

From the Pastor

I have been doing some reading about church vitality and renewal off and on since seminary. I recently purchased Diane Butler Bass' Christianity for the Rest of Us, which is a 2009 book that explores ways of thinking about and being church. Her book concludes a three year study of that various neighborhood congregations 1-6 are affiliated with "mainline" denominations (like the United Church of Christ). I think the book will be quite helpful as it not only chronicles the ups and downs of the neighborhood church, it points to practices that vital, faithful congregations practice, many of which we already do (like hospitality). After reading the book, I may suggest that various other leaders in the congregation read it so that we can have rich conversations. (See, another reason to go to Vision Coordinating Team meetings!)

When I read a review of the book recently, I remembered that a couple of years ago, I had copied a 20 point renewal program from either her blog or another blog that credited Bass with the plan. I wish that I had the exact cite, or the right site. I find it insightful, humorous, and thought-provoking. I hope that you do as well.

Be genuine. Do not under any circumstances try to be trendy or hip, if you are not already intrinsically trendy or hip. If you are a 90-year-old woman who enjoys crocheting and listens to Beethoven, by God be proud of it.

Stop pretending you have a rock band.

Stop arguing about whether gay people are okay, fully human, or whatever else. Seriously. Stop it.

Stop arguing about whether women are okay, fully human, or are capable of being in a position of leadership.

This is a fool-proof plan. If you do it, I guarantee that you will attract young people to your church. And lots of other kinds of people too. The end.

I laugh when I see some of those. I feel proud of our congregation on some points. And I feel convicted on other points. I look forward to hearing from you what your reaction is.

Peace,
Pastor Lynn