

All Church Worship Brainstorming Summary

“Starting Over and Digging Deeper”

Monday, May 9, 2016

Members present: Rose Emmons, Anne Selleck, Larry Jorgensen, Jim Post, Karen Post, Mary Ivanov, Vicki Zuker, Dave Selleck, Barb Gripton, Betty Kinney, Phyllis Jones, Jean Kelly, Marie Kordecki, Dave Booth, Kathy Neff, Michael Boersma, Lynne Richmond, Brad Dean, Dave Jirikovic, Lisa Jirikovic, Ron Zuker, Karen Booth, Ivan Ivanov, Ana Ivanov, Luka Ivanov, Josiah Boersma

Background Information

This series is based on a book called It's Not What You Think: Why Christianity Is about So Much More than Going to Heaven When You Die by Jefferson Bethke. He challenges the church to think about what we believe and why. Our call is to nurture a relationship with Jesus that shows through what we say and do – not to follow rules and go through the motions. What does authentic faith look like today?

General discussion points: 1) Pastor Mary: She wanted to start a new series after the merger.

This is a good topic to follow unity, the current theme for both churches. It gets back to the basic tenets of faith. She did add topics: “Declare Your Dependence”, “Mission – It's Now What You Think,” and “Just Pray It!” It is also good to hear from some young (twenty-something) voice like Bethke even when we won't agree on everything he has to say.

2) Religious spirit: The family of God can get caught up in legalism, one of Bethke's main points. It is also a reason why many unchurched people see religion as judgmental, rather than grace-filled. 3) Many people describe themselves as spiritual, but not religious. It is a cop out. Other authors, below, speak to this too. 4) Jesus came to do away with hypocrisy.

Visuals: Images that are half black and white (how we see God and religion much of the time) and half color (authentic picture of God and faith). Related: Lois Lowry's book The Giver, the movie “Pleasantville”, and the movie “The Wizard of Oz.”

Alternate series titles: “Changing Minds,” “Back to Basics,” “Looking for More,” “Mythbusters” (<http://www.heartlandworship.com/sermons/sermon/2012-10-14/mythbusters:-the-myth-of-scales>)

Introductory media:

- “Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus.” Length: 4:03. Spoken word (poetry) intro to his book. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IAhDGYIpgY#t=53>. For the poem's text go to <http://www.revivalifestyle.com/religion-vs-jesus/>; Karen will make this available to everyone as a Word document too. For a related article, visit <http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2408/loving-jesus-religiously>. **Comments:** You have to watch this several times to catch everything he is saying. Use it more than once during the series.
- “It's Not What You Think.” Length: 1:36. Promo video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZpUeD3KysDk>.

Theme scriptures:

- Matthew 5: 17-20, 23-24: “I have not come to abolish the law...” and reconcile with others before offering your gifts to God)

- Amos 5: 21-24: “Let justice roll down like waters...
- Luke 6: 46: “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

Ideas for the series:

- Additional sources for a contemporary view of the church:
 - Rachel Held Evans’ Searching for Sunday
 - Brian McLaren’s A New Kind of Christianity and A Generous Orthodoxy (and others)
 - Adam Hamilton’s Making Sense of the Bible
- Would it be possible to create short vignettes beginning with “I used to think ..., but now I know...” or something that is a thread through the longer series? Let Karen Booth know if you are interested in volunteering. **Potential volunteers:** Dave Selleck, Rose Emmons (mission?), Luka or Ana Ivanov (listening)
- What are some films that could support the series? More recent films: *Risen*, *War Room* (prayer)
- Music: “Let Bad Religion Die” by Gungor

June 19, 2016: “In God’s Image”

5th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Genesis: 1: 1-2, 26-31 (Contemporary English Version) “The Beginning”

¹In the beginning God, created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was barren, with no form of life; it was under a roaring ocean covered with darkness. But the Spirit of God was moving over the water.

²⁶ God said, “Now we will make humans, and they will be like us. We will let them rule the fish, the birds, and all other living creatures.”

²⁷ So God created humans to be like himself; he made men and women. ²⁸God gave them his blessing and said:

Have a lot of children! Fill the earth with people and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the ocean, the birds in the sky, and every animal on the earth.

²⁹I have provided all kinds of fruit and grain for you to eat. ³⁰And I have given the green plants as food for everything else that breathes. These will be food for animals, both wild and tame, and for birds.

³¹God looked at what he had done. All of it was very good! Evening came and then morning—that was the sixth day.

Scripture: 1 John 3: 1-3 (Today’s New International Version) “Children of God”

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.

Synopsis: Our story as human being begins with God creating us in the images of God, yet we can get caught up in our view of ourselves rather than God’s view of each of us as beloved. We need to reclaim that what happened “in the beginning,” paying special attention to God’s work as Creator. In the sacrament of Holy Baptism, we remember that we belong to God and that we are loved and called to be God’s people.

Visuals:

Media possibilities:

- “Life: God’s Love Story.” Length: 2:14. Cost: \$14.00. This communicates the essential message that human life was created by God for the glory of God. Every life is special and of eternal value because every life was made in the image of a sovereign God.
<http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/35938/life-gods-love-story>.
- “The Workshop.” Length: 3:00. Cost: \$15.00. God knows us better than we know ourselves, because He made us and He pays close attention to every detail of our lives. Having been created in God’s image, God is constantly working on us to refine, repair and restore us to our full potential. God is a master craftsman and we are His masterpiece.
<http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/38828/the-workshop>.

Activity: Father’s Day. Strawberry Festival. Noisy offering. Give a chocolate “treasure” to all men in the congregation. Use Father’s Day prayer to acknowledge all experiences of fathering. Holy Baptism (an/or Reaffirmation).

Music: “How He Loves”; “Behold What Manner of Love”; “Hello My Name Is” (Matthew West); “Children of God” (Third Day); “Let There Be” (Gungor)

Celebration Service meets outside

Discussion points: 1) Reaffirmation of baptism: Touch the water. Also suggested: Sprinkling, kiddie pool, squirt gun, or garden sprayer. 2) Not sure how it relates: Pastor Dave milking a cow during worship to promote the Heifer Project.

June 26, 2016: “Camping with God” 6th Sunday of after Pentecost

Scripture: I Kings 8: 22-23 (New Living Translation) “Solomon’s Prayer of Dedication”

²²Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire community of Israel. He lifted his hands toward heaven,
²³and he prayed, “O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in all of heaven above or on the earth below. You keep your covenant and show unfailing love to all who walk before you in wholehearted devotion.

Scripture: John 1: 1-4, 14-18 (Contemporary English Version) “The Word Became Flesh”

¹In the beginning was the one who is called the Word. The Word was with God and was truly God.
²From the very beginning the Word was with God. ³And with this Word, God created all things. Nothing was made without the Word. Everything that was created ⁴received its life from him, and his life gave light to everyone.
¹⁴The Word became a human being and lived here with us. We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. From him all the kindness and all the truth of God have come down to us.
¹⁵John spoke about him and shouted, “This is the one I told you would come! He is greater than I am, because he was alive before I was born.”
¹⁶Because of all that the Son is, we have been given one blessing after another. ¹⁷The Law was given by Moses, but Jesus Christ brought us undeserved kindness and truth. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is truly God and is closest to the Father, has shown us what God is like.

Synopsis: God is with us! That’s the truth we claim: no matter where we are, God is with us. God’s presence isn’t limited to a particular space, like a church building, and yet it’s difficult to remember that the incarnation (God coming “in the flesh” and literally “pitching a tent”)

means that God knows our human experience intimately and desires for us to know him intimately, too.

Visuals: Tent (Brad Dean has a couple kid's tents).

Media possibilities:

- "I Am with You Always." Length: 1:44. Cost: \$15.00. Diverse individuals are shown with matching text speaking of excitement, sin, brokenness, and confusion, followed by the message "I am with you." This mini-movie with uplifting music culminates in a reminder that in our joy and happiness, even in our struggles and sin, in every moment for all eternity, God is with us, always. <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/61402/i-am-with-you-always>
- "God with Us." Length: 1:54. Cost: \$19.00. Moving adaption of John 1 read by children, adults, and seniors. <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/65637/god-with-us> Related visual: fireflies.

Activity:

Music: #182 "Word of God Come Down on Earth"; "Cannot Keep You" (Gungor)

Discussion points: 1) Pastor Mary: The story has come full circle. Our OT ancestors carried the ark (and God's divine presence) with them. They later built a temple (I Kings) and rebuilt it after it was destroyed. With the incarnation, God's divine presence is with us again. 2) Coffee hour treat: S'mores. 3) Michael: Are we going to talk about our bodies as temples? 4) God cannot be contained.

July 3, 2016 at 10:00 am: "Declare Your Dependence" 7th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Deuteronomy 10: 12-22 (Contemporary English Version) "Fear the Lord"

¹²People of Israel, what does the Lord your God want from you? The Lord wants you to respect and follow him, to love and serve him with all your heart and soul, ¹³and to obey his laws and teachings that I am giving you today. Do this, and all will go well for you.

¹⁴Everything belongs to the Lord your God, not only the earth and everything on it, but also the sky and the highest heavens. ¹⁵Yet the Lord loved your ancestors and wanted them to belong to him. So he chose them and their descendants rather than any other nation, and today you are still his people.

¹⁶Remember your agreement with the Lord and stop being so stubborn. ¹⁷The Lord your God is more powerful than all other gods and lords, and his tremendous power is to be feared. His decisions are always fair, and you cannot bribe him to change his mind. ¹⁸The Lord defends the rights of orphans and widows. He cares for foreigners and gives them food and clothing. ¹⁹And you should also care for them, because you were foreigners in Egypt.

²⁰Respect the Lord your God, serve only him, and make promises in his name alone. ²¹Offer your praises to him, because you have seen him work such terrifying miracles for you.

^{22f}When your ancestors went to live in Egypt, there were only seventy of them. But the Lord has blessed you, and now there are more of you than there are stars in the sky.

Scripture: Galatians 5: 1-6, 13-15 (The Message) "Freedom in Christ"

¹Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you.

²I am emphatic about this. The moment any one of you submits to circumcision or any other rule-keeping system, at that same moment Christ's hard-won gift of freedom is squandered. ³I repeat my warning: The person who accepts the ways of circumcision trades all the advantages of the free

life in Christ for the obligations of the slave life of the law.

⁴I suspect you would never intend this, but this is what happens. When you attempt to live by your own religious plans and projects, you are cut off from Christ, you fall out of grace. ⁵Meanwhile we expectantly wait for a satisfying relationship with the Spirit. ⁶For in Christ, neither our most conscientious religion nor disregard of religion amounts to anything. What matters is something far more interior: faith expressed in love.

¹³It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows. ¹⁴For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom. ¹⁵If you bite and ravage each other, watch out—in no time at all you will be annihilating each other, and where will your precious freedom be then?

Synopsis: Though we might prize independence, we are ultimately dependent on God. Our freedom is not the same as being able to do what we want when we want to, but we have the freedom to live as God's people – loving God and loving others by putting our faith into action.

Visuals: Declaration of Dependence (or Apostle's Creed) on the wall below the ledge – ready to be signed by everyone. On a loosely related note: Sharpie on a stick.

Media possibilities:

- "Freedom in Christ." Length: 1:54. Cost: \$15.00. This story of a Japanese soldier who continued to fight World War II for almost 30 years echoes the way we continue to fight the things that Christ has already freed us from.
<http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/43602/freedom-in-christ>.
- "Stories of Freedom." Length 3:50. Cost: \$19.98. Be inspired and uplifted as three immigrants tell of their pursuit of freedom and how it lead to more than just America, but to identity in Jesus Christ.
<http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/39347/stories-of-freedom>.
- "Free." Length: 4:46. Cost: We own it. Last used 6/9/2013. Paul reminds us in Galatians 5:1 that Christ has set us free, but it's very easy to fall back into slavery.
<https://journeyboxmedia.com/product/free/>
- "In Their Own Words." Length: 3:21. Cost: \$17.98. Veterans' tales of service demonstrate how they fully relied on God and each other.
<http://www.floodgateproductions.com/index.php/mini-movies/in-their-own-words.html>
- "Welcome to Our Church 2." Length: 1:55. Cost: \$18.98. A straight-forward message, communicating the vision of your church.
<http://www.floodgateproductions.com/index.php/welcome-to-our-church-2011.html>.

Activity: Holy Communion. Signing a "Declaration of Dependence."

Music: #437 "This Is My Song"; #698 "God of Ages"; "I Surrender"; "We Believe" by the Newsboys; "Come, Now Is the Time to Worship" (Still the greatest treasure remains for those who gladly choose you now.)

Discussion points: 1) Pastor Mary: This is not from the book. She is not going to connect this to the holiday. We are free to love and serve.

July 10, 2016: "Risky Love"

8th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Luke 10: 25-37 (The Message)

“The Good Samaritan”

²⁵Just then a religion scholar stood up with a question to test Jesus. “Teacher, what do I need to do to get eternal life?”

²⁶He answered, “What’s written in God’s Law? How do you interpret it?”

²⁷He said, “That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence—and that you love your neighbor as well as you do yourself.”

²⁸“Good answer!” said Jesus. “Do it and you’ll live.”

²⁹Looking for a loophole, he asked, “And just how would you define ‘neighbor’?”

³⁰Jesus answered by telling a story. “There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead. ³¹Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he angled across to the other side. ³²Then a Levite religious man showed up; he also avoided the injured man.

³³“A Samaritan traveling the road came on him. When he saw the man’s condition, his heart went out to him. ³⁴He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. Then he lifted him onto his donkey, led him to an inn, and made him comfortable. ³⁵In the morning he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill—I’ll pay you on my way back.’

³⁶“What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man attacked by robbers?”

³⁷“The one who treated him kindly,” the religion scholar responded.

Jesus said, “Go and do the same.”

Synopsis: A neighbor isn’t bound by how close they live or how well we know them; a neighbor is anyone in need. When we’re tempted to see each other as less than beloved, we need to remember the call to “love people, not things; use things, not people.” But loving our neighbor is risky and requires more than we might think.

Visuals: Shoes (if we use the “Shoes” video). Chess board (if we use the “Check Mate” video).

Media possibility: Would Journey Box Media have some contemporary illustrations?

- “Who Is My Neighbor.” Length: 5:17. Cost: We own it. Last used 7/14/2013. Modern parable based on the Good Samaritan.
<http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/20303/who-is-my-neighbor>.
- “Ludmilla.” Length: 5:03. Cost: \$19.98. An elderly Czech woman lives at the “Embassy of the Kingdom of Heaven.” This is a true story of how God is using everyday people to do His work and expand His Kingdom.
<http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/37098/deidox-ludmilla>.
- “Shoes.” Length: 2:58. Cost: \$17.98. God, in Christ, stepped into our shoes and walked. But are we willing to do the same for people who aren’t like us, and who may not believe the same things we believe? Christians can struggle with being judgmental, until they walk in someone else’s shoes. <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/27822/shoes>
- “Check Mate.” Length: 3:00. Cost: Free (Journeybox Media subscription). A reminder that the greatest commandment is love, this story of two unlikely friends from opposing sides of war encourages viewers to conquer their enemies with love. When we show even one act of love toward those who harm us, it’s impossible to know where it may lead.
<https://journeyboxmedia.com/product/check-mate/>

Message illustration: April 30, 2016 Upper Room Devotional – “The Waitress”

Activities: Blessing Bags (Rose Emmons and Jim Ozier’s book, [Clip In](#)). Ask people to bring

supplies for filling homemade bags. Sample items: Canned soup, nuts, socks, toothbrush/paste, comb, etc. Pack the bags, along with a handwritten note and church business card, after church. Have members take one or more and distribute them to people as they see fit. Alternatives: Kiddie bags with small toys or school supplies (Haiti, Ross Park), Kindness bags for lonely neighbors (tea bag, note, etc). Note that new people want to be part of a greater mission right away.

Music: #432 “Jesu, Jesu”; #2130 “The Summons”; “Brother” by The Brilliance; “Brother” by Need to Breathe

Quote: “Love people, not things; use things, not people.” Spencer Kimball. **Comments:** This is posted frequently on Facebook. It speaks to the inauthenticity of people, one of Bethke’s major points.

Discussion points: 1) How does our definition of “neighbor” affect how we treat others? 2) What does Jesus have to say about it? It is easier to love someone who loves you than loving an enemy. 3) VCI finding: We need to be in mission with, not to. That requires getting to know people more deeply. This is Community En Compass’ philosophy. 4) The Good Samaritan was in it for the long haul. How far are we expected to go? When does helping become enabling? Note how the Muskegon Rescue Mission mentors the men for a year. 5) Michael’s story: After buying groceries, Michael noticed a man on the corner. He gave him strawberries he had just purchased. Once at home, he thought God was calling him to do more, so he packed a backpack with supplies and returned to give it to him. He felt bad that he didn’t do more, especially when he realized he did not ask his name. 6) Mission InSite: Author, Tom Bandy (Worship Ways), wants us to ask, “How can we be a blessing?” without expecting anything in return.

Skit/drama: Someone is talking to Jesus and is told to go and follow his instructions.

July 17, 2016: “Listening Well”

9th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: I Kings 19: 9b-13 (Contemporary English Version)

“The Lord Appears to Elijah”

⁹And he spent the night there in a cave.

While Elijah was on Mount Sinai, the Lord asked, “Elijah, why are you here?”

¹⁰ He answered, “Lord God All-Powerful, I’ve always done my best to obey you. But your people have broken their solemn promise to you. They have torn down your altars and killed all your prophets, except me. And now they are even trying to kill me!”

¹¹“Go out and stand on the mountain,” the Lord replied. “I want you to see me when I pass by.”

All at once, a strong wind shook the mountain and shattered the rocks. But the Lord was not in the wind. Next, there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹²Then there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire.

Finally, there was a gentle breeze, ¹³and when Elijah heard it, he covered his face with his coat. He went out and stood at the entrance to the cave.

The Lord asked, “Elijah, why are you here?”

Scripture: Matthew 3: 13-16 (The Message)

“The Baptism of Jesus”

¹³Jesus then appeared, arriving at the Jordan River from Galilee. He wanted John to baptize him.

¹⁴John objected, “I’m the one who needs to be baptized, not *you!*”

¹⁵But Jesus insisted. “Do it. God’s work, putting things right all these centuries, is coming together right now in this baptism.” So John did it.

¹⁶The moment Jesus came up out of the baptismal waters, the skies opened up and he saw God's Spirit—it looked like a dove—descending and landing on him.

Synopsis: God's grace is in our lives even before we recognize it, but God pursues us and desires us to know our identity as beloved children. Holy Baptism is a sacrament – a sign of God's grace and recognition of who we are. We must listen for God's voice among the noisiness of our lives and claim our identity as children of God.

Visuals:

Media possibilities:

- "Listening." Length: 1:11. Cost: \$20.00. In a world filled with distractions, God desires our full attention. When we quiet ourselves and listen, he can speak to us. Are you listening?
- "Shouts and Whispers." Length: 2:06. Cost: \$17.98. Have you ever considered the specific voices being spoken to people as they sit in your worship services? There are two sets of voices, and helping your people identify them could allow them to hear the One true voice that matters most. <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/27821/shouts-and-whispers>
- "Coffee with Jesus." Length: 2:11. Cost: \$20.00. When you pray, who does most of the talking? Do you ever let Jesus get a word in? <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/10219/coffee-with-jesus>

Activity: Noisy offering. VBS celebration.

Music: "Hello, My Name Is"; #2218 "You Are Mine"; "How Can It Be?" by Lauren Daigle

Celebration Service meets outside

Discussion points: 1) We are reminded that God created us in His image and that He calls us. 2) Jewish kids are constantly taught to listen for God's "still, small voice." 3) We are all called to be ministers. 4) Baptism is an affirmation of our identity. 5) Noisy places: Rock concert, big city, wedding reception, Wesco gas pumps with video screens, amusement parks. 6) Really quiet places: Soundproof room; the town of Greenbank, West Virginia (<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/10/141010-radio-telescope-green-bank-west-virginia-astronomy/>)

July 24, 2016: "Finding Real Rest"

10th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Genesis 1: 31-2:3 (The Message)

"The Beginning"

^{1:31}God looked over everything he had made; it was so good, so very good! It was evening, it was morning—Day Six.

^{2:1}Heaven and Earth were finished, down to the last detail. ²By the seventh day God had finished his work. On the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³God blessed the seventh day. He made it a Holy Day because on that day he rested from his work, all the creating God had done.

Scripture: Exodus 20: 1-17 (Today's English Version)

"The Ten Commandments"

¹God spoke, and these were his words:

²"I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves.

³"Worship no god but me.

⁴"Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth. ⁵ Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the Lord your God and I tolerate no

rivals. I bring punishment on those who hate me and on their descendants down to the third and fourth generation. ⁶But I show my love to thousands of generations of those who love me and obey my laws.

⁷ “Do not use my name for evil purposes, for I, the Lord your God, will punish anyone who misuses my name.

⁸ “Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. ⁹ You have six days in which to do your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me. On that day no one is to work—neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country. ¹¹ In six days I, the Lord, made the earth, the sky, the seas, and everything in them, but on the seventh day I rested. That is why I, the Lord, blessed the Sabbath and made it holy.

¹² “Respect your father and your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you.

¹³ “Do not commit murder.

¹⁴ “Do not commit adultery.

¹⁵ “Do not steal.

¹⁶ “Do not accuse anyone falsely.

¹⁷ “Do not desire another man’s house; do not desire his wife, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys, or anything else that he owns.”

Synopsis: “I’m so busy” has become a badge of honor, but God calls us to honor Sabbath time.

Sabbath is a time to recreate and be re-created by God. How do we reclaim the gift of Sabbath and find health and strength to live more faithfully?

Visuals: Tablets with the Ten Commandments

Media possibilities:

- “Missing the Joy.” Length: 6:58. Cost: \$15.00. Has the “church” become frantic activity on the Sabbath? Isn’t a day off for “weak” people? Isn’t “play” just for children? What does creativity have to do with salvation? Are we missing the joy of keeping the Sabbath? Theologian and author Marva Dawn asks us to consider whether or not we are finding rest. <http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/14955/missing-the-joy>. **Comments:** Good background information. Maybe not the best to use in worship.
- “RESTORE Rest.” Length: 1:43. Cost: Free (Journeybox Media subscription). Many of us don’t make relaxation a priority, and when we do have time for it, we often don’t know how to relax. Does our relentless work say something about a lack of trust in God? <https://journeyboxmedia.com/product/restore-rest/>
- “RESTORE Reflection.” Length: 1:32. Cost: Free (Journeybox Media subscription). The pace of our world is consistently speeding up, so the discipline of meditation and reflection is often a difficult one to make a habit. Slowing down and reflection on the beauty of God is often overlooked in the name of achievement. <https://journeyboxmedia.com/product/restore-reflection/>
- “Be with God.” Length: 1:05. Cost: \$9.99. Life is busy. What if we took a minute to slow down? What if? <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/50413/be-with-god>

Activity:

Resource: Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest by Wayne Muller

Discussion points: 1) Have you ever heard anyone say “Sabbath” as opposed to “taking time off”? 2) The commandment comes between the commandments to love God and the ones

to love others. It is probably broken more often than any other commandment. 3) Jean: As a youth, there were some things that her family did not do on Sundays. 4) There is a scriptural precedent; God rested. Do we think we are so important that we can't rest too? Do we trust God? 5) Jesus did break Sabbath to heal; but then again, he is God and we are not. 6) Intentional rest may include doing activities which refresh us. Examples: Walking. Going to the beach. Fishing. Watching television. Napping. Playing ball. Gardening. Prayer beads. 7) The Seventh Day Adventists Sabbath on Saturday, even cooking meals on Friday so they don't work. 8) Businesses that close for Sabbath: Russ'; Hobby Lobby; Chick-Fil-A; Van's Car Wash; Go Gear. 9) Sabbath just means "time off." We can take time off any day of the week. 10) Pastors Mary and Dave attended a called session about Sabbath that took place on the Sabbath. The timing caused a good deal of anger. On the flip side, some found the session itself very powerful.

Music: #700 "Abide with Me"; "O God, You Made the Sabbath Day" (below)

TALLIS' CANON 8.8.8.8 ("All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night") can be sung to tune of UMH 95

O God, you made the Sabbath day, Your gift, your law, your healing way. You also made, within each heart A longing for this day apart. You gave your children, long-oppressed, Your freeing gift of Sabbath rest. You give us Sabbath freedom, too: Our lives are more than work we do!	Life's sacred rhythm seems long gone; The world, unblinking, carries on. Your Spirit calls us! Slow our pace That we may hear your word of grace. Christ Jesus lives! He makes us new! On Sundays now, we worship you. With hearts uplifted, joy restored, Your church goes out to serve you, Lord.
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July 31, 2016: "Mission's Not What You Think"

11th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: James 2: 14-19? (The Message)

"Faith and Deeds"

¹⁴Dear friends, do you think you'll get anywhere in this if you learn all the right words but never do anything? Does merely talking about faith indicate that a person really has it?

¹⁵For instance, you come upon an old friend dressed in rags and half-starved ¹⁶and say, "Good morning, friend! Be clothed in Christ! Be filled with the Holy Spirit!" and walk off without providing so much as a coat or a cup of soup—where does that get you? ¹⁷Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?

¹⁸I can already hear one of you agreeing by saying, "Sounds good. You take care of the faith department, I'll handle the works department."

Not so fast. You can no more show me your works apart from your faith than I can show you my faith apart from my works. Faith and works, works and faith, fit together hand in glove.

¹⁹Do I hear you professing to believe in the one and only God, but then observe you complacently sitting back as if you had done something wonderful? That's just great. Demons do that, but what good does it do them?

Synopsis: Pastor Mary has contacted Jimmy about the mission team leading the service. The Devotional Team is planning now, but they should be able to work with this.

Visuals:

Media possibility: "Here on Mission." Length: 2:40. Cost: \$20.00. Sometimes missions can start to become focused on serving the world and forgetting your neighbor. This clever short

shows how living on mission can be as simple as loving the person right next door.

<http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/40239/here-on-mission>

Activity: HS Youth Mission Team

Music:

August 7, 2016: “For God’s Sake”

12th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Psalm 100 (New International Version)

¹Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

²Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

³Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

⁴Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

⁵For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Scripture: Isaiah 6: 1-8 (Contemporary English Version)

“Isaiah’s Commission”

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died, I had a vision of the Lord. He was on his throne high above, and his robe filled the temple.

²Flaming creatures with six wings each were flying over him. They covered their faces with two of their wings and their bodies with two more. They used the other two wings for flying, ³ as they shouted, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord All-Powerful! The earth is filled with your glory.”

⁴ As they shouted, the doorposts of the temple shook, and the temple was filled with smoke. ⁵Then I cried out, “I’m doomed! Everything I say is sinful, and so are the words of everyone around me. Yet I have seen the King, the Lord All-Powerful.”

⁶One of the flaming creatures flew over to me with a burning coal that it had taken from the altar with a pair of metal tongs. ⁷It touched my lips with the hot coal and said, “This has touched your lips. Your sins are forgiven, and you are no longer guilty.”

⁸After this, I heard the Lord ask, “Is there anyone I can send? Will someone go for us?”
“I’ll go,” I answered. “Send me!”

Synopsis: “True worship is about the priority we place on *who* God is in our lives and *where* God is on our list of priorities.” It’s easy to get our focus off of worship God and worshipping other things. We struggle to give up our idols (money, hobbies, stuff) and remember that we worship God because God is good. God is worthy of our praise and thanksgiving, and worship helps to order our lives and walk in faith.

Visuals:

Media possibilities:

- “Woe to Me.” Length: 3:18. Cost: \$15.00. Visual liturgy of Isaiah 6 (could be shortened).
<http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/8031/woe-to-me>
- “In His Presence.” Length: 4:05. Cost: \$15.00. A compelling typography video to a powerful spoken word piece, inviting listeners into the presence of God.
<http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/28578/in-his-presence>.
- “Greater.” Length: 2:35. Cost: \$17.98. People walk into church services every week with the weight of the world on their shoulders. Help them set their hearts toward God by

experiencing his greatness. <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/48531/greater>

Activity: Holy Communion.

Music: #139 "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"; #64 "Holy, Holy, Holy"; "Psalm 100" (Chris Tomlin); "Come, Now Is the Time to Worship"; "Praise You in This Storm" (Casting Crowns)

Discussion points: 1) Betty: Her uncle frequently used the expression, "for God's sake," in a very negative way. She had a hard time wrapping her head around a sermon on worship entitled, "For God's Sake." 2) Consumer mentality: When did worship become more about "being fed" than praising God? 3) Barb: Her mother always told her to thank God when things are going wrong. It could be worse. 4) Why do we tend to say we are "going to church" instead of "going to worship"? What does that say about our worship?

August 14, 2016: "Your Kingdom Come – Now!"

13th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Matthew 13: 13-15 (The Message)

"Speaking in Parables"

¹³That's why I tell stories: to create readiness, to nudge the people toward receptive insight. In their present state they can stare till doomsday and not see it, listen till they're blue in the face and not get it.

¹⁴I don't want Isaiah's forecast repeated all over again: Your ears are open but you don't hear a thing. Your eyes are awake but you don't see a thing.

¹⁵The people are blockheads! They stick their fingers in their ears so they won't have to listen; They screw their eyes shut so they won't have to look, so they won't have to deal with me face-to-face and let me heal them.

Synopsis: Jesus offers many images of what the Kingdom of God is like, and even a small seed and a small amount of yeast can help us to understand the power of God to work with what seems insignificant! We may be used to thinking that God's Kingdom is far off, but the Kingdom is a reality when we're following Jesus' way of love and sacrifice.

Visuals: Mustard seed. Yeast.

Media possibilities:

- "Justice and the Kingdom of God." Length: 4:01. Cost: \$15.00. Andy Harrington, Executive Director of Greater Vancouver YFC/Youth Unlimited, offers some thoughts and stories on justice and the Kingdom of God.
<http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/8328/justice-and-the-kingdom-of-god>.
- "Jesus and the Kingdom." Length: 3:44. Cost: \$15.00. Author Brian McLaren discusses the liberating yet disturbing message from Jesus about living in the Kingdom of God.
<http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/9251/jesus-and-the-kingdom>
- "Justice." Length: 1:46. Cost: Free (Journeybox Media subscription). The hard work of justice for everyone is far from over. Challenge your community to open their eyes to the need around them and take action, whatever those needs are.
<http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/43045/justice>

Activity:

Music: "Testify to Love" (Wynonna Judd)

Discussion points: 1) Pastor Mary: The Kingdom is here and now. This is not about heaven. It's about making heaven on earth. We have mistakenly equated the Kingdom with heaven. 2) The Kingdom comes in those things we don't expect (small blessings). 3) How does age

affect our view of the Kingdom? Is it harder to have eyes focused on the Kingdom when you are young?

August 21, 2016: “Wounds, Scabs, and Scars”

14th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Isaiah 53: 1-6 (The Message)

¹Who believes what we’ve heard and seen? Who would have thought God’s saving power would look like this?

²The servant grew up before God—a scrawny seedling, a scrubby plant in a parched field. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause us to take a second look.

³He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand. One look at him and people turned away. We looked down on him, thought he was scum.

⁴But the fact is, it was *our* pains he carried—*our* disfigurements, all the things wrong with *us*. We thought he brought it on himself, that God was punishing him for his own failures. ⁵But it was our sins that did that to him, that ripped and tore and crushed him—*our sins!* He took the punishment, and that made us whole. Through his bruises we get healed.

⁶We’re all like sheep who’ve wandered off and gotten lost. We’ve all done our own thing, gone our own way. And God has piled all our sins, everything we’ve done wrong, on him, on him.

Synopsis: God is always in the business of resurrection – transforming us to be more like Christ when we surrender our lives to him. Part of surrendering to God is bringing all that we are – even the parts that we might try to hide like shame, guilt, struggle, regret, and grief. We aren’t defined by our past, and our scars can be an opportunity to see how God is bringing healing and peace and leading us into the future with hope.

Visuals: Wound. Scabs. Scars.

Media possibilities:

- “Shattered.” Length: 1:47. Cost \$17.00. We see ourselves as broken and undeserving of God’s love. God sees us as His creation made in His image and loves us no matter what we’ve done. We need to replace the way we see ourselves with the way God sees us. <http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/47052/shattered>.
- “Fumes.” Length: 5:14. Cost: \$17.98. Redemption often flows through the most surprising events. Originally created for a secular short-film festival, this video is the perfect companion to any theme of brokenness, hope, or even suicide. <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/60972/fumes>

Activity: Healing service – with a specific focus on healing as being different than curing.

Music: #345 “I Surrender All”; #357 “Just As I Am, Without One Plea”; “You Are More” by Tenth Avenue North (You are more than the sum of your past mistakes. You are more than the choices that you make.)

Message illustration: Billie Jo’s story of tattoo/scar

Celebration Service meets outside

Discussion points: 1) We are called to embrace our past, but not dwell on (or in) it. 2) Scars are a witness to God’s work in our lives. 3) Marcia McFee (<http://marciamcfee.com/index.php/beach-glass/>): *The image of beach glass came out of a brainstorming session that produced the word “shattered.” Beach glass starts as something discarded and tossed aside as “trash.” Then, after sometimes decades of being tossed around by sea and sand, the broken glass is rounded and smoothed and becomes, literally, a “gem.” This metaphor proved a rich one for our worship.*

August 28, 2016: "Just Pray It!"

15th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Matthew 6: 5-14 (Contemporary English Version)

"Prayer"

⁵ When you pray, don't be like those show-offs who love to stand up and pray in the meeting places and on the street corners. They do this just to look good. I can assure you that they already have their reward.

⁶ When you pray, go into a room alone and close the door. Pray to your Father in private. He knows what is done in private, and he will reward you.

⁷ When you pray, don't talk on and on as people do who don't know God. They think God likes to hear long prayers. ⁸ Don't be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask.

⁹ You should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, help us to honor your name. ¹⁰ Come and set up your kingdom, so that everyone on earth will obey you, as you are obeyed in heaven. ¹¹ Give us our food for today. ¹² Forgive us for doing wrong, as we forgive others. ¹³ Keep us from being tempted and protect us from evil.

¹⁴ If you forgive others for the wrongs they do to you, your Father in heaven will forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Synopsis: There are many people who say, "I can't pray," or they point to other who they say "can really pray." Jesus offers us a model for prayer after the disciples ask for his help, and it's a place to start. How do we get past our struggle to pray correctly and get to a place where we feel free talk to God and where we talk freely with God?

Visuals:

Media possibilities:

- "Thy Will." Length: 3:58. Cost: Free? Lady Antebellum's Hillary Scott penned a (musical) heartfelt letter to God.
http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=1JM9ECNU&utm_source=GodTube%20Must-See%20Video&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=05/04/2016
- "An Audience with God." Length: 4:43. Cost: Free. If you could tell God anything and you knew he was listening, what would you say?
<http://highwaymedia.org/videos/documentaries/an-audience-with-god>

Activity:

Hands-on item: Card with the five finger prayer or other model of praying.

Music: #492 "Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire" (sung to the tune of Amazing Grace); #395 "Take Time to Be Holy"; "The Lord's Prayer" (Malotte)

Discussion points: 1) Pastor perspective: Everyone can pray. There isn't a "God acceptable" way to do it. Just use your own words. 2) Many people find it difficult to pray in front of others, probably because we compare ourselves to others and feel we don't measure up. 3) Larry's story: He worked with Pastor Gil at Hackle Hospital. Larry offered to pray with a Catholic patient at the end of his visit. She asked if he was Catholic. He said, "No, but I am a Christian." The answer did not satisfy her. That prompted him to learn to pray in a way that is acceptable to Catholics. 4) God listens to everyone who prays to him, no matter their religion or rank. Jehovah's Witnesses (and others) disagree.

September 2, 2016 at 10:00 am: "Table Grace"

16th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Matthew 9: 9-13 (New Living Translation)

⁹As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. ¹¹But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?"

¹²When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do." ¹³Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.'^E For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

Scripture: I Corinthians 11: 23-26 (Contemporary English Version)

²³I have already told you what the Lord Jesus did on the night he was betrayed. And it came from the Lord himself.

He took some bread in his hands. ²⁴Then after he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Eat this and remember me."

²⁵ After the meal, Jesus took a cup of wine in his hands and said, "This is my blood, and with it God makes his new agreement with you. Drink this and remember me."

²⁶The Lord meant that when you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you tell about his death until he comes.

Synopsis: Mealtimes are sacred and holy times, but we've lost the sense of what it means to be connected around the table. We hurry through meals, and many times we eat alone without taking time to enjoy the food or talk to one another. Family dinners are only for special occasions – or maybe a thing of the past altogether. In the church, Holy Communion is our family dinner and a time to remember how Jesus offers us grace and new life. We're invited to experience God's grace around the table and feel the presence of Christ as our host.

Labor Day Weekend

Visuals:

Media possibility: "Supper time." Length: 3:00. Cost: \$20.00. A wonderfully told story of how a boy learned the value of communion through his family's supper time.

<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/840/supertime-short-version>

Activity: Holy Communion

Music: "2254 "In Remembrance of Me"; #2268 "As We Gather at Your Table" (sing to the more familiar tune of Beach Spring or Hyfrydol); #2269 "Come, Share the Lord"

Discussion points: 1) Coming together around the table is coming together in sacred space. It is where community is formed. 2) Screens, whether they are televisions or smart phones, at home or in restaurants, take away from building community around the table. 3) How many people still have uninterrupted family meals? 4) Use pictures from Glenys Nellist's blog of Molly Epplert serving communion on Children's Sunday. <http://www.glenysnellist.com/>

Pastor Mary will probably be on vacation August 28 or September 4.