

Let's Go Deeper..... Wednesday, November 18

Last Sunday we explored The healing of Bartimaeus in **Mark 10:46-52**.
Jesus asked Bartimaeus, **“What do you want me to do for you?”**
“My teacher,” Bartimaeus responded, **“let me see again.”**

Speaking of asking the Lord for sight, here is a prayer from John Phillip Newell -
former rector of the Iona Abbey:

*Clear our heart, O God, that we may see You.
Clear our heart, O God, that we may truly see ourselves.
Clear our heart, O God, that we may know the sacredness of this moment
And in every moment Seek You, Serve You, Strengthen You,
As the Living Presence in every presence.
Clear our heart, O God, that we may see.*

“Let me see.” I've been prayerfully seeking a vision myself. Burton Joyner helped me along a few weeks ago when he said he heard a phrase at a HUB Class that stuck with him: “Gardeners don't grow plants. They grow soil.” It's true. If you get the soil right, the plants will flourish. If the soil is poor, the plants will struggle. Same with the ministries of a congregation. Get the church's culture right and all else will follow.



Enjoy David Mallett's *Garden Song*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mOLewjkO4s>

I've discerned several “soils” I sense we need to grow at Central. If we can cultivate them, fruitfulness will follow:

1. The soil of Communication. This includes a strategy and tools for the more effective sharing of Central's news, but also the encouragement and opportunity for us to become more comfortable and confident in sharing how the good news of Jesus Christ is forming our lives.

2. The soil of Proactivity. Planning ahead. Providing opportunities and invitations for dreaming and imagining. Proactive as opposed to reactive, last

minute, seat of the pants. Proactivity is ultimately grounded in the prayer of discernment.

3. The soil of Excellence Phil. 4:8. Not excellence as in elitist. Excellence as in everything we do-- worship, classes, anthems, publications—seen as offerings to God. Therefore, we give our best. To do so, however, requires advance planning. See #2 above.

4. The soil of Participation Ephesians 4:11, 12. The more people involved in the ministries of the church in ways that invite and involve their gifts, the better. Equip everyone from elders and worship leaders to outreach volunteers and board members to feel confident, competent, and appreciated in what they do.

5. The soil of You in Youth. Develop a cadre of adults of all ages who will make an investment in the lives of our church's children and youth. "It takes a village to raise a child," not just a called and gifted Youth Minister.

6. The soil of Generosity. We live in a culture of scarcity, the belief we don't have enough of anything. The result is living life and being church in a fetal position of clutching, anxiety, and fear. In fact, we live in a world of abundance. If we would just open our hearts and hands, loaves abound.

7. The soil of Hospitality. Embodying our Welcome Statement in flesh-and-blood. And not just welcoming those who come to us, but extending invitations to "Come, see" to people who haven't stepped foot yet in Central. Being the hands, feet, and welcoming voices of Jesus.

Who might you invite to Central in the weeks ahead?

Let's Get Ready for This Sunday...

We'll grow the soil of Generosity as we explore The Great Commandment in **Mark 12:28-34**. In gratitude to God from whom all blessings flow, we'll each be invited to make a pledge to support Central's ministries in 2016. A church-wide catered meal will follow worship at Noon.

In Christ,

Pastor David