

Brainstorming Messages and Synopses October and November 2014

Monday, September 22, 2014

Members present: David Booth, Karen Booth, Ron Zuker, Vicki Zuker, Lynne Richmond, Roger Richmond, Mary Ivanov, Gary Cooper, Barb Gripton, Michael Boersma, and Betty Kinney

Our Goal:

“The worship we hope to develop will be rooted in Scripture, centered on Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It will be relevant to local and emerging culture, while addressing the needs of believers and unbelievers alike. Above all, it will intentionally engage people physically, emotionally, intellectually, and soulfully.”

Felt needs: What physical, emotional, intellectual, or spiritual need are we addressing in this service so that worship is engaging and a means of making disciples? What question needs to be posed/answered so that we are making disciples?

Extravagant Generosity: The Heart of Giving by Michael Reeves and Jennifer Tyler gets church members thinking and praying about their financial discipleship on a day-to-day basis in a holistic way. Members will be able to reflect and share with the congregation via heart card responses and storytelling. We will post the heart cards. Think about **who might want to share their stories with the congregation** during worship. The devotional book that goes along with the series can be used for personal devotions and/or small groups.



HEART is the common image/them/visual. Lynne is collecting sticks to make a large version of the heart shown, above. We will hang this on the front wall. Alternative material: pool noodles.

General discussion points: Use Psalm 51 during the series.

October 12, 2014: “EKG: Ministry Flows from the Heart” 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Synopsis: Generosity is a character trait that we value in others, and yet we sometimes struggle to be generous and to put our trust in God. However, generosity says something about our spiritual health. Ultimately, our ability to be generous rests on God’s generosity. (We’ll take our pulse!) Generosity flows from the heart – first from God’s heart to us and then from our hearts into the world. God desires that we experience “life that is truly life.”

Felt need: To experience “life that is truly life”

Metaphor/visuals: Heart. Real EKG.

Card response for adults and kids: What do you love about our church?

Storytelling: Where do you see Jesus in our church?

Media possibilities:

- “Generous People.” Length: 1:59. Cost: \$12.98. Synopsis: Inspirational reminder about generosity. Preview it at <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/60056/generous-people>. **Discussion:** It is okay, but doesn’t really present the message in a new way.
 - “Living for Eternity.” Length 0:59. Cost: \$20.00. Synopsis: Even though our life is short on earth, what we do now has eternal significance. Therefore, do everything for Christ. Animated text that challenges believer to live a life of eternal significance. Preview it at <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/28829/living-for-eternity>. **Discussion:** We like this. It really fleshes out the last few verses of the day’s scripture reading. Is the music too slow?
- Karen’s music suggestions:** 572 Pass It On; 347 Spirit Song; 2080 All I Need Is You; 2152 Change My Heart, O God

Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:6-19 (New International Version)

Key verses: 1 Tim. 6:17-19

⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain.

⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

¹¹But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

¹⁷Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may **take hold of the life that is truly life.**

October 19, 2014: “The Art of Love: Relationships Are Matters of the Heart”

19th Sunday after Pentecost

Synopsis: We learn to love as God loves us through the Body of Christ. Loving relationships are a vital part of faith formation. We have been the recipients of extravagant generosity, and we can be those who share faith and hope with others.

Felt need: To be in loving relationships

Metaphor/visuals: Heart. Child who opens a gift and plays with the box (goes with “My Favorite Gift)

Card responses for adults: People who made a difference in my spiritual life

Card responses for kids: I fully rely on God for these gifts (FROG)

Storytelling: Who has made a difference in your spiritual life? (This leads nicely into All Saints Day)

Media possibilities:

- “My Favorite Gift.” Length: 1:55. Cost: \$15.00. Synopsis: A little girl shows off the gifts she has received for her birthday. When asked to pick her favorite, she chooses a photo of her with her grandmother. A beautiful picture of love and relations over money and things. Preview it at <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/26903/my-favorite-gift>. **Discussion:** Touching. It shows that things are far less valuable than relationships.
- “Lindsay.” Length: 5:23. Cost: \$20.00. Synopsis: A public school teacher in the Bronx pouring her heart into the broken souls that enter her classroom each year. Outside they see drug drops, prostitution, and drive-by shootings. Inside with her, they experience unconditional love and support. Preview it at <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/31521/deidox-lindsay>. **Discussion:** Long, but well done. Powerful choice of words. Her students* have not learned to trust in love because they have had so many empty promises and broken relationships. She models unconditional love.
- “Unlovable.” Length: 1:15. Cost \$15.00. Synopsis: We must understand that if we make loving God our top priority then we will naturally love others, even the unlovable. Preview it at <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/30596/unlovable>. **Discussion:** Really good, especially when those whom are hard to love or we don’t think deserve love are named.
- “Neighbor.” Length: 2:40. Cost: \$15.00. Synopsis: Author, activist, and president of Mission year, Leroy Barber talks about his strategy for love and being a neighbor. Preview it at <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/14956/Neighbor>. **Discussion:** We would like this man to be our neighbor. He knew that the answer to “What are you living for?” is to glorify God.
- “After the Heart.” Length: 2:08. Cost: \$15.00. Synopsis: Right action without a transformed heart still has you outside of what God created you to be. This isn’t about religion or rules or ways to behave, it is about what is going on in your heart. Jesus isn’t into healing the symptoms. That is why He goes after the heart. Preview it at <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/23449/after-the-heart>. **Discussion:** This paints a different picture of Jesus, ruthlessly and aggressively going after our hearts, that gets our attention. We liked it.

Discussion points: 1) Is this the right time to tell how Ivan and his family had to rely on the kindness of so many people when they moved to the United States? 2) Our relationships with each other prove (or disprove) that we have a relationship with God. 3) “Lindsay,” “Unlovable,” and “Neighbor” would make a great collection of videos to show in one service: “Lindsay” to open the service, “Neighbor” as a message illustration, and “Unlovable” as a benediction. 4) Lindsay school/classroom is an unexpected bright spot in the Bronx---clean classroom, uniforms, well-behaved kids). It is not what you would expect walking through the neighborhood where 70% or more of the families live in poverty. Barb noted a similar oasis in the midst of poverty on her trip to the Dominican Republic when she toured a local school.

Karen’s music suggestions: 2162 Grace Alone; 2230 Lord, We Come to Ask Your Blessing;

Brainstorming music suggestions: Crazy Mary by Pearl Jam

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ziGoJBLnRA>); Worn by Tenth Avenue North (fits with Lindsay's description of her kids <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUEy8nZvpdM>); Teach Your Children Well by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (New Revised Standard Version)

⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.

⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁶Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. ⁷Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. ⁸Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, ⁹and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Scripture: Mark 12:28-31 (New Revised Standard Version)

²⁸One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?"

²⁹Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-13 (New Revised Standard Version)

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

October 26, 2014: "Bucket Lists: Visions and Hope Are Inspirations of the Heart"

20th Sunday after Pentecost

Synopsis: Do you have a bucket list – those things you want to do and experience in your life?

We should have visions and hopes for our own spiritual lives as well as for the faith community that we're a part of.

Felt need: To begin to identify visions and hope for our own lives and for our congregation

Metaphor/visuals: Heart. Runners (goes with "What Do You Live For" and references the "dash" between birth and death)

Card response: What would you most like to see happen in the church in the next year?

Storytelling: What is your greatest hope and best vision for God's work through this congregation?

Potential storytellers: Jim Post, Gail Anderson (possibly via video), Brad Dean

Media possibilities:

- “The Bucket List.” Length: 1:11. Cost: We own it. Last used 10/16/11. Synopsis: What should have the highest priority on my list of things to do before I kick the bucket? It may seem like a morbid thought, but it is inevitable! For the Christ follower, bucket-kicking is not big deal. Preview it at <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/18527/the-bucket-list>. **Discussion:** Not many comments.
- “30 Days: No Regrets.” Length: 2:28. Cost: \$20.00. Synopsis: What if you had only 30 days left to live? What would be important? Psalm 90:12 asks God to teach us the brevity of life so we might be wise. What would be on your bucket list? Preview it at <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/23201/30-days-no-regrets>. **Discussion:** Something of a downer. The counter was distracting. Alternate plan: Pose the questions, “What if Lake Harbor had 30 days to remain open? What would you want our legacy to be?” That is what we should be doing now.
- “What Do You Live For?” Length: 1:50. Cost \$15.00. Synopsis: This Man on the Street Interview asks: 1) What do you live for? And 2) What do you want to leave behind? Preview it at <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/46801/What-Do-You-Live-For>. **Discussion:** It is sad how few people had thought about these questions. All the answers are self-centered. It is probably an accurate representation of our culture, i.e. we live to make money and take care of ourselves. We do what we can to just get by--living for the moment, reacting to every little thing. Even the “good” answer, living for kids and grandkids, is short-sighted as they will someday be gone. Consider making our own video along this line and changing the focus to church.
- “Christian To Do List.” Length: 1:21. Cost: \$17.98. Synopsis: This is a wonderful way to encourage people to strengthen their Christian walk and start doing the things God called us “To Do.” Preview it at <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/25702/Christian-To-Do-List>. **Discussion:** Uplifting. Snazzy beat.

Karen’s music suggestions: 405 See Ye First; 707 Hymn of Promise; 2226 Bind Us Together; 451 Be Thou My Vision

Discussion points: 1) What would a God-size vision look like for a church? 2) Might we want to use an excerpt from the original movie, “The Bucket List”? 3) We know people with no church home. What if we went outside our walls to help people every week? They would begin to ask why we do it and we could tell them about God. They would see he is real and understand why people go to church. Churches in Fenton and the Tri Cities do that, but just a few times a year.

Scripture: Joel 2:28 (The Message)

²⁸“And that’s just the beginning: After that—

“I will pour out my Spirit on every kind of people: Your sons will prophesy, also your daughters. Your old men will dream, your young men will see visions.

Scripture: Matthew 6:33 (New Living Translation)

³³Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

Scripture: Colossians 3:1-17 (Contemporary English Version)

¹ You have been raised to life with Christ. Now set your heart on what is in heaven, where Christ rules at God's right side.

² Think about what is up there, not about what is here on earth. ³ You died, which means that your life is hidden with Christ, who sits beside God. ⁴ Christ gives meaning to your life, and when he appears, you will also appear with him in glory.

⁵ Don't be controlled by your body. Kill every desire for the wrong kind of sex. Don't be immoral or indecent or have evil thoughts. Don't be greedy, which is the same as worshiping idols. ⁶ God is angry with people who disobey him by doing these things. ⁷ And that is exactly what you did, when you lived among people who behaved in this way. ⁸ But now you must stop doing such things. You must quit being angry, hateful, and evil. You must no longer say insulting or cruel things about others. ⁹ And stop lying to each other. You have given up your old way of life with its habits.

¹⁰ Each of you is now a new person. You are becoming more and more like your Creator, and you will understand him better. ¹¹ It doesn't matter if you are a Greek or a Jew, or if you are circumcised or not. You may even be a barbarian or a Scythian, and you may be a slave or a free person. Yet Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

¹² God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient. ¹³ Put up with each other, and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you. ¹⁴ Love is more important than anything else. It is what ties everything completely together.

¹⁵ Each one of you is part of the body of Christ, and you were chosen to live together in peace. So let the peace that comes from Christ control your thoughts. And be grateful. ¹⁶ Let the message about Christ completely fill your lives, while you use all your wisdom to teach and instruct each other. With thankful hearts, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷ Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks to God the Father because of him.

November 2, 2014: "Declarations on Your Heart: Extravagant Generosity Is an Expression of Your Heart"

21st Sunday after Pentecost

Synopsis: God shows love to God's people by giving sacrificially – the giving of Jesus for the whole world. God is faithful in giving. God is faithful in being extravagantly generous. We give as a response to God's grace in our lives.

Felt need: To feel joy in sacrificial giving

Card response/Faith Commitment Sunday: Faith Commitment Card. The cards will be sent out the second week in October. People will be asked to pledge their prayer, presence, gifts, service, and witness. We will probably collect them during communion.

Storytelling: My giving is an expression of what I love.

All Saints Day: What would be the best way to incorporate a time of remembering the saints? We do not have a single tradition other than naming the saints in the bulletin (members, friends, relatives), offering a chance to name those not listed, and remembering there are those who have not been named. Previous remembrances include lighting candles, tolling bells, altar display of photos or memorabilia, children's dance with ribbons ("I'll Fly Away"), weaving ribbons, writing on a tablecloth, and writing on angels.

Communion

Media possibilities:

- “Giving Your Best.” Length: 1:46. Cost: \$15.00. Synopsis: Kelly is a 5th grade girl who decided to do something amazing. She gave away her birthday so that people she doesn’t know can have access to clean water. Preview it at <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/43820/Giving-Your-Best>. **Discussion:** This might be a great video for kids. Note the similarity between our Lenten project of making birthing kits for UMCOR and the clean water project in the video. Norton Family Practice has a similar fundraiser, Pennies for Potties, for their medical team that is Haiti bound.
- “How to Succeed at Giving.” Length: 0:58. Cost: \$20.00. Synopsis: A humorous take on how to succeed at giving without really trying (or succeeding). Preview it at <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/36526/how-to-succeed-at-giving>. **Discussion:** Looks like the beginning of a game show. Hilarious. Probably not right for this Sunday, but could be used as a commercial during a message or on Holy Humor Sunday, the Sunday after Easter. It would be funny to have choir members peel off their robes to reveal “I’m a Super Christian. I double tithe.” T-shirts. To learn more about Holy Humor Sunday go to <http://www.gbod.org/resources/holy-humor-sunday-bright-sunday> and http://home.comcast.net/~fcba/site/?/page/HOLY_HUMOR_SUNDAY_Liturgy_Helps/&PHPSESSID=1ac94d84a0cfbf530a170baa8bc5c0fc.

Karen’s music suggestions: Hello My Name Is (1 John); 2036 Give Thanks; 389 Freely, Freely; 2269 Come, Share the Lord; 587 Bless Thou the Gifts; Children of God (Third Day)

Scripture: John 3:1-17 (Contemporary English Version)

¹There was a man named Nicodemus who was a Pharisee and a Jewish leader.

²One night he went to Jesus and said, “Sir, we know that God has sent you to teach us. You could not work these miracles, unless God were with you.”

³Jesus replied, “I tell you for certain that you must be born from above before you can see God’s kingdom!”

⁴Nicodemus asked, “How can a grown man ever be born a second time?”

⁵Jesus answered:

I tell you for certain that before you can get into God’s kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the Spirit. ⁶Humans give life to their children. Yet only God’s Spirit can change you into a child of God. ⁷Don’t be surprised when I say that you must be born from above. ⁸Only God’s Spirit gives new life. The Spirit is like the wind that blows wherever it wants to. You can hear the wind, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going.

⁹“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰Jesus replied:

How can you be a teacher of Israel and not know these things? ¹¹I tell you for certain that we know what we are talking about because we have seen it ourselves. But none of you will accept what we say. ¹²If you don’t believe when I talk to you about things on earth, how can you possibly believe if I talk to you about things in heaven?

¹³No one has gone up to heaven except the Son of Man, who came down from there. ¹⁴And the Son of Man must be lifted up, just as that metal snake was lifted up by Moses in the desert. ¹⁵Then everyone who has faith in the Son of Man will have eternal life.

¹⁶God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. ¹⁷God did not send his Son into the world to condemn its people. He sent him to save them!

Scripture: 1 John 3:1-3 (Today's New International Version)

¹See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

²Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

The Old Testament is a story of our **"Ancestors in Faith."** We might know the basic stories of Abraham, Moses, and others. Looking back, we see that their journey with God was different than ours, and yet we find some common ground. To be sent into the Promised Land (or some call it the land of promise) was a gift from God. However, the journey to that place wasn't without difficulty, conflict, struggle, and joy. A life of faith isn't a smooth road for any of us, and it's not always smooth as a community of faith.

After coming off our focus on our covenant life together followed by a specific focus on extravagant generosity, we will focus on the transition time from Moses to Joshua. What do you do when you make it to the destination you've been waiting to get to for so long? How do you respond? Do you settle in?

General discussion: The narrative and action in these readings lend themselves to skits. Pastor Mary will see what she can find or write them. There may be a Veggie Tales she can use as inspiration. Would we use the historical setting with costumes or a current setting? Betty and Mary have audio bibles. Also look for appropriate clips from the Roma Downey and Mark Burnett's "Bible" mini-series. Michael's boss has the series on DVD. *Note after the meeting:* Moses' and Joshua' stories appear in episode 2, "Exodus."
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bible_%28TV_miniseries%29).

November 9, 2014: "Standing at the Edge of Something Great" 21st Sunday after Pentecost

Synopsis: Moses gets to see the Promised Land on the horizon, but doesn't get to enter it. His time as leader has been important, but settling here will require a new leader. Joshua and Moses have history together, and Joshua's trust in God's promises is one key leadership trait. Our congregation has experienced much change, and yet God is faithful to God's promises. What do we see when we look around us? How do we honor leaders who have come before us and open ourselves to those who will come after us?

Felt need: Trust the unchanging nature of God's promises to lead us through change

Metaphor/visuals: Moses, standing at the edge of the Promised Land, in silhouette. Create this up on the ledge behind a sheet. Moses would start at the back of the ledge and stand up with his staff (backlit). Use a portion of Betty audio bible as the text or write a monologue; the speaker would remain out of sight. Dim the back light and lay down at the end of the reading. **Idea for later:** Do this for Jesus on the cross for Good Friday

Veteran's Day: Pastor Mary will speak to this as she brings the light of Christ into the congregation.

Media possibilities: "God Will." Length: 2:00. Cost: \$20.00. Synopsis: A simple video about the promises of God. Preview it at <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/56327/god-will>.

Discussion: It is not the best fit for this week, but would be good for another time. The large print is easy to read, but the smaller print would need to be read aloud.

Music suggestions:

Scripture: Deuteronomy 34:1-12 (The Message)

¹Moses climbed from the Plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, the peak of Pisgah facing Jericho. GOD showed him all the land from Gilead to Dan, ²all Naphtali, Ephraim, and Manasseh; all Judah reaching to the Mediterranean Sea; ³the Negev and the plains which encircle Jericho, City of Palms, as far south as Zoar.

⁴Then and there GOD said to him, "This is the land I promised to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with the words 'I will give it to your descendants.' I've let you see it with your own eyes. There it is. But you're not going to go in."

⁵Moses died there in the land of Moab, Moses the servant of GOD, just as GOD said. ⁶God buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth Peor. No one knows his burial site to this very day.

⁷Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eyesight was sharp; he still walked with a spring in his step. ⁸The People of Israel wept for Moses in the Plains of Moab thirty days. Then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses came to an end.

⁹Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. The People of Israel listened obediently to him and did the same as when GOD had commanded Moses.

¹⁰No prophet has risen since in Israel like Moses, whom GOD knew face-to-face. ¹¹Never since has there been anything like the signs and miracle-wonders that GOD sent him to do in Egypt, to Pharaoh, to all his servants, and to all his land ¹²—nothing to compare with that all-powerful hand of his and all the great and terrible things Moses did as every eye in Israel watched.

November 16, 2014: "Crossing Over to New Life"

22nd Sunday after Pentecost

Synopsis: Joshua is the leader as the Israelites cross over the Jordan River. What are those places of "crossing over" for us? We celebrate those moments of new life and hope – when we realize that worries and anxieties about the future don't have such a stronghold on us. Just as the ark of the covenant, a symbol of God's law and leading, is the focus for the people as they cross the river, we pray that we focus on God too – God's faithfulness from

the beginning up to now and in the days to come. What does God have in store for us as we open our hearts to God's leading?

Felt need: Celebrate moments of new life and hope and release our worries about the future

Metaphor/visuals: Ark of the Covenant. Joshua held in God's hand (Bring Us Home) – could we make it with sand and glue? Mark and Stacy Sorensen's big hand. River. Dark changing to light. Two doors representing the old life and new life.

Discussion: It is easy to stick with what we know, our current life. The Money Hall problem, is a brainteaser, in the form of a probability puzzle, loosely based on *Let's Make a Deal*. It shows that we get stuck on what we have already picked, even if there is a good chance it is the wrong choice. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monty_Hall_problem).

Media possibilities:

- "Bring Us Home: The Story." Length: 5:10. Cost: \$19.98. Synopsis: The story of Joshua is told in an artistic interpretation by a sand artist and music from The Story. Preview it at <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/54334/bring-us-home-the-story>. **Discussion:** This tells more of Joshua's story than is told in Joshua 3:7-17. Very powerful visuals, especially the image of Joshua being held in God's hand. The images were so engaging it was easy to lose track of the lyrics.
- "Joshua 24: 14-15." Length: 0:32. Cost: \$8.00. Synopsis: Visual liturgy. Preview it at <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/46036/joshua-24-14-15>.

Music suggestions: On Eagle's Wings (including the verses); "Swimming to the Other Side" by Pat Humphries (lyrics below); **Off on a tangent suggestions:** Wind Beneath My Wings; You Raise Me Up

Chorus:

*We are living 'neath the great big
dipper.*

We are washed by the very same rain.

*We are swimming in this stream
together,*

some in power and some in pain.

*We can worship this ground we walk on,
cherishing the being that we live beside.*

Loving spirits will live forever.

We're all swimming to the other side.

I am alone and I am searching,
hungering for answers in my time.

I am balanced at the brink of wisdom.

I'm impatient to receive a sign.

I move forward with my sense open.

Imperfection it be my crime.

In humility, I will listen we're all
swimming to the other side.

Chorus

On this journey through thoughts and
feelings

Binding intuition, my head, my heart.

I am gathering the tools together. I'm
preparing to do my part.

All of those who have come before me
band together and be my guide.

Loving lesson that I will follow, we're all
swimming to the other side.

Chorus

When we get there we'll discover all of
the gifts we've been given to share

Have been with us since life's beginning
and we never noticed they were
there.

We can balance at the brink of wisdom,
never recognizing that we've
arrived.

Loving spirit will live together; we're all
swimming to the other side.

Chorus

Scripture: Joshua 3:7—17 (Contemporary English Version)

⁷The Lord told Joshua, “Beginning today I will show the people that you are their leader, and they will know that I am helping you as I helped Moses.

⁸Now, tell the priests who are carrying the chest to go a little way into the river and stand there.”

⁹Joshua spoke to the people:

Come here and listen to what the Lord our God said he will do! ¹⁰The Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites control the land on the other side of the river. But the living God will be with you and will force them out of the land when you attack. And now, God is going to prove that he’s powerful enough to force them out. ¹¹⁻¹³Just watch the sacred chest that belongs to the Lord, the ruler of the whole earth. As soon as the priests carrying the chest step into the Jordan, the water will stop flowing and pile up as if someone had built a dam across the river.

The Lord has also said that each of the twelve tribes should choose one man to represent it.

¹⁴The Israelites packed up and left camp. The priests carrying the chest walked in front, ¹⁵until they came to the Jordan River. The water in the river had risen over its banks, as it often does in springtime. But as soon as the feet of the priests touched the water, ¹⁶⁻¹⁷the river stopped flowing, and the water started piling up at the town of Adam near Zarethan. No water flowed toward the Dead Sea, and the priests stood in the middle of the dry riverbed near Jericho while everyone else crossed over.

November 23, 2014: To be determined

23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Synopsis: It has been years of struggle as the Israelites are settling into the new land that God has promised. Many times along our journey, we stop and take stock. We take time to renew our commitment to God – to remember our covenant with God and with each other. Now that they have crossed over, they will remain in this new place. Giving thanks to God is a key part of how we respond to God. For families, Thanksgiving is prime time to slow down and be together, but even more, it’s an opportunity to remember God’s faithfulness. We’ll celebrate the sacrament of Holy Baptism (or reaffirm our baptisms) as an act of remembering and renewing our covenant with God.

Felt need: Remember and give thanks to God

Metaphor/visuals:

Karen’s music suggestions: 2188 The Family Prayer Song; 2040 Awesome God; 2030 The First Song of Isaiah

Brainstorming music suggestions: “Down to the River to Pray” as sung by Alison Krauss in *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qw6Hon013E>)

Scripture: Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 (New Living Translation)

¹Then Joshua summoned all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, including their elders, leaders, judges, and officers. So they came and presented themselves to God.

²Joshua said to the people, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Long ago your ancestors, including Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River, and

they worshiped other gods. ³But I took your ancestor Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him into the land of Canaan.

¹⁴“So fear the LORD and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD alone. ¹⁵But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.”

¹⁶The people replied, “We would never abandon the LORD and serve other gods. ¹⁷For the LORD our God is the one who rescued us and our ancestors from slavery in the land of Egypt. He performed mighty miracles before our very eyes. As we traveled through the wilderness among our enemies, he preserved us. ¹⁸It was the LORD who drove out the Amorites and the other nations living here in the land. So we, too, will serve the LORD, for he alone is our God.”

¹⁹Then Joshua warned the people, “You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy and jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. ²⁰If you abandon the LORD and serve other gods, he will turn against you and destroy you, even though he has been so good to you.”

²¹But the people answered Joshua, “No, we will serve the LORD!”

²²“You are a witness to your own decision,” Joshua said. “You have chosen to serve the LORD.”

“Yes,” they replied, “we are witnesses to what we have said.”

²³“All right then,” Joshua said, “destroy the idols among you, and turn your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.”

²⁴The people said to Joshua, “We will serve the LORD our God. We will obey him alone.”