

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"Man Plans. God Laughs" 5/24/23

*The mind of man plans his way,
But the Lord directs his steps. (Proverbs 16:9)*

I'm a list maker. I know, you'd never have guessed. I have a shopping list, a to-do lists, a to call list, and a what to write about list. I need to know what and when I'm doing everything. I have a list for today, for the week, and for the month. It's all laid out, but it's just a suggestion. Change is just a heartbeat away. I've talked about this before, but I'm still surprised when things don't go as I've planned.

Joseph Campbell tells us, "Change is a constant in life, and embracing it is key to living a fulfilling and meaningful existence." We need to be able to adapt and to be flexible, because change is bearing down on us.

We fear the unknown, it deviates from our list. It's unexpected and we're not prepared, we don't feel like we can handle something new. Especially today. Today I'm already worn out, frustrated about the lack of hours I have to complete my to-do list – and now this! Now, my car won't start. Now, I've lost my job. Now, my income is lower than expenses. Now, I'm alone. Now, I've received a diagnosis I, well, I can't live with. Now, half the members aren't attending church. Now, an unexpected visitor. Now, the road is closed because of a freak snowstorm. Now, my herd has a high number of winter-kill. Now, the water isn't running because of a drought. Now, you want it - when? These interruptions go on and on.

Life happens. Change happens. But instead of facing it with fear, which is probably our first reaction, train yourself to see the unexpected as an opportunity; an opportunity for growth, for self-improvement, for a stronger faith. Remember God is with you. God strengthens us to face the unknown, to walk in the dark. Fear can freeze us. Instead, we need to look at the situation and find a different way to deal with it, a new way to accomplish the goal. We need to make a new list – the old ones don't include change.

God knows His plans for us. God's list is scripture. Our plans can and will change. We need to look at change and see it in a new light, to be positive and give it our all. We need to sing and dance in the rain. God's got this, even if we're a little off our game.

Being in scripture helps us know we can lean on God. We are strengthened by His Spirit. Christ has gone before us, and we can adjust our sails and go with the new direction of the wind. It may be a wonderful adventure, we may meet new people, prove we are stronger than we thought, find an opportunity to witness to the love of God. We may learn to let go of things which hold us back. We may find a new joy.

Joseph Campbell presents this question, "Are you going to be able to say a hearty 'yes' to your adventure?" Hang on - and enjoy the ride.

Please pray with me.

God of the journey, it is difficult to thank You when the journey doesn't go the way we intended, when there are unexpected detours and dead ends. But we know You are with us. Help us to lean into You when we face changes and use the unexpected to make us into the people You created us to be.

Amen.