

## **MIDWEEK MISSIVE 02/21/19**

**As I was driving into downtown Boston yesterday morning, I was struck by how technology has changed in my lifetime, and how much these changes in technology have changed my life. Not an original thought, by any stretch of the imagination, but still, one that has me thinking.**

**Thinking things like: how did I ever get around unfamiliar places without a GPS? Early on, maps helped guide us, but that took two people: one to navigate and one to drive. Then using MapQuest, you could print out the directions to your destination and the navigators role became less critical, but still useful. A driver could usually read the directions - somewhat safely - but it could be difficult. Then came GPS and the various GPS systems: Mapquest, Garmin, and the one I use, Waze. Now, my phone, plugged into my sound system in the car, not only shows me the route, but tells me verbally when I need to turn, etc. The extra person in the car is no longer a necessity. Waze even tells me when Police are lying in wait, when I am about to come upon a giant pothole, and when traffic is so bad that Waze automatically switches me to a better, faster route!**

**Then there are phones. It used to be that if you were not home to answer the phone, the phone just rang and rang until the caller got fed up and hung up. Then came the advent of answering machines. You could set a tape recorder up and whenever someone called, they could leave a recorded message for when you did return...as long as you erased the tape at regular intervals before it got full. Now, my phone has a built in voice-mail that gets stored in the heavens somewhere, and caller i.d. which allows me to see who is calling and then decide whether I want to answer. (Oh, but I would never do that to any of you! ) I can keep voice-mail messages as long as I want, and now, I don't even have to listen to them: they show up as text! And probably the most important thing is that my phone goes everywhere with me. No more having to wait to get home to see if someone called, or to call someone.**

**My phone now has more computing capacity than the first two or three computers I owned! (Which, by the way, were huge towering configurations about the size of dehumidifier.) The GPS I mentioned before? It's on my phone. I also have apps that allow me to listen to the Detroit Tigers whenever they play; read my Bible; meditate; read the Boston Globe, the Detroit Free Press, Atlanta Journal Constitution and the New York Times; watch anything I get on my cable TV (which is another thing: what would my grandparents say about paying for TV?). My phone allows me to answer my e-mail, send people text messages, listen to my music (I currently have about 300 albums on my phone to listen to at a moment's notice). I can use my phone to peruse family pictures (4800 and counting). I can use my phone to read books, or listen to someone read them to me. Oh, and I can use my phone to call people and actually talk to them! What a concept!**

**I could go on and on about the technological advances that have shaped my life. But what is important to me this morning is understanding that while technology can do much for us, it can't do everything. I love my GPS, but sometimes it's not a bad thing to get a little lost and discover something new. I love being able to screen my calls (but not yours!) but it's not a bad thing to pick up the phone, not knowing who is calling, and be surprised by a friend you have not heard from in a long time. I love my music at the touch of a button, but I miss sitting with my albums, reading the liner notes while I listen, immersed in the music without any distractions. I love that my screens are so much better and brighter and sharper, but I wonder if doing everything by staring at a screen keeps me from truly appreciating what is happening all around me?**

**And this is only one of the reasons that Lent is so important to me. During Lent I can intentionally step back and focus on what is important. It gives me a reason to stop, listen, pray, meditate and really reflect on things. Without a screen, without background music, without taking the time to scroll through pictures, or Facebook or read the weather report. Don't get me wrong: I love my technology, but Lent reminds me that there are things that need to be done without technological assistance. Things like reconnecting with my spiritual disciplines in order to strengthen my connection with God and coming to a better understanding of how I can serve God and God's people better in the days to come.**

**Lent begins on Wednesday March 6th, and we will mark that beginning with an Ash Wednesday Worship Service at the Candleberry Chapel at 7:00 p.m. It will be a traditional service of repentance, reflection and prayer and the marking of our foreheads with ashes to remind us who we are, and whose we are. It is designed to set the tone for the Lenten journey ahead of us, and will be well worth the time.**

**Be peaceful,  
Rev. Brad—**

Bradley J. Miller  
Interim Pastor  
Candleberry Chapel  
381 S. Main St.  
Attleboro, MA 02703  
(508) 222-2525  
[www.candleberrychapel.com](http://www.candleberrychapel.com)