



**August 12, 2017**

**4:00 pm Saturday Afternoon Worship**

**Royal Oak First United Methodist Church**

Pastor Jeff Nelson

320 W Seventh St, Royal Oak, Michigan 48067

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**Scripture**

Matthew 19:13-15

*Common English Bible*

Some people brought children to Jesus so that he would place his hands on them and pray. But the disciples scolded them. "Allow the children to come to me," Jesus said. "Don't forbid them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people like these children." Then he blessed the children and went away from there.

**Songs**

Children's Song Medley

**Message**

The Little Things

Jeff Nelson

**\* Hymn #2239 (FWS)**

Go Ye, Go Ye into the World

**Blessing**

Dear Friends,

An interesting thing happens when you read the story of Exodus—the people never seem to get to the Promised Land. It all starts out fine and dandy. God taps Moses on the shoulder and says, “Yo! Let’s get these people out of here! I have a better place for them to live. Let’s roll!” And so Moses does the hard work of organizing the people to leave. He holds Town Hall meetings explaining the benefits of a move. He meets late into the night with finance people putting together the budget for this move out of Egypt. The Trustees and the Administrative Board drew up the plans and timelines in preparation for the community vote. All the work had been done. The plan seemed feasible. The finances would be a stretch but not out of reach. And so they voted to set off to a new place.

That’s when the story gets interesting. There were delays. There were setbacks. The timeline got off track. This was going to take longer and cost more. In fact, almost the entire book of Exodus is about getting there—it is about the journey, not about the arrival. During this journey to their “promised land,” they changed as people. They had to become more patient, more tolerant, more flexible, and more trusting. When they finally got there, they were not the same people. It was the journey, with all of its delays, setbacks, and frustrations, that made them more God’s people. It was the journey that made the difference.

I arrived here a year ago in midst of your journey to a new building and a renewed ministry. Hopes were high. The timelines and the budget were in place. We could almost see the destination. But like the ancient Israelites, the journey has had setbacks and delays. It is going to take longer and cost more than we imagined. Like the Exodus people, there are moments we wonder if we just should have stayed put.

But here is what I know—this journey is making us. We are growing in the midst of the chaos. We have become more flexible, more innovative, and more tolerant. We have learned that, while the new building will be a great *tool* for making ministry happen, it is the *people* in the building that make the ministry happen. I am proud of how this journey is shaping us, even though I am more than ready for this journey to be done.

Tomorrow, at 1:00 pm, we will have a Church Conference to approve an additional \$700,000 on this project. It is part of the journey. It is part of what is making us the people who will be ready to live in the “Promised Land” once we finally arrive.

Thanks for being on the road with us!

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Pastor Jeff". Below the signature is a simple line drawing of a smiley face with two dots for eyes and a curved line for a mouth.