



Worship Brainstorming **"God's Good Gift of Sexuality"**

Tues., July 19, 2022 at Ivanov's home
6:00 p.m. Potluck
7:00-9:30 p.m. Brainstorming for Worship
August 7-28, 2022 (4 Sundays)

The worship brainstorming for this series will be held at Pastor Mary and Ivan's home – our church parsonage. Members of all ages and backgrounds are invited to participate in the one-time commitment. The ideas generated at the brainstorming are used in worship.

We will have a potluck at 6:00 p.m. Ivan is grilling – both meat and meatless options. Please bring a dish to share. Brainstorming is from 7:00-9:30 p.m. We'll plan to meet outside if weather permits. **Safety protocols will be the same as at church.**

Please pick up the brainstorming packet (this document) at church or find it online, read the Scripture readings and Pastor Mary's message synopses, and preview videos when they become available. More information is available at on our website.

RSVPs are helpful but not mandatory. Sign up at church or contact the church office (213-798-2181 or Office@LakeHarborUMC.org) or Karen Booth. Carpooling is encouraged, but not critical.

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

Social Justice Issue for August 2022: Equitable Education

2021 theme connection: We don't hear much biblical truth spoken around the topic of sexuality – or at least we don't talk about it much in church. Even as adults our understanding of love, lust, sex, sexuality, marriage, pornography, grace, and commitment leaves a lot to be desired. How can we pick up the pieces of this puzzle and grow into healthier relationship?

Potential illustration/series intro: “Jane, the Virgin” television show,
<https://www.thefundamentals.com/the-villanuevas-and-sex-shame/>

Synopsis: Human beings are created in the image of a relational God and designed to enjoy an intimate relationship with their Creator and one another. There is no dichotomy between body and spirit in the Old or New Testaments. In this series, we’ll explore our understanding of God’s good gift of sexuality and how our faith in Jesus informs it.

The Scriptures will be taken from suggested passages for weddings.

Resources

IMPORTANT NOTE from Pastor Mary: These resources come from a variety of places – many of them rooted in United Methodist theology and practice, but not all of them. This series will address relationships in general – and also specifically about intimate relationships.

IMPORTANT NOTE from Karen Booth: Given the large number of resources, I thought it might be helpful to cluster related items. Someone else might group them differently. Additional information is available on our website at <https://lakeharborumc.org/2022/07/july-19-2022-worship-brainstorming/>.

Books and related resources:

- Adam Hamilton: Love to Stay: Sex, Grace, and Commitment. Read [Amazon](#)’s substantial excerpts from the book.
- Gary Chapman: The Five Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts
 - Other versions: Children, Teens, Singles
 - <https://5lovelanguages.com/>
- Rob Bell:
 - Sex God: Exploring the Endless Connections between Sexuality and Spirituality
 - *Flame*, a 2002 Nooma video by Rob Bell, length: 10:57.
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1327538440139>
 - Loosely related song: “Start a Fire” by Unspoken <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrEzr-rWwe8>
- Nadia Bolz-Weber:
 - Shameless: A Sexual Reformation. Read [Amazon](#)’s substantial excerpt from the book.
 - The Divine Gift of Sex <https://www.faithchoiceohio.org/blog/the-divine-gift-of-sex>

From the United Methodist Church:

- “Social Principles: The Nurturing Community.” <https://www.umc.org/en/content/social-principles-the-nurturing-community>
- “Wonderfully Made and Difficult Conversations.”
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/blog/wonderfully-made-and-difficult-conversations>

- “Facing Up to Pornography and Sexual Addictions.”
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/facing-up-to-pornography-and-sexual-addictions>
- UM wedding liturgy (see sections at the end of the packet)

Ministry Matters - a community of resources for (Methodist) church leaders:

- <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/9858/the-sex-recession>
- <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/7888/when-we-talk-salvation-sexuality-matters>
- <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/5950/must-christianity-change-its-sexual-ethics-history-may-hold-the-key>
- <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/5392/lets-talk-about-sex-umc>
- <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/5375/fallout-from-the-sexual-revolution>
- <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/5267/lets-talk-about-sex-10-questions-with-bromleigh-mcclenaghan>
- <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4184/the-trivialization-of-sex>
- <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/1494/review-making-sense-of-sex>
- The History (and Humor) of "Incompatibility: A review of the Wesley Bros Comics book, Submitting to Be More Vile: The Illustrated Adventures of John & Charles Wesley <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/11368/the-history-and-humor-of-incompatibility>

Youth and Young Adults:

- <https://www.umcyoungpeople.org/lead/talking-with-millennials-about-sex-and-intimacy>
- <https://www.umcyoungpeople.org/lead/dos-and-donts-of-talking-sex-in-small-groups>
- <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/lets-talk-about-sex>
- <https://www.umcyoungpeople.org/lead/when-its-time-to-change>

Other denominations, Christianity Today, and Preaching Today:

- An Affirmation of God’s Gift of Sexuality <https://family.adventist.org/an-affirmation-of-gods-gift-of-sexuality/>
- Human Sexuality Is Gift from God <https://thecatholicspirit.com/news/nation-and-world/human-sexuality-is-gift-from-god-pope-says/>
- Sex Against God: Three Ways the World Abuses the Gift <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/sex-against-god>
- Urgent Care: Adultery & Emotional Affairs https://www.bclstore.com/products/urgent-care-adultery-emotional-affairs?_pos=6&_sid=0286f27cf&_ss=r&utm_source=Building+Church+Leaders+Newsletter&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=10531&utm_content=7648&utm_campaign=email

- The Bible's Sexual Position <https://www.evidenceunseen.com/theology/practical-theology/the-bibles-sexual-position/>
- America's Unhappy Sex Recession (available as a pdf on our website)

Related ideas:

- **4 Greek words for “love”**
 - Eros* – romantic, intimate love
 - Storge* – love between family (parents and children), empathy
 - Phileo* – love in friendship
 - Agape* – self-sacrificing love, selfless, self-giving, God’s love
- **Complementarianism** and **egalitarianism** - views on the relationship between men and women, especially in marriage and in ministry.
- Complementarianism stresses that although men and women are equal in personhood, they are created for different roles.
- Egalitarianism also agrees that men and women are equal in personhood but holds that there are no gender-based limitations on the roles of men and women.
- Living survey – invite responses from our congregation
- Offer a small group on *Five Love Languages*
- Vow renewal for married couples
- Find your marriage license – what do you treasure about the other?

Music: *The Gift of Love; When Love Is Found; Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

Visuals:

- Collection of memes: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/3LuLk8rY9fJqQV7L8>
- Human Sexuality A Divine Fire Within... <https://slideplayer.com/slide/6254360/>

August 7, 2022: “The First Thing”

9th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Genesis 1: 26-28, 31a; 2: 18-25 (MSG)

1²⁶⁻²⁸ God 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.”
 God created human beings;
 he created them godlike,
 Reflecting God’s nature.
 He created them male and female.
 God 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.”

³¹ God looked over everything he had made;
it was so good, so very good!

²¹⁸⁻²⁰ GOD said, “It’s not good for the Man to be alone; I’ll make him a helper, a companion.” So GOD formed from the dirt of the ground all the animals of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the Man to see what he would name them. Whatever the Man called each living creature, that was its name. The Man named the cattle, named the birds of the air, named the wild animals; but he didn’t find a suitable companion.

²¹⁻²² GOD put the Man into a deep sleep. As he slept he removed one of his ribs and replaced it with flesh. GOD then used the rib that he had taken from the Man to make Woman and presented her to the Man.

²³⁻²⁵ The Man said,
“Finally! Bone of my bone,
flesh of my flesh!
Name her Woman
for she was made from Man.”

Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and embraces his wife. They become one flesh.

The two of them, the Man and his Wife, were naked, but they felt no shame.

Synopsis: Sexuality is one of the first topics addressed in Scripture. It’s important as a good gift of God and should be a topic we don’t shy away from. We are created in God’s image, and sexuality is a part of our full identity.

Felt need: To celebrate the gift of sexuality as a part of God’s good creation

Visuals:

Hands-on item:

Activity: Holy Communion

Media possibilities:

- “The Story of Sex.” Length: 2:02. Cost: Free with subscription. Web license: Yes. An inventive introduction to the topic of sex that transitions perfectly into a sermon.
<https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/108205/the-story-of-sex>

Music:

Children’s Time: Where do you see people helping each other?

Social media:

August 14, 2022: “What Language Are You Speaking?” 10th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: I Corinthians 13: 31b-13: 13 (NRSV)

And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to

remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly,^[b] but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Synopsis: Though we all use the word “love,” we don’t all experience love in the same way. We’ll explore the five love languages (words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical touch) as a way to understand how God loves us and how we love one another.

Felt need: To better understand our personal love language(s) and those of our loved ones

Visuals: Treasure chest of memories (goes with “Love Life”)

Hands-on item:

Activity:

Media possibilities:

- “Love Life.” Length: 4:31. Cost: Free with subscription. Web license: Yes. 1 Corinthians 13 shares the truest definition of love, and that love takes on a deeper meaning as we get older. This heartwarming mini-movie takes a peek at how this can play out in real life. <https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/35966/love-life> **Note from Karen:** this might work well for August 28 also.
- “Love Actually Is.” Length: 1:21. Cost: Free with subscription. Web license: Yes. Most of us could quote Paul’s “love chapter” off the top of our heads. But how many of us consistently live out those definitions of love in the everyday mundane moments of life? <https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/81424/love-actually-is>

Music:

Children’s Time: When do you feel loved?

Social media:

NOTE: This is the Sunday after Unity Christian Music Festival

August 21, 2022: “What’s Our Song?”

11th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Song of Songs 1: 1-4, 2: 8-14, 16a; 8:6-7 (MSG) – or use readers?

THE SONG—BEST OF ALL SONGS—SOLOMON’S SONG!

The Woman

²⁻³ Kiss me—full on the mouth!
Yes! For your love is better than wine,
headier than your aromatic oils.
The syllables of your name murmur like a meadow brook.
No wonder everyone loves to say your name!
⁴ Take me away with you! Let's run off together!
An elopement with my King-Lover!
We'll celebrate, we'll sing,
we'll make great music.
Yes! For your love is better than vintage wine.
Everyone loves you—of course! And why not?
Look! Listen! There's my lover!
Do you see him coming?
Vaulting the mountains,
leaping the hills.
My lover is like a gazelle, graceful;
like a young stag, virile.
Look at him there, on tiptoe at the gate,
all ears, all eyes—ready!
My lover has arrived
and he's speaking to me!

The Man

¹⁰⁻¹⁴ Get up, my dear friend,
fair and beautiful lover—come to me!
Look around you: Winter is over;
the winter rains are over, gone!
Spring flowers are in blossom all over.
The whole world's a choir—and singing!
Spring warblers are filling the forest
with sweet strains.
Lilacs are exuberantly purple and perfumed,
and cherry trees fragrant with blossoms.
Oh, get up, dear friend,
my fair and beautiful lover—come to me!
Come, my shy and modest dove—
leave your seclusion, come out in the open.
Let me see your face,
let me hear your voice.
For your voice is soothing
and your face is ravishing.

The Woman

My lover is mine, and I am his.

Hang my locket around your neck,
wear my ring on your finger.
Love is invincible facing danger and death.
Passion laughs at the terrors of hell.
The fire of love stops at nothing—
it sweeps everything before it.
Flood waters can't drown love,
torrents of rain can't put it out.
Love can't be bought, love can't be sold—
it's not to be found in the marketplace.

Synopsis: Physical intimacy and desire are a part of God's design for us - meant to bond us to another person in a loving, healthy, consensual, committed relationship. Our struggle to honor that gift can cause great harm and diminish the blessing of it.

Felt need: To claim the joy of intimacy and God's blessing of it – and repent from our misuse of the gift

Visuals:

Hands-on item:

Activity:

Media possibilities:

- "Friends with Benefits." Length: 1:02. Cost: \$15.00. Web license: Probably not. This video shows a young man and woman practicing a "friends with benefits" lifestyle. <https://www.sermonspice.com/sermon-illustrations/49951/friends-with-benefits>
- "Overview: Song of Songs." Length: 6:58. Cost: Free. Overview of Song of Songs.

Music: *Perfect Day* by Lou Reed

Children's Time: What's your favorite song? Why? What does it make you remember?

Social media:

August 28, 2022: "More than Madly in Love"

12th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Philippians 2: 1-4 (NIV)

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Synopsis: Life-giving and loving relationships require us to reflect the love of Jesus for others.

The challenge is putting others first and understanding that intimacy is beyond a simple physical connection, but includes deep spiritual connection.

Felt need: To understand the connection between sexuality and spirituality

Visuals:

Hands-on item:

Activity:

Media possibilities:

Music:

Children's Time:

Social media:

United Methodist Wedding Liturgy

Covenant

God of all peoples,

you are the true light illumining everyone.
You show us the way, the truth, and the life.
You love us even when we are disobedient.
You sustain us with your Holy Spirit.
We rejoice in your life in the midst of our lives.
We praise you for your presence with us,
and especially in this act of solemn covenant;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all life,

Author of salvation, Giver of all grace:
Bless and sanctify with your Holy Spirit
Name and *Name*, who come now to join in marriage.
Grant that they may give their vows to each other
in the strength of your steadfast love.
Enable them to grow in love and peace
with you and with one another all their days,
that they may reach out
in concern and service to the world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God,

you have so consecrated
the covenant of Christian marriage
that in it is represented
the covenant between Christ and his Church.

Send therefore your blessing upon these two people,
that they may surely keep their marriage covenant,
and so grow in love and godliness together
that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Consent and Commitment

Will you have...to live together in holy marriage?

Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him,
in sickness and in health,

and forsaking all others, be faithful to him
as long as you both shall live?

In the name of God,
I, take you, to be my spouse,
to have and to hold
from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
until we are parted by death.
This is my solemn vow.

I take you, to be my spouse,
and I promise before God and all who are present here
to be your loving and faithful husband (wife)
as long as we both shall live.
I will serve you with tenderness and respect,
and encourage you to develop God's gifts in you.

In the name of God,
I take you to be my spouse from this time onward,
to join with you and to share all that is to come,
to give and to receive,
to speak and to listen,
to inspire and to respond,
and in all our life together
to be loyal to you with my whole being,
as long as we both shall live.

These rings (symbols)
are the outward and visible sign
of an inward and spiritual grace,
signifying to all the uniting of two people in holy marriage.

I give you this ring
as a sign of my vow,
and with all that I am,
and all that I have,
I honor you;
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Community and Care

Do you who represent their families
rejoice in their union
and pray God's blessing upon them?

Will all of you, by God's grace,
do everything in your power
to uphold and care for these two persons in their marriage?