



March 2018

Dear North East Family,

My office is in the process of sending a book to either the Lay Leader or Church Council of every church in our district. The book is called *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Unchartered Territory* by Tod Bolsinger. The book focuses on the new realities our churches face in a post-Christian, post-modern world. Tod Bolsinger uses the Lewis and Clark expedition as a backdrop for the book. As you may remember, President Thomas Jefferson commissioned Lewis and Clark to map out the new Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Lewis and Clark didn't know what to expect and assumed they would need canoes to sail rivers. Instead, they met the Rocky Mountains and quickly realized they would have to adapt.

You could say the Church finds itself in a similar situation today. Much of what the Church has used to share the Good News of Jesus doesn't work anymore. It's like bringing canoes and then facing the Rocky Mountains. We have to find a new and different way so we can bring the salvation and hope we have to new people in new places and in new ways.

I'd like to encourage you to think about getting a copy of *Canoeing the Mountains* and read it. If you are part of a small group or a Sunday school class, perhaps your class could read it together. It has excellent discussion questions, and I have no doubt that you will begin to think about how you need to adapt the methods you use to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Our Operations Team has challenged your church's leadership team to read the book over the next several months and then to use a discussion guide that we've borrowed from the Virginia Annual Conference.

One added incentive to read the book is that in January of next year, the Florida, South Georgia, and North Georgia Annual Conferences are bringing Tod Bolsinger to Epworth-by-the-Sea in St. Simon's Island for a workshop. We'll be sure to share more information as we get it so you can actually meet the author and engage with him about his ideas.

In many ways we're moving into unchartered territory, but as Jesus said in Matthew 28:20, "Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age." John Wesley put it another way as he passed on to the other side of heaven, "Best of all, God is with us!"

God bless you!

All God's love,

Jay Therrell, Superintendent