

I've mentioned to you before that one of my hobbies is something called "geocaching." Built upon the twenty-four GPS satellites that orbit the earth, geocaching is a game of high-tech hide-and-seek in which small boxes are hidden in all sorts of places around the world—nearly two million of them—and then their exact coordinates are uploaded to www.geocaching.com.



Using a hand-held GPS device of some sort (most smartphones have this ability these days), one then navigates to those coordinates and tries to find the geocache container. Successful finds are uploaded to "the great computer in the sky," and then you're off to find the next one. There are eighteen geocaches within a mile of where I'm sitting at this moment!



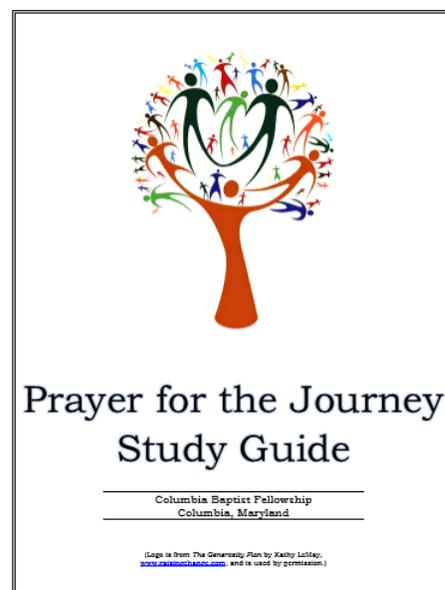
There are many times across the years when most of us would really like to have the exact coordinates of the next destination on our life's journey, but while such clear guidance is sometimes granted, most of the time discernment of God's leading is a more subtle undertaking. In the life of the Church, guidance often comes as a result of concerted prayer by the whole congregation.

Our Lenten observance this year will focus on just such concerted prayer, and I'd like to invite you to be a part of that focused attention. As we continue to launch a new chapter in our life together, there are several major areas in which we need to make decisions that will guide our ministries for the next decade, and these decisions probably need to be made this year.

Our Church Council has decided to use an approach called "Prayer for the Journey" to structure the process of our discernment. We'll make study guides available to all who participate,¹ and these guides will provide resource materials for eight small-group prayer sessions during Lent. The topics of these sessions will be:

- Week of February 3: *The Kingdom of God:
The Starting Point and the Goal of our Journey*
- Week of February 10: *The Sacrifice of Confession*
- Week of February 17: *Pleasing God*
- Week of February 24: *Faith Anchors*
- Week of March 3: *New Wineskins*
- Week of March 10: *On Getting What You Expect*
- Week of March 17: *Divine Discontent*
- Week of March 24: *God Has Something for Us to Do*

Our prayer groups for this discernment process will be organized into "Prayer Triplets." Our Church Council Leadership Team will assign those who wish to participate to groups of three persons for these eight weeks. Our goal



¹ We can send digital copies on request to persons in other towns who receive the *Laptop* by email.

will be to place persons together who aren't already best friends (husband and wives will be in different groups), because such new groupings result not only in new and deeper friendships throughout the congregation but also to more creative processes of discernment.

The organizational meeting for the Prayer Triplets will follow morning worship on February 3, with each group setting their own schedule for meetings thereafter. *Prayer Guides* will be distributed at that first meeting. We'll have a debriefing session following morning worship on April 7 to begin the process of sorting through what God has shown us during the weeks of discernment.

It's not necessary to be a member of CBF to participate in this process. We need as many ears and hearts listening as we can gather! If you'd like to be in a Prayer Triplet, you can respond to this email or sign up the next time you're at The Meeting House.

Our prayer journey actually begins next Tuesday evening, when we'll have a quarterly Service of Meditation & Communion in the Chapel. The service will be come-and-go from 5:30-7 p.m., and since Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is the day before, the meditation will involve reading and reflecting on Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. We'll be asking ourselves what sort of dreams God would have in our hearts this year.

Dave

P.S. This week marks the thirtieth anniversary of our L.O.V.E. Group (Ladies Organized for Volunteering & Encouragement). This group has made incalculable contributions to our common life, for which we give hearty thanks to God!

