



The Newsletter of the Reformed Dutch Church of Claverack
A Reformed Church in America Congregation

The Fisherman

October 2017

PASTOR'S CORNER

For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.—Matthew 16:25

It was my privilege to study with Rev. Dr. Sandy Selby at a workshop entitled “Ingredients for a Meaningful Life” at Silver Bay YMCA during my education week this past summer. Sandy is a chaplain for the police department in Akron, Ohio. She based her lectures/slide shows on the book, *The Power of Meaning*, by Emily Esfahani Smith. Smith addresses questions like, “What is the meaning of life?” “What makes a life worth living?,” and “What are the paths to having a meaningful life?”

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Smith synthesizes research in the fields of psychology, neuroscience, literature, history and sociology and finds four “pillars” of meaning upon which Dr. Selby organized her workshop. Those “pillars” that make our lives meaningful are **belonging, purpose, storytelling, and transcendence.**

I found that these “pillars” to a meaningful life were well-aligned with the teachings of Jesus. And I found it interesting that research in the social sciences and literature supported these constructs. In the church many find a sense of **belonging** that extends out a sense of “groundedness” in our homes, workplaces, communities, and beyond. In Christ, we find our **purpose**, to go and spread the good news of God’s love and forgiveness. We share the gospel by **storytelling**, learning the stories of Jesus as our children are studying the parables in Sunday School this year, and sharing our stories of our life in God with others. These activities lead to **transcendence**, a connection to God and to others that extends throughout and beyond our earthly lives.

Smith stresses the inner decision to find meaning and take personal responsibility. In all situations, we have the ability to choose our response. Jesus modeled this kind of meaningful life. This reminds me of the words of Paul in my favorite verse of the Bible:

“For I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and going hungry, of plenty and of being in need. I can do all things in him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:11b-13

Blessings,
Pastor Linda