

Worship Brainstorming Summary

May-June 2019 – Season Easter

Series: Children's Sunday & "STOP IT! (In the Name of Love)"

2019 theme: Love God and love your neighbor

Monday, April 8, 2019



Members present: Marie Kordecki, Vicki Zuker, Lynne Richmond, Barb Gripton, Jean Kelly, Pastor Mary, Jim Post, Karen Post, Carole Koch, Larry Jorgenson, Betty Kinney, Diane Thompson, Karen Booth

Most of us may remember being told "stop doing that" as children. Whether at home or school or somewhere else, we're often told what NOT to do. As parents and caregivers, we may find ourselves saying, "Stop it!" or redirecting behavior often.

As we seek to be faithful to Jesus, we may be the ones hearing "stop it!" in order for the Good News of God's love to be clearer to the world. After the celebration of the joy resurrection and new life on Easter Sunday, what do we do? In light of the gift of salvation that is ours in Jesus, how do we offer an effective witness to what Jesus' saving love looks like?

Jesus calls us to go into the world and make disciples, but we need to check ourselves as we interact with others. What do we need to stop doing so that we can love God and others more authentically in the name of Jesus - the Risen Savior? We'll use the letters in the New Testament written to early Christians to focus on what we need to stop doing (and start doing) to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Philippians 2: 1-18 will be our overall guiding Scripture. Key verses are in ***bold italics***.

¹ Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ ***Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.*** Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ ***not looking to your own interests*** but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Do Everything Without Grumbling

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

¹⁴ ***Do everything without grumbling or arguing,*** ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." ***Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky*** ¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on

the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. ¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸ So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

Ideas for the series:

- Could we offer the Philippians reading in different translations or forms each Sunday? Yes.
- Exodus 20: 1-17 offer the Ten Commandments, a guide for loving God and loving neighbor, which includes what NOT to do (murder, commit adultery, steal, false testimony, covet)

Resources: Thomas Bandy is writing a six-part series on the future of the United Methodist Church. "Stay or Go? How Adherents and Visitors Decide" is the third article in the series. <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/9575/stay-or-go-how-adherents-and-visitors-decide> Here is excerpt found under the heading, "Role Models and Spiritual Guides." It is worth reading the article, but especially the part that starts here:

In contrast to the old Christendom days, post-Christendom visitors are not seeking professionals. If they were to reduce their list of expectations to the barest essentials, great preaching, sophisticated theology, excellent psychotherapy, etc. are not in the top ten. They are looking for leaders who can demonstrate in daily living what faith is all about and who can guide others to do likewise. If their neighbor were to ask them what being Christian really means, they want to point to a lay elder of the church and say *just follow that person around for twenty-four hours, observe what they do and listen to what they say, and you will know.*

Visuals:

- Use stars (Philippians 2:15) as an image through the series (glow in the dark, paper, stickers). Stars would also fit in with the VBS theme, "To Mars and Beyond" and the Kelsey June wedding (being over the moon in love).
- STOP/GO - STOP signs (Carole's son or Jerry Scott), traffic lights, STOP hand, barricade, saw horses, police tape, stop signs that are take-offs on the Supremes' song. Cat meme.
- On the ledge: STOP IT! or INTEGRITY
- Leave the white banners up through at least Children's Sunday.

Music possibilities: 1) Close each service by reciting the chorus of "Stop in the Name of Love." They might need to be adapted slightly as shown below:

Stop! In the name of love before you break ~~my~~ God's heart.

Stop! In the name of love before you break ~~my~~ God's heart.

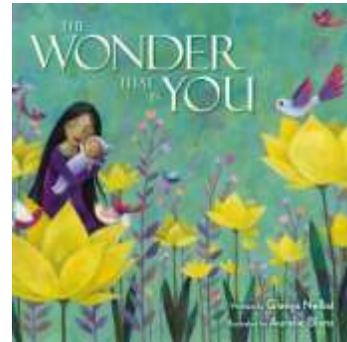
Think it over. Think it over.

2) "Mean" by Taylor Swift <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYa1eI1hpDE> 3) Supreme singer possibilities: Jill McMahon, Betty Kinney, Diane Thompson, Marilyn Forton with Jean Kelly as a backup dancer (no Temptations). 3) Loosely connected quote: All the world is queer save thee and me, and even thou art a little queer." Robert Owen

Publicity: "See You on Sunday!" and February Harbor Light

General discussion points: We are Easter people. This FaceBook quote sums up the series: Sometimes the best evangelism is simply telling people you're a Christian and then not being a complete jerk.

May 5, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.: “The Wonder That is You”
Children’s Sunday with special guest, Glenys Nellist



Scripture: Isaiah 55:12

¹²The mountains and hills will burst into song... And all the trees in the fields will clap their hands.

Synopsis:

Felt need: To recognize that each person is a wonderful creation of God

Visuals: Harmon Hilleary will create bulletin cover, Pictures of Lake Harbor children/youth

Media possibility: “God’s Earth – Closer.” Length: 1:00. Cost: \$10.00. Visual liturgy. **Comments:** Pastor Mary will pass this long to Glenys. It would help to leave the verse on the screen longer. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/42001/gods-earth-closer>

Related info: Sharing from kids, youth, and teachers

Activity: Holy Communion - kids serving with adults, Celebration of Ross Park readers, Recognition of Christian Education leaders

Music: The Trees of the Field (FWS 2279), Let Us Break Bread Together (UMH 618)

Discussion points:

May 12, 2019: “If You Can’t Say Anything Nice”

STOP GOSSIP (in the Name of Love)

Mother’s Day

Scripture: Philippians 4: 4-9 (NIV) “Pray About Everything”

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Scripture: James 1: 19-27 (NIV) “Listening and Doing” See also James 3 (taming the tongue)

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,

²⁰for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. ²¹Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

²²Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵But the man who

looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

²⁶If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Synopsis: These are words we hear parents and others who offer good advice about how we speak, but we struggle to keep our mouths (and sometimes our fingers) from spreading rumors and lies. How does gossip compromise our witness and hurt those around us?

Felt need: To communicate truthfully, honestly, and respectfully.

Visuals: James “tight rein on the tongue.” Norman Rockwell’s “Gossip” painting. Loose lips sink ships. We’re not gossiping; we’re networking.

Media possibilities: We only watched the first two videos as a group.

- **“Gossip.”** Length: 3:10. Cost: We own it. This comedy about the inappropriate use of prayer requests stars Kate Flannery, Victoria Jackson, and Beth Grant as women in a prayer group who tear down their fellow church members through gossip. **Comments:** Humorous. Very good example of gossip masquerading as a prayer group. Use it.
<https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/13305/gossip>
- **“New Friends.”** Length: 3:27. Cost: \$15.00. After seeing a difference in the lives of her new friends at the church she has been attending, a young woman shares with her husband a desire to make a spiritual commitment. However, she happens to observe her new friends out of the church setting where they exhibit very different characteristics. **Comments:** Ouch! Perfect example of ugly Christians. Feels like a slap in the face. It makes the point, but in a mean spirited way. Use in other circumstances, like a message on hypocrisy. Shows a lack of hospitality and degree of not accepting newcomers. The women in the video lost out on so many levels – trust and acceptance at a new church and her “friends” and any willingness from her husband to attend church with her.
<https://www.sermonspice.com/product/38407/new-friends>
- **“Gossip Excuses.”** Length: 1:20. Cost: \$20.00. Powerful video about gossip! This installment of the CHRISTIAN GUIDE TO EXCUSES hilariously points out the types of excuses people give to keep gossiping. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/27965/gossip-excuses>
- **“Thoughts on Gossip.”** Length: 0:48. Cost: \$20.00. This video describes gossip from the view of a shallow Christian. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/20402/thoughts-on-gossip>
- **“The Loop.”** Length: 1:06. Cost: \$7.00. News can travel fast in our high tech communication world. Here’s a humorous look at how quick the news of one girl’s slipup grows.
<https://www.sermonspice.com/product/5327/the-loop>

Related info: Gossip is spreading information without facts. This needs to include all forms of communication, i.e. social media. **To stop gossip ask:** Why are you telling me this?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzpkb99c52l>

Activity: Give a chocolate “treasure” to all women in the congregation, use Mother’s Day prayer to acknowledge all experiences of mothering.

Music: #572 “Pass It On” (this is jokingly called “Gossip’s Hymn”); #92 “For the Beauty of the Earth”; #526 “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

Quotes: 1) “If you can’t say anything nice, sit by me.” Often attributed to Alice Roosevelt Longworth. 2) “Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.” This quote appeared in a 1901 autobiography of Charles Stewart, but is probably a distillation of other people’s thoughts dating back to the mid-1800’s. 3) “Don’t tell me what was said about me. Tell my why they were so comfortable to say it to you.” Jay Z.

Discussion points: 1) The misinformation that happens in the “telephone game” is not the same problem as misinformation spread through social media. 2) Pastor Mary in Cedar Springs: Three teenage boys were in a car accident. One died. This was shared on social media right away, almost before the dead boy’s mom heard about it - a huge problem. 3) Before we share ask, “Is this ours to share?” We don’t have to share just because we can. Do we know if it is corroborated or true? 4) Gossip: whispering behind someone’s back, negative, not thinking through the consequences of sharing, learning that there are people you cannot trust to keep a secret, “Did you know?” 5) Technology has hastened the speed at which we share. 6) Examples of things that were shared on social media, but should not have been: Diane’s son’s engagement, wedding dress pictures. 7) Pastor Mary: Their Arizona guide ask that they not share pictures of the petro glyphs so that the site would not be ruined by guideless visitors. 8) News organizations have been complicit in the problem as they rush to be first. Rather than doing their own research and corroborating stories, they rely on internet sound bites, video clips, and tweets. 9) Lynne used Dr. Laura’s questions to limit her Middle School students’ gossip. Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary? 10) Spiritual focus: To honor other people. 11) Lynne was in tough contract negotiations. She was also good friends with the superintendent. It was clear when she heard from a “friend” about the talk in the lounge, that someone had breached her trust. 12) Gossip can be a power play. It takes the focus off of self and those things we cannot (or are not willing) to fix. 13) Social media is never a place for resolving conflict. That requires vulnerability and the ability to read emotion, body language and other nonverbal cues. 14) Triangulation is a manipulation tactic where one person will not communicate directly with another person, instead using a third person to relay communication to the second, thus forming a triangle. 15) From the movie, “Wonder”: While dressed up for Halloween, Auggie overheard his friend talking about him in a very mean way.

May 19, 2019: “Playground (of Life) Rules”
STOP BULLYING/BEING MEAN (in the name of love)
Graduation Sunday

Scripture: James 3: 13-18 (CEV) “Boasting about Tomorrow”

¹³ You should know better than to say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to the city. We will do business there for a year and make a lot of money!”

¹⁴What do you know about tomorrow? How can you be so sure about your life? It is nothing more than mist that appears for only a little while before it disappears. ¹⁵You should say, “If the Lord

lets us live, we will do these things.”¹⁶Yet you are stupid enough to brag, and it is wrong to be so proud.¹⁷If you don’t do what you know is right, you have sinned.

Scripture: Colossians 3: 1-17 (NIV) “Rules for Holy Living”

¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

¹²Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Synopsis: The school playground may bring back fun memories of playing with friends, or it may bring back sad memories of feeling left out or getting hurt. Playground rules are there for a reason. “Be safe, take turns, share, and include others” continue to help us as we graduate to the bigger playground of life.

Felt need: To be reminded of how we’re called to treat each other as children of God.

Visuals: DARE bully logo. Nelson Muntz from “The Simpsons.” Adults and kids looking unhappy while looking at social media. Images of physical bullying.

Hands-on item: Poem – “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten” by Robert Fulghum. Handout – prayer from “The Jesus Memo.”

Media possibilities: We only watch the first one as a group.

- **“The Jesus Memo: Bullying.”** Length: 2:34. Cost: \$16.99. The world is a cruel place...but it doesn’t have to be. This video will challenge you to live your life with an awareness of others. It’s not about being a good person. It’s about being like Jesus. **Comments:** Very fast paced, but still quite readable. Could be slowed down. Not only does it say, “Don’t be a jerk,” to people of ages, it goes one step further and asks people to reach out to anyone in need. <https://skitguys.com/videos/the-jesus-memo-bullying>
- “The Power of the Tongue.” Length: 1:02. Cost: \$15.00. A deceptive heart and an un-reflective mind, corroborating un-tamed tongue is an explosive combination for the destruction of lives. This animation presents a simple approach toward the words we use

and their impact on others. From school bullying to the workplace to the family table and even at church, the tongue can be used to either hurt or heal.

<https://www.sermonspice.com/product/17001/the-power-of-the-tongue>

- “Bullied.” Length: 3:31. Cost: \$15.00. A bully is forcing his seat partner to do his homework every morning. When things get out of control another student gets brave and stands up for the victim. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/47587/bullied>

Related info:

- Facebook’s October 2, 2018 post, “Protecting People from Bullying and Harassment.” <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/10/protecting-people-from-bullying/>
- DARE Bullying: Awareness, Education, and Prevention <https://dare.org/bullying-awareness-education-and-prevention/> We like the BULLY graphics from their site.

Activity: Sharing from graduates, gifts to graduates.

Music: #2171 “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace”; #585 “This Little Light of Mine”; #577 “God of Grace and God of Glory”; #420 “Breath on Me, Breath of God”

Discussion points: 1) Pastor Mary’s playground rules are from Ana. One more rule: Don’t hand upside down on the monkey bars in a dress. 2) Bullying is direct; it is not done behind someone’s back like gossiping. 3) Rose Emmons’ story of bullying a friend and apologizing years later was/is very powerful. 4) Larry: When did the fierce bullying begin? He never felt it when he was young. Barb: It has always been around but bullies used to be able to drop out of school. 5) Why do people become bullies? Lack of self-esteem, effective parenting, resilience. Neglect. 6) The Fruitport school superintendent contacted area churches to recruit responsible adults to become mentors for elementary students. It has made a huge difference in reducing behavior problems. 7) Recent news story: Grand Rapids police officer surprises boy with memorable birthday party after taking him to school when he missed the bus. <https://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/2019/04/grand-rapids-police-officer-surprises-boy-with-memorable-birthday-party.html>. 8) Pastor Jerry noted that Jesus wasn’t mad at his friends or after the resurrection in spite of how he was treated before he died. 9) Distinction between bullying and being mean: intensity, consistency, social isolation, focused relationship. 10) Boys and girls tend to treat each other, react to others, and bully differently. You need to employ different strategies for each group to be effective. 11) Lynne wouldn’t let her students pick teams so that there wouldn’t be any child who was always picked last. 12) Bullying: Meanness by erosion. 13) Hazing is a form of bullying. 14) It can be hard to step in and stop bullying, but some of us are willing to risk taking an active role in fixing a problem. 15) Families have bullies and/or opinionated members. 16) Cyberbullying: Ana needed to report an incident in 7th grade which involved what she saw on someone else’s phone. Do parents monitor their children’s social media presence? Ask your child, “What would your grandparent think of your post?” Related: You can be charged with possession and/or distribution of porn if you have explicit selfies on your phone.

May 26, 2019 at 10:00 am: “Let It Go” – STOP REGRET (in the name of love)
Memorial Day Weekend

Scripture: Philippians 3: 12-14 (CEV) “Pressing on Towards the Goal”

¹²I have not yet reached my goal, and I am not perfect. But Christ has taken hold of me. So I keep on running and struggling to take hold of the prize.

¹³My friends, I don't feel that I have already arrived. But I forget what is behind, and I struggle for what is ahead. ¹⁴I run toward the goal, so that I can win the prize of being called to heaven. This is the prize that God offers because of what Christ Jesus has done.

Scripture: James 4: 7-12 (NIV) "Submit Yourselves to God"

⁷Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

¹¹Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. ¹²There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

Scripture for projection: Isaiah 43: 18-21 (NIV) "God's Mercy"

¹⁸"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. ¹⁹See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

²⁰The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, ²¹the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

Synopsis: Regret has been described as "mining our mistakes." We learn from mistakes, but to get stuck in regret doesn't show the power of God to love and forgive. How do we hear the call to "let go" and allow God to bring healing and peace?

Felt need: To recognize the need to let go of what holds us back from true freedom in Christ.

Visuals: Shovel; digging a hole. Stones. Rearview mirror. Undo button. Ball and chain (regret, guilt, shame).

Quotes: Moving on doesn't mean you forget about things; it just means you have to accept what happened and continue living.

Media possibilities: We only watched the first two as a group.

- **"Regrets."** Length: 2:35. Cost: \$20.00. We often mark our pasts by the regrets we have. Whether its trials we encounter, the disappointments we endure, or the unhealthy habits we foster, we each have lingering regrets in our lives. We allow ourselves to be burdened by our pain, scars and shame forgetting that Christ came to set us free. **Comments:** Lots of specific regrets. Betty scale: 8/10. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/27990/regrets>
- **"Let Go."** Length: 3:05. Cost: Free. We tend to hold on to things for far too long, causing our heart to become stone. Use this reflective visual prayer as a moment to prepare your community's hearts for worship or confession. **Comments:** Female voice was a bit soft and hard to understand over the music. It is available with a male narrator and a no narration version. We like the text of the prayer. It lends itself to good visuals with stones. <https://journeyboxmedia.com/product/let-go/>

- “Bad Day.” Length: 2:30. Cost: \$20.00. We all have bad days in life. We get angry, we say something that we regret, or do something that we wish we never did. God offers us forgiveness and a brand new start. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/17205/bad-day>
- “Living with Regrets.” Length: 3:49. Cost: \$14.98. In this clip, Christ picks up Jake after a party. They talk about how they regret the way they treated Roger. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/31486/living-with-regrets>

Related info: Do we want to offer a time of healing? Yes.

Activity: Consecration of Memorial Gifts, tour of Memorial Garden

Music: #383 “This Is a Day of New Beginnings”; #472 “Near to the Heart of God” #528 “Nearer, My God, to Thee”; “Hello My Name Is”; “Don’t Stop Thinking About Tomorrow”

Discussion points: 1) Top funeral songs: “My Way” (regrets, I’ve had a few...) and “Bridge Over Troubled Water” 2) Regret is one of the most destructive things we hang onto. It can lead to depression and revenge. 3) Pastor Mary will look at repentance and regret. Repentance is easier said than done, but regret leaves you in the stuck, looking backward place. It compromises our witness as it is an impediment to accepting the freedom found in Christ. 4) Mistakes have consequences, but we do not to be forever defined by them. If we let that happen we won’t be able to recognize that God loves us anyway. 5) Lynne sank into a deep depression after cancer. Prayer alone did not help. She needed to be honest with herself (same as repentance) and seek a doctor’s help too. 6) Jim has a mental picture of Winnie-the-Pooh’s friends, Eeyore, when he thinks of regret. 7) What does joy (not happiness) look like? We have a savior and salvation that we could never have on our own. 8) 1986 movie “The Mission” penance scene is a great example of letting go of a great burden. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRUXEAspYWs>

June 2, 2019: “_____” – STOP HOLDING GRUDGES (in the name of love)

Pastor Mary is at Annual Conference.

Brad Hilleary & Carole Koch will preach together at both services.

Scripture: Ephesians 4: 25-32 “Living As Children of the Light” (CEV)

²⁵We are part of the same body. Stop lying and start telling each other the truth.

²⁶Don’t get so angry that you sin. Don’t go to bed angry ²⁷and don’t give the devil a chance.

²⁸If you are a thief, quit stealing. Be honest and work hard, so you will have something to give to people in need.

²⁹Stop all your dirty talk. Say the right thing at the right time and help others by what you say.

³⁰Don’t make God’s Spirit sad. The Spirit makes you sure that someday you will be free from your sins.

³¹Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others. Don’t yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude. ³²Instead, be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.

Scripture: Galatians 5: 16-26 “God’s Desire and Our Own Desires” (CEV)

¹⁶If you are guided by the Spirit, you won’t obey your selfish desires. ¹⁷The Spirit and your desires are enemies of each other. They are always fighting each other and keeping you from doing what you feel you should. ¹⁸But if you obey the Spirit, the Law of Moses has no control over you.

¹⁹People's desires make them give in to immoral ways, filthy thoughts, and shameful deeds. ²⁰They worship idols, practice witchcraft, hate others, and are hard to get along with. People become jealous, angry, and selfish. They not only argue and cause trouble, but they are ²¹envious. They get drunk, carry on at wild parties, and do other evil things as well. I told you before, and I am telling you again: No one who does these things will share in the blessings of God's kingdom.

²²God's Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, ²³gentle, and self-controlled. There is no law against behaving in any of these ways. ²⁴And because we belong to Christ Jesus, we have killed our selfish feelings and desires. ²⁵God's Spirit has given us life, and so we should follow the Spirit. ²⁶But don't be conceited or make others jealous by claiming to be better than they are.

Scripture: (James 1: 19-20) "Listening and Doing" (CEV)

¹⁹ My dear friends, you should be quick to listen and slow to speak or to get angry.

²⁰ If you are angry, you cannot do any of the good things that God wants done.

Synopsis:

Felt need: To admit that holding grudges is destructive to our spiritual life.

Potential sermon titles: "How's that Working for You?" and "Bitter Isn't Better"

Visuals: Cartoon: Filing cabinet of issues taking up most of the couch leaving little room for the couple.

Quotes: 1) Holding a grudge is like letting someone live rent-free in your head. 2) There is enough heartache and sorrow in this life without our adding to it through our own stubbornness, bitterness, and resentment. 3) When you hold grudges, your hands aren't free to catch blessings. 4) It hurts more to hold grudges than to forgive. The anger we hold inside damages us, nobody else. Don't be a prisoner of yourself. 5) "I hope he'll rot in hell." Why keeping a grudge is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. 6) I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear. – Martin Luther King, Jr. 7) The only one unforgiveness jails is you.

Media possibilities: We watched all three videos as a group.

- "Effects of Unresolved Offenses." Length: 1:20. Cost: \$20.00. We asked ordinary people what they thought the effects of holding a grudge are. After a variety of answers, here is what they said. This is a great way to introduce topics like forgiveness, anger, love or mercy. **Comments:** We could do something like this in house or use this idea as an activity during worship. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/10509/effects-of-unresolved-offenses>
- "Grudge." Length: 4:20. Cost: \$20.00. Collecting grudges is a lot of work...especially if you collect a souvenir for every time you've been hurt. Sitting in a garage filled with "mementos," our host shares stories about how he collected three of his items. This visual depiction of how we all store up our grudges is a fantastic illustration about the value of forgiveness. **Comments:** Needs an intro. It reminded Carole about her sister and a chemistry set. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/35124/grudge>
- "Thoughts on Showing Grace." Length: 1:02. Cost: \$20.00. Deep thoughts from a shallow Christian on show grace. **Comments:** Must show sometime. Favorite line: Holding grace over someone else's head. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/63850/thoughts-on-showing-grace>

Related info: For a very contrary look at holding grudges, read the book review (by Jenny Allen) of How to Hold a Grudge by Sophie Hannah. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-to-hold-a-grudge-review-bitter-is-better-11546559895> Potential sermon title based on this book: "Bitter Isn't Better."

Activity: Holy Communion. Pastor Mary will ask Rev. John Thompson to preside.

Music: #2218 "You Are Mine"; "How He Loves" by David Crowder Band

Discussion points: 1) Carole: The only grudge she ever held was based on envy. She stay away from the person for a very long time but ended it with an apology at their 50th high school reunion. The person never actually knew about the grudge. HS Reunion related advertisement: Get Rid of Your Worry Monster <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/d8dh/pom-get-rid-of-your-worry-monster-reunion> 2) Grudges hurt the person holding them. 3) Pastor Mary has seen the effect of holding grudges in her own family. It is not a good way to live. It hurts relationships and the people caught in the middle. It can carry on generationally. 4) Related book: Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis is a memoir by J. D. Vance about the Appalachian values of his Kentucky family and their relation to the social problems of his hometown of Middletown, Ohio, where his mother's parents moved when they were young. Holding grudges plays an outsized role in Appalachian values. 5) Misunderstandings – Yale, not jail. 6) Dr. Phil: How's that working for you? 7) "The Race" is the 96th episode of the American sitcom Seinfeld. The story follows Jerry as he meets an old rival, who suspects that he cheated in a high school race and wishes to re-run it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXPiEicc59s>. Related project for the Zukers, Posts, Lucketts – write "The Gospel According to Seinfeld." Festivus for the rest of us. 8) John Wesley: Moving on to perfection means being filled with love. 9) Grudges are a lot of work. They don't make for a happy person.