

## Worship Brainstorming Summary

### “QUEST: TRAVEL AS A SPIRITUAL ACT”

Tuesday, July 6, 2021

Worship Brainstorming for July 25 –  
August 29, 2021



**Members present:** Vicki Zuker, rose

Emmons, Betty Kinney, Skylar Epplett, Kate Robbins, Karen Post, Jim Post, Pastor Mary Ivanov, Jimmy Epplett, Larry Jorgenson, Bonnie Jorgenson, Michael Boersma, David Booth, Karen Booth; Lynne Richmond and Dave Lorenz via email

Whether you travel far away or see your local surroundings as if for the first time, pilgrimage has long been a spiritual practice, and “journey” a deeply-felt metaphor for our spiritual lives. “Quest” comes from the Latin root meaning “ask, seek.” This four-week worship series (which we are expanding to six weeks) will encourage us to open ourselves more fully to the curiosity and wonder, reflection and transformation that travelers—not merely tourists—experience when they choose to immerse themselves in soul-widening adventures.

**2021 theme connection:** There is rich blessing in discovery and diversity

**Key word:** Reconnection

**Key scripture:**

#### Resources:

- Worship Design Studio materials
- Introductory video by Marcia McFee <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JISsNBI95OQ>
- “Travel as a Spiritual Act” webinar with Rick Steves <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJ3sL-RKnTM>. **Note:** The video is almost one hour and forty-five minutes long. Watching it is probably the single most important thing you can do to prep for the brainstorming. The “Quest” package came with excerpts from this video ranging in length from 1:18-4:28 and these topics: breaking bread, celebrating the family, growing closer to God, encountering religious practices, encountering suffering, the challenge of travel, the road as a church, and traveling on purpose.
- “Why We Travel” by Rick Steves. Length: 26:47. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9bprJ6V\\_4c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9bprJ6V_4c)
- “The Local Church Needs a Global Perspective,” Christianity Today Pastors Newsletter, July 6, 2021 <https://lakeharborumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/The-Local-Church-Needs-a-Global-Perspective.pdf>

- Nala's World: One Man, His Rescue Cat, and a Bike Ride around the Globe by Dean Nicholson. Synopsis and pictures: <https://www.amazon.com/Nalas-World-Rescue-around-Globe-ebook/dp/B083J18VVH>
- "Path to a Miracle" by Hannah Anderson. This is the story of a journey of a different sort. <https://lakeharborumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Path-to-a-Miracle-Bible-Studies.pdf>

### Music:

- How Great Thou Art UMH #77
- Cry of My Heart TFWS #2165
- Just a Closer Walk with Thee UMH #2158
- For the Healing of the Nations UMH #428
- There's a Wideness in God's Mercy UMH #121
- We Meet You, O Christ UMH #257
- Your Love, O God, Has Called Us Here UMH #647
- Jesus Calls Us UMH #398
- Lord, Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing UMH #671
- Theme song: "The Quest" by Dr. Marcia McFee.

Lyrics:

*Leaving home, we set our seeing,  
On a quest for deeper meaning.  
What we find can change us for the love of all  
The love of all the creation and its beings.*

- Prayer song: "Stepping In" by Christopher Grundy  
<http://www.christophergrundy.com/stepping-in-lyrics/>,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTSh10xaGuY>



### Visuals: Map, globe, journal

- Marcia McFee's Pinterest board <https://www.pinterest.com/worshipstudio/quest-travel-series/>
- Lynne Richmond's Pinterest board <https://www.pinterest.com/lynandlid/spirituality-of-travel-series/> and some of her ideas:
  - Make a banner from larger map pages... as in U.S. atlases (ask members for old stuff)
  - Ask to borrow globes, suitcases to stack
  - Emphasize "bon voyage" rather than have a "safe trip"
- World map papers for making votive, candles, flags, luggage tags, etc.  
[https://www.amazon.com/Monolike-Vintage-Poster-Wrapping-Design/dp/B07GV6VCZV/ref=sr\\_1\\_10?dchild=1&keywords=map+paper&qid=1620311069&sr=8-10](https://www.amazon.com/Monolike-Vintage-Poster-Wrapping-Design/dp/B07GV6VCZV/ref=sr_1_10?dchild=1&keywords=map+paper&qid=1620311069&sr=8-10) & <https://www.amazon.com/World-Traveller-Gift-Wrapping->

[Paper/dp/B078W3BBJD/ref=sr\\_1\\_13?dchild=1&keywords=map+paper&qid=1620311069&sr=8-13](https://www.canva.com/design/DAEdtnWPpR4/8geQifKKQoC0sl241Zfcjg/view?utm_content=DAEdtnWPpR4&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton&utm_ode=preview)

- Alegreya font family (used in Marcia McFee’s graphics) – available for free  
<https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Alegreya+Sans#standard-styles>

**Hands-on items:** Friendship bracelets, postcards

([https://www.canva.com/design/DAEdtnWPpR4/8geQifKKQoC0sl241Zfcjg/view?utm\\_content=DAEdtnWPpR4&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=sharebutton&utm\\_ode=preview](https://www.canva.com/design/DAEdtnWPpR4/8geQifKKQoC0sl241Zfcjg/view?utm_content=DAEdtnWPpR4&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton&utm_ode=preview)) , food from around the world (salt, cheeses)

**NOTES:** Are there **people who can share about travel experiences** that have been transformational? Ivan Ivanov, Dave & Karen Booth, Julie Jones, Dave Lorenz

**2021 marks two important anniversaries for LHUMC:**

1. 65 years since charter (April 22, 1956)
2. 5 years since merger with Lakeside UMC (June 2016)

**General discussion points:**

1. Travel doesn’t have to take you far from home, just to a place with new sites and people. You learn that people have more in common than differences; they want to care for their families, enjoy good health, safety, education, and be able to meet basic needs.
2. Dave Lorenz: “Travel is a great antidote for fear.” He doesn’t normally reply to nasty messages, but upon receiving an email from a Canadian who said she loved the beauty and history of Michigan and won’t travel here again because of all the Muslims, he replied that travel is exactly the cure needed for such narrow-minded thinking.
3. Mark Twain: “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.
4. Quest and question have the same Latin root.
5. Rick Steves has traveled most of his life including spending 40 consecutive summers in Europe. He is largely known for his PBS specials. His faith as an ELCA Lutheran is evident as he talks about travel as a spiritual act.
6. Marcia McFee is the daughter of an airline pilot. Read more about her background at <https://671et55f.pages.infusionsoft.net/>.
7. Travel isn’t always something we do for pleasure. Ivan’s parents sent him to the US to assure his safety when he was the same age as Ana is now.
8. Larry appreciated the distinction Rick Steves made between traveling as a tourist and as one on a pilgrimage, seeking to learn and be transformed.
9. Pastor Mary is looking for people who have stories to tell about travel. She noted that in scripture people are always on the move. Many of the Psalms were recited as people moved, especially to and from the temple.

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**July 25, 2021: “Leaving Home”**

**Scripture:** Psalm 121 (NRSV) Assurance of God’s Protection, A Song of Ascents

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the hills—<br/>from where will my help come?</p>          | <p><sup>5</sup> The LORD is your keeper;<br/>the LORD is your shade at your right hand.</p>                         |
| <p><sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD,<br/>who made heaven and earth.</p>                | <p><sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike you by day,<br/>nor the moon by night.</p>                                 |
| <p><sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot be moved;<br/>he who keeps you will not slumber.</p> | <p><sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all evil;<br/>he will keep your life.</p>                               |
| <p><sup>4</sup> He who keeps Israel<br/>will neither slumber nor sleep.</p>                    | <p><sup>8</sup> The LORD will keep<br/>your going out and your coming in<br/>from this time on and forevermore.</p> |

**Scripture:** Exodus 13: 17-22 (NIV) Crossing the Sea

<sup>17</sup> When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, “If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.” <sup>18</sup> So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle.

<sup>19</sup> Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the Israelites swear an oath. He had said, “God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place.”

<sup>20</sup> After leaving Sukkoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. <sup>21</sup> By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. <sup>22</sup> Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

**Synopsis:** The story of the pilgrimage of our ancestors in faith reminds us that traveling, moving, leaving home, is part of our faith story. There are times when we need to leave what’s familiar in order to grow and thrive. Beginning a journey involves leaving “home”—whether that is a physical place in order to explore another part of the world, or changing a mindset that keeps us from expanding our spiritual capacity.

**Felt need:** To understand that God is with us on the journey of life and faith even and especially when it feels like the unknown

**Visuals:**

**Children’s time possibility:** Salt from different places around the world. Salt adds flavor (and comes in many different colors). Celebrating unique flavors.

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

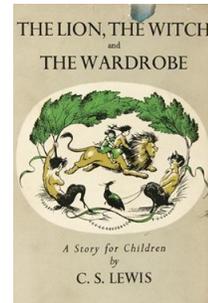
**Media possibilities:**

**Music:** Lead On, O Cloud of Presence (FWS 2234), Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah (UMH 127)

**Worship Leader:** Dave Lorenz

**Discussion points:**

1. Sometimes you have to leave home to grow (college), grow up, make your own way, and claim your own faith.
2. Michael was reminded of the kids' journey in The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe. They could have stayed safe at home, but they would not have grown. He noted Mr. Beaver's excitement and fear when Aslan was on the move. Where there is risk, there is also reward, much the same as the Parable of the Talents (7-4-21 worship).
3. Vicki: You must stretch yourself to grow and make disciples.
4. The Ivanovs and Mertzs are flying to Florida. Their seats are not together. Ivan was elected to sit in the seat next to strangers since he can talk to anyone, something he learned when he traveled to the US. As a child, he was less outgoing.
5. Taking risks gives God space to work. 6
6. Kim Bos was an exchange student in Sweden.
7. Pastor Mary's big question: What have you learned when you've gone to unknown places? My expectations are pretty much always wrong (Jimmy). I was expecting excitement and transformation, but the extent of it was much greater than I had ever imagined (Rose). Christians are always on a journey; we never stop learning, though later in life I seem to be relearning (Larry). I was transformed by doing stuff when I paid attention (Fred Yonkers in his 7-4-21 fruit of the spirit reflection).
8. Travel goes better when you have a guide, especially if there are language barriers.



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**August 1, 2021: "The Encounter"**

**Scripture:** Psalm 146 (NIV)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD.<br/>Praise the LORD, my soul.</p>  | <p><sup>6</sup> He is the Maker of heaven and earth,<br/>the sea, and everything in them—<br/>he remains faithful forever.</p>                       |
| <p><sup>2</sup> I will praise the LORD all my life;<br/>I will sing praise to my God as long as I<br/>live.</p>                     | <p><sup>7</sup> He upholds the cause of the oppressed<br/>and gives food to the hungry.<br/>The LORD sets prisoners free,</p>                        |
| <p><sup>3</sup> Do not put your trust in princes,<br/>in human beings, who cannot save.</p>   | <p><sup>8</sup> the LORD gives sight to the blind,<br/>the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,<br/>the LORD loves the righteous.</p>             |
| <p><sup>4</sup> When their spirit departs, they return to the<br/>ground;<br/>on that very day their plans come to<br/>nothing.</p> | <p><sup>9</sup> The LORD watches over the foreigner<br/>and sustains the fatherless and the widow,<br/>but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.</p> |
| <p><sup>5</sup> Blessed are those whose help is the God of<br/>Jacob,<br/>whose hope is in the LORD their God.</p>                  | <p><sup>10</sup> The LORD reigns forever,<br/>your God, O Zion, for all generations.<br/>Praise the LORD.</p>  |

**Scripture:** John 4: 4-42 (NRSV) – This could be done as a reader’s theater, perhaps using The VOICE translation (<https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John4:4-42&version=VOICE>).

<sup>4</sup> But he had to go through Samaria. <sup>5</sup> So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup> A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” <sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” <sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” <sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” <sup>17</sup> The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” <sup>19</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” <sup>25</sup> The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” <sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” <sup>28</sup> Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, <sup>29</sup> “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” <sup>30</sup> They left the city and were on their way to him.

<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” <sup>32</sup> But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” <sup>33</sup> So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. <sup>35</sup> Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. <sup>36</sup> The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper

may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup>For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' <sup>38</sup>I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

<sup>39</sup>Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." <sup>40</sup>So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup>And many more believed because of his word. <sup>42</sup>They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

**Synopsis:** Jesus often crossed paths with others not from his "tribe." He did not shy away, but often sought out these opportunities. He met people going about their daily lives and engaged with them at the point of their deepest yearning. When we seek out and are open to new encounters, new people, and new relationships, we can experience new spiritual connections with humanity and more spiritual depth within us. How can we shift our perception, redefining "strangers" as "friends we have not yet met?"

**Felt need:** To claim new experiences as a part of spiritual journey and one another as spiritual friends

**Visuals:** Lanterns from around the world. <https://www.pinterest.com/sudro/lanterns-around-the-world/>

**Children's time possibility:** Day and night happen all around the world. We all need lights and need to be the light.

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:** Holy Communion

**Media possibilities:** "Spoken Word – Woman at the Well." Length: 2:36. Cost: We own it.

We've used it twice – not sure when. A dramatic interpretation of the woman at the well, and her desire to be loved for who she is. <https://www.sermonspice.com/sermon-illustrations/6702/spoken-word--woman-at-the-well>

**Music:** The Summons (FWS 2130), How He Loves Us, No Longer Slaves, The Servant Song (FWS 2222)

**Worship Leader:** Brad Hilleary

**Discussion points:**

1. This scripture reading is one of Pastor Mary's favorites. We should all have these kinds of encounters. The woman went to the middle of the day to avoid gossipers. According to Jewish customs, Jesus should never have been alone with this woman. Other people would have stereotyped this woman never suspecting that she would be the one to spread the news of Jesus. In all of scripture, but people are put together in uncomfortable situations and the unexpected happens, especially when Jesus is around. We should seek out opportunities to be uncomfortable.
2. Strangers are friends we haven't met yet.
3. We can have deeply spiritual connections with others.
4. Prewedding mix-up: Some couples have mistakenly asked to have John 4:16 (<sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back.") when they really wanted 1 John 4: 16 (<sup>16</sup>And

so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.) read during their ceremony.

5. In the news: "I've read Mao Zedong. I've read Karl Marx. I've read Lenin," (General) Milley said. "That doesn't make me a communist. So what is wrong with having some situational understanding about the country which we are here to defend?"
6. Vicki: Bullies and people that are really hard to like are often that way because they are hurting.
7. Song: "Going to California" by Led Zeppelin.
8. We get to know each other by telling our stories and hearing other's.
9. Mike Layman encountered a young man at Supper House who said he wouldn't come in unless Mike could recite John 3:16. Mike was a bit worried. The young man joined in as he said the verse. He's never had anything like that.
10. Eric Gordon has been working for Pro Med transporting people to and from medical appointments. Many are regular clients with amazing stories. One woman was a nation yodeling champion. One man was a war correspondent with amazing stories; Eric said he should write a book. He had written one on a different topic and is in the process of writing another about the war stories.
11. Dave Booth's exam rooms were filled with travel photos. Patients would often ask what people are like in other countries. His response was always, "a whole lot like us." Examples: They want to get to know you over dinner (Zé – Lisbon, Portugal home hosted dinner); teach you about their cultures (Cooking class in Bodrum, Turkey); provide for their families (Lotus Cooking School, Marrakesh, Morocco); be an example of true forgiveness (Robert, a former prisoner who now gives tours of Robbins Island, Cape Town, South Africa); help their neighbors (South African witch doctor); show you their favorite places (Shannon, Scotland); support the village school (Home visit, Acapulco, Mexico); explain – and often lament over – their county's political situation/history (Christophe, France; Tamara, Croatia; Elizabet, Peru). They are also distracted by technology (Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina). There is no such thing as personal space (everywhere but the US and Canada) and no whiny children (Peru).
12. As Jimmy was driving the van back to Henderson Settlement in Kentucky, he was surprised by a wasp and ended up jerking the van's steering wheel and going into a ditch. Another van picked up the kids while he waited a couple hours for the tow truck. Lots of people stopped to offer help, water, food, etc. He finally counted 78 people over the course of an hour and a half. He never encountered anything like that before – very neighborly. Even the tow truck driver, who had to lay down in a ditch of water to get the hitch connected was incredibly kind. What a different way of life!
13. Song: "Take Me to the Alley" by Gregory Porter – *Well, they guild their houses in preparation for the King and line the sidewalks with every sort of shiny thing. They will be surprised when they hear him say, "Take me to the alley. Take me to the afflicted ones. Take me to the lonely ones that somehow lost their way."*
14. Scott Robbins was scheduled to speak at Lakeside. He dressed up as a bum and sat down by the church door before the service, drenched in beer. Many people walked around him. When he walked in church, Larry's daughter took away his beer. At some point people started to recognize him and he got up to speak on acceptance.

15. Snap judgements: Recently a woman walked into a meeting in Fellowship Hall carrying a pile of clothes. No one recognized her and she didn't really say much except that she wanted to talk to the pastor. Mary later realized that she was related to a member and that she had lost five family members this year. Betty and others kind of waited around to make sure everything would be alright. We all need to make snap judgements. The Epplott Family motto is "talk to strangers, but safely." If a snap judgement is wrong, own it and fix it.
16. Skylar admits to walking towards danger. She works at Walmart and has seen all sorts of things that other people stand back from. Every person has a story. She wants to learn them so she pushes herself to do the right thing. 1
17. Michael used to work at the Rescue Mission and gained lots of experience talking to guys. One day after chapel, a man walked in shoeless, soiled, and very drunk. He hugged Michael for about five minutes. Michael then led him to the shower and found some clean clothes for him. God hugs us and tells us that he loves us when we are a mess too.
18. These encounters do as much for us as they do for them.

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**August 8, 2021: "" - Rev. Dr. Margie Crawford preaching**

**Scripture:**

**Synopsis:**

**Felt need:** To

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:**

**Music:**

**Worship Leader:** Rose Emmons

**Discussion points:** 1) We'll learn more about the message when she returns from vacation.

2) Our first Sunday together after the merger was June 13, 2016. Brad Hilleary and Carole Rose preached on "Synergy through Unity" based on Isaiah 43: 16-21 and Psalm 133. We had been using this "Unity Prayer" for several weeks:

God, grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, which is pretty much everyone, since I'm clearly not you, God. At least not the last time I checked.

And while you're at it, God, please give me the courage to change what I need to change about myself, which is frankly a lot, since, once again, I'm not you, which means I'm not perfect. It's better for me to focus on changing myself than to worry about changing other people, who, as you'll no doubt remember me saying, I can't change anyway.

Finally, give me the wisdom to just shut up whenever I think that I'm clearly smarter than everyone else in the room, that no one knows what they're talking about except me, or that I alone have all the answers.

Basically, God, grant me the wisdom to remember that I'm not you.

Amen.

Media: “God of the New” (<https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/60778/god-of-the-new->). Image: Zipper merge. 3) We will probably have at least a video greeting from Bishop Bard also.

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## August 15, 2021: “Take Me Where Love is Needed”

LHUMC Mission Trip reflections

**Scripture possibilities:** Micah 6:8; Isaiah 43: 1-4, 16-21; Proverbs 20:5; Ezekiel 47: 8-10; Psalm 23; Amos 5: 24 (Skylar and Ana, the devotions team, will have more information as plans unfold.)

**Synopsis:** The message will be a reflection on the places the youth served, people they encountered, and what they’ve seen through new eyes.

**Felt need:** To hear God’s call to take love with us wherever we go

**Visuals:** Water.

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:**

**Music:** Make Me a Channel of Your Peace; “The River” by Jordan Feliz

**Worship Leaders:** HS Youth – currently about 12-15 people plan on participating

**Discussion points:**

1. Stagnant water is unclean and needs to be filtered.
2. The tides and shoreline change the beach.
3. Sailors use compasses and the stars to navigate. What do we use?
4. Currents: There times when we should go with the flow and there are times when we need to go against it.
5. Water ebbs and flows. How does this affect us?
6. A new river and ecosystem are created below a waterfall. It is connected, but only loosely.
7. Sometimes you can travel great distances without leaving town.
8. The western part of our country is experiencing a great drought currently. What happens when we don’t have water?

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## August 22, 2021: “The Reflection”

**Scripture:** Isaiah 65: 17-25 (NIV)

<sup>17</sup> “See, I will create  
new heavens and a new earth.

The former things will not be remembered,  
nor will they come to mind.

<sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever  
in what I will create,

for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight  
and its people a joy.

<sup>19</sup> I will rejoice over Jerusalem  
and take delight in my people;  
the sound of weeping and of crying  
will be heard in it no more.

<sup>20</sup> “Never again will there be in it  
an infant who lives but a few days,  
or an old man who does not live out his  
years;

the one who dies at a hundred  
will be thought a mere child;  
the one who fails to reach a hundred  
will be considered accursed.

<sup>21</sup> They will build houses and dwell in them;  
they will plant vineyards and eat their  
fruit.

<sup>22</sup> No longer will they build houses and others  
live in them,  
or plant and others eat.

For as the days of a tree,  
so will be the days of my people;

my chosen ones will long enjoy  
the work of their hands.

<sup>23</sup> They will not labor in vain,  
nor will they bear children doomed to  
misfortune;  
for they will be a people blessed by the LORD,  
they and their descendants with them.

<sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer;  
while they are still speaking I will hear.

<sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb will feed together,  
and the lion will eat straw like the ox,  
and dust will be the serpent’s food.

They will neither harm nor destroy  
on all my holy mountain,”  
says the LORD.

**Scripture: Revelation 21: 22-27 (NRSV)**

<sup>22</sup> I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. <sup>25</sup> Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. <sup>27</sup> But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

**Synopsis:** When we begin to broaden our experience of other places and people, we face the reality of religious differences. If we continue to reflect and open our hearts, what feels so different may not be as far from us as we thought. Images like light and water are common themes across faith traditions as we seek peace, provide for basic needs, and offer love and compassion for those suffering and oppressed. How can deeper reflection connect us to the wider human family and free us to explore possibilities for a better world?

**Felt need:** To find common ground with people who are different from us and see God at work

**Visuals:** Reflections – water, mirrors, light.

**Children’s time possibility:** Cheeses from around the world. Abundance.

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:**

**Music:** He Leadeth Me (UMH 128), 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord), Goodness of God (Bethel Music), Shall We Gather at the River (UMH 723)

**Worship Leader:** Jim Post

**Discussion points:**

1. Pastor Mary's big question: How many people keep a written travel journal? Bonnie Jorgenson, Rose Emmons, Pastor Mary. The Booths do a photo journal. Do people look back at what they've written? Do we reflect on how we see things differently as a result of our travels? Many people's journals and observations have common themes, e.g., we are more alike than different, we are not afraid of others, etc.
2. How does the immediacy of news and information affect us? Do we choose to ignore it so that we don't have to do anything about it? You can't know certain things and not care about what is happening? Related song from the 1980s: We Are the World. It was a response to children starving in Africa. Lyrics: *There comes a time when we heed a certain call, when the world must come together as one. There are people dying... We can't go on pretending day-by-day that someone, somewhere soon must make a change...*
3. Egocentrism: During Covid we didn't tend to hear about other needs and it seems unlikely that they went away. Will we respond or conclude that they are not a problem for us to fix?
4. Nationalism is not gospel-centered. It is scary. We are also global citizens and citizens of heaven – yes, dual citizenship.
5. We can have gratitude for the blessing of living here. What do I do with the opportunities I've been given? Both Vicki Zuker and Karen Post are overwhelmed with the support they received during their cancer journeys and feel/felt moved to offer a response.
6. Unless you've been with someone who has gone through the process of becoming a citizen, you have no idea how much is involved.
7. The more you travel the more you realize how good we have it in the United States in spite all of our problems (history, politics...).
8. Jimmy often stands out as different. He continues to reflect on how his mission trip van breakdown showed him a different (and very good) level of acceptance by people who did not know him.
9. Kids need to travel even if it is school field trips to a farm, zoo, pond, or someone else's home.
10. Several people in our group have done home visits and have been shocked by the situations, no running water, no lights, hoarding, lack of language skills, etc.

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## August 29, 2021: "Returning Home"

### Scripture: Psalm 36: 5-9 (NIV)

Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens,  
 your faithfulness to the skies.

<sup>6</sup>Your righteousness is like the highest mountains,  
 your justice like the great deep.

You, LORD, preserve both people and animals.

<sup>7</sup>How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!  
 People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

<sup>8</sup>They feast on the abundance of your house;  
you give them drink from your river of delights.

<sup>9</sup>For with you is the fountain of life;  
in your light we see light.

**Scripture: John 15: 1-17 (MSG)**

<sup>15</sup> <sup>1-3</sup>“I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer. He cuts off every branch of me that doesn’t bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more. You are already pruned back by the message I have spoken.

<sup>4</sup>“Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can’t bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can’t bear fruit unless you are joined with me.

<sup>5-8</sup>“I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you’re joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can’t produce a thing. Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.

<sup>9-10</sup>“I’ve loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you’ll remain intimately at home in my love. That’s what I’ve done—kept my Father’s commands and made myself at home in his love.

<sup>11-15</sup>“I’ve told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I’m no longer calling you servants because servants don’t understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I’ve named you friends because I’ve let you in on everything I’ve heard from the Father.

<sup>16</sup>“You didn’t choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won’t spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you.

<sup>17</sup>“But remember the root command: Love one another.

**Synopsis:** After stretching our spirits and loving more of the glorious creation and its peoples, we return home, but we are not the same. We have returned memories of new friends and new perspectives – and maybe even new convictions to be more active and loving citizens of humanity right where we reside. Jesus says “abide in me” and follows that up with the commandment to love one another.

**Felt need:** To see how God transforms us through travel – whether near or far away – and calls us to love better through it

**Visuals:** Photographs

**Children’s time possibility:** Ways to show friendship – friendship bracelets.

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:**

**Music:** We Are Marching (FWS 2235), Your Love Oh Lord (Third Day)

**Worship Leader:** Brian Mosley

**Discussion points:**

1. What will we do differently once we return home?
2. Over the course of years of ministry, many of us have noticed that people are content with far fewer things. Pastor Mary has a coffee table book showing the amount of food, clothes, shoes, etc. that people own in different countries. It is crazy that people need to rent place to store their stuff. There is a trend to live more simply with less stuff.
3. Living in a storage unit is a cheaper housing option in more densely populated areas. There is security, bathrooms, locks, etc.
4. Henderson Settlement: Jimmy asked to use the hose out front to clean up paint. He was told, "No. That runs to my son's house down in the holler." It isn't at all unusual to have multiple generations with homes on the same property.
5. Cultural differences are real. Examples: Personal space (only in the US and Canada is that a "thing"), personal cars and homes (Ivan always lived in an apartment until he came to the US), odors (for a variety of reasons), language (not just between different languages, but by people who in theory speak the same language but use very different words/dialects/phrases)