

Copyright October 26 & 27, 2019. All rights reserved. Geist Christian Church

Title: We Believe... In the Ministry of All People

Preaching: Danny Gulden, Lead Pastor, Promise Road Campus

Text: [1 Peter 2:4-10](#)

E-mail: [Danny Gulden](#)



We are in the second week of a sermon series entitled "We Believe... looking at the things that make Geist Christian Church and the larger movement of which we are a part, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) different. What is unique about us that help us live out our mission and vision, what we believe enables us to be faithful to

the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Last week we look at how we believe in the Table, Reconciliation, and Unity and today we are looking at how We Believe... In the Ministry of All People

Gayla and Scott Congdon were college students in Southern California in the late 1970s when they began volunteering with a group on campus to take clothes to orphanages across the Mexico border. They did this a couple of times, taking the clothes gathered at clothing drives and each time they did, they noticed that the orphanage seemed more and more crowded. They looked into the faces of these children and it broke their hearts. So, they started asking questions. They asked why more and more kids were in these orphanages. They answered they got was this: In Mexico at that time, a family had to have their own house- if they didn't have a house, then their children became a ward of the government- they were cracking down on this and that is why the population in the orphanages were growing. Now, the Congdon's at this point had just finished college, just gotten married, trying to figure out what to do with their life, but something about what was happening right across the border was nagging at them. They could not shake it. Clothing drives did not feel like enough.

They did some more research and determined if housing was the issue, if families could stay together if they had a house, then maybe that was the solution. So, they got some friends together, raised some money, worked with a local pastor to find a family who needed a home and went down and built a house, a home for the family, an 11 x 22 house that allowed a family to be a family. These young adults didn't stop there. They thought that this would be great for church groups to come and do. AMOR Ministries was started and incorporated in 1980 and to date, they have built in the border

communities of Tijuana and Tecate Mexico nearly 20,000 homes and have hosted nearly 375,000 short term missionaries. Our high school youth will be going to build a house next summer for a family.

You have a ministry in this world. We believe this to be true. In fact, the large majority of the ministry and good that is done in that world are done by people who are not professional clergy.

I love what Fredrick Buechner says, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

Each and every one of us has that place, the place where your deep gladness and joy in life meet up with a part of the world's deep hunger.

Maybe more than ever we are concerned with carving out a meaningful identity. If I had to guess, for many, one of the reasons we come to church is because we want to discover who God desires for us to be.

The early followers of Jesus became aware that what Jesus was asking them to do was live differently in this world. Their lives and the life of their community should be different from what marked other communities of people. They struggle with the idea that Christian identity is now their identity.

1 Peter is what we call a general epistle, one that we are not certain who wrote it or who it was written to, but we believe it was written to a community of Christians in Asia Minor who was part of the rapid growth of early Christianity.

In some ways, they are in transition as a people because they are leaving behind who they used to be and moving into who they are becoming.

"Once you weren't a people, but now you are God's people. Once you hadn't received mercy, but now you have received mercy." (1 Peter 2:10)

This piece of scripture is on one level and pep talk and on another a reminder of just who each of us in Jesus Christ. The writer uses the common biblical image of stones, these as living stones that have come to life, have come to a new life in Christ, so that they are now building blocks

"Now you are coming to him as to a living stone. Even though this stone was rejected by humans, from God's perspective it is chosen, valuable. You yourselves are being built like living stones into a spiritual temple. You are being made into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:4-5)

You are being made into a holy priesthood... now I don't know about you, but I don't know if I want much to do with being a part of a holy priesthood. A holy priesthood being built like living stones into a spiritual temple. That sounds like a lot.

From our early days, as a frontier movement to now, we have believed in what 1 Peter refers to as the priesthood of all believers, we believe that God has given unique and special gifts to each and every one of us. God has given unique and special gifts to all people.

Alexander Campbell, one of our founders, went so far as to say that trained and ordained clergy are the third-class citizens of the church. It's no wonder that most clergy like one of our other founders, Barton Stone, better.

In the Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) By baptism, all Christians are inducted into the corporate ministry of God's people, sharing in it to fulfill their own calling as servants of Christ.

Have you read the Steven Covey book, the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People? In the book, he talks about keeping the main thing the main thing. We are not often very good in the church at keeping the main thing the main thing.

Perhaps the main thing of what we do in this place is that together we discover what each of our callings are as servants of Christ. Discovering our callings so that together we can build the kingdom of God in the here and now. That's keeping the main thing the main thing.

Each of us, in some way, shape, or form is called to be a minister of the Gospel. You have a calling: you have a ministry. Each and every one of us had a ministry.

Some may think that as a pastor I have this all figured out. And that's why a congregation gathers each week to watch the professionals do ministry. That's not true, church is not a spectator sport. It's not supposed to be primarily done by the professional clergy. In some respects. I am no more qualified to do this than you are. In our church, there are no acts of worship that I do, that you cannot do. In fact, if I wasn't doing this, I would most likely run the media. If you are the sound person or the media person, you have the most power in the whole room.

A few weeks ago, I was talking to a neighbor and he was trying to figure out what I do. He said, "You run the church and do all the work." No, I told him. My main role is to equip- as Paul wrote to the church His purpose was to

equip God's people for the work of serving and building up the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12) To take it one step further, we each, in many ways, equip others to do ministry.

Whenever I think about the practice of the priesthood of all believers, I can't help but think about our family's friend Jim. Jim had an extremely successful career in Sales and Sales Leadership, for years had the type of title that anyone would be proud to share with those who asked. During his working years and on into retirement, when people asked him what he did he always, always told them- "I'm the church chef, I cook for people and I feed people." We all know people like that. Many of us are people like that.

Marshall Rosenberg writes about his son Brett, who when it snowed, would run down the street to a neighbor's home. This neighbor had trouble walking and getting around. She could drive, but when it snowed and her driveway was full of snow, she could not get around. So Brett would go and shovel her driveway, which would take over an hour to do. He would never ask her for any money or any type of compensation. But Marshall Rosenberg could never get Brett to clear even a little bit of snow from their driveway at home. It bothered him until he found himself thinking about this one day. The house was somewhat of a domination system, where he was the father commanding his son to do something. But when Brett went to shovel the neighbor's drive he saw a need and he had the gifts and the calling to meet that need. He did from a place that made him feel alive and made life more wonderful for someone else.

We Believe in the Ministry of All People. We believe that God has given special and unique gifts to each and every person. We believe we are like living stones, equipped by God with all we need to proclaim mighty acts of the ones who have called us and saved us. Our identity in Christ is our real and true identity.

So, I want to invite you to do something today and over the next few weeks. I want you to take the next step in following Christ, I want to offer you the chance to determine what your ministry is or is becoming or will be. I want you to think about who you are becoming and how you can use your gifts in order to serve others.

How can you use your gifts in order to build the kingdom of God here at Promise Road?

I want to invite you to make this prayer a part of your prayer life over the next few weeks

God, what do you want to do through me? God, where are you calling me to serve?

I promise you that you have been called to serve. I promise you that you have been given not only the gifts but also the calling and the identity.

You have a ministry. For you are God's people.