

All Church Worship Brainstorming June-September 2017

Monday, May 22, 2017

Pastor Mary and Ivan Ivanov's house

6:00 pm Cookout/Potluck Dinner

7:00-9:00 pm Brainstorming for Worship

Join us at 6:00 pm for dinner. Ivan is grilling lots of meat and bread. Please bring a dish to pass.

RSVP's are helpful but not mandatory. Contact the church office (213-798-2181 or lakeharbor@aol.com). Please read the scripture and message synopses and preview the videos before we gather if at all possible.

In the Beginning: (God's) Family Drama

Genesis gives us the story of how and what God created and the great flood. It also tells the story of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and his sons (the twelve tribes of Israel). But as with any family, there is drama and dysfunction. It is like reality TV at its best (and worst!). It is real life and real faith - sometimes messy, sometimes beautiful, always a blessing even when we can't fully see the end result. What do all of these men and women teach us about our own humanity and God's faithfulness?

Ideas:

- Have a small group opportunity to read through and study Genesis together. This would allow us to dig into the whole book, including stories that we won't cover like Cain and Abel, Lot and family, Rebekah, Leah and Rachel, Dinah, Tamar, and Potiphar's wife.
- Show films like *Bruce Almighty*, *Evan Almighty*, and *The Shack*.
- Use family sitcom scenes as a jumping off point for discussion.
- Explore family systems theory in connection with Genesis.

Media collection for the whole series: 13 videos for \$99

<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/60222/genesis-the-full-collection>

Resource: *The Book of Beginnings: Genesis* has messages for all the stories in Genesis (<https://bible.org/series/book-beginnings-genesis>) and great sermon titles too.

Special music throughout summer at 9:00 a.m. worship.

Wedding on Sat., July 22.

June 18, 2017: "In the Beginning: *Imago Dei*"

Father's Day

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-2:4a (The Message)

¹First this: God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don't see. ²Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

³God spoke: “Light!” And light appeared.⁴God saw that light was good and separated light from dark. ⁵God named the light Day, he named the dark Night. It was evening, it was morning—Day One.

⁶God spoke: “Sky! In the middle of the waters; separate water from water!” ⁷God made sky. He separated the water under sky from the water above sky. And there it was: ⁸he named sky the Heavens; It was evening, it was morning—Day Two.

⁹God spoke: “Separate! Water-beneath-Heaven, gather into one place; Land, appear!” And there it was. ¹⁰God named the land Earth. He named the pooled water Ocean. God saw that it was good.

¹¹God spoke: “Earth, green up! Grow all varieties of seed-bearing plants, Every sort of fruit-bearing tree.” And there it was. ¹²Earth produced green seed-bearing plants, all varieties, And fruit-bearing trees of all sorts. God saw that it was good. ¹³It was evening, it was morning—Day Three.

¹⁴God spoke: “Lights! Come out! Shine in Heaven’s sky! Separate Day from Night. Mark seasons and days and years, ¹⁵Lights in Heaven’s sky to give light to Earth.” And there it was. ¹⁶God made two big lights, the larger to take charge of Day, The smaller to be in charge of Night; and he made the stars. ¹⁷God placed them in the heavenly sky to light up Earth ¹⁸And oversee Day and Night, to separate light and dark. God saw that it was good. ¹⁹It was evening, it was morning—Day Four.

²⁰God spoke: “Swarm, Ocean, with fish and all sea life! Birds, fly through the sky over Earth!” ²¹God created the huge whales, all the swarm of life in the waters, And every kind and species of flying birds. God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them: “Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Ocean! Birds, reproduce on Earth!” ²³It was evening, it was morning—Day Five.

²⁴God spoke: “Earth, generate life! Every sort and kind: cattle and reptiles and wild animals—all kinds.” And there it was: ²⁵wild animals of every kind, Cattle of all kinds, every sort of reptile and bug. God saw that it was good.

²⁶God spoke: “Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, And, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth.”

²⁷God created human beings; he created them godlike, Reflecting God’s nature. He created them male and female.

²⁸God blessed them: “Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth.” ²⁹Then God said, “I’ve given you every sort of seed-bearing plant on Earth And every kind of fruit-bearing tree, given them to you for food. ³⁰To all animals and all birds, everything that moves and breathes, I give whatever grows out of the ground for food.” And there it was.

³¹God 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.

⁴This is the story of how it all started, of Heaven and Earth when they were created.

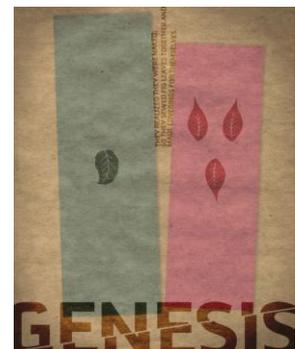
Synopsis: We are made in God’s own image and made for relationship with God and each other. From the start, it seems that God’s intent was for us to reflect the image of God. **How can we celebrate God’s image in us and in one another?**

Felt need: Bolded, above.

Visuals: Broken text and leaves, similar to the image shown, right.

Media:

- “Genesis: Adam and Eve Teaser” 0:33, “Genesis: The Creation of Man and Woman” 1:09, and “Genesis: The Fall” 2:03 are included



in the Genesis Collection

<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/60189/genesis-adam-and-eve-collection>.

- “Creation: The Story.” Length: 3:45. Cost: \$19.95. Visual liturgy. Soundtrack from *Music Inspired by the Story* <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/54344/creation-the-story>
- “Genesis 1.” Length: \$14.98. Visual liturgy. Text is in rhyme. <http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/19310/genesis-1>

Activity: Noisy offering for Missions, Father’s Day prayer and chocolate, Strawberry Festival after worship

Resource for Adam and Eve:

<https://www.dropbox.com/home/LHUMC/Summer%202017?preview=What+Adam+and+Eve+Can+Teach+Modern+Couples.doc>

Music: Morning Has Broken (UMH 145); All Things Bright and Beautiful (UMH 147); “Good (Adam and Eve)” 6:01 from *Music Inspired by the Story*.

June 25, 2017: “In the Beginning: *Building Trust*”

Scripture: Genesis 6:9-22; 7:24; 8:14-19 (The Message)

^{6:9}This is the story of Noah: Noah was a good man, a man of integrity in his community. Noah walked with God.

¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹As far as God was concerned, the Earth had become a sewer; there was violence everywhere. ¹²God took one look and saw how bad it was, everyone corrupt and corrupting—life itself corrupt to the core.

¹³God said to Noah, “It’s all over. It’s the end of the human race. The violence is everywhere; I’m making a clean sweep.

¹⁴“Build yourself a ship from teakwood. Make rooms in it. Coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁵Make it 450 feet long, seventy-five feet wide, and forty-five feet high. ¹⁶Build a roof for it and put in a window eighteen inches from the top; put in a door on the side of the ship; and make three decks, lower, middle, and upper.

¹⁷“I’m going to bring a flood on the Earth that will destroy everything alive under Heaven. Total destruction.

¹⁸“But I’m going to establish a covenant with you: You’ll board the ship, and your sons, your wife and your sons’ wives will come on board with you. ¹⁹You are also to take two of each living creature, a male and a female, on board the ship, to preserve their lives with you: ²⁰two of every species of bird, mammal, and reptile—two of everything so as to preserve their lives along with yours. ²¹Also get all the food you’ll need and store it up for you and them.”

²²Noah did everything God commanded him to do.

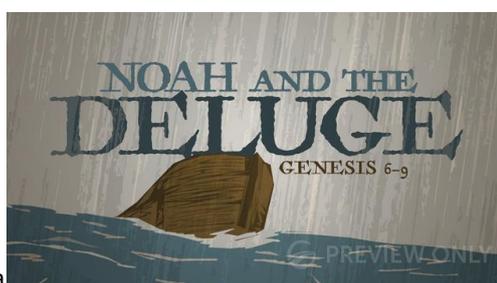
^{7:24}The floodwaters took over for 150 days.

^{8:14}By the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the Earth was completely dry.

¹⁵God spoke to Noah: ¹⁶“Leave the ship, you and your wife and your sons and your sons’ wives. ¹⁷And take all the animals with you, the whole menagerie of birds and mammals and crawling creatures, all that brimming prodigality of life, so they can reproduce and flourish on the Earth.”

¹⁸Noah disembarked with his sons and wife and his sons’ wives. ¹⁹Then all the animals, crawling creatures, birds—every creature on the face of the Earth—left the ship family by family.

Synopsis: Noah’s faith in God leads him to build the ark and follow through with his part of bringing hope. Are we willing to walk by faith and trust in God even when the plan seems strange and the outcome uncertain?



Felt need: Trust God in all circumstances.

Visuals: rainbow, wood for building. Image, right.

Media: insurance commercial, film - *Evan Almighty*

Media possibilities: In addition to a video from the above collection, see:

- “Genesis: The Call of Noah” 1:18, “Genesis: Noah and the Flood” 1:14, and “Genesis: The Flood Subsides” are all part of the Genesis collection.
<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/60187/genesis-noah-collection>
- St. Paul’s Insurance advertisement. Length: 1:00. Cost: Free. It isn’t easy keeping promises. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1BDJmYXNMk>
- “Evan Almighty meets God.” Length: 2:05. Cost: Free. Last used in 2008? When God instruct him to build an ark, Evan’s life goes from overnight success to almighty mess!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByV4gM2uuu4>
- “The Animated Kid’s Bible: Noah 2.” Length: 2:14. Cost. \$15.00. Animated telling of the first part of Noah’s story. Additional parts told in separate videos.
http://www.sermonspice.com/product/10566/the-animated-kids-biblenoah_2
- “Bible Shorts: Noah.” Length: 0:47. Cost: \$9.94. Animated retelling.
<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/32102/bibleshorts-noah>

Activity: VBS commissioning of leaders

Music: Great Is Thy Faithfulness (UMH 140); God of Wonders; Rise and Shine

July 2, 2017 at 10:00 am: “In the Beginning: Promises, Promises”

Scripture: Genesis 18: 1-15, 21: 1-7 (The Message)

¹God appeared to Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance of his tent. It was the hottest part of the day.

²He looked up and saw three men standing. He ran from his tent to greet them and bowed before them.

³He said, “Master, if it please you, stop for a while with your servant. ⁴I’ll get some water so you can wash your feet. Rest under this tree. ⁵I’ll get some food to refresh you on your way, since your travels have brought you across my path.”

They said, “Certainly. Go ahead.”

⁶Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. He said, “Hurry. Get three cups of our best flour; knead it and make bread.”

⁷Then Abraham ran to the cattle pen and picked out a nice plump calf and gave it to the servant who lost no time getting it ready. ⁸Then he got curds and milk, brought them with the calf that had been roasted, set the meal before the men, and stood there under the tree while they ate.

⁹The men said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?”

He said, “In the tent.”

¹⁰One of them said, “I’m coming back about this time next year. When I arrive, your wife Sarah will have a son.” Sarah was listening at the tent opening, just behind the man.

¹¹Abraham and Sarah were old by this time, very old. Sarah was far past the age for having babies. ¹²Sarah laughed within herself, “An old woman like me? Get pregnant? With this old man of a husband?”

¹³God said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh saying, ‘Me? Have a baby? An old woman like me?’ ¹⁴Is anything too hard for God? I’ll be back about this time next year and Sarah will have a baby.”

¹⁵Sarah lied. She said, “I didn’t laugh,” because she was afraid.

But he said, “Yes you did; you laughed.”

^{21:1}God visited Sarah exactly as he said he would; God did to Sarah what he promised:

²Sarah became pregnant and gave Abraham a son in his old age, and at the very time God had set. ³Abraham named him Isaac. ⁴When his son was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him just as God had commanded.

⁵Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born.

⁶Sarah said, "God has blessed me with laughter and all who get the news will laugh with me!"

⁷She also said, "Whoever would have suggested to Abraham that Sarah would one day nurse a baby! Yet here I am! I've given the old man a son!"

Synopsis: Abraham shows hospitality to three visitors and receives the promise of a son.

How do we welcome God in our midst and discover God's promises of life and hope in unexpected ways?

Felt need: Bolded, above.

Visuals: icon of three visitors (Trinity)

Media: "Genesis: The Call of Abraham" 1:20 and "Genesis: God's Covenant with Abraham" 1:06 are part of the Genesis collection and could be useful in setting up the scripture reading. <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/60222/genesis-the-full-collection>

Activity: VBS reflections, Holy Communion, ice cream after worship?

Music: VBS song(s); The God of Abraham Praise (UMH 116); God, Whose Love is Reigning O'er Us (UMH 100); Standing on the Promises (UMH 374)

July 9, 2017: "In the Beginning: *God Who Sees and Hears*"

Scripture: Genesis 21: 8-21 (Contemporary English Version) (ref. Genesis 16:13)

⁸The time came when Sarah no longer had to nurse Isaac, and on that day Abraham gave a big feast.

⁹⁻¹⁰ One day, Sarah noticed Hagar's son Ishmael playing, and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that Egyptian slave woman and her son! I don't want him to inherit anything. It should all go to my son."

¹¹Abraham was worried about Ishmael. ^{12f} But God said, "Abraham, don't worry about your slave woman and the boy. Just do what Sarah tells you. Isaac will inherit your family name, ¹³but the son of the slave woman is also your son, and I will make his descendants into a great nation."

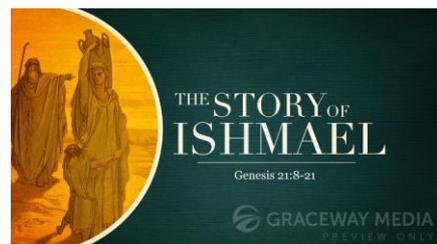
¹⁴Early the next morning Abraham gave Hagar an animal skin full of water and some bread. Then he put the boy on her shoulder and sent them away.

They wandered around in the desert near Beersheba, ¹⁵and after they had run out of water, Hagar put her son under a bush. ¹⁶Then she sat down a long way off, because she could not bear to watch him die. And she cried bitterly.

¹⁷When God heard the boy crying, the angel of God called out to Hagar from heaven and said, "Hagar, why are you worried? Don't be afraid. I have heard your son crying. ¹⁸Help him up and hold his hand, because I will make him the father of a great nation." ¹⁹Then God let her see a well. So she went to the well and filled the skin with water, then gave some to her son.

²⁰⁻²¹God blessed Ishmael, and as the boy grew older, he became an expert with his bow and arrows. He lived in the Paran Desert, and his mother chose an Egyptian woman for him to marry.

Synopsis: Abraham is the faith father of Jews, Muslims, and Christians. God's cares for and provides for Hagar and Ishmael when they are kicked out. God provides what we need at the right time in the toughest of circumstances.



Felt need: Trust in God's promise to provide.

Visuals:

Media: "Genesis: Sarah and Hagar." Length: 1:41. This video from the Genesis collection would be useful for telling what came before today's scripture reading.

<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/60222/genesis-the-full-collection>

Resource: <https://allenvandermeulen.org/2015/03/02/sermon-the-rejected-child/>

Activity:

Music: The God of Abraham Praise (UMH 116); God, Whose Love is Reigning O'er Us (UMH 100); His Eye Is on the Sparrow (FWS 2146); I Need Thee Every Hour (UMH 397)

July 16, 2017: "In the Beginning: Sacrifice"

Scripture: Genesis 22: 1-14 (The Message)

¹After all this, God tested Abraham. God said, "Abraham!"

"Yes?" answered Abraham. "I'm listening."

²He said, "Take your dear son Isaac whom you love and go to the land of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I'll point out to you."

³Abraham got up early in the morning and saddled his donkey. He took two of his young servants and his son Isaac. He had split wood for the burnt offering. He set out for the place God had directed him. ⁴On the third day he looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵Abraham told his two young servants, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I are going over there to worship; then we'll come back to you."

⁶Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and gave it to Isaac his son to carry. He carried the flint and the knife. The two of them went off together.

⁷Isaac said to Abraham his father, "Father?"

"Yes, my son."

"We have flint and wood, but where's the sheep for the burnt offering?"

⁸Abraham said, "Son, God will see to it that there's a sheep for the burnt offering." And they kept on walking together.

⁹They arrived at the place to which God had directed him. Abraham built an altar. He laid out the wood. Then he tied up Isaac and laid him on the wood. ¹⁰Abraham reached out and took the knife to kill his son.

¹¹Just then an angel of God called to him out of Heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

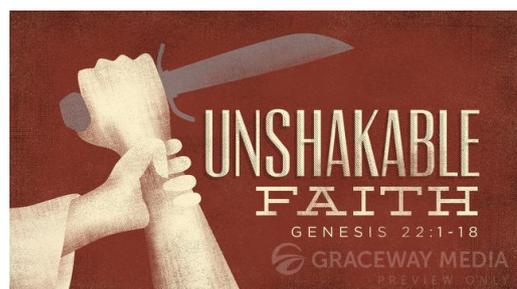
"Yes, I'm listening."

¹²"Don't lay a hand on that boy! Don't touch him! Now I know how fearlessly you fear God; you didn't hesitate to place your son, your dear son, on the altar for me."

¹³Abraham looked up. He saw a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. Abraham took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

¹⁴Abraham named that place God-Yireh (God-Sees-to-It). That's where we get the saying, "On the mountain of God, he sees to it."

Synopsis: Abraham is "tested" by God in a most incredible way - called to sacrifice the most important thing in his life. When we feel like God is asking us to do the impossible or when we're facing a difficult situation, how do we continue to pray and stay in connection with God?



Felt need: To turn towards God when we are in difficult circumstances.

Visuals:

Media: "Abraham: Sacrifice of Isaac." Length: 2:34. Cost: \$15.00. Visual liturgy by the same producer as the Genesis collection.

<http://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/61979/abraham-sacrifice-of-isaac>

Activity: Noisy offering

Music: The God of Abraham Praise (UMH 116); El Shaddai (UMH 123)

July 23, 2017: "In the Beginning: *Living with Regret*"

Scripture: Genesis 25: 19-34 (The Message)

⁹This is the family tree of Isaac son of Abraham: Abraham had Isaac.

²⁰Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan Aram. She was the sister of Laban the Aramean.

²¹Isaac prayed hard to God for his wife because she was barren. God answered his prayer and Rebekah became pregnant. ²²But the children tumbled and kicked inside her so much that she said, "If this is the way it's going to be, why go on living?" She went to God to find out what was going on. ²³God told her,

Two nations are in your womb,
two peoples butting heads while still in your body.
One people will overpower the other,
and the older will serve the younger.

²⁴When her time to give birth came, sure enough, there were twins in her womb. ²⁵The first came out reddish, as if snugly wrapped in a hairy blanket; they named him Esau (Hairy). ²⁶His brother followed, his fist clutched tight to Esau's heel; they named him Jacob (Heel). Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.

²⁷The boys grew up. Esau became an expert hunter, an outdoorsman. Jacob was a quiet man preferring life indoors among the tents. ²⁸Isaac loved Esau because he loved his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

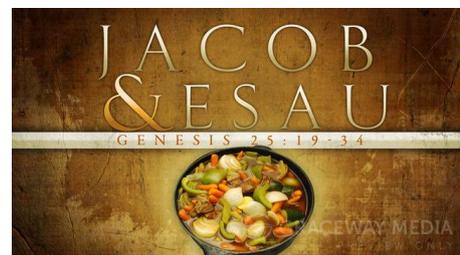
²⁹One day Jacob was cooking a stew. Esau came in from the field, starved. ³⁰Esau said to Jacob, "Give me some of that red stew—I'm starved!" That's how he came to be called Edom (Red).

³¹Jacob said, "Make me a trade: my stew for your rights as the firstborn."

³²Esau said, "I'm starving! What good is a birthright if I'm dead?"

³³Jacob said, "First, swear to me." And he did it. On oath Esau traded away his rights as the firstborn. ³⁴Jacob gave him bread and the stew of lentils. He ate and drank, got up and left. That's how Esau shrugged off his rights as the firstborn.

Synopsis: Esau gives up an important part of his identity for the sake of a fleeting feeling. He devalues God's gift in his life and falls to a momentary desire, only to regret it later on. How do we get lost in our desire for instant gratification instead of slowing down and weighing the consequences of our actions?



Felt need: Learn how to deal with regret.

Visuals: Wedding on Saturday, July 21.

Media:

- "Genesis: Isaac's Blessing." Length: 2:08. This video is from the Genesis collection.
<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/60222/genesis-the-full-collection>

- “Jacob & Esau.” Length: 1:21. Cost: \$1.99. Animated story.
<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/49485/jacob-amp-esau>

Resource: [Understanding the Islamic Dilemma – source needs to be vetted](http://www.indefenceofthegospel.com/content/jacob-and-esau-understanding-islamic-dilemma)

<http://www.indefenceofthegospel.com/content/jacob-and-esau-understanding-islamic-dilemma>

Activity: Time for healing prayer

Music:

July

30, 2017: “In the Beginning: *But You Don’t Understand Me*”

Pastor Mary on vacation - Jeff Verry is sharing the message.

Scripture: Genesis 11: 1-9 (The Message)

At one time, the whole Earth spoke the same language. ²It so happened that as they moved out of the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled down.

³They said to one another, “Come, let’s make bricks and fire them well.” They used brick for stone and tar for mortar.

⁴Then they said, “Come, let’s build ourselves a city and a tower that reaches Heaven. Let’s make ourselves famous so we won’t be scattered here and there across the Earth.”

⁵God came down to look over the city and the tower those people had built.

⁶God took one look and said, “One people, one language; why, this is only a first step. No telling what they’ll come up with next—they’ll stop at nothing! ⁷Come, we’ll go down and garble their speech so they won’t understand each other.” ⁸Then God scattered them from there all over the world. And they had to quit building the city. ⁹That’s how it came to be called Babel, because there God turned their language into “babble.” From there God scattered them all over the world.

Synopsis:

Felt need:

Question: How can the confusion produced by people speaking different languages, literally and figuratively, further God’s plan for people to be in relationship with Him and each other?

Visuals:

Media: “Bibleshorts: Tower of Babel.” Length: 0:22. Cost: \$9.98. Animated retelling.
<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/32104/bibleshorts-tower-of-babel>

Activity:

Music: “Shoulders” by King and Country (*When confusion’s my companion...*)

August 6, 2017:

Pastor Mary on vacation - Mission Team reflections

Title:

Scripture:

Synopsis:

Visuals:

Media:

Activity: Holy Communion (Pastor Mary will ask someone to preside.)

Music:

August 13, 2017: “In the Beginning: *Encountering the Holy*”

Scripture: Genesis 28: 10-19a (The Message)

¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and went to Haran.

¹¹He came to a certain place and camped for the night since the sun had set. He took one of the stones there, set it under his head and lay down to sleep. ¹²And he dreamed: A stairway was set on the ground and it reached all the way to the sky; angels of God were going up and going down on it.

¹³Then God was right before him, saying, "I am God, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. I'm giving the ground on which you are sleeping to you and to your descendants. ¹⁴Your descendants will be as the dust of the Earth; they'll stretch from west to east and from north to south. All the families of the Earth will bless themselves in you and your descendants. ¹⁵Yes. I'll stay with you, I'll protect you wherever you go, and I'll bring you back to this very ground. I'll stick with you until I've done everything I promised you."

¹⁶Jacob woke up from his sleep. He said, "God is in this place—truly. And I didn't even know it!" ¹⁷He was terrified. He whispered in awe, "Incredible. Wonderful. Holy. This is God's House. This is the Gate of Heaven."

¹⁸Jacob was up first thing in the morning. He took the stone he had used for his pillow and stood it up as a memorial pillar and poured oil over it. ¹⁹He christened the place Bethel (God's House).

Synopsis: Jacob's dream is a welcome relief in the midst of his family drama. He receives a pledge of God's presence and protection. He marks the place as a way to remember God's faithfulness and grace in his life. How do "God moments" stay with us and help us on our faith journey?



Felt need: Recognize and remember our God moments.

Visuals:

Media:

Activity: Children's time story using a toy Jacob's ladder or paper ladder chain

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/stairway-to-heaven.html>.

Music: We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder (UMH 418); Nearer My God to Thee (UMH 528);

Surely the Presence (UMH 328)

August 20, 2017: "In the Beginning: *Marked by Struggle*"

Scripture: Genesis 32: 22-31 (The Message)

²²But during the night he got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants, and his eleven children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.

²³He got them safely across the brook along with all his possessions.

²⁴But Jacob stayed behind by himself, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. ²⁵When the man saw that he couldn't get the best of Jacob as they wrestled, he deliberately threw Jacob's hip out of joint.

²⁶The man said, "Let me go; it's daybreak."

Jacob said, "I'm not letting you go 'til you bless me."

²⁷The man said, "What's your name?"

He answered, "Jacob."

²⁸The man said, "But no longer. Your name is no longer Jacob. From now on it's Israel (God-Wrestler); you've wrestled with God and you've come through."

²⁹Jacob asked, "And what's your name?"

The man said, “Why do you want to know my name?” And then, right then and there, he blessed him.

³⁰Jacob named the place Peniel (God’s Face) because, he said, “I saw God face-to-face and lived to tell the story!”

³¹The sun came up as he left Peniel, limping because of his hip. ³²(This is why Israelites to this day don’t eat the hip muscle; because Jacob’s hip was thrown out of joint.)

Synopsis: Jacob’s wrestling match leaves a mark that stays with him. It is a sign of struggle and new life. How do the dips and valleys in our life with God remind us of God’s steadfast presence?

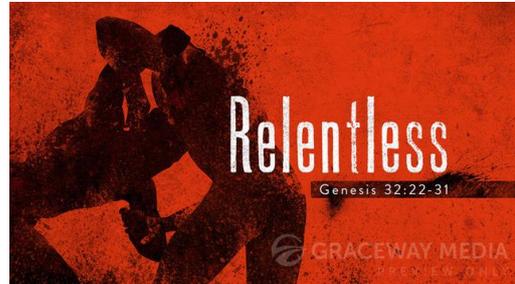
Felt need: Recognize God’s presence in our struggles.

Visuals:

Media:

Activity: Noisy offering

Music: Come, O Thou Traveler Unknown (UMH 386); Be Thou My Vision (UMH 451); Holy Ground (FWS 2272)



August 27, 2017: “In the Beginning: *The Power of Jealousy*”

Scripture: Genesis 37: 1-4, 12-28 (The Message)

¹Meanwhile Jacob had settled down where his father had lived, the land of Canaan.

Joseph and His Brothers

²This is the story of Jacob. The story continues with Joseph, seventeen years old at the time, helping out his brothers in herding the flocks. These were his half brothers actually, the sons of his father’s wives Bilhah and Zilpah. And Joseph brought his father bad reports on them.

³Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons because he was the child of his old age. And he made him an elaborately embroidered coat. ⁴When his brothers realized that their father loved him more than them, they grew to hate him—they wouldn’t even speak to him.

¹²His brothers had gone off to Shechem where they were pasturing their father’s flocks. ¹³Israel said to Joseph, “Your brothers are with flocks in Shechem. Come, I want to send you to them.”

Joseph said, “I’m ready.”

¹⁴He said, “Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are doing and bring me back a report.” He sent him off from the valley of Hebron to Shechem.

¹⁵A man met him as he was wandering through the fields and asked him, “What are you looking for?”

¹⁶“I’m trying to find my brothers. Do you have any idea where they are grazing their flocks?”

¹⁷The man said, “They’ve left here, but I overheard them say, ‘Let’s go to Dothan.’” So Joseph took off, tracked his brothers down, and found them in Dothan.

¹⁸They spotted him off in the distance. By the time he got to them they had cooked up a plot to kill him. ¹⁹The brothers were saying, “Here comes that dreamer. ²⁰Let’s kill him and throw him into one of these old cisterns; we can say that a vicious animal ate him up. We’ll see what his dreams amount to.”

²¹Reuben heard the brothers talking and intervened to save him, “We’re not going to kill him. ²²No murder. Go ahead and throw him in this cistern out here in the wild, but don’t hurt him.” Reuben planned to go back later and get him out and take him back to his father.

²³When Joseph reached his brothers, they ripped off the fancy coat he was wearing, ²⁴grabbed him, and threw him into a cistern. The cistern was dry; there wasn't any water in it.

²⁵Then they sat down to eat their supper. Looking up, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites on their way from Gilead, their camels loaded with spices, ointments, and perfumes to sell in Egypt. ²⁶Judah said, "Brothers, what are we going to get out of killing our brother and concealing the evidence?" ²⁷Let's sell him to the Ishmaelites, but let's not kill him—he is, after all, our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.

²⁸By that time the Midianite traders were passing by. His brothers pulled Joseph out of the cistern and sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites who took Joseph with them down to Egypt.

Synopsis: Sibling rivalry is a reality for Joseph and his brothers, and Jacob's special treatment adds to the problem. **Where do we struggle with jealousy, and how do we keep it in check so that we don't act on it in ways that harm one another?**

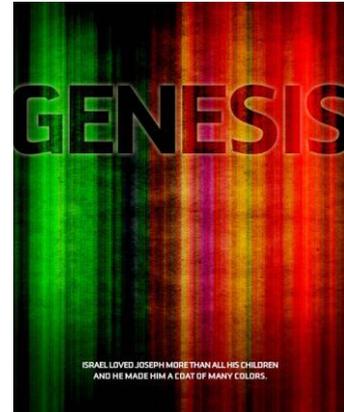
Felt need: Bolded, above.

Visuals:

Media: Excerpts from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, especially "Close Every Door."

Activity:

Music: "#129 "Give to the Winds Thy Fears"



September 3, 2017 at 10:00 am: "In the Beginning: Reconciled"

Scripture: Genesis 45: 1-15 (The Message)

¹Joseph couldn't hold himself in any longer, keeping up a front before all his attendants. He cried out, "Leave! Clear out—everyone leave!" So there was no one with Joseph when he identified himself to his brothers.

²But his sobbing was so violent that the Egyptians couldn't help but hear him. The news was soon reported to Pharaoh's palace.

³Joseph spoke to his brothers: "I am Joseph. Is my father really still alive?" But his brothers couldn't say a word. They were speechless—they couldn't believe what they were hearing and seeing.

⁴"Come closer to me," Joseph said to his brothers. They came closer. "I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵But don't feel badly, don't blame yourselves for selling me. God was behind it. God sent me here ahead of you to save lives. ⁶There has been a famine in the land now for two years; the famine will continue for five more years—neither plowing nor harvesting. ⁷God sent me on ahead to pave the way and make sure there was a remnant in the land, to save your lives in an amazing act of deliverance. ⁸So you see, it wasn't you who sent me here but God. He set me in place as a father to Pharaoh, put me in charge of his personal affairs, and made me ruler of all Egypt.

⁹"Hurry back to my father. Tell him, 'Your son Joseph says: I'm master of all of Egypt. Come as fast as you can and join me here. ¹⁰I'll give you a place to live in Goshen where you'll be close to me—you, your children, your grandchildren, your flocks, your herds, and anything else you can think of. ¹¹I'll take care of you there completely. There are still five more years of famine ahead; I'll make sure all your needs are taken care of, you and everyone connected with you—you won't want for a thing.'

¹²“Look at me. You can see for yourselves, and my brother Benjamin can see for himself, that it’s me, my own mouth, telling you all this. ¹³Tell my father all about the high position I hold in Egypt, tell him everything you’ve seen here, but don’t take all day—hurry up and get my father down here.”

¹⁴Then Joseph threw himself on his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. ¹⁵He then kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Only then were his brothers able to talk with him.

Synopsis: Joseph’s faith and God’s grace have kept Joseph alive for many years. He’s able to see God’s hand in his situation - or at least make the best of it. And he extends grace to those who have wronged him. **How do we extend God’s grace when we’ve received it and seek reconciliation?**

Felt need: Bolded, above.

Visuals:

Media: “Bend.” Length: 4:01. Cost \$19.98. Tells the story of Joseph. Soundtrack from *Music Inspired by the Story*. <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/54332/bend-the-story>

Activity: Holy Communion

Music: This Is a Day of New Beginnings (UMH 383); Where Charity and Love Prevail (UMH 549); Bind Us Together (FWS 2226); Make Me a Channel of Your Peace (FWS 2171)