



Valley Voice

Buffalo Run, Fillmore and Valley View
The United Methodist Churches of the Buffalo Run Charge
“One Congregation Serving the Community and Worshiping in Three Locations”
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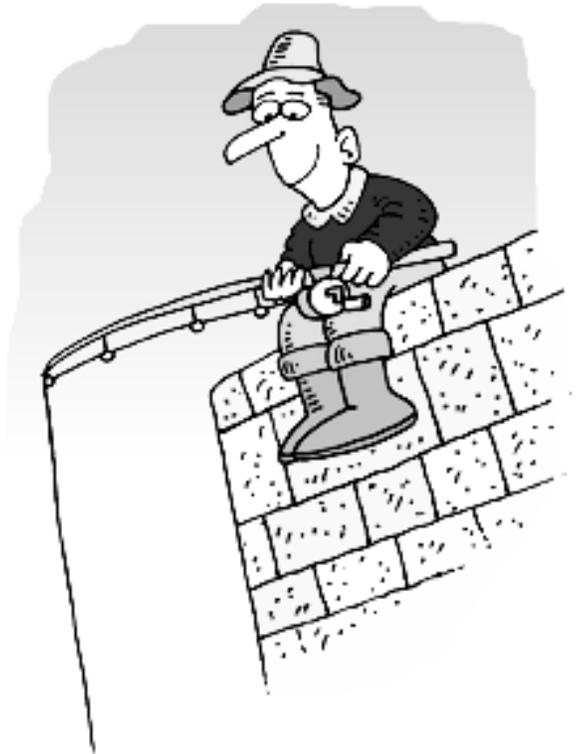
Fishing Instruction and Guide Service

(Part Two)

In the June/July newsletter I reacquainted us with the familiar biblical image of making disciples as fishing for men. I imagine that at the end you may have felt like I had left you hanging. Well, this is a subject way too big to address in a page and a half, so let's pick up where we left off. (If you missed last month's article or just need a reminder, you can find it on our charge web site, buffaloruncharge.org. Follow the link to the pastor's message.)

Imagine for a minute that a friend has convinced you to try your hand at fly fishing. You've heard the stories of lunkers he's landed. How he enticed the fish with just the right fly; his anticipation as the fly drifts over the pool; and then the swirl of the water as the fly is taken. The hook is set and the line goes tight. In the rod, you can feel every twist and turn the fish makes as it runs upstream leaping and twisting. The splash of the water looks like diamonds flying through the air. You battle with the old boy till your arm aches and finally you land him. Now you remove the hook, and for a minute, you just look at this fish with every color of God's rainbow down the side.

Now you're standing on the bank of a stream with your friend. He points out a small eddy on the far side of the stream and says there's a big one in there, and gives you these instructions. Your best bet is to use an 8 foot #6 Fenwick rod with soft action, and weight forward floating line. Use a 9 foot 5X tapered leader and a 2 foot tippet. Try a dry fly, probably a Light Cayhill. It's close to the hatch. Cast from the bottom of the pool on this side upstream above the eddy and drift it in. the current in the middle of the stream is swift so you will have to mend your cast once or twice.



Anyone can fish for souls

Most of us would probably have no idea what was just said. It's most likely every bit of information we need to connect with that big ol' fish. It just isn't useful because we don't know the fly-fishing lingo.

So it goes with our efforts to share our beliefs about God and faith in Jesus in today's American culture. Most people don't understand our Christian lingo. It's hard for us to imagine, but a large percentage of Americans have grown up with no connection to the church. Terms like sin, justification, grace, crucifixion, and resurrection are foreign to them. And the culture has even distorted the meaning of terms like faith, forgiveness, and love to the point that we need to explain the biblical understanding of them. With such a barrier between the church and those we seek to share our faith with, where do we begin?

Let's go back to our fishing story. What got you out to the stream in the first place? Wasn't it the excitement that we heard in the friend's story about the thrill of connecting with that big ol' fish? We could almost feel it ourselves and wanted a chance at a similar experience.

Rick Richardson offers a new perspective in his book, "Reimagining Evangelism". What if sharing our faith was less like downloading information about Jesus and more like inviting a friend on a spiritual journey?

Let's imagine again that we are back at the stream. Our friend points to the eddy where the big ol' fish is and then takes us down into the stream, hands us a rod already to go, and stands beside us as we make the cast. Gently lays his hand on our and shows us how to roll the line back up stream so the fly drifts naturally. The water swirls, and he yells that you got 'em. Now you can feel every twist and turn that fish makes.

Chances are good that you're hooked and you will want to learn all that information that will enhance future, deeper experiences.

So this is where we begin:

- ✓ Are we so much in love with God that we can't wait for Sunday worship?
- ✓ Are filled with joy and peace the rest of the week?
- ✓ Do we talk about our connection with God and the ways we experience Him in our lives with passion and excitement to our un-churched friends, neighbors, and co-workers?

There are ways that we can share our faith that don't strike fear in our hearts and overwhelm our friends and send them running.

On Sunday evenings in September the Buffalo Run Charge will offer a time of study and based in the perspectives from "Reimagining Evangelism"

I hope you will join us.

Pastor Duane