



October 2024

August 12, 1805, was a significant day in American history. The Lewis and Clark expedition was well underway, heading west, to try to find a water passage that would take them all the way to the Pacific Ocean. August 12, 1805, was also the fateful day when Lewis and Clark realized that everything they knew about their world up to that point was **WRONG**. Looking at the vast expanse of the Rocky Mountains ahead of them, far different from the Appalachian Mountains that they were used to, they realized a couple of things. First, the canoes that they hauled all the way from St. Louis were absolutely not going to be sufficient. Second, there really was no waterway to the Pacific. Up until this point, Lewis and Clark believed that their way forward would largely resemble their past and they were wrong.<sup>1</sup> What do you do when the world of the familiar, safe, and known is not the world of tomorrow?

We have all been there before. When the plans we made for our future were disrupted by our choices, the choices of others, natural disasters, or unforeseen and unescapable incidents. This is exactly where the Hebrews found themselves when the prophet Jeremiah wrote, "For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm to give you a future with hope" (Jer. 29:11). After being overtaken by the Babylonians, the Hebrew people had been carried into exile. Babylon was not where the Hebrews had planned to be, and it certainly was not where they wanted to be. Nor was this God's plan. God says that God's plan for us is **SHALOM** (welfare) *not* harm. Our hope is that even when the world we thought we knew is not the world of tomorrow, God's plan for you, me, and this world is peace.

This radical hope of shalom is the claim we profess every Sunday and why we carve out time every year for a generosity campaign. Yes, during our generosity season (the month of October) we prayerfully consider how God is calling us to give back financially to the church. Even though this is an important part of this season because our finances help support the ministries in and outside of JIPC and these ministries depend on our financial gifts, our generosity campaign goes beyond finances. This season is part of our call to remember that when our tomorrow does not look anything like the world we knew, God remains at work bringing shalom. This peace is hard to find at times, I know. Therefore, God brings us together, equipping us to recognize this peace and to follow Jesus Christ into a world that is desperate and unsure of tomorrow. So that together, as a church, we can point to God's *future with hope*.

Yours in Christ,  
Barrett

***Jeremiah 29:10-11 I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says God, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.***

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<sup>1</sup> This illustration is drawn from the presentations and writings of the Rev. Dr. Tod Bolsinger, most notably his book "Canoeing Up Mountains"



**JAMES ISLAND**  
Presbyterian Church

**James Island Presbyterian Church**  
1632 Fort Johnson Road, Charleston, SC 29412  
843-795-3111; [jipc@jamesislandpc.org](mailto:jipc@jamesislandpc.org)