

# Worship Brainstorming Summary

## The Faith of a Mockingbird

Based on a book by Pastor Matt Rawle  
February 6-27, 2022 (4 weeks)

**Members present:** Betty Kinney, Paul Powers, Mudgi Cavender, Karen Post, Jim Post, Larry Jorgenson, Pastor Mary, Ivan Ivanov, David Booth, Karen Booth; Missy and Mike Post, Lynne Richmond via notes

**Social Justice Issue for February 2022:** Literacy

**Theme:** The Spiritual Journey Continues...Picking up the pieces

- Connecting the pieces
- Transformation
- Serving others (passionately)

**Metaphors:**

- Puzzle/puzzle pieces – making a new picture. Related hands-on item: puzzle piece with scripture reference.
- Mosaic – creating something beautiful from broken pieces

**Major spoken/unspoken needs:**

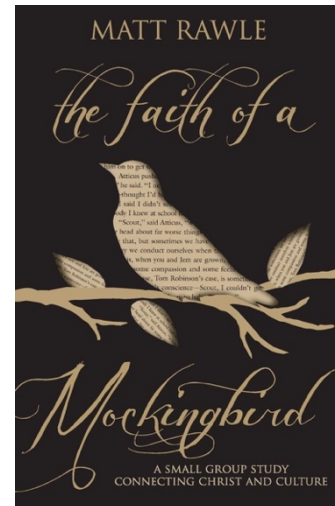
- Dealing with fear, which often presents itself as anger and rage. One antidote to fear is serving.
- Peace, sense of belonging, safe communities, coming together, compassion
- Finding a new normal – less busy, better sense of priorities, greater gratitude, increased resilience

**From author Matt Rawle:**

**Sin, redemption, wisdom, and love** are all themes in Harper Lee's masterpiece, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. An influential and transformative novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is one piece of popular culture that certainly has withstood the test of time. **Published in 1960**, *To Kill a Mockingbird* serves as a lens through which we can understand our place in the world, how we play a role in God's story, and what it means to live out a hopeful faith in a broken world. Looking at the book's four main characters—Scout Finch, Atticus Finch, Tom Robinson, and Boo Radley—they teach us about faith and redemption. (Note: the movie was released in 1962.)

The novel offers timeless characters who speak pointed words of truth, and we also "overhear" the discoveries of Maycomb County citizens as they encounter the prophetic truth of **mystery, courage, mercy, and justice**. We can discover how our own broken lives are part of God's timeless redemption story.

**Series synopsis:** Pastor and author Matt Rawle sees Christ all around him – in books, movies, TV shows, rock music – and he want to share what he sees. As Rawle says, "God offers the raw ingredients, and 'culture' is whatever we cook up." In *The Faith of a Mockingbird*, Matt



Rawle uses Harper Lee's beloved characters to explore Christian faith, theology, and ethics, considering God's world and what it all means.

**2022 theme connection:** Transformation. We don't have to learn everything first-hand.

Literature is a great resource for seeing how characters are transformed by events and their interactions with each other. **Comment:** This story is a great example of the value of art and literature. God is revealed in this story.

**Series promotional video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHJkAkHGnYA>. The office will order some copies of Matt Rawle's book.

**Promoting the series:** Encourage people to read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, listen to the audio book, watch *To Kill a Mockingbird*, or at least familiarize themselves with the story.

- **To Kill a Mockingbird trailer:** Show one trailer in church on February 6. It is not clear which trailer we should use.
  - Official Trailer #1. Length: 2:53. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KR7loA\\_oziY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KR7loA_oziY)
  - 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Trailer. Length: 1:34. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgUXahs3Ghc>
  - Updated version (contemporary music and text overlay added) Length: 3:26. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYeGBGOJL1U>
- **Free movie:** Show the 1962 film (2 hr. 10 min) at church on Sun., February 6.
- **Book summary:** Matt Rawle's book has a 3-page summary of TKAM (*To Kill a Mockingbird*). **Create our own short video.** Ask someone (Dave Lorenz) to record themselves reading the summary. Add images from the movie. Post the finished video on our website, Facebook, and YouTube.
- **Harbor Light:** Include links to all of the movie clips we'll use in worship, the series promo video, 1962 movie trailer, and publicity for the Feb. 6 movie showing.



**Media:** Use short clips from the film in worship. We will have to use "Be right back" slide as Universal holds the rights to the film.

**Related interview:** Reconciliation with God & Others [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_643qTmuck](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_643qTmuck)

#### Music:

- Music from the 1962 film - sheet music available
- *Nearer My God, to Thee*
- *Amazing Grace*
- *On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand*
- *Tell Me the Stories of Jesus*
- *Blessed Assurance*

**Visuals:** picket fence, tree, rocking chair, pocket watch

- Lynne's pins <https://www.pinterest.com/lynandlid/the-faith-of-a-mockingbird/>

- Ideas on our website <https://lakeharborumc.org/2022/01/january-17-2022-worship-brainstorming/>

**Hands-on item (Lynne Richmond):** i was thinking about handouts and i saw an idea on pinterest (i think!).... about printing a quote from the movie on a vintage-looking library card....

**Resources:**

- Weekly countdown
- Worship videos for each week
- Facebook post ideas

**Articles:**

- On Harper Lee and Methodist/UM connection <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/6692/harper-lee-was-united-methodist-in-word-deed>
- Matt Rawle <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/6691/remembering-a-mockingbird>
- On Christ figures in the movies <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/1432/jesus-goes-to-the-movies-part-2>
- Jake Owensby: “Mockingbirds don’t merely trill or chirp. They compose melodies. That’s why one of Harper Lee’s characters said that it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird; all they do is sing their hearts out.”
  - Related movie clip: “To Kill a Mockingbird: Sin to Kill a Mockingbird.” Length: 0:29. Cost: Free. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHScNGR82Zc>
  - Related hands-on item: 3” mockingbird cutout \$0.60 each (~~\$0.76 each~~) <https://24hourcrafts.com/products/unfinished-wooden-mockingbird-shape>
  - Sample mockingbird songs [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern\\_Mockingbird/sounds](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern_Mockingbird/sounds)
- In 1964, Harper Lee told the New York radio station WQXR in a rare interview, “Well, my objectives are very limited ... I would like to be the chronicler of something that I think is going down the drain very swiftly, and that is small-town, middle-class Southern life. There is something universal in it. Something decent to be said for it, and something to lament, once it goes, in its passing. In other words, all I want to be is the Jane Austen of South Alabama.”

**We’re still in the season of Epiphany when we focus on God coming for all the world - and God “showing up” in our lives in powerful ways.**

**Discussion points:** 1) Why has this book and movie withstood the test of time? It is the story of a child asking questions and receiving answers to that help her make sense of the world. The movie’s casting was excellent and it remained true to the story. The themes are compelling – social class, race, small town life, justice, etc. 2) Atticus talks to his children as if they were adults. 3) Stories: What stories do we tell ourselves? What stories do we believe about others? What happens when the stories we once believed are disproven? How do our stories change? 4) What kind of feedback do you think Harper Lee received for telling such a bold story? She wrote about some very rough/tough topics. 5) The accused, Tom Robinson, couldn’t possibly win. As a black man he couldn’t say no to Mayella’s

requests. The all white, all male members of the jury couldn't believe he could be telling the truth when it contradicted his white accuser's testimony or any other evidence. 6) Bob Ewell was the most despicable person in this story. While the author and fellow townspeople never called him "poor white trash," that is how we would describe him today. 7) Ivan: How often do we actually stand up for our principles when it is easier to remain on the sidelines? How can we expect the judicial system or race related problems to improve, if we don't step out in faith? 8) People care about the characters in the story and are highly invested in them. 9) Through the incarnation, Jesus literally came and walked in humanity's shoes.

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## February 6, 2022: "Telling Your Story"

Epiphany 5 - Scout

**Scripture:** I Corinthians 12: 4-27 (Common English Bible) We can use multiple readers.

<sup>4</sup> There are different spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are different ministries and the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> and there are different activities but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. <sup>7</sup> A demonstration of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good. <sup>8</sup> A word of wisdom is given by the Spirit to one person, a word of knowledge to another according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> faith to still another by the same Spirit, gifts of healing to another in the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> performance of miracles to another, prophecy to another, the ability to tell spirits apart to another, different kinds of tongues to another, and the interpretation of the tongues to another. <sup>11</sup> All these things are produced by the one and same Spirit who gives what he wants to each person.

<sup>12</sup> Christ is just like the human body—a body is a unit and has many parts; and all the parts of the body are one body, even though there are many. <sup>13</sup> We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jew or Greek, or slave or free, and we all were given one Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup> Certainly the body isn't one part but many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot says, "I'm not part of the body because I'm not a hand," does that mean it's not part of the body? <sup>16</sup> If the ear says, "I'm not part of the body because I'm not an eye," does that mean it's not part of the body?

<sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, what would happen to the hearing? And if the whole body were an ear, what would happen to the sense of smell? <sup>18</sup> But as it is, God has placed each one of the parts in the body just like he wanted. <sup>19</sup> If all were one and the same body part, what would happen to the body? <sup>20</sup> But as it is, there are many parts but one body. <sup>21</sup> So the eye can't say to the hand, "I don't need you," or in turn, the head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." <sup>22</sup> Instead, the parts of the body that people think are the weakest are the most necessary. <sup>23</sup> The parts of the body that we think are less honorable are the ones we honor the most. The private parts of our body that aren't presentable are the ones that are given the most dignity. <sup>24</sup> The parts of our body that are presentable don't need this. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the part with less honor <sup>25</sup> so that there won't be division in the body and so the parts might have mutual concern for each other. <sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part gets the glory, all the parts celebrate with it.

<sup>27</sup> You are the body of Christ and parts of each other.

**Synopsis:** The Christian story is one of brokenness, but the story doesn't end there—our story is also about healing, grace, and resurrection! When we learn to do the work of God, we discover who we are and how our story, through grace, is part of God's story. How can we—in thought, word, and deed—tell God's story?

**Felt need:** To understand that brokenness and healing lie at the heart of the Christian story and that part of the disciple's role is to call attention to the ways we need Christ personally and communally.

**Visuals:**

**Activity:** Holy Communion

**Media possibilities:** Karen will include all three links in the newsletter and on website and note that we'll probably use the first clip in worship.

- **"To Kill a Mockingbird: Dill Harris."** Length: trim to 3:03 (or less), before Dill appears. Cost: Free. Scout and Jem have questions for their father, Atticus. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muZdy82zFb0> **Comments:** This clip gives a sense of Scout's questions and Atticus' respect for other people, including his own kids.
- "To Kill a Mockingbird: The Children Save Atticus." Length: 2:50. Cost: Free. Web license: No. When a mob interrogates Atticus, the children show up and Scout's kindness and innocence convinces them to leave. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oaVuVu5KXuE&list=PLZbXA4lyCtgrcLU-2Um-Oc0gzfNadC\\_dO&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oaVuVu5KXuE&list=PLZbXA4lyCtgrcLU-2Um-Oc0gzfNadC_dO&index=3)
- "To Kill a Mockingbird: The Compromise." Length: 2:10. Cost: Free. Atticus explains what a compromise is to Scout. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bjd-8TrylsU>

**Music:**

**Children's Time:** Use Scout as a way to talk about asking questions - even hard questions. (Be like a child to enter the Kingdom, radical innocence, honesty)

**Social media:** How do your daily habits reveal your faith and values? For what do you give thanks?

**Hands-on item to go with the social media questions (Lynne):** Photo card with these questions: Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing? Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love? These are the real questions. Henri Nouwen

**Discussion points:** 1) Epiphany is a celebration of God "showing up" in the world – Christ coming for all. Epiphany also means a sudden moment of clarity or understanding. 2) Atticus would love to shield his kids from the ugly parts of the world, but can't. They need to learn about them. 3) 1 Corinthians speaks to everyone's place in their community. Scout is learning about her place in her community. 4) Scout gets into quite a lot of trouble by speaking so directly (telling the truth as she knew it) and asking her questions. Example: She explained to her teacher that the Cunningham's were all poor and couldn't borrow money, because they could never pay it back. She asked why Mr. Cunningham brought hickory nuts, not money. She asked if her family was poor. 5) The bible is a book of faith. It includes many stories of transformation – even more than TKAM. 6) Pastor Mary: A seminary colleague 40 years her senior (and former neuro pathologist), gave her excellent advice about raising children – respect them. 7) It is hard to understand the extent of the brokenness of the world. When do children learn about that? 8) Missy Post was surprised at the difference

between her recent theater experience with TKAM and her memory of the movie. There was a scene in which Atticus and Calpurnia were arguing. It showed that even Atticus wasn't perfect; he stumbled. That Atticus knew the outcome of the trial before it happened and still accepted the case was a bigger surprise as an adult than she remembered it being as a teen. 9) Jim noted that evil does win pretty often. Why? Ivan believes it is because not many people are willing to stand up to it. "Going along to get along." Jim is afraid people care more about winning than doing the right thing. The 2022 January series from Calvin College has been answering the question, "What do we do now?" Pastor Mary noted that ultimately, evil doesn't win. Values, like courage are essential as is relationship building that engenders trust. We have all noticed what happens to someone's reputation when standing up against evil takes a turn or the worse. 10) Why are we surprised that living life (now) as a Christian is hard? Jesus never promised an easy road. He accepted the difficulties and moved ahead anyway. One thing that has changed is social media and the sense of immediacy of both information and (potential) responses. Karen Post noted how she seems to know so much more about some people, including long-time friends, from social media. It makes it difficult to stay in relationship with them. 11) Larry: Politics bring out many of our "baser" instincts; sex, power, and money make the world go round. There are just a handful of hot topics that seem to get attention. 12) Other than the lack of social media, political and cultural turbulence of the 1960's was not that different than our current times. There is also a greater focus on self (I want... I need... I have a right to...). 13) Cultural differences have always existed to some extent. Expectations change from one era to the next. Jim noted that when his elementary class was told to walk down the hall to get in line for a vaccine, they just did it; no one questioned it. 14) Eroded trust: Whom do you trust? Physicians? Pastors? Teachers? Authority figures? The church? Law enforcement? Politicians? We can all name examples of individuals whom we cannot trust. When did we write off whole classes of people? Jim wonders how the Viet Nam War played into the erosion of trust. 15) Children figure out that evil wins.

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## **February 13, 2022: "Hero or Saint?"**

Epiphany 6 - Atticus Finch

Super Bowl Sunday - Souper Bowl of Caring

### **Scripture: Matthew 5: 1-12 (Common English Bible) "Happy People"**

5 <sup>1</sup> Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up a mountain. He sat down and his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup> He taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup> "Happy are people who are hopeless, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

<sup>4</sup> "Happy are people who grieve, because they will be made glad.

<sup>5</sup> "Happy are people who are humble, because they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> "Happy are people who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, because they will be fed until they are full.

<sup>7</sup> "Happy are people who show mercy, because they will receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup> "Happy are people who have pure hearts, because they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> "Happy are people who make peace, because they will be called God's children.

<sup>10</sup> “Happy are people whose lives are harassed because they are righteous, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

<sup>11</sup> “Happy are you when people insult you and harass you and speak all kinds of bad and false things about you, all because of me. <sup>12</sup> Be full of joy and be glad, because you have a great reward in heaven. In the same way, people harassed the prophets who came before you.

**Scripture:** II Corinthians 12: 9-10 (NIV) - might be projected during message

<sup>9</sup> But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. <sup>10</sup> That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

**Synopsis:** As followers of Jesus, we’re called to be saints, not heroes or champions, but what’s the difference? How do we seek justice, find wisdom, act with courage and selflessness, and strive for a life rooted in humility, grace, and love - modeled after Jesus?

**Felt need:** To explore differences between a hero (or champion) and a saint - and to hear God’s call to be saints.

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:** Karen will include all three links in the newsletter and on website and note that we’ll probably use the first clip in worship.

- **“To Kill a Mockingbird: Atticus Talking to Scout about insults and rumors.”** Length: 1:17. Cost: Free. Web license: No. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHScNGR82Zc>
- “To Kill a Mockingbird: Atticus Talking to Scout.” Length: 2:21. Cost: Free. Web license: No. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBAV\\_nkRaU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBAV_nkRaU)
- “To Kill a Mockingbird: Mayella’s Guilt.” Length: 3:00. Cost: Free. Web license: No. Atticus addresses the court and describes Mayella’s guilt for tempting a black man, and the dire consequences her guilt has caused. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C841wEogE4U&list=PLZbXA4lyCtgrcLU-2Um-Oc0gzfNadC\\_dO&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C841wEogE4U&list=PLZbXA4lyCtgrcLU-2Um-Oc0gzfNadC_dO&index=6)

**Music:**

**Children’s Time:** Who helps us know God better?

**Social media:** What have you not said today that needed to be said? Whose words matter in your life?

**NOTE:** The four differences between the hero and the saint are: who the story is about, why the story is told, what the story takes for granted, and when the story goes wrong. For the hero/champion, the story is about them. For the saint, their story points beyond them to God.

**Discussion points:** 1) Integrity: Atticus’ beliefs and actions align. He accepts a case he knows he cannot win because he cares about Tom Robinson and his community. 2) Jim: Consider the townspeople’s perspective. Imagine how hard it would have been to listen to Mayella’s testimony, watch as it becomes clear that she falsely accused the defendant, and try to

believe justice had been served when he was convicted in spite of the evidence. How would the stories that they tell each other have to change? To some extent, what happened in this trial still happens today. How many lives have been wasted when innocent people have been unjustly accused and had to serve time?

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## **February 20, 2022: “The Power of a Story”**

Epiphany 7 - Tom Robinson

### **Scripture: Galatians 3: 26-29 (Common English Bible)**

<sup>26</sup>You are all God’s children through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup>All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>Now if you belong to Christ, then indeed you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to the promise.

### **Scripture: Colossians 1: 15-24 (The Message) “Christ Holds It All Together”**

<sup>15-18</sup>We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God’s original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—*everything* got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment. And when it comes to the church, he organizes and holds it together, like a head does a body.

<sup>18-20</sup>He was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—he is supreme in the end. From beginning to end he’s there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is he, so expansive, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross.

<sup>21-23</sup>You yourselves are a case study of what he does. At one time you all had your backs turned to God, thinking rebellious thoughts of him, giving him trouble every chance you got. But now, by giving himself completely at the Cross, actually *dying* for you, Christ brought you over to God’s side and put your lives together, whole and holy in his presence. You don’t walk away from a gift like that! You stay grounded and steady in that bond of trust, constantly tuned in to the Message, careful not to be distracted or diverted. There is no other Message—just this one. Every creature under heaven gets this same Message. I, Paul, am a messenger of this Message.

\* \* \*

<sup>24-25</sup>I want you to know how glad I am that it’s me sitting here in this jail and not you. There’s a lot of suffering to be entered into in this world—the kind of suffering Christ takes on. I welcome the chance to take my share in the church’s part of that suffering. When I became a servant in this church, I experienced this suffering as a sheer gift, God’s way of helping me serve you, laying out the whole truth.

**Scripture: Acts 10 - used as reference – Peter’s vision/the Good News is for everyone**



**Synopsis:** How does diversity help us understand God more fully? It's not about being color blind; rather, it's about all colors being valued as a part of the family of God.

**Felt need:** To challenge the faith community to recognize that everyone's story is different, and the differences strengthen us as the body of Christ. (There's also a challenge to understand how injustice and oppression - both individual and systemic - affect our stories and perceptions.)

**Visuals:** Brown egg and white egg. Crack them open to see they are both the same on the inside. (Mudgi)

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:** Karen will include all three links in the newsletter and on website and note that we'll probably use the first clip in worship.

- **"To Kill a Mockingbird: All Men Are Created Equal."** Length: 2:44. Cost: Free. Web license: No. Atticus points out the obvious inequalities in the justice system and asks the jury to look at Thomas' case with a fair and just eye.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-x6njs-cGUE&list=PLZbXA4lyCtgrcLU-2Um-Oc0gzfNadC\\_dO&index=7](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-x6njs-cGUE&list=PLZbXA4lyCtgrcLU-2Um-Oc0gzfNadC_dO&index=7)
- "To Kill a Mockingbird: The Trial Scene." Length: 6:58 (could be trimmed to 4:12). Cost: Free. Web license: No. Tom Robinson testifies.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhetrQJg4IE>
- "To Kill a Mockingbird: Atticus' Closing Statement." Length: 1:09. Cost: Free. Web license: No. In his closing statements for the defense, Atticus, tries to convince the jury to believe Tom Robinson.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MmtVx1A8BA&list=PLZbXA4lyCtgrcLU-2Um-Oc0gzfNadC\\_dO&index=8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MmtVx1A8BA&list=PLZbXA4lyCtgrcLU-2Um-Oc0gzfNadC_dO&index=8)

**Music:** "All God's Children Have a Place in the Choir"

**Children's Time:**

**Social media:** How do your roots influence your role in God's story?

**Discussion points:** 1) Racism has been described as America's original sin. Tom never had a chance. 2) What stories do we choose to believe? What are our preconceived notions? What happens when we need to change our minds in the face of contradictory evidence? 3) It is hard to fathom how two of the three defendants in the Ahmaud Arbery case showed no remorse over shooting an innocent black man who was just out jogging. 4) Faith is messy. We do know that good overcomes evil in the end. 5) Mary and Ivan have found the conversations that they have had with their kids have been much different than those they had with their own parents. Ana is very passionate about wanting to change the world. Ivan would like to push her to think about how she can go about that without getting hurt. It can be tough for parents to give up control and release their fears. Others agreed that raising kids has changed their own perspectives on many issues. We have to hear each other out. 6) What do we do when we leave church? 7) Power differentials. Privilege. 8) We can't know what it is like to live in another person's skin. If we could, how would that change our discussions? 9) Atticus' bold closing statement (p. 273 in Pastor Mary's book; page 232 in Karen Booth's):

“And so a quiet, respectable, humble Negro who had the unmitigated temerity to ‘feel sorry’ for a white woman has had to put his word against two white people’s. I need not remind you of their appearance and conduct on the stand – you saw them for yourselves. The witnesses for the state, with the exception of the sheriff of Maycomb County, have presented themselves to you gentlemen, to this court, in the cynical confidence that their testimony would not be doubted, confident that you gentlemen would go along with them on the assumption – the evil assumption that *all* Negroes lie, that *all* Negroes are basically immoral beings, that *all* Negro men are not to be trusted around our women, an assumption one associates with minds of their caliber.

“Which, gentlemen, we know is in itself a lie as black as Tom Robinson’s skin, a lie I do not have to point out to you. You know the truth, and the truth is this: some Negroes lie, some Negroes are immoral, some Negro men are not to be trusted around women – black or white. But this is a truth that applies to the human race and to no particular race of men. There is not a person in this courtroom who has never told a lie, who has never done an immoral thing, and there is no man living who has never looked upon a woman without desire.”

10) Pastor Mary has never preached to a congregation or any audience that included a substantial number of blacks and thought her message might be somewhat different than it would for a predominately white congregation. Dave challenged her to think about preaching it us as if we were a more racially diverse group.

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## February 27, 2022: “Defining a Mystery”

Transfiguration Sunday - Boo Radley

### Scripture: Acts 17: 22–28 (Contemporary English Version)

<sup>22</sup> So Paul stood up in front of the council and said:

People of Athens, I see that you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> As I was going through your city and looking at the things you worship, I found an altar with the words, “To an Unknown God.” You worship this God, but you don’t really know him. So I want to tell you about him. <sup>24</sup> This God made the world and everything in it. He is Lord of heaven and earth, and he doesn’t live in temples built by human hands. <sup>25</sup> He doesn’t need help from anyone. He gives life, breath, and everything else to all people. <sup>26</sup> From one person God made all nations who live on earth, and he decided when and where every nation would be.

<sup>27</sup> God has done all this, so that we will look for him and reach out and find him. He isn’t far from any of us, <sup>28</sup> and he gives us the power to live, to move, and to be who we are. “We are his children,” just as some of your poets have said.

### Scripture: I Corinthians 15: 50-58 (CEV)

<sup>50</sup> My friends, I want you to know that our bodies of flesh and blood will decay. This means that they cannot share in God’s kingdom, which lasts forever. <sup>51</sup> I will explain a mystery to you. Not every one of us will die, but we will all be changed. <sup>52</sup> It will happen suddenly, quicker than the blink of an eye. At the sound of the last trumpet the dead will be raised. We will all be changed, so that we will never die again. <sup>53</sup> Our dead and decaying bodies will be changed into bodies that won’t die or decay. <sup>54</sup> The bodies we now have are

weak and can die. But they will be changed into bodies that are eternal. Then the Scriptures will come true,

“Death has lost the battle!

<sup>55</sup> Where is its victory?

Where is its sting?”

<sup>56</sup> Sin is what gives death its sting, and the Law is the power behind sin. <sup>57</sup> But thank God for letting our Lord Jesus Christ give us the victory!

<sup>58</sup> My dear friends, stand firm and don't be shaken. Always keep busy working for the Lord. You know that everything you do for him is worthwhile.

**Synopsis:** How do we understand more fully who God is and what God is like? It's not enough for God to be an idea; rather, God is already working within our lives. God's kingdom is realized when we respond to God's grace. Even though brokenness is a part of our lives, it doesn't have the final word.

**Felt need:** To become part of God's story and engage more deeply in God's work in the world - even as we claim the mystery of God.

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:** Karen will include both links in the newsletter and on website and note that we'll probably use the first clip in worship.

- **“To Kill a Mockingbird: Scout Meets Boo Radley.”** Length: 1:33. Cost: Free. Web license: No. Scout meets Boo Radley for the first time, and they are very happy to see each other. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRmIef02Ajk&list=PLZbXA4lyCtqrLU-2Um-Oc0gzfNadC\\_dO&index=10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRmIef02Ajk&list=PLZbXA4lyCtqrLU-2Um-Oc0gzfNadC_dO&index=10)
- **“To Kill a Mockingbird: Boo Is a Hero.”** Length: 2:58. Cost: Free. Web license: No. When Jem and Scout get attached in the woods on Halloween night, Boo fights and saves them. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FR0glia2cb8&list=PLZbXA4lyCtqrLU-2Um-Oc0gzfNadC\\_dO&index=9](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FR0glia2cb8&list=PLZbXA4lyCtqrLU-2Um-Oc0gzfNadC_dO&index=9)

**Music:**

**Children's Time:**

**Social media:** In what ways do you desire to know more about God? How do you describe God's grace?

**Discussion points:** 1) The kids initially hear stories about Boo that make him seem crazy. Boo is ultimately their savior. Their stories change when they come face-to-face with this mystery. God is mysterious. What are the stories we are told about God? Are the stories about a loving, accessible, gracious, compassionate God? Or are they about a mean, scary, vengeful God? How do we hear different people's stories? How do we tell our stories? 2) Boo offers small acts of grace by leaving small gifts in a tree, covers Scouts with a blanket, and mends and folds Jem's pants after they were caught in a fence and torn. Actions speak louder than words. 3) As a young man, Arthur Radley was pretty wild. He got into trouble. His parents promised to keep watch over him at home rather than having him sent away. He became a recluse.