

Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church (USA)



Changing Lives and
Growing In God's Love

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Rev. Dr. Daris S. Bultena, Pastor
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Changing Standards

Dear Readers,

Okay, maybe it is my age. I am, after all, now 45 years old. Ancient for some, and a mere youth for others. I myself cannot quite decide which it is—some days it is both. I bring up the age issue because I'm wondering if it has to do with maturity. Somehow age is in there somewhere when it comes to the issue of maturity.

We held our Vacation Bible School this past weekend. Last year we shifted to an intensive weekend experience rather than a weeklong event. It ends up being the same amount of contact hours, but in a shorter span of days. We found it worked well last year and committed to doing it again this year. Well and good.



But... (there's always a "but")...we had less kids this year. There are a host of theories about why we had fewer children in attendance. Some think it has something to do with when school ended, others posit a theory about weather, and still others the general cultural shift away from old concepts like Vacation Bible School.

But (there it is again), I have always liked Vacation Bible School. As a youngster it was the highlight of my summer. I remember the days in my early ministry when we had classrooms of children all learning by grade level appropriate materials. It was the time when teaching was done with children listening and calm...



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Those days are gone. Children are active. The program is more active. Some of us have had to change our standards. Some us older ones—yes, I'm talking personally now—we have to bend and maybe even fine-tune our thinking.

What if it is not about breaking the 100 kid benchmark? What if it is not about how many classrooms you have? What if it isn't about perfect classrooms, decorations, teaching materials and incredible skits, projects, crafts, and songs? What if those are not the standards?

Okay, then what do you have? Well, I can tell you as one now on the other side of Vacation Bible School 2010 that we had children and adults engaged with telling the story of this incredible God. We had children and adults connecting in ways that drew them close and will be lasting. We had adults and children singing, and dancing, and getting tired and eating popsicles—all of them together and the Holy Spirit alive and vivid.

Perhaps this old man of 45 needs to change his standards and see that while the old days are not coming back these days are sheer gift of an amazing giving God! That is my prayer for your life as you read this—that whatever standard you are using to evaluate your own success with change in such a way that it is evaluated based on seeing life as true "gift of an amazing giving God!"

Blessings,
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