

## All Church Worship Brainstorming Summary for June-July 2019 Worship

### Series: "Power to Lead Well"

Pentecost & Season of Pentecost

2019 theme: Love God and love your neighbor

Monday, May 13, 2019

**Members present:** David Booth, Larry Jorgenson, Bonnie Jorgenson, Kate Robbins, Ron Zuker, Betty Kinney, Vicki Zuker, Pastor Mary Ivanov, Karen Booth

The Holy Spirit is the continuing presence of God in our lives, but for many of us, the Holy Spirit is mysterious and unpredictable. It's that part of the Trinity that we can't explain well, but we know it's important and want to feel it in our lives. When we say we're "empowered by Christ and sent forth to serve," we're trusting in the Holy Spirit to guide us. We're given the gifts of the Spirit to use as a part of the Body of Christ, but many times, we don't pay much attention to those gifts. Even if we know what they are, we don't always claim them. This series will challenge us to be attentive to the power of the Holy Spirit, to claim our spiritual gifts, and to use them to lead well as servant-leaders. Our VBS Scriptures will guide us.

**Ephesians 3: 14-21 (NIRV)** will be our overall guiding Scripture:

<sup>14</sup> I bow in prayer to the Father because of my work among you. <sup>15</sup> From the Father every family in heaven and on earth gets its name. <sup>16</sup> I pray that he will use his glorious riches to make you strong. May his Holy Spirit give you his power deep down inside you. <sup>17</sup> Then Christ will live in your hearts because you believe in him. And I pray that your love will have deep roots. I pray that it will have a strong foundation. <sup>18</sup> May you have power together with all the Lord's holy people to understand Christ's love. May you know how wide and long and high and deep it is. <sup>19</sup> And may you know his love, even though it can't be known completely. Then you will be filled with everything God has for you.

<sup>20</sup> **God is able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine. He does everything by his power that is working in us.** <sup>21</sup> Give him glory in the church and in Christ Jesus. Give him glory through all time and for ever and ever. Amen.

**Music ideas:** You Say, God of Wonders, Jesus Loves Me, Thy Word

#### Ideas for the series:

- Share VBS memories
- Invite people to offer a monologue in first person - Drama Ministry?
- Define what a servant-leader is

#### Resources:

- *To Mars and Beyond* curriculum
- *To Mars and Beyond* Adult Study Book
- Short-term class on spiritual gifts
- <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership->



[resources/develop-principled-spiritual-leaders](#)

**Visuals:**

- VBS décor
- Red, orange, yellow, white, dove
- Graphics:  
<https://www.ignitermedia.com/collections/39142-heroes-of-faith>



**Publicity:** “See You on Sunday!” and February Harbor Light

**General discussion points:** 1) This series grew out of a discussion at last September’s retreat around current leaders and their leadership styles. It is particularly relevant for Pastor Mary as a GVSU alumnus watching a beloved president, Thomas Haas, retire. He noted that servant-leaders have competence, commitment, community, and character. They also know the importance of just showing up. 2) Qualities of a servant-leader in the context of a Christian community:

- Exhibit a commitment to God, one’s own family, community, and self.
- Put other people above self.
- Welcomes all. Show that leading is not about one’s self or best friends.
- Has a purpose.
- Owns mistakes.
- Is honest and trustworthy.
- Is a good listener and vision.
- Sees other people’s strengths, finds appropriate ways to use them, and shows appreciation for what they do.
- Manages conflict well.
- Does not operate alone. Has a good support group.

3) Qualities of a bad leader: It seems like it is easier to list example here than for good leaders.

- Can’t be trusted or can be trusted to let people down.
- Are critical, prone to belittling friends, co-workers, relatives in front of others.
- Ask for input, but never do anything with it as the decision has already been made.
- May be corrupt.
- Show favoritism.
- Are incompetent, but don’t own up to their own failures or what they don’t know.
- Don’t listen to others. Illustration: Boss dumping the contents of a suggestion box in the trash.

4) Theme: We hear the term “power,” its use, and abuse used frequently and in ways that are not consistent with what we will talk about as we consider the power of the Holy Spirit.

**June 9, 2019: “The Power to Lead”**

Pentecost Sunday

**Scripture:** Acts 2: 1-21 (VOICE) “The Holy Spirit Comes on Pentecost”

**Narrator:** <sup>2:1</sup> When the holy day of Pentecost came 50 days after Passover, they were gathered together in one place.

<sup>2</sup> Picture yourself among the disciples: A sound roars from the sky without warning, the roar of a violent wind, and the whole house where you are gathered reverberates with the sound. <sup>3</sup> Then a flame appears, dividing into smaller flames and spreading from one person to the next. <sup>4</sup> All the people present are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin speaking in languages they've never spoken, as the Spirit empowers them.

<sup>5</sup> Because of the holy festival, there are devout Jews staying as pilgrims in Jerusalem from every nation under the sun. <sup>6</sup> They hear the sound, and a crowd gathers. They are amazed because each of them can hear the group speaking in their native languages. <sup>7</sup> They are shocked and amazed by this.

**Pilgrims:** Just a minute. Aren't all of these people Galileans? <sup>8</sup> How in the world do we all hear our native languages being spoken? <sup>9</sup> Look—there are Parthians here, and Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, and Judeans, residents of Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygians and Pamphylians, Egyptians and Libyans from Cyrene, Romans including both Jews by birth and converts, <sup>11</sup> Cretans, and Arabs. We're each, in our own languages, hearing these people talk about God's powerful deeds.

**Narrator:** <sup>12</sup> Their amazement becomes confusion as they wonder,

**Pilgrims:** What does this mean?

**Skeptics:** <sup>13</sup> It doesn't mean anything. They're all drunk on some fresh wine!

**Narrator:** <sup>14</sup> As the twelve stood together, Peter shouted to the crowd,

**Peter:** Men of Judea and all who are staying here in Jerusalem, listen. I want you to understand: <sup>15</sup> these people aren't drunk as you may think. Look, it's only nine o'clock in the morning! <sup>16</sup> No, this isn't drunkenness; this is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. <sup>17</sup> Hear what God says!

In the last days, I will offer My Spirit to humanity as a libation.

Your children will boldly speak the word of the Lord.

Young warriors will see visions, and your elders will dream dreams.

<sup>18</sup> Yes, in those days I shall offer My Spirit to all servants, both male and female, and they will speak boldly My word.

<sup>19</sup> And in the heaven above and on the earth below, I shall give signs of impending judgment: blood, fire, and clouds of smoke.

<sup>20</sup> The sun will become a void of darkness, and the moon will become blood.

Then the great and dreadful day of the Lord will arrive,

<sup>21</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be liberated into God's freedom and peace.

**Synopsis:** The Holy Spirit isn't simply the third person of the Trinity, but the power of God to sustain us on our journey and help us to lead.

**Felt need:** To trust in the Spirit to sustain us with gifts for ministry

**Visuals:** Holy Spirit tongues of fire???

**Media:** We have a couple other videos that we have used before too. We only watched the first as a group. We also have a homemade video of tongues of fire and people speaking in different languages.

- "Pentecost: Everything Is New." Length: 1:23. Cost: \$16.99. God is here. Christ is here. The Spirit is here, and we are part of it. This visually engaging, high-energy video celebrates Pentecost, when everything became new and the Church was born. <https://skitguys.com/videos/pentecost-everything-is-new> **Comments:** Like the visuals. It would make sense to read the scripture before seeing the video for people who are unfamiliar with Pentecost.

- “The Spirit on the Street.” Length: 3:09. Cost: \$12.00. Here is what some people have to say about the Holy Spirit. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/2802/spirit-on-the-street>
- “Thoughts on the Holy Spirit.” Length: 1:00. Cost: \$20.00. Thoughts from a shallow Christian. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/37201/thoughts-on-the-holy-spirit>
- “The Holy Spirit – Don’t Forget About It!” Length 3:12. Cost. \$20.00. We really like to focus on Jesus and we really like to talk about God and so sometimes the Holy Spirit gets a bad rap. The Trinity doesn’t work without the Spirit. (Change music?) <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/46874/the-holy-spirit-dont-forget-about-it>

**Drama:** “Knowledge Is Power.” To open a discussion about how we often miss the point of studying about God. Cast: 2. Under 5 minutes.

**Related info:** Last day of choir

**Activity:** Invite congregation to dress in red, orange, or yellow; Reception of New Members

**Music:** Spirit of the Living God (UMH 393), Spirit of God (FWS 2117). This is the choir’s last Sunday until fall. They are singing, “Just As I Am.”

**Discussion points:** 1) Present Acts 2: 1-21 as a drama, with movement, sound effects (wind, thunder), many voices, concluding with red toilet paper streamers over the congregation using leaf blowers (or air cannons). Karen still has the script, video and sound effects from the May 5, 2015 drama. 2) Would someone like to do a liturgical dance too? 2) As Methodists, we don’t focus on the Holy Spirit or speaking in tongues as much as the Pentecostals so.

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## June 16, 2019: “Lead with Faith”

Father’s Day

**Scripture:** Daniel 6 (CEV) “Daniel in the Den of Lions”

<sup>1</sup>Darius divided his kingdom into a hundred and twenty states and placed a governor in charge of each one.

<sup>2</sup>In order to make sure that his government was run properly, Darius put three other officials in charge of the governors. One of these officials was Daniel. <sup>3</sup>And he did his work so much better than the other governors and officials that the king decided to let him govern the whole kingdom.

<sup>4</sup>The other men tried to find something wrong with the way Daniel did his work for the king. But they could not accuse him of anything wrong, because he was honest and faithful and did everything he was supposed to do. <sup>5</sup>Finally, they said to one another, “We will never be able to bring any charge against Daniel, unless it has to do with his religion.”

<sup>6</sup>They all went to the king and said:

Your Majesty, we hope you live forever! <sup>7</sup>All of your officials, leaders, advisors, and governors agree that you should make a law forbidding anyone to pray to any god or human except you for the next thirty days. Everyone who disobeys this law must be thrown into a pit of lions. <sup>8</sup>Order this to be written and then sign it, so it cannot be changed, just as no written law of the Medes and Persians can be changed.”

<sup>9</sup>So King Darius made the law and had it written down.

<sup>10</sup>Daniel heard about the law, but when he returned home, he went upstairs and prayed in front of the window that faced Jerusalem. In the same way that he had always done, he knelt down in prayer three times a day, giving thanks to God.

<sup>11</sup>The men who had spoken to the king watched Daniel and saw him praying to his God for help. <sup>12</sup>They went back to the king and said, “Didn’t you make a law that forbids anyone to pray to any god or human except you for the next thirty days? And doesn’t the law say that everyone who disobeys it will be thrown into a pit of lions?”

“Yes, that’s the law I made,” the king agreed. “And just like all written laws of the Medes and Persians, it cannot be changed.”

<sup>13</sup>The men then told the king, “That Jew named Daniel, who was brought here as a captive, refuses to obey you or the law that you ordered to be written. And he still prays to his god three times a day.” <sup>14</sup>The king was really upset to hear about this, and for the rest of the day he tried to think how he could save Daniel.

<sup>15</sup>At sunset the men returned and said, “Your Majesty, remember that no written law of the Medes and Persians can be changed, not even by the king.”

<sup>16f</sup> So Darius ordered Daniel to be brought out and thrown into a pit of lions. But he said to Daniel, “You have been faithful to your God, and I pray that he will rescue you.”

<sup>17</sup>A stone was rolled over the pit, and it was sealed. Then Darius and his officials stamped the seal to show that no one should let Daniel out. <sup>18</sup>All night long the king could not sleep. He did not eat anything, and he would not let anyone come in to entertain him.

<sup>19</sup>At daybreak the king got up and ran to the pit. <sup>20</sup>He was anxious and shouted, “Daniel, you were faithful and served your God. Was he able to save you from the lions?”

<sup>21</sup>Daniel answered, “Your Majesty, I hope you live forever! <sup>22</sup> My God knew that I was innocent, and he sent an angel to keep the lions from eating me. Your Majesty, I have never done anything to hurt you.”

<sup>23</sup>The king was relieved to hear Daniel’s voice, and he gave orders for him to be taken out of the pit. Daniel’s faith in his God had kept him from being harmed. <sup>24</sup>And the king ordered the men who had brought charges against Daniel to be thrown into the pit, together with their wives and children. But before they even reached the bottom, the lions ripped them to pieces.

<sup>25</sup>King Darius then sent this message to all people of every nation and race in the world:

“Greetings to all of you! <sup>26</sup>I command everyone in my kingdom to worship and honor the God of Daniel. He is the living God, the one who lives forever. His power and his kingdom will never end.

<sup>27</sup>He rescues people and sets them free by working great miracles. Daniel’s God has rescued him from the power of the lions.”

<sup>28</sup>All went well for Daniel while Darius was king, and even when Cyrus the Persian ruled.

**Synopsis:** Daniel in the lion’s den shows the power of faith to guide us and help us to lead others.

**Felt need:** To find strength from the Holy Spirit to claim our faith and be obedient to God

**Visuals:** lion, fire

**Media:** We did not watch these as a group.

- Deidox – Alyssa.” Length: 4:39. Cost: \$20.00. A teenager lives her faith, not by sight. <https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/18912/deidox--alyssa>
- “Sick.” Length: 1:41. Cost: Free with membership. Based on Jesus’s quote in Luke 5:31, SICK is a visually intriguing wake-up call for all followers of Christ. <https://journeyboxmedia.com/product/sick/>
- “Daniel – Between Iraq & a Hard Place.” Length: 1:15. Cost: \$20.00. An animated telling of the story of Daniel and his friends. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/48710/daniel-between-iraq-amp-a-hard-pace>

**Drama:** “A Den of Political Lions.” As the lions await the arrival of Daniel for their dinner, they discuss the unfairness of the religious laws and dream of a country where people will have freedom of religion.

**Related info:** <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/10-things-you-didn-t-know-about-daniel-in-the-bible.html>

**Activity:** Confirmation, Chocolate for all men in the congregation

**Music:** For the Beauty of the Earth (UMH 92), Praise to the Lord, the Almighty (UMH 139)

**Discussion points:** 1) We’ll need to tell Daniel’s story, but today’s focus is on him in the lion’s den. 2) He was a servant-leader who stood against the crowd. The king had given him power (authority) and felt badly when Daniel was thrown to the lions. 3) We usually skip over the ending where the other people thrown in the lions’ den were torn to bits. 4) Daniel remained faithful to God. The king changed his rules because of that. 5) This story takes place after a lifetime of service. Daniel was in his 70s or 80s. 6) He had integrity and devotion to the greater good. 7) What do we do when we are given power? 8) *To Mars and Beyond* Adult Study invites people to think about their core values. It offers quite a long list and asks people to circle up to seven that are important to them. It also asks them to finish this sentence: I am at my best when.... 9) Larry remembers a work training (brainwashing) session at which former State Representative Wm. Van Regenmorter noted that most politicians are very idealist when they are sworn it, but have to almost immediately begin the work of getting re-elected. It is hard to maintain core values under that system. 10) What is important (core values) to families raising kids? Knowing that makes it far easier to tell kids that is not how things are done at our house. 11) How do we live faithfully in a world that doesn’t view, honor, or care about God the way we do? It is hard. 12) Where are the figurative lions’ dens in today’s world? Dark basement (kids). Holding back advice on how to raise children – rewards, punishments, responsibilities.

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## June 23, 2019: “Lead with Boldness”

**Scripture:** Esther 4-9 (VOICE - focus on chapters 4 & 7, below)

*Chapter 4: Mordecai Persuades Esther to Help*

**Narrator:** <sup>4:1</sup> Mordecai mourned when he found out what had happened. He ripped his clothes, put on sackcloth, and wiped ash onto his body. Then he went through the city, weeping loudly in anguish. <sup>2</sup> When he came to the king’s gate, not far from the palace, he stopped since those wearing sackcloth were not permitted to enter it and disrupt the mood of the court.

<sup>3</sup> In the meantime, as word of the king’s decree began to spread throughout all of the provinces, terrible distress grew among the Jews. They fasted, wept, and screamed out in misery. Like Mordecai, many put on sackcloth and ashes.

<sup>4</sup> Back in Susa, Esther’s maids and eunuchs witnessed Mordecai mourning outside of the king’s gate. They went and reported to the queen all that they saw.

**Esther:** What is wrong? Why is he doing this? It breaks my heart to think of him like this. Take these clothes to Mordecai so he can put them on instead of wearing sackcloth.

**Narrator:** *But when the servants arrived, Mordecai refused to wear the clothes Queen Esther had sent.* <sup>5</sup> So Esther sent for Hathach, who was one of the king’s eunuchs assigned to serve her.

**Esther:** Hathach, go to Mordecai at once. Find out why he is mourning, and report back to me all that he says.

**Narrator:** <sup>6</sup> Hathach went to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate. <sup>7</sup> Mordecai told the queen's servant everything that had happened and how much money Haman had pledged to place into the royal treasury in exchange for the destruction of the Jews. <sup>8</sup> Then he gave Hathach a copy of the order for mass murder of the Jews, the same order issued in the city of Susa.

**Mordecai:** Show it to Esther. Tell her everything I have told you. Convince her to go before her king and plead for his favor, not only for her life, but also for the lives of her people.

**Narrator:** <sup>9</sup> Hathach returned to Esther and told her everything Mordecai had said. <sup>10</sup> Esther ordered Hathach to return to the city gate and reply to Mordecai.

**Esther:** <sup>11</sup> How am I supposed to see the king? It's known throughout the land, from the greatest of the king's officials to the common folk who live in the provinces, that any person who approaches the king in the inner chamber without being invited is sentenced to death. That's the law! There's only one exception, and that's if the king were to hold out the gold scepter to that person and spare his or her life. It's been 30 days since the king last summoned me!

**Narrator:** <sup>12</sup> Hathach and the other servants took Esther's response to Mordecai.

**Mordecai:** <sup>13</sup> Tell Esther, "Don't be fooled. Just because you are living inside the king's palace doesn't mean that you out of all of the Jews will escape the carnage. You must go before your king. <sup>14</sup> If you stay silent during this time, deliverance for the Jews will come from somewhere, but you, my child, and all of your father's family will die. And who knows? Perhaps you have been made queen for such a time as this."

**Narrator:** <sup>15</sup> Once again, Hathach returned to Queen Esther with Mordecai's message. In turn she sent a reply back to Mordecai.

**Esther:** Tell Mordecai, <sup>16</sup> "In preparation for my audience with the king, do this: gather together all the Jews in Susa, and fast and pray for me. Intercede for me. For three days and nights, abstain from all food and drink. My maids and I will join you in this time. And after the three days, I will go in to the king and plead my people's case, even though it means breaking the law. And if I die, then I die!"

**Narrator:** <sup>17</sup> Mordecai left the king's gate and put all of Esther's instructions into action.

#### *Chapter 7: Haman Hanged*

**Narrator:** <sup>7:1</sup> King Ahasuerus and Haman came to dine with Queen Esther; <sup>2</sup> and while they were drinking wine, the king posed his question once again.

**King Ahasuerus:** What is your request, Queen Esther? I'm willing to give you anything you want. Just make your request. Even if it's half the kingdom you desire, I will make it happen!

**Queen Esther:** <sup>3</sup> If you favor me, my king, and if it pleases you, spare my life. That's all I'm asking for—that my people and I be spared. That is my wish. <sup>4</sup> There are some, my king, who wish to rid your kingdom of us. For my people and I have been sold, marked for destruction and massacre. Now if the plan were simply to sell our men and women into slavery, I would have kept my mouth closed because that would not have been important enough to disturb you, my king.

**King Ahasuerus:** <sup>5</sup> Who has targeted your people? Where is this man who dares to do this?

**Queen Esther** (pointing to Haman): <sup>6</sup> The man responsible for these actions is wicked Haman. He is vile, and an enemy to my people.

**Narrator:** In that moment, Haman's joy turned to terror before the king and queen. <sup>7</sup> Angered, the king shoved away from the table, left his wine, and walked into the palace garden. But Haman, aware that King Ahasuerus had already sealed his fate, didn't follow behind. Instead, he pleaded with Queen Esther to spare his life. <sup>8</sup> In desperation, he threw himself onto the couch where Queen

Esther was sitting, just as King Ahasuerus walked back from the garden to the place where the wine and the banquet had been set.

**King Ahasuerus:** Haman, will you even violate my queen right here in the palace, where I can see you?

**Narrator:** As soon as the king gave the order, the royal eunuchs covered Haman's face. His fate had been sealed. <sup>9</sup> One of those eunuchs was Harbonah.

**Harbonah:** Look! Haman has prepared a 75-foot pole for execution in his own courtyard. He was hoping to use it to hang Mordecai, the man who spoke up and saved the king.

**King Ahasuerus:** Well, hang him on it!

**Narrator:** <sup>10</sup> So they took Haman and killed him and displayed him on the pole he had made ready for Mordecai. And King Ahasuerus' anger subsided.

**Synopsis:** Esther used her social capital and influence to make a difference, and she invited others to pray and trust in God.

**Felt need:** To trust in the Holy Spirit to help us speak and act boldly for God in our sphere of influence.

**Visuals:** crown, "For such a time as this..."

**Media:** WE watched the last two as a group.

- "A Fourfold Blessing." Length: 2:25. Cost: \$20.00. This modern church classic is a beautiful prayer that challenges our notions of what is considered a blessing while callin us to act on the empathy that we feel for others. Adapted from "A Non-traditional Blessing" by Sr. Ruth Fox. <https://skitguys.com/videos/a-fourfold-blessing>
- "One of a Kind: Esther – Picked for a Purpose." Length: 4:00. Cost: \$19.99. Esther thought she was just a regular girl, but God chose her to be in a specific place for a very specific purpose. But she had to trust God, even when she didn't hear from him. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/62381/the-book-of-esther-in-20-words>  
**Comments:** She provides an excellent summary of Esther's life up until chapter 4. Use is before the scripture reading.
- "The Book of Esther in 20 Words." Length: 1:18. Cost: #15.00. Each of the 10 phrases is accompanied by the scriptural reference where it is found. **Comments:** Good summary of the whole book. Much different than the previous video. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/62381/the-book-of-esther-in-20-words>

**Drama:** "Right Where I Belong." A woman who wants to serve others nearly misses a chance to serve a friend in need because she's distracted by a bigger cause.

**Related info:** 1) <https://lcef.org/five-powerful-leadership-lessons-from-the-book-of-esther/> 2) June 22 wedding

**Activity:** Cut out star (Esther means "star") for people to write down an opportunity to serve God boldly where they are. Missions' Strawberry Festival.

**Music:** God of Grace and God of Glory (UMH 577), God Will Take Care of You (UMH 130) [http://www.carolynshymns.com/perhaps\\_you\\_have\\_been\\_chosen.html](http://www.carolynshymns.com/perhaps_you_have_been_chosen.html)

<i>Verse 1:</i>	<i>she dared to serve her God.</i>
<i>Come, let us honor Esther,</i>	<i>She could not rest with privilege</i>
<i>her courage we applaud.</i>	<i>deny her people's fate.</i>
<i>When she could live with riches,</i>	<i>She chose to live her calling:</i>

*serve those outside the gate.*

Verse 2:

*God, grant that we, like Esther,  
have courage for our quest,  
and use our past experience*

*to serve those not as blessed.*

*Help us to trust you fully  
that we may find our bliss,  
and answer when you call us  
for 'such a time as this.'*

**Discussion points:** 1) This was part of Children's Sunday 2017. 2) Esther uses both her social capital and influence to save her people. She knew it wasn't something she could do alone and asked her people to pray and fast in anticipation of her meeting with the king. She took a stand. 3) Key phrase: For such a time as this. 4) What messages do we play in our own heads that tell us not to try or take a risk? 5) How do we balance humility with using our influence at home, at work, in the community, and in group settings? 6) Anti-bullying campaigns promote the power of just one person standing against a bully. 7) Purim celebrates Esther's courage and success in saving the Jews. 8) We usually skip over the ending, where Haman is hung, but Kate's Sunday School kids wanted to know that he received a just punishment.

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## June 30, 2019: "Lead with Kindness"

**Scripture:** Luke 10: 25-37 (VOICE) "The Parable of the Good Samaritan"

**Narrator:** <sup>25</sup> Just then a scholar of the Hebrew Scriptures tried to trap Jesus.

**Scholar:** Teacher, what must I do to experience the eternal life?

**Jesus** (answering with a question): <sup>26</sup> What is written in the *Hebrew* Scriptures? How do you interpret their answer to your question?

**Scholar:** <sup>27</sup> You shall love—"love the Eternal One your God with everything you have: all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind"—and "love your neighbor as yourself."

**Jesus:** <sup>28</sup> Perfect. Your answer is correct. Follow these commands and you will live.

**Narrator:** <sup>29</sup> The scholar was frustrated by this response because he was hoping to make himself appear smarter than Jesus.

**Scholar:** Ah, but who is my neighbor?

**Jesus:** <sup>30</sup> This fellow was traveling down from Jerusalem to Jericho when some robbers mugged him. They took his clothes, beat him to a pulp, and left him naked and bleeding and in critical condition. <sup>31</sup> By chance, a priest was going down that same road, and when he saw the wounded man, he crossed over to the other side and passed by. <sup>32</sup> Then a Levite who was on his way to assist in the temple also came and saw the victim lying there, and he too kept his distance. <sup>33</sup> Then a despised Samaritan journeyed by. When he saw the fellow, he felt compassion for him. <sup>34</sup> The Samaritan went over to him, stopped the bleeding, applied some first aid, and put the poor fellow on his donkey. He brought the man to an inn and cared for him through the night.

<sup>35</sup> The next day, the Samaritan took out some money—two days' wages to be exact—and paid the innkeeper, saying, "Please take care of this fellow, and if this isn't enough, I'll repay you next time I pass through."

<sup>36</sup> Which of these three proved himself a neighbor to the man who had been mugged by the robbers?

**Scholar:** <sup>37</sup> The one who showed mercy to him.

**Jesus:** Well then, go and behave like that Samaritan.

**Synopsis:** The Good Samaritan is remembered for many reasons, but one is incredible kindness that goes beyond the expected response.

**Felt need:** To remember the power of the Holy Spirit to help us be kind when it's inconvenient, unpopular, and risky

**Visuals:**

**Media:** We did not view these as a group, but we'll probably use "Good Sam." Note from Karen: The second video is also a good contemporary retelling that doesn't seem very long.

- "Good Sam" video from 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade Sunday School class
- "Good Samaritan." Length: 5:04. Cost: \$5.00. A modern retelling of the story. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/47100/good-samaritan>
- "Kids Talk Kindness 1." Length: 04:2. Cost: \$8.00. In this segment kids talk about things you can do to be kind. <https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/13871/kids-talk-kindness-1>
- "Who Is My Neighbor?" Length: 5:18. Cost: We own it. Last used 7/14/13. A modern day retelling of the parable. A woman is stranded on a remote country road. She is ultimately helped by a rough looking member of a motorcycle gang.

**Drama:** "Good Samaritan." Upon meeting a homeless man in a fast food restaurant, a theology student is challenged by God's most basic command, "Love one another as I have loved you. Cast: 2. Over 5 min.

**Related info:** <https://www.crosswalk.com/family/career/the-parable-of-the-good-samaritan-5-lessons-learned.html>, <https://www.scarymommy.com/be-good-samaritan/> **Comments:** The scary mommy blog emphasizes that there are Good Samaritan laws protecting people who step in to help. What a sad statement about our society!

**Activity:** "Random Acts of Kindness" cards and invitation to perform one

**Music:** Jesu, Jesu (UMH 432); "The Good Samaritan"

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/06/hymn-good-samaritan.html>

**Discussion points:** 1) This is a familiar story, even to people outside the church. We need to focus on a different aspect with each retelling so today we will focus on kindness, especially when it is dangerous, risky, and unpopular. The Good Samaritan was willing to get involved in an uncomfortable mess. Are we? 2) In Jesus' time, his audience would have known of the racial and social boundaries that this man crossed. We might miss that. 3) The Good Samaritan must have been a man of great means, wealth, integrity, or the innkeeper would not have taken in a stranger on his word alone. 4) The television show, "What Would You Do?" is a pretty good example of how people are put in uncomfortable situations. Some people choose to do the right (but very difficult) thing; others just watch a bad situation get worse. 5) Jesus tells this parable in response to a scholar with a legalist mindset. "What is the minimum I must do to have eternal life?" We sometimes ask the same question when we are dealing with friends, family, and church members because it is messy. How much is enough? 6) This is a challenging story and we already know what we should do. Volunteering can be very uplifting. 7) Larry: What was once a small act of kindness (flashing headlights to let someone know their lights are not on), can be a liability (gangs/shootings). 9) Scam or real need? As Dave and Karen were riding the monorail from terminal A in San

Francisco to the car rental place, a man hopped on asking for money to pay for his daughter's luggage. Larry and Bonnie have noticed people asking in the surgery waiting room. Vicki and Ron prayed with a man at a rest stop who was asking for gas money; he did use it to buy gas. What about people standing on a street corner? Who can fathom being in that position? What is our role? How far do we go? Where are the boundaries? 8) Larry noted that virtually everyone who was in his Katrina clean-up group was thanked with one exception, something that doesn't sit well with some volunteers. Since Ron has worked at the mission, he has noticed that more than one volunteer has been hurt by a lack of gratitude. He has also noticed that many of the guys don't have the where-with-all to know that they should say thank you. 9) We don't know if the Good Samaritan was thanked though we might assume that the man was grateful. 10) When we're feeling a bit snarky, we might offer a "you're welcome" if we don't hear a "thank you." 11) Jesus calls us to step into messy situations that are not at all convenient.

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### July 7, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.: "Lead with Gratitude"

**Scripture:** Luke 17: 11-19 (VOICE) "Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers"

**Narrator:** <sup>11</sup> Jesus was still pressing toward Jerusalem, taking a road that went along the border between Samaria (*considered undesirable territory*) and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> On the outskirts of a border town along this road, He was greeted from a distance by a group of 10 people who were under quarantine because of an ugly and disgusting skin disease known as leprosy.

**Lepers (shouting across the distance):** <sup>13</sup> Jesus, Master, show mercy to us!

**Jesus:** <sup>14</sup> Go now and present yourselves to the priests for inspection of your disease.

They went, and before they reached the priests, their skin disease was healed, leaving no trace of the disease that scarred them and separated them from the community.

<sup>15</sup> One of them, the instant he realized he had been healed, turned and ran back to Jesus, shouting praises to God. <sup>16</sup> He prostrated himself facedown at Jesus' feet.

**Leper:** Thank You! Thank You!

**Narrator:** Now this fellow happened to be, not a Jew, but a Samaritan.

**Jesus:** <sup>17</sup> Didn't all ten receive the same healing this fellow did? Where are the other nine? <sup>18</sup> Was the only one who came back to give God praise an outsider? <sup>19</sup> (to the Samaritan man) Get up, and go your way. Your faith has made you healthy again.

**Synopsis:** "Counting your blessings" is always good advice, but how does gratitude make a difference in serving God and each other?

**Felt need:** To take opportunities to be thankful to God and to others

**Visuals:**

**Media:** We did not watch these as a group.

- "A Simple Message of Thanks." Length: 1:16. Cost: \$20.00. With a child's narration and simple artwork this video tells the story of one man's thankfulness to God, reminding us to take the time to thank God for His many blessings in our life.

<https://www.sermonspice.com/product/29107/a-simple-message-of-thanks>

- “Start Small.” Length: 4:01. Cost: \$17.98. We know it's important to give thanks to God for everything, but it can be hard to know where to begin. Sometimes it helps to start small, right where you are. <https://skitguys.com/videos/start-small>
- “Veterans Day: A Letter of Gratitude.” Length: 2:42. Cost: \$16.99. This letter to veterans expresses the gratitude that we feel for those who have made significant sacrifices to serve our country. <https://skitguys.com/videos/veterans-day-a-letter-of-gratitude>

**Related info:** <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/9-ways-for-leaders-to-amplify-their-gratitude/>

**Activity:** Holy Communion, write a thank you note to God (or someone else)

**Music:** Now Thank We All Our God (UMH 102), Thank You, Lord (UMH 84)

**Discussion points:** 1) Jesus didn't tell the healed lepers to come back and say, “thank you.” He does call out the nine who did not thank him. It is notable that the Samaritan was grateful. 2) Cultivating gratitude: What can we remember to be thankful for? 3) Ask people to write a thank you note. 4) Gratitude is a sign of wisdom and spiritual maturity. 4) Why do we show gratitude? That's what we were taught. We feel it. To repay a kindness. 5) The degree of gratitude can vary greatly. 6) Little kids frequently send thank you notes (or drawings), probably more so than adults. 7) Does it personally matter if the thank you is in a text, email, or written not? Times and social mores have changed. A written note is more likely to be kept and displayed for longer, but any form of communication is better than nothing. 8) Larry was at the men's breakfast where he reconnected with an old friend. His friend needs heart surgery, but he is afraid to leave his wife alone as she has Alzheimer's disease. Both men found they were grateful for what they can do. “Thank God we're perfect.”

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## July 14, 2019: “Lead with Hope”

**Scripture:** Luke 24: 13-35 (VOICE) “Walk to Emmaus”

**Narrator:** <sup>13</sup> Picture this: That same day, two other disciples (not of the eleven) are traveling the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus. <sup>14</sup> As they walk along, they talk back and forth about all that has transpired during recent days. <sup>15</sup> While they're talking, discussing, and conversing, Jesus catches up to them and begins walking with them, <sup>16</sup> but for some reason they don't recognize Him.

**Jesus:** <sup>17</sup> You two seem deeply engrossed in conversation. What are you talking about as you walk along this road?

They stop walking and just stand there, looking sad. <sup>18</sup> One of them—Cleopas is his name—speaks up.

**Cleopas:** You must be the only visitor in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about what's been going on over the last few days.

**Jesus:** <sup>19</sup> What are you talking about?

**Two Disciples:** It's all about the man named Jesus of Nazareth. He was a mighty prophet who did amazing miracles and preached powerful messages in the sight of God and everyone around.

<sup>20</sup> Our chief priests and authorities handed Him over to be executed—crucified, in fact.

<sup>21</sup> We had been hoping that He was the One—you know, the One who would liberate all Israel **and bring God's promises.** Anyway, on top of all this, just this morning—the third day after the execution—<sup>22</sup> some women in our group really shocked us. They went to the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup> but they didn't see His body anywhere. Then they came back and told us they did see something—a vision of heavenly messengers—and these messengers said that Jesus was alive.

<sup>24</sup> Some people in our group went to the tomb to check it out, and just as the women had said, it was empty. But they didn't see Jesus.

**Jesus:** <sup>25</sup> Come on, men! Why are you being so foolish? Why are your hearts so sluggish when it comes to believing what the prophets have been saying all along? <sup>26</sup> Didn't it have to be this way? Didn't the Anointed One have to experience these sufferings in order to come into His glory?

**Narrator:** <sup>27</sup> Then He begins with Moses and continues, prophet by prophet, explaining the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures, showing how they were talking about the very things that had happened to Jesus.

**Narrator:** <sup>28</sup> About this time, they are nearing their destination. Jesus keeps walking ahead as if He has no plans to stop there, <sup>29</sup> but they convince Him to join them.

**Two Disciples:** Please, be our guest. It's getting late, and soon it will be too dark to walk.

**Narrator:** So He accompanies them to their home. <sup>30</sup> When they sit down at the table for dinner, He takes the bread in His hands, He gives thanks for it, and then He breaks it and hands it to them. <sup>31</sup> At that instant, two things happen simultaneously: their eyes are suddenly opened so they recognize Him, and He instantly vanishes—just disappears before their eyes.

**Two Disciples** (to each other): <sup>32</sup> Amazing! Weren't our hearts on fire within us while He was talking to us on the road? Didn't you feel it all coming clear as He explained the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures?

**Narrator:** <sup>33</sup> So they get up immediately and rush back to Jerusalem—all seven miles—where they find the eleven gathered together—the eleven plus a number of others. <sup>34</sup> Before Cleopas and his companion can tell their story, the others have their own story to tell.

**Other Disciples:** The Lord has risen indeed! It's true! He appeared to Simon!

**Narrator:** <sup>35</sup> Then the two men report their own experience—their conversation along the road, their moment of realization and recognition as He broke the bread.

**Synopsis:** Jesus' appearance to those who were walking to Emmaus remind us that he is always with us - and sometimes shows up clearly in unexpected ways, people, and even in times when hope seems lost.

**Felt need:** To pay attention to moments of "holy heartburn" that reminds us of God's presence.

**Image:** Death eater (Harry Potter)

**Media:**

- "Hope Is Here." Length: 3:20. Cost: \$18.98. Hope is present in Christian church everywhere, because true Hope is Person, and His name is Jesus.  
<https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/43947/hope-is-here>
- "Debunked 4: I Can Have True Hope without God." Length: 2:55. Cost: \$18.00. In this episode, we debunk the idea that anyone can have real, everlasting hope without God.  
<https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/56918/debunked-4-i-can-have-true-hope-without-god->
- "Our Risen Savior: Road to Emmaus." Length: 5:26. Cost: \$16.99. Two disciples reflect on walking and talking with Jesus on the Road to Emmaus after His resurrection. They might bicker and take a few rabbit trails as they remember that day, but the burning in their hearts lives on. <https://skitguys.com/videos/our-risen-savior-road-to-emmaus>
- "Let's Go (Evangelism)." Length: 1:26. Cost: \$19.98. After Jesus' resurrection, he appeared before two disciples on their way to Emmaus. After this amazing encounter, they are

compelled to share the good news that Christ truly is alive. This movie is a call to action for all believers. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/59384/lets-go-evangelism>

**Related info:**

**Activity:**

**Music:** Leaning on the Everlasting Arms (UMH 133), Open Our Eyes, Lord (FWS 2086), Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus (UMH 349), Open My Eyes (UMH 454)

**Discussion points:** 1) There is power in a long walk. Jesus is always with us even when we don't recognize him and all hope seems lost. 2) Pastor Mary often hears "it's not fair" from people in unexpected circumstances. It is not fair. It can be hard to get over it. It can be even harder to remain hopeful. 3) Edna Gilbert at 100 ½ years of age continues to be hopeful though she has lost a husband and child. Helen Riehl is another person who remains positive in all circumstances. 4) God's promise is that we are never alone, not that no trouble will come. 5) Betty: We can choose a positive or negative attitude. What does God/Jesus want me to do? 6) Larry knows many people who choose to be negative; it seems to be easier than being positive. These "Debbie downers" (Saturday Night Live skit) are hard to be around. They drain our physical, mental, and spiritual energy and suffer physically, mentally, and spiritually too. 7) Burrill and Marilyn Colburn also have positive attitudes. "I'd rather be seen than viewed." – Burrill. 8) One of Dave's patient responded to "Good morning" with "What's good about it?" Dave went on to explain and reprimand him. His attitude has been better in recent visits. He reminds Dave of a death eater from Harry Potter (sucks the life out of us).