

SUNDAY

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SOUTH GEORGIA ADVOCATE

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Canoeing the mountains

GROWING IN GRACE

BEN GOSDEN

In 1804, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson explore a new territory America had just purchased from the French (known as the Louisiana Purchase) to find a trade route via the Pacific Ocean.

At this point, no one had dared to go west of the Mississippi, so Lewis and Clark set out with their expedition party, known as the Corps of Discovery, and canoes to paddle their way to the Pacific Ocean. Lewis and Clark were exceptional scientists and explorers. And they carried with them the best supplies and knowledge American had to offer. Their President (the author of the Declaration of Independence, no less) had placed his faith in them. What did they have to lose?

It turns out they had a lot to lose. You see, no one had been west of the Mississippi and the assumption was the rivers were tributaries that eventually led to the Pacific Ocean. Lewis and Clark brought canoes for their journey — it was the mode of transportation that made the most sense. Only they had no idea that instead of the Pacific Ocean, it was the Rocky Mountains that awaited them on the other side of the river bend.

Dr. Tod Bolsinger uses this historic journey as the backdrop of his leadership book, “Canoeing the Mountains.” I’m an avid reader, and this one has made its way into my holy canon of leadership books. Rarely has there been a book so honest and appropriate for the shifting sands we now find ourselves in as the 21st Century Church of Jesus Christ. In my next few columns, I want to offer you some thoughts on where we are and where God might be calling us, all of us, next as the Church.

We must recognize that we’re staring at mountains and all we have are the canoes that brought us this far.

Bolsinger notes that we have five vital lessons to learn: 1) The world in front of us is nothing like the world behind us; 2) Trust is essential if people are to follow you into unfamiliar territory; 3) We must learn to be adaptable; 4) Not everyone will want to go with us into this uncharted season of ministry, and that’s not all bad; and 5) Transformation is the end game.

Read more online at www.sgaumc.org/advocate

#GivingTuesday: Connect your passion with God's mission on Nov. 28:

It’s hard to believe the holidays are right around the corner. That means it’s time once again for UMC #GivingTuesday. On Nov. 28, United Methodists have the opportunity to extend the spirit of giving thanks into the Advent season through gifts to one of the more than 600 church-related Advance projects and more than 300 United Methodist missionaries. And to make a big day even BIGGER, Georgia Gives Day has joined forces with Giving Tuesday. Support South Georgia United Methodist ministries through Georgia Gives Day/Giving Tuesday by search for “United Methodist” or “Methodist” at the Georgia Gives website, www.gagives.org.

United Methodist Student Day is November 26: On United Methodist Student Day Nov. 26, churches will come together to support students as they prepare for a life that unites faith and knowledge. Our gifts on this Special Sunday go to scholarships for diligent United Methodist students in local congregations just like yours. Many of these young people plan to return to their churches after graduation to share their gifts. To make it easy for you to prepare for this Special Sunday, visit www.umcgiving.org for a free, downloadable Student Day pastor and leader’s kit.

Teams needed from Texas to Florida

The South Georgia Conference has received requests for ERTs (Early Response Teams) and mission teams from Annual Conferences affected by recent storms. Coastal communities here at home and in Texas and Florida can use our help, as can communities affected by Hurricane Matthew last year. Remember that when you are looking for an opportunity to volunteer as a mission team, each requesting Annual Conference controls the process and coordinates the United Methodist response.

Want to Serve in South Georgia?

Here at home, Hurricane/Tropical Storm Irma left its worst impact in Coastal Georgia. Badged, current ERT and trained chainsaw teams are needed in Chatham and other coastal counties. Lodging can be arranged in local churches; however, teams may need to cook their own meals or use local restaurants.

Interested ERTs can contact Luis O. Morales, South Georgia Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, at morhill@gmail.com.

Want to serve in Florida, Texas, Louisiana, North Carolina, or Puerto Rico? Visit www.sgaumc.org/disasterresponse for more details.

Published weekly, the *Sunday Advocate* summarizes news events affecting South Georgia United Methodists and serves as a link to the in-depth reporting of the *South Georgia Advocate*, the official news source of the South Georgia Conference of The UMC. Unless indicated, all news compiled courtesy of the *South Georgia Advocate* or United Methodist News Service. www.sgaumc.org/advocate