

## Gods' Hands in Mission

As first month of the year January represents new beginnings. LCOS and I have bonded the last few months and it's time to reach a new level of partnership in mission. The Book of Nehemiah in the Old Testament comes to mind. I encourage you to read this fascinating story that is considered a classic on godly leadership. God gives Nehemiah a vision to rebuild the broken walls of Jerusalem. The challenges are many and the odds are bad, yet starting with prayer and planning carefully, Nehemiah pushes ahead where most fear to go. In record time the walls are built. In addition, restoration of the temple is achieved. The Israelites experience a revival of sincere worship and witness in the world. All the usual problems that prevent progress are confronted and conquered. It's God touching lives and people acting as the Lords' hands in the world.

We are Gods' hands in the greater San Bernardino community. It's our privilege to return thanks for our freedom from sin and death by sharing with others Christ's love in active, tangible ways. As our LCOS mission statement says so well, "To live in faith, share the Gospel, and bring God's healing and hope to all people."

Already LCOS members are working to help our congregation reach the next level of this mission. Marilyn Kraft leads a strategic plans committee that is crafting a 3-5 year plan to help guide us in this adventure. Be prepared to hear more about their efforts through a variety of ways. Members will be approached for input and insights on critical questions similar to the process used for the ministry profile that brought me here as your new pastor. A community canvas is scheduled also. Continually praying and armed with this data, a final product for congregational approval is hoped for by Easter.

Supporting this effort is our hard working Church Council under the capable leadership of Joanne Burling. These leaders are boldly breaking the mantra, "but we have always done it this way" to discover a better way to be the church. Their efforts coupled with the strategic committee is a dynamo of divine direction. Please keep them in your prayers.

In some ways this is a Nehemiah challenge, but we are blessed by the same God who gave a resounding victory to Israel and promises to be with us as well. Prayer and God's word are key means in this endeavor. Our prayer closet remains open in classroom #2. Our small groups meeting for Bible Study and our Sunday services around Word and Sacrament continue to enable us.

Mark your calendars. 27 January is our annual congregational meeting. This is an exciting time for us to be God's people poised to launch a new year as Gods' hands in mission to a community in need of hope. What a great time and place to be Christ's Church!

Pastor Scottie