

FIRST AND CENTER

Pastor's Blog

May 23, 2018

I went all the way up to the top of the scaffolding around our steeple one last time this week - my third trip to the top since September. Two highlights of this came as I saw the bell being struck once again (after years) and the new clock faces keeping time (even saw the minute hand move!). This is what they look like:



So many old church buildings have clocks with bells that ring to remind people of the time. Why? Was it just a public service in the days before wristwatches and cell phones? Or something more?

Often in the Bible, big events are heralded by time markers. The prophet Isaiah's call story begins "In the year that King Uzziah died." Jesus' birth story begins by telling us the census that sent his parents to Bethlehem happened when Augustus was emperor and Quirinius governor of Syria. This is not incidental to the story. These time markers tell us that this is not a timeless myth, but a story of a God who interacts with people in specific ways in specific times, as part of our histories. God enters into our stories *in the here and now* just as God did in the *there and then*. The clock and bell in our tower are to remind those who see and hear them that God still dwells among us in our time, inviting them to look up, to listen, to open themselves to see and hear what God is doing. Next time you hear the bell, take a moment to ask God, "What's up now, for me, for us, for the world?"

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse
Transitional Minister