

October 18, 2020 Sermon

Apologizes for the sometimes poor audio sound in the 10.18 sermon. Here is the manuscript text, not written for publication (that just means not responsible for typos and bad punctuation.)

Have you ever seen geese fly in formation?

They do it a lot this time of year as they migrate south to warmer weather.

If you've seen them, then you know that quite often one arm of the formation is longer than the other.

Do you know why that is?

Why is one arm of the "V" longer than the other?

More geese. 😊 (:

Sorry, couldn't resist.

A few years back a comparison between church people and geese was making the rounds.

It began by reminding us that as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following.

You probably already knew that. But did you know that by flying in the v-formation the whole skein of geese adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own?

71% greater flying range. Talk about strength in numbers.

Then the author of the story says:

People who share a common direction and a sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are traveling with the encouragement of one another.

Traveling with the encouragement of one another....

"Encourage one another" is our stewardship theme this year.

It is from St. Paul in his letter to the Christians in Thessalonica where he says, Therefore, encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

To remind us of how we are also already doing this we are collecting stories of how we have experienced encouragement and how we have encouraged others in this faith community.

What experience could you share?

What story could you tell?

Join us at our virtual coffee hour to share yours and hear from others.

I know you will find it very encouraging.

The story continues: When a goose falls out of formation it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

There it is, the power of encouragement.

Sometimes it sounds like honking geese.

I want to encourage you this morning, my friends

Encourage you to stretch your wings, to clear your throat, to take advantage of the lifting power of others, to honk loudly, And I'm guessing you are here watching this service wanting to be encouraged.

You could have stayed away, played it safe, drop out of the formation.

But you got up, perhaps got dressed, and joined us in worship because you know that God has called you for better, created us for more, formed us for community.

I want to go on record in the midst of this pandemic and after only 17 months as your pastor; I want to go on record as saying PoP's best days are yet to come. PoP's best days are yet to come.

I wouldn't be here if I didn't think that was true.

And I am pleased to say that those best days are already breaking in.

You'll hear some of those encouraging stories later in the month.

But for now, know, we are at a tipping point in our life together; where we have the opportunity to move from scarcity and fear into abundance and hope together, from going it alone to life in community.

This our time to give thanks for the lifting power flying in this community provides.

What a gift it is to travel with the encouragement of one another.

This is a time to honk, loudly and frequently.

Send a meal card, write a note, drop off flowers, create an Oktoberfest bag, and...

And increase our giving for 2021.

Yes, encouragement comes as we all grow from wherever we are to wherever we want to be.

This is our time to act into the future we desire by living out of the blessings of God and not the cautions of fear mockers; to grow from whatever percentage of our income we currently give to a higher percentage as an expression of how grateful we are for what God has done for us in Christ and continues to do for us through PoP.

Such growth in giving in the midst of a pandemic, in uncertain future, is an expression of our commitment to work together towards a common direction and a sense of community, so we can get where God would have us be more quickly and easily.

I stand before you this day my friends, honking, as do many other encouraging members, leaders, new disciples at PoP flapping our wings in order to create an uplift that is for us birth pains into our best days.

I encourage you to grow in 2021 from whatever percentage of your income you are currently giving to a higher percentage of your choice, whatever represents the growth, the movement forward you desire at this time.

Why? Because if the truth be told it is God's Spirit at work here, God's own power and encourager, at work through PoP's leadership, disciples, and each and every one of us watching- God's Holy Spirit encouraging, flapping her wings, creating an uplift that is for us birth pains into our best days; days of a common direction and a sense of community in order to get where we are going more quickly and easily.

Let us pray. Dear God, thank you for the gift of your son, Jesus. Thank you for loving and blessing and saving us! Thank you for making us the church. Make us eager to come together. Give us a common sense of direction and sense of community. Help us to trust in your abundance and promises for our best years as we invest in your kingdom through our offerings and tithes. Amen.