

Seabold UMC

In Faith and Community, We Love, Serve and Grow

February 2017



Dear all,

This month, I've been doing a lot of research on church planting. Many of you know that I am being trained as a church planter. This is someone who is in charge of "planting" new churches—of starting them up and getting them running. It is a very challenging job for many reasons. However, it also holds one of the keys to the success of the church.



See, as we've talked about before, our society is undergoing massive cultural changes. From the beginning, the U.S. has baked into its very fabric Christianity. It was the norm and we structured our whole society around it. However, we are currently undergoing a paradigm shift—not just rearranging our house's furniture, but stripping the frame to the studs. As we well know, Christianity is losing a lot of our former social power. We've heard this lamented in all quarters of Christianity. The "creeping secularism" is taking over our country and destroying our values and religion, they say. I couldn't disagree more.

Rather, *the death of Christianity is the salvation of Christianity*. Christianity has never done well when it had tons of social power. As soon as Constantine legalized Christianity in the Roman Empire, people jumped on board because Christianity was the norm, and was how you got social status. We are just now starting to see that unravel. People are freaking out because they think that we're taking on water. They think that without the Church as we have come to know it, the world will become a decrepit, Godless society.

Really, *God doesn't need the Church*. God will do God's work in the world whether or not groups meet on Sunday mornings. And moreover, there will always be faithful people around willing to work with God. What we are witnessing in our lifetimes is the crumbling of a giant structure that we have built up. It served us well for quite a while, but it no longer serves its purpose.

We have one of the most exciting opportunities happening right in front of our eyes. We get to figure out what the future will look like. We get to exercise our creativity, imagination, ingenuity, and talents to sculpt something from scratch. Just because the Church is dying does not mean that God will not be at work in the world. What we get to do is figure out how we are going to join in. There is so much potential that we've been unable to tap into it in previous generations, when we thought the Church was doing just fine.

(Continued from page 1)



This is why church planters have some of the keys to this new thing. It is really hard to turn the Titanic when it's going full speed ahead. Our inertia and momentum will make it very hard to change the course of our institutions. For example, I am not particularly confident that, at the end of my career, the Methodist church will exist to be my employer. There's too much momentum to make the drastic changes that need to happen. Church planters, however, get to start completely from scratch. They don't have to change

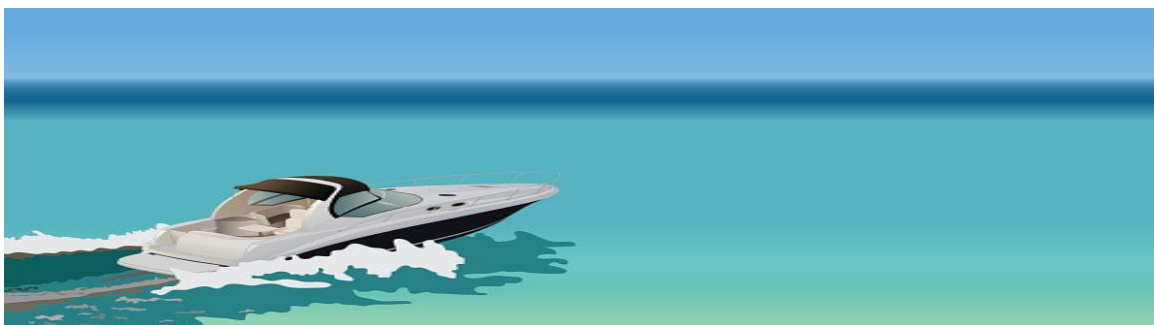
institutions. They get a nimble speedboat that can easily swerve out of the way of the looming iceberg.

As I've said before, I have a ton of hope for Seabold UMC. I really think that it is one of the maybe 10% of churches that could actually weather these massive cultural shifts. Granted, we can never thrive in our current form. Without adapting, we will certainly close within 10-20 years, if not sooner. However, I deeply believe that this church is one of the few that could make it! We have the potential to be nimble and flexible enough to make those tight turns in our speedboat.

However, what it would require is discomfort. Nobody likes change, especially when you've had a whole life getting used to doing things a certain way. Change is uncomfortable. It requires giving up what we know and love for something uncertain. It involves risk—what if it never materializes like we hoped? And nobody knows what the end product looks like, precisely because *it has never existed before*. We in the Pacific Northwest are literally pioneers, trailblazers. Our exploratory work will set the groundwork for the rest of the country, as they start feeling the changes that we already are undergoing.

It is precisely the liminality—the discomfort, the transition, the turning point—that holds so much latent power and potential. I would love to go on this journey with you. If Seabold UMC has been meaningful in your life, I hope that you will help us to be meaningful in people's lives in 50 or 100 years.

If we decide as a church to embark on this journey, we will begin exploring over the coming months just what this might look like. We will work as a community to discern who God is calling us to be.





February Calendar

- 2/1 Bible Study @ 3:45pm
- 2/7 Prayer Group @9:30am
- 2/8 Bible Study @ 10am
- 2/11 4-H Cooking @ 2pm
- 2/14 Prayer Group @9:30am
UMW Meeting @ 10am
Finance @ 2pm
- 2/15 Bible Study @ 3:45pm
- 2/20 President's Day
- 2/21 Prayer Group @ 10am
- 2/22 Bible Study @ 3:45pm
Trustees @ 7pm
- 2/27 Super Supper @ 5pm
- 2/28 Prayer Group @ 10am
Days for Girls @ 10am



February Birthdays

- 2/1 Peggy Drew
- 2/1 Jeanne Whitehead
- 2/2 Carol Payne
- 2/3 Tess Stoullil
- 2/6 Rita Rowe
- 2/16 Ella Becker
- 2/16 George LeCerff
- 2/17 Kelsey Isenman
- 2/18 Linda Whitehead
- 2/24 John Goessman
- 2/26 Lacy Nesser

Anniversaries

- 2/14 Amy & Raj Singh
- 2/21 Ralph & Evelyn Weaver

UMW February Meeting

The next United Methodist Women's meeting will be on Valentine's Day, Tuesday Feb. 14 beginning with the business meeting at 10am, followed by a DVD film on poverty at 11am. The film considers the questions, "What is Poverty?" and interviews people who have faced poverty because of some circumstance in their life such as losing a job, becoming disabled in some way, etc.

Following the program we will enjoy a stone soup lunch—please bring a can of broth type soup to share—beverages, bread, dessert and conversation will be supplied. You are all welcome to participate in this event!

United Methodist Women is sponsoring a Leadership Training, Education and Development program at Highline UMW in Burien on Saturday, Feb 4. The keynote speaker, Stephanie Cruz, will discuss "Making a Difference in Maternal and Child Health." The program begins at 9:00am and includes lunch. Please call Mary Schroff by January 30 if you wish a ride to this program: 360-697-5884.

Remember, the Annual Interfaith Advocacy Day at our state capital in Olympia will take place on Thursday, February 9. Lunch, speakers and meeting with our state legislators will take place if we plan early. There are forms in the narthex to fill out if you are interested in participating. Please call me with any questions: Linda Cauthers, 360-697-9444.



Book of the Month

Hillbilly Elegy

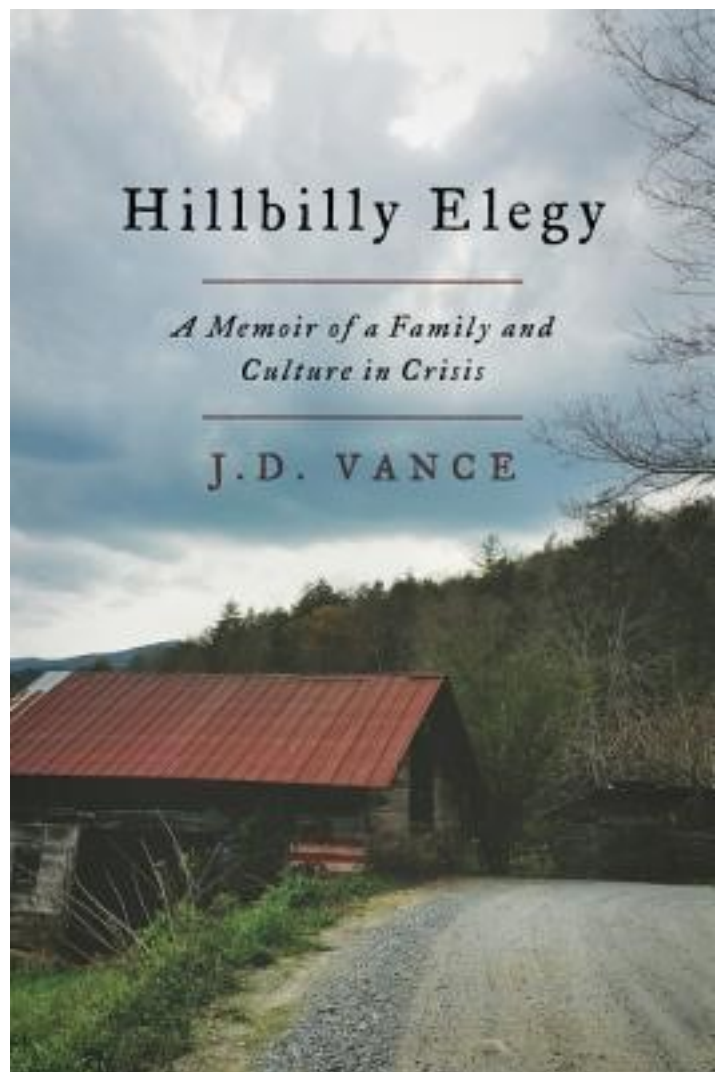
By J.D. Vance

From a former Marine and Yale Law School Graduate, a poignant account of growing up in a poor Appalachian town, that offers a broader, probing look at the struggles of America's white working class. Part memoir, part historical and social analysis, J. D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy* is a fascinating consideration of class, culture, and the American dream.

Vance's grandparents were "dirt poor and in love." They got married and moved north from Kentucky to Ohio in the hopes of escaping the dreadful poverty around them. Their grandchild (the author) graduated from Yale Law School, a conventional marker of their success in achieving upward mobility for their family. But Vance cautions that is only the short version. The slightly longer version is that his grandparents, aunt, uncle, and mother struggled to varying degrees with the demands of their new middle class life and they, and Vance himself, still carry around the demons of their chaotic family history.

Delving into his own personal story and drawing on a wide array of sociological studies, Vance takes us deep into working class life in the Appalachian region. This demographic of our country has been slowly disintegrating over forty years, and Vance provides a searching and clear-eyed attempt to understand when and how "hillbillies" lost faith in any hope of upward mobility, and in opportunities to come.

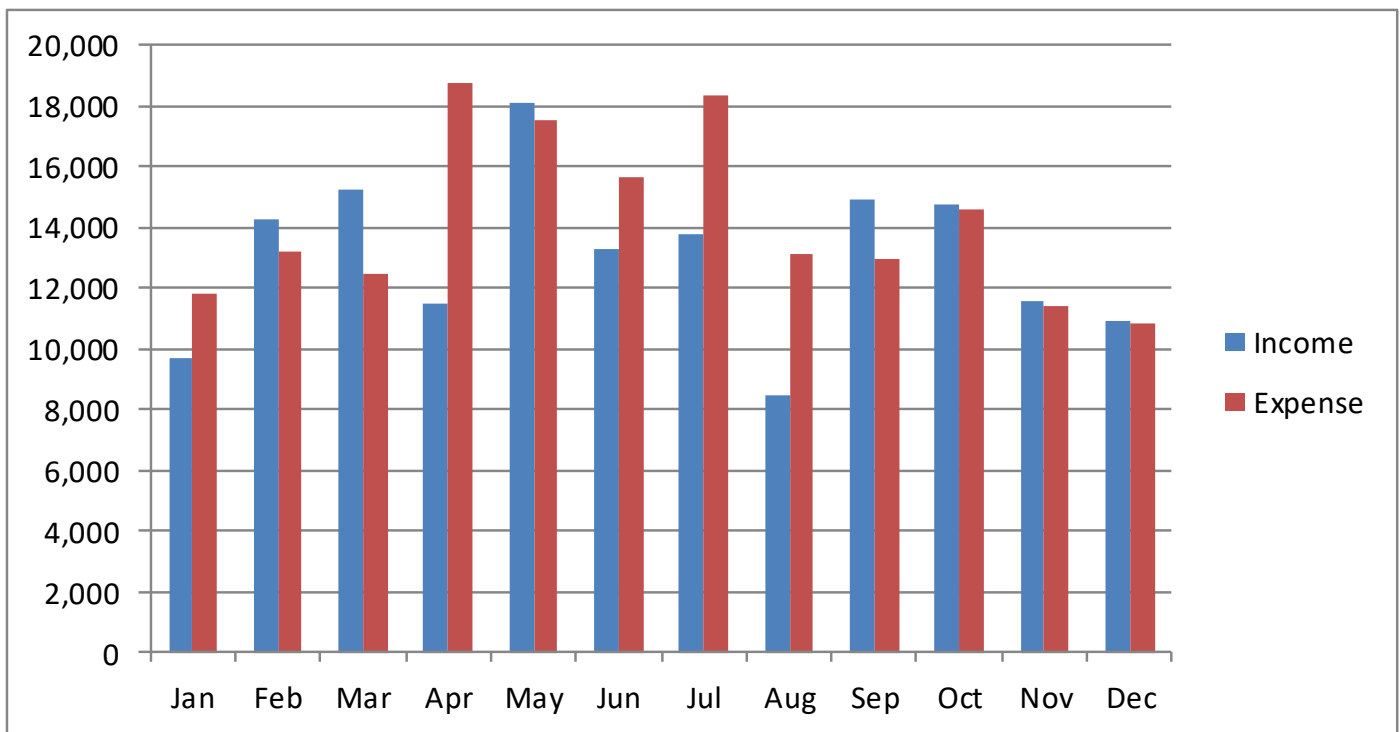
At times funny, disturbing, and deeply moving, this is a family history that is also a troubling meditation on the loss of the American dream for a large portion of this country.



FINANCE UPDATE

Report of Financial Status - January thru December 2016

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Income	9,667	14,297	15,208	11,460	18,123	13,323	13,804	8,492	14,944	14,761	11,599	10,911
Expense	11,830	13,188	12,445	18,761	17,557	15,618	18,378	13,090	12,965	14,601	11,392	10,831
diff	-2,163	1,109	2,763	-7,301	566	-2,295	-4,574	-4,598	1,979	160	207	80
cum diff	-2,163	-1,054	1,709	-5,592	-5,026	-7,321	-11,895	-16,493	-14,514	-14,354	-14,147	-14,067



There is some good news to report this month: We paid our apportionments in full thanks to your generous support, and again in December, as in the preceding three months, income exceeded expenses (but not by much).

The committee is currently working on improving our accounting procedures. We have noted that we get results in some aspects of our reports that we know are not correct and we must adjust certain transactions to make sense of the data. The problems relate to transactions involving transfers of funds between accounts such as between the General Fund and the restricted funds accounts. We believe that we have corrected the problem and will implement the actions starting this month.

The Finance Committee

Seabold United Methodist Church
6894 Seabold Church Road
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
Phone 206.842.3622/877.842.3622

 *Happy Valentines Day* 