long-standing need for a building addition that would allow us the fellowship and classroom space that we require. And those are just some of the highlights!

If you don't have a little bit of fear and doubt, then you probably aren't paying attention! I know that I have moments of doubt, and you do too. What Matthew 28:17 tells us is that doubt is okay, just keep worshipping Jesus. Don't let the devil use your doubt as an excuse for inaction, or as an excuse to stop following and worshipping Jesus.

Rightly used, our fear and doubt become a motivating force that allows us to ask the tough questions first. Doubt can cause us to be better at planning ahead, better at identifying potential problems. Concerns and questions can cause us to better shape our mission, and will save us headaches down the road.

I encourage each and every one of you to be a part of the mission conversations that we are having. Speak to your council members and to me. Come to a council meeting; just ask Keith when to come. And please plan to attend one of the building addition planning meetings that will soon be coming up. Preliminary drawings have been completed and your ideas, input, and even doubts are needed.

Jesus concludes in Matthew 28 with these words, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Peace,

Pastor Chris