



Building Congregational Vitality

Vitality isn't a number. It's not about how many members you have, or how large your budget is, or even how many baptisms you celebrate each year. Rather, it's a mindset and commitment to re-energize and live out your church's faith in your community and the world. Vitality is a passion for following Jesus—growing in faith and discipleship, embracing people beyond your church walls, working for justice and reconciliation, and serving your neighbors in need. Bethany Presbyterian has a history of being active in the community of Grants Pass. As a Matthew 25 congregation we are rededicating our commitment to being a church of action, where God's love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious.

Dismantling Structural Racism

In Matthew 25 Jesus addresses the nations and focuses on "the least of these," revealing his concern for groups of people who experience marginalization because of how others respond to their most basic needs—food, water, clothing, welcome, healing, and freedom. Harsh judgment is pronounced on those who lack compassion and fail to act justly towards people who are marginalized. Today in our country people of color are among the most marginalized communities because of racism. Studies on racism reveal people of color are disproportionately impoverished, imprisoned and denied access to economic and educational benefits enjoyed by white Americans.

Eradicating Systemic Poverty

The prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures demonstrated a clear concern for condemning and correcting unjust systems. Jesus stands firmly in this prophetic tradition when he expresses his solidarity with people who are hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, sick, or in prison. Furthermore, in this scene of final judgment, Jesus is addressing the "big picture"—all the nations and peoples of the world; in this context he would seem to be referring not only to individual actions, but to larger social structures that affect people who are poor.