

September 30, 2014

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

Last week, I attended a leadership conference with Bishop Mariann and several other clergy from the diocese. The conference was held at the Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City, the largest Methodist congregation in the country, whose Senior Pastor, Adam Hamilton, delivered the sermon at the Presidential Inaugural Prayer Service in 2013.

In one of the workshops I attended, Hamilton said there were three questions which every pastor should be able to answer. They were big, important questions, and I have wrestled with them ever since, trying to formulate my responses.

While each question could take pages to answer, I felt it was important to have clear, concise responses which could be shared in just a moment or two, the length, say, of an average elevator ride.

So, here they are, the three important questions which I should be able to answer, and my three "elevator speech" responses:

Why do people NEED Jesus?

Because Jesus connects us with God. In the midst of life's complexities, Jesus brings us back to what is important, providing direction, answers, and ultimately, God's love. Through Jesus, we see who we are and know we belong to God.

Why do people NEED the church?

Because the church is where we learn about Jesus. Jesus laid the foundations of the church by surrounding himself with a group of disciples because he knew being part of a community was essential to growing in faith. It is through our worship and fellowship, our education programs and service opportunities, that we come to know Jesus more deeply.

Why do people NEED Grace Church?

Because Grace Church is a very unique community in which people of all races and cultures can come to build their relationships with each other and with God. While many churches say they are welcoming of all people, Grace Church is. Our diversity, in all its wonder and beauty, offers us a glimpse of the kingdom of God.

Now, how would you answer?

See you at church,
Andrew