



PULPIT

PROJECT

Volume 2 | Spring 2025

A workshop offered by the Institute of Preaching
Supported by a grant from the Lilly Endowment's
Compelling Preaching Initiative

A MESSAGE FROM THE DESIGN TEAM

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In August 2024, two dozen clergy from the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church gathered at the Orlando Science Center. They were invited to pilot a new, untested workshop called “The Pulpit Project.”

For three days, guided by a spirit of creativity and collaboration, these preachers worked together to produce a collection sermon series as a gift to the Church.

Too often, we do this work alone. But we found that when you fill a room with people who are committed to the Gospel, who take the responsibility of preaching seriously, and who are willing to give and receive feedback, you not only leave with greater quantity but quality as well.

This document is the product of the Holy Spirit inspired work of the second cohort, which met in Spring 2025.

Some of these series are more fully-formed, and some are more conceptual. All of them are meant to be jumping-off points that you can adapt for your context. In that way, you join us in the creative collaboration.

Please visit ThePulpitProject.org for more information and to access previous collections.

NOTE: Any referenced URLs were accurate and active at time of publishing. Things may have changed since then.

“This workshop experience will take everything you thought you knew about preaching and enhance it. The collaboration amongst colleagues is amazing. You will come away with not only a library of sermon series to last years, but a greater understanding of how to develop them and your ministry.” – Scott Ehler, Pulpit Project participant

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SIDEKICKS OF SCRIPTURE

SERIES TYPE

Discipleship, Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Throughout scripture, there are a number of characters who never find themselves in the limelight, but they can teach us a lot about what it means to be a supporting character in God's story.

Spiritual Focus: We often want to be someone who creates major or miraculous change, but so much of the work of the church is mundane.

Inspired by *Leading from the Second Chair* by Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson

FIRST SERMON

Jethro

Exodus 18:13–23

Theme: Offering wisdom and stepping back. Jethro never takes the spotlight, but he plays an important role in Moses's formation as a leader of the people of Israel. Jethro's advice to Moses to delegate is part of the reason why Moses is able to be effective in his role. The lesson that Jethro teaches Moses and teaches us now is that there are times where we have to relinquish control over the details to be the most effective in our ministries.

SECOND SERMON

Aaron

Exodus 7:1–3, Exodus 32:1–5

Theme: Faithful companionship and the dangers of going too far.

Aaron is a complicated character that both supports Moses in his time of need but also serves as a cautionary tale. Aaron walks alongside Moses during Moses's confrontations of Pharaoh as a steady hand and strong speaker. Aaron also forgets his

place when Moses climbs the mountain to meet God and receive the law by allowing the people of Israel to create the golden calf. Sometimes we attempt to take control of situations that God already has handled and cause more harm than good.

THIRD SERMON

Hagar

Genesis 16:7–14

Theme: Relegated to the second chair.

Hagar is relegated to the status of "sidekick" because of her secondary nature to Abraham's wife, Sarah. Even though Hagar only ever does everything that is asked of her in a situation she has incredibly little control over, her actions and presence are seen as a curse. Even with the social shame that she endures, she is still seen as beloved by God—and even earns the honor of being the only person in all of scripture that offers God a name.

FOURTH SERMON

Jonathan

1 Samuel 20:27–34

Theme: Supposed to be the main character but isn't.

Jonathan's close friendship with David is particularly important to David's story not only because Jonathan is the son of Saul, but because, theoretically, Jonathan would have been next in line for the throne. Jonathan's abdication of that expectation in favor of serving his friend David tells us a lot about what it means to care about the commands of God. Sometimes what is expected of us as Christians is that we step to the side, even when it feels like we're losing what we believe we "earned" in order to allow for God's grace to work.

FIFTH SERMON

Matthias

Acts 1:21–26

Theme: Filling unexpected and under-appreciated roles.

Matthias is often forgotten in the accounts of

the disciples as the disciple that seems to be chosen simply to fill a gap that Judas leaves upon his betrayal and death—and yet, the importance of this role cannot be overstated. Matthias receives the Holy Spirit in the upper room with the rest of the disciples, goes and preaches the gospels and starts early churches with the rest of the disciples. Church history tells us he is even martyred for his faith—but he's never mentioned again by name beyond Acts 1. Sometimes the work of kingdom building goes on in secret and without thanks.

SIXTH SERMON

Epaphroditus

Philippians 2:25–30

Theme: Doing the mundane for the kingdom. Epaphroditus is only mentioned in one book of scripture as a "messenger" for Paul. Church history tells us that Epaphroditus was the one who was hard at work delivering the letters of Paul to the various churches of the epistles. The work that Epaphroditus does is largely mundane—carrying mail from one city to the next—but without it, there is no early church. Often times, our desire as

Christians is to do the big flashy work with the hope that it's the work in the spotlight that brings people to Christ. The reality is that most of Christian ministry looks a lot more like Epaphroditus's work, and that it's that work behind the scenes that often is what builds the kingdom of God. "We are the ones carrying the letters..."

SEVENTH SERMON

John the Baptist

Mark 1:1–8

Theme: Insistence on the role of sidekick. Because of our hierarchical world, we often find ourselves constantly thinking about "promotion." In some ways, the world of the Roman Empire was similar. People saw John and the great work that he was doing and assumed that he was greater than he actually was. All the while, John spends much of his time insisting that someone greater is coming. As Christians, we are often called to insist that we are secondary, and John the Baptist gives us an example and language to allow ourselves to step to the side in favor of the work of God in the world.

RESOURCES

Leading from the Second Chair by Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson

Lead Creators: Jana Hall-Perkins, Nick Lee, Shawn Klein, David Averill



WHAT WILL I FIND AT CHURCH?

SERIES TYPE

Books of the Bible, Seeker Sensitive

SERIES DESCRIPTION

63% of people identified as Christian in 2022 (Pew) and of that group, 30% say they attend church every week (Gallup). That means the majority of Christians in our country do not make worship a priority. Why do we?

FIRST SERMON

Formation

Romans 12:1–2

If we are not careful, we can allow partisan news, social media, many other influences (healthy and unhealthy) to form us. Church community is a vessel God uses to shape our head, heart, and hands.

SECOND SERMON

Belonging

Romans 12:3–8

Shared values and mission empower us to build friendships. This sense of belonging is so needed when we often experience rejection. Community helps through hard times.

THIRD SERMON

Service

Romans 12:9–21

As the body of Christ, we care about the people who are not in church. We serve people with our head, heart, and hands. This is a form of evangelism because we are saying “I love you” with our actions.

Lead Creators: Mike Luzinski, Pam Bowden, Bryant Manning, Matthew Findley

MENOPAUSAL JESUS: NAVIGATING CHANGE

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Menopause and hormonal imbalances create a change of life that touches diverse people, revealing the mortality of our bodies. We must learn to navigate and normalize emotional, physical, spiritual, social, and mental changes in our life, rejecting the heresy that the body is bad. Even Jesus went through change before, during, and after the cross, allowing us to discover the fuller expression of Jesus' humanity.

FIRST SERMON

Physical Changes

Matthew 17:1–9

Reflecting on how the body of Jesus changes throughout his ministry: need for sleep, going to lonely places, and being transfigured. The full expression of who Jesus is can be revealed in intimate times of prayer and reflection.

SECOND SERMON

Relational Changes

Mark 3:20–22, 31–35

Sometimes people need help understanding why relational changes are needed and how to navigate them. Sometimes our family will not understand. God can lead us to friends who are supportive and mission focused.

THIRD SERMON

Emotional Changes

Matthew 26:36–46

Explore Jesus' confidence and questions related to his calling. Introduce the concept of the dark night of the soul. Finding strength to press on through prayer. Dealing with grief

and loss when people you trust let you down.

FOURTH SERMON

Spiritual Changes

Matthew 27:45–50

Feeling forsaken by God. Crying out in faith despite the pain, fear, anger. Trusting in God's plan and provision even when it looks and feels like victory will never be possible.

FIFTH SERMON

I've Changed, But I'm Still Me

Luke 24:36–45, John 20:24–29

Jesus showing his changed body while still being focused on his mission: teaching, saving, and serving. We are invited to get up close and personal with Christ—even the scarred “ugly” parts. How do we keep mission-minded even as our body changes?

RESOURCES

Host a health and wellness fair or blood drive to provide practical support to people navigating change.

Lead Creators: Latricia Scriven, Ginger Medley, Jeremy Knight, Rushing Kimball

THE GEOMETRY OF GRACE

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

In a world often defined by division, borders, and separations, God's grace stands as a beautiful and radical unifier. The Geometry of Grace explores the foundational elements of geometry as metaphors for the different ways God's grace intersects and impacts our lives. Through points, lines, angles, and circles, we will journey together through the Wesleyan understanding of grace: prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace. This series reminds us that grace is not just an idea—it is a transformative force that connects, changes, and invites us to live more fully into God's of love.

FIRST SERMON

The Point of Grace: A Beginning

Ephesians 2:8–9, Romans 5:8

In geometry, a point is the simplest and most fundamental element—it has no length, width, or height, yet it defines a location.

In the beginning, God is the “point”—the source, the beginning, the center of all existence. Just as a point in geometry marks a specific location, God is the defining starting place for everything.

We, too, are “points” in God's divine design. Created in love, by love, and for love, we are reflections of God—the Imago Dei. We exist because of God's love; and our lives begin with the divine grace that flows from God's heart. Grace is not something we earn but an extension of God's love for us.

It is because of this love that God created us good and continues to offer grace as an outgrowth of that love. Even before we recognize it, God's love reaches out to us, drawing us toward God. Grace begins with God's love for us, calling us to relationship and inviting us to reflect that love to others.

SECOND SERMON

The Line of Grace: Connecting Us

John 15:5, 1 Corinthians 1:9

In geometry, a line is defined as a set of points extending infinitely in both directions. A line connects points, forming a continuous path. Similarly, God's grace can be like a line—extending from God to us, and from us back to God, creating an unbroken connection. Just as a line connects distinct points, grace connects us to God and to one another.

Prevenient Grace functions in this way: it is the grace that God extends to us before we are even aware of it, drawing us toward God and to the community of faith. Just as a line connects points, prevenient grace connects us to God before we even realize we need that connection. It is God's grace that initiates the relationship, calling us before we have the capacity to respond.

As we grow in discipleship, we are called not only to receive God's grace but also to extend that grace to others. Just as God offers grace to us before we ever fully recognize it, we are invited to consider how we might extend grace to others, even before we know them.

In our growth as disciples, we are asked to reflect the love and grace that God has shown us, offering kindness and compassion to those we encounter, extending grace before we know the full story. Just as a line connects, we too are called to connect with others through grace, offering what God has first given us.

THIRD SERMON

The Angle of Grace: The Turning Point

Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 5:17

We can see in angles a change of direction. Justifying grace is the moment when we encounter God's forgiveness and transformative power through Christ, leading to a change in direction. Just as an angle has a turning point, justifying grace marks a shift in our lives. This week reflects on how grace intersects with our lives to bring about profound transformation, turning us toward holiness and away from sin.

FOURTH SERMON

The Circle of Grace: Wholeness, Belonging, and Perfection

1 John 4:9–10, 2 Corinthians 3:18

A circle has no beginning or end, symbolizing the eternal and all-encompassing nature of God's love. Sanctifying grace is the grace that continues to work in us, leading us to spiritual growth and transformation over time. Just as a circle is a perfect shape, sanctifying grace brings us closer to the perfection of Christ. The circle of grace reflects God's ongoing work in our lives, continually shaping us to reflect God's love and holiness.

Additionally, the circle of grace is a place where everyone belongs—no one is excluded. Everyone is invited to enter into the fullness of God's love. Just as the family of God continues to grow as we are transformed, God's sanctifying grace draws us into a larger family of believers, uniting us in love. No matter where we are on our journey of faith, God's sanctifying grace draws us into deeper fellowship with God, with each other, and with all of creation.

Lead Creator: Latricia Scriven

WHAT I HAVEN'T BEEN TELLING YOU.

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Each week, we'll confront essential but often overlooked aspects of our walk with God. From confronting our complacency with grace in "The Other Prodigal Son", to expanding our vision of God's mission in "Shouldn't God Care?", we'll explore the responsibility of speaking truth to power, the importance of shifting perspectives beyond human limitations, and the call to invest in the future we may never see. This series invites us to step beyond what we've been told, and into the fullness of what God is calling us to.

FIRST SERMON

The Other Prodigal Son

Luke 15:25-32

Once we experience grace and become familiar with it, it is easy to forget that we once needed it and continue to need it.

The church must remember that "freely we have received, and freely we must give" (Matthew 10:8). We have been impacted by the weight of God's grace, and we have a responsibility to react to this and live out accordingly—for with great power comes great responsibility.

Let's get out of the "cheap grace" mindset. Because of grace our reaction ought to be reflective of the Father's reaction. Be on the lookout for others, run out to meet others, embrace them and make them feel loved, clothe them and remind them of their dignity, and rejoice and feast with them.

SECOND SERMON

Shouldn't God Care?

Jonah 4:11

Understanding that our mission field,

message, and image of God is too small.

How are we limiting what God wants to do among us and through us? "It is not about the fish." You can't give people what you don't have.

THIRD SERMON

Time to speak up!

2 Samuel 12:1-7a

Speaking truth to power (individual and systematic). Including power centers in churches.

Self-examination, i.e. pride, arrogance, and superiority.

Power of repentance.

FOURTH SERMON

More than human perspective.

Matthew 16:21-23

Overcoming the danger of being too protective, i.e. institutional protection.

Forgetting the mission.

Property > People and Tradition > People.

Dangers of being shortsighted.

Dangers of wanting rewards without the risk.

FIFTH SERMON

A land I may not see.

Numbers 20:12.

How is the Church investing in the next generation?

Importance of carving a future we will not claim. 1 Corinthians 2:9: “Eyes have not seen, ears have not heard, and no heart has ever imagined.”

Living out the mission and the vision without letting our frustrations taint it.

Trusting God will supply and equip us for the fulfillment of this future while resting on God’s promises.

Lead Creators: Matt Wallis, Abdel Rodriguez, Frank Adams, Ryan Hall

MY SOUL CRIES OUT / OUR SOULS CRY OUT

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Loss is an inherent aspect of life and will inevitably affect every individual, family, community, and nation. The process of responding to loss involves a journey that spans from feelings of devastation and disorientation to eventual hopefulness. It is important to convey that support is available throughout this challenging experience. Most importantly, it is important to convey that God is always there.

FIRST SERMON

**It Came Unexpectedly and Suddenly
Changed Our Life**

Isaiah 41:10, Psalm 23

Felt Need: Facing the challenge of dealing with the myriad of emotions which emerge when a loss comes unexpectedly and/or coupled with a tragedy.

Key Idea: Coping with feelings of vulnerability, loss of safety and connection, and a desire for control may be some of the emotions that emerge—coupled with an overwhelming uncertainty and/or anxiety.

Key Points: An emotional response is natural, whether repressed or expressed. Your grief journey is your personal lived experience. Name physical and emotional symptoms that may emerge

While it may not feel like it, God is with us every step of the way. Encourage people to trust in God's strength and presence even when facing difficult circumstances.

Illustration: 12-year-old girl shot by gang members during a revenge drive-by shooting intended for her brother while in

her grandmother's living room doing her homework.

SECOND SERMON

Why Me?

Psalm 23

Felt Need: Dealing with the intense feeling associated with grief: denial, anger, uncertainty, vulnerability, rage and/or fear.

Key Idea: Grieving is a natural response to loss. Lament is a prayer to God who is there to help us grieve.

Key Points: Grieving is natural and needed. Coping with anger at God. People may turn to different coping mechanisms such as seeking support, substance abuse, engaging or disengaging with self-care finding ways to cope with their intense emotions. Lament as a prayer to God, affirms your faith in God. Lament provides a framework for intense emotions.

Illustration: Family infighting posted on Facebook

THIRD SERMON

Justice

Isaiah 1:17, Micah 6:8

Felt Need: Injustice can evoke strong feelings of unfairness and a desire to correct the wrong.

Key Idea: Responding to injustice by advocating for change or standing up against injustice is our Christian responsibility. Injustice can challenge people to change their point of view.

Key Points: Injustice often forces individuals to reconsider their beliefs and perspectives. It can be a catalyst for personal growth and transformation, prompting people to question their assumptions and biases. Injustice can challenge people to create change in the community for others and future generations.

When faced with injustice, individuals may feel compelled to take action and advocate for change. This can lead to efforts to improve the community and create a better future for others. It involves standing up against unfair practices and working towards a more just society.

Finding productive ways to channel these feelings is essential, including acknowledging emotions, seeking perspective taking, and cultivating resilience.

It's important to find constructive ways to deal with the strong emotions that arise from experiencing injustice. This includes acknowledging and processing these emotions, seeking to understand different perspectives, and building resilience to cope with challenges. Productive channels can include engaging in advocacy, participating in community initiatives and fostering empathy and understanding.

Illustration: Advocating with the powers that be for a change in the system.

Examples include: advocating for stricter gun enforcement laws following drive-by shooting, or constructing speed bumps in the road to prevent speeding following hit-and-run murder.

FOURTH SERMON

Hope Comes in the Mourning

Revelation 21:4

Felt Need: Restoration

Key Idea: Finding comfort in sorrow

Key Points: Fellowship and connection are a necessary part of the grieving process. Grieving is a deeply personal experience, but it is also important to connect with others during this time. Fellowship and connection provide emotional support and help individuals feel less isolated. Sharing the burden of grief with a community can be comforting and healing.

Finding productive ways to channel grief. Grief can be overwhelming, and finding constructive ways to channel these emotions is crucial. This can include engaging in activities that honor the memory of the lost loved one, participating in support groups, or finding creative outlets such as writing, art, or music. These activities can help individuals process their grief and find a sense of purpose.

Communal activity to channel grief and fellowship. Participating in communal activities can be a powerful way to channel grief and foster fellowship. These activities can bring people together, provide a sense

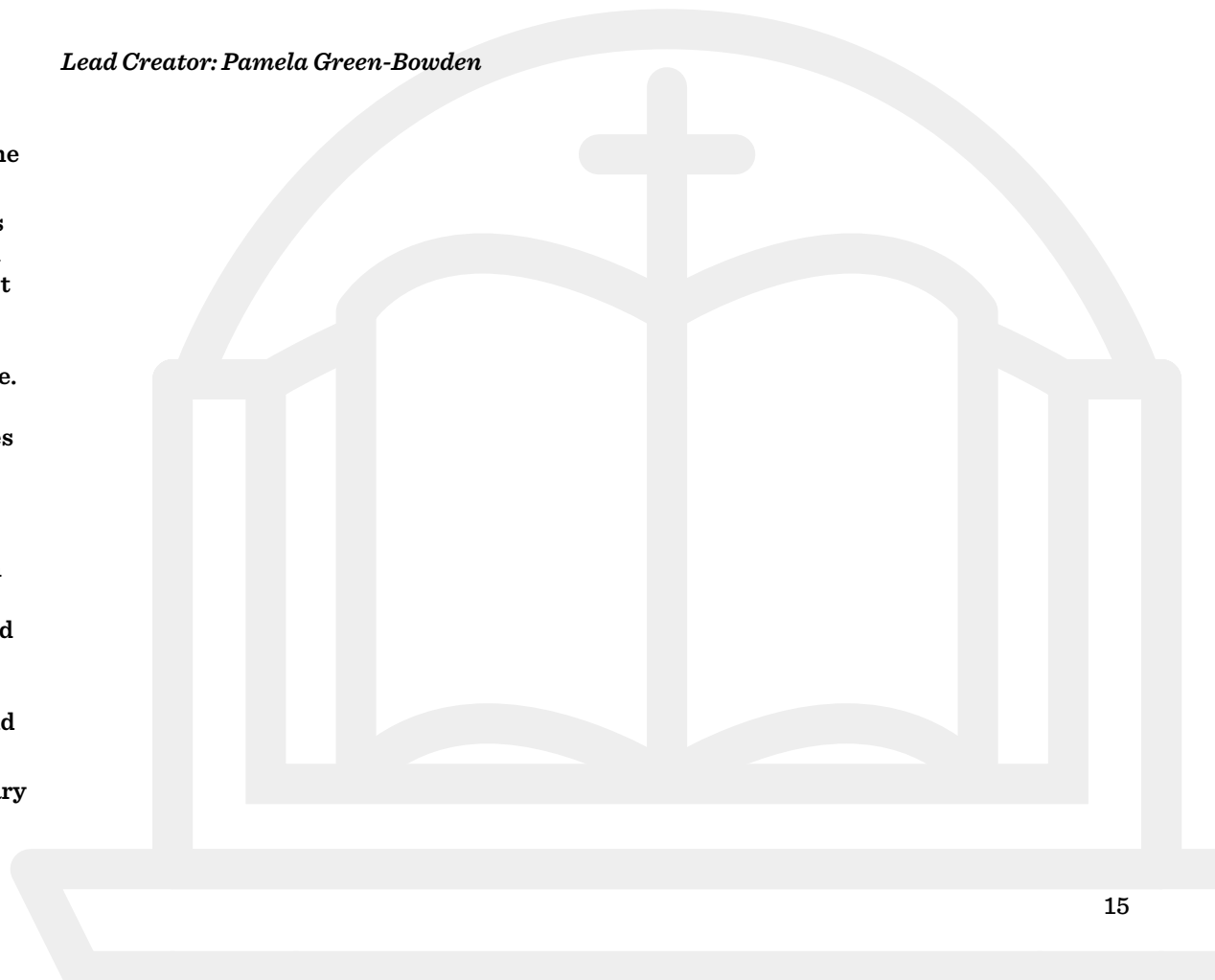
of belonging, and create opportunities for collective healing. Examples include memorial services, community events, or group projects that honor the memory of the lost loved one.

Grief is a process and a journey. Grieving is not a linear process; it is a journey that can take time and may involve various stages. It is important to acknowledge that grief is a unique experience for each individual and that there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Understanding that grief is a journey can help individuals be patient with themselves and others as they navigate this difficult time.

Rejoice in the God who comforts. Finding comfort in faith can be a source of strength during the grieving process. Rejoicing in the God who comforts can provide hope and reassurance that there is a higher power offering support and solace. This spiritual connection can be a vital part of healing and finding peace amidst sorrow.

Illustration: Block Party on the anniversary of the event.

Lead Creator: Pamela Green-Bowden



DEEP LISTENING: LEARNING TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

This series reflects United Methodist theology, emphasizing grace, personal and communal discernment, and the call to social holiness as an expression of God's Kingdom.

FIRST SERMON

Why Listen? – A Grace-Filled Invitation

Luke 19:39–40

Felt Need: “I don’t know how to listen to God.”

Key Idea: God’s voice is always calling out—through Scripture, creation, the Spirit, and the faith community. Listening is a gift of grace and an act of discipleship.

Key Points: Prevenient Grace: God speaks before we are even aware of it.

The world is full of competing voices; if we don’t listen to God, we will be shaped by others.

Methods of listening: Scripture, prayer, Christian conferencing (small groups), and the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Methodist Connection: John Wesley’s Means of Grace, especially prayer and community discernment.

Illustration: The Pharisees wanted Jesus’ disciples to be silent, but God’s truth is irrepressible—even creation will cry out.

SECOND SERMON

How to Listen? – Learning Spiritual Discernment

1 Samuel 3:1–10

Felt Need: “I feel paralyzed by big decisions—how do I hear God instead of just reacting?”

Key Idea: Discernment is a practice, cultivated over time and in community.

Key Points: Listening takes practice: Samuel didn’t recognize God’s voice at first.

Community helps us discern: Eli helps Samuel understand God’s call.

Wesleyan Quadrilateral: We discern God’s voice through Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience. Learning to listen includes creating sacred space for silence and seeking wise counsel.

Methodist Connection: The role of spiritual mentors and accountability partners in discipleship.

Illustration: Samuel had to return multiple times before recognizing God’s call. So do we.

THIRD SERMON

When Listening Leads to Growth – A Life of Holiness

Luke 5:15–16

Felt Need: “I want to grow spiritually but need help developing habits.”

Key Idea: Deep listening transforms us, aligning our lives with God’s purposes.

Key Points: Jesus models the necessity of listening prayer. If Jesus needed to step away and listen, how much more do we?

Listening leads to self-awareness: We hear our own deepest longings in God’s presence.

Spiritual disciplines nurture our ability to hear: Prayer, fasting, Sabbath, journaling, retreat.

Methodist Connection: Sanctifying Grace: Growth in holiness is both personal (inner transformation) and social (outward action).

Illustration: Despite urgent needs, Jesus regularly withdrew to pray. We must too.

FOURTH SERMON

When Listening Leads to Freedom – The Kingdom of God & Social Justice

John 10:27

Felt Need: “My life is too loud and busy—I struggle to hear God.”

Key Idea: Hearing and following God’s voice leads to true freedom—not just for us, but for the world.

Key Points: Freedom comes through alignment with God’s will: When we recognize God’s voice, we move in step with the Kingdom.

Listening leads to action: Justice, mercy, and reconciliation are natural outcomes of deep listening.

Obstacles to hearing God: Busyness, noise, fear, injustice, oppression.

The Kingdom of God is about liberation. We are freed from sin and oppression, and we are freed for love and justice.

Methodist Connection: Social Holiness: Faith is lived out in service to the world. Listening to God leads to participation in God’s justice.

Illustration: John Wesley and the early Methodists heard God’s call to care for the poor, fight for abolition, and work for justice.

RESOURCES

Conclusion & Call to Action

Encourage practical challenges each week: practicing silence, joining a small group, journaling prayers, engaging in acts of service.

End with Wesley’s Covenant Prayer as a response to God’s voice:

“I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt...”

Challenge: What is God saying to you? And what are you going to do about it?

Lead Creator: Matthew Findley

WHAT IS TRUTH?

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Truth can be difficult to hear, but it also has the power to bring healing. This four week sermon series invites you to explore the transformative power of truth revealed in Jesus Christ and discover how believers can experience it daily. Centered around the story of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), each week highlights a unique aspect of truth.

FIRST SERMON

What is Truth?

John 18:37–38, Proverbs 3:5–6

Description: In a moment of profound searching, Pilate asked Jesus about His identity as King of the Jews. Jesus boldly stated that anyone seeking the truth listens to Him. Pilate's question, "What is truth?" resonates deeply today. Scripture affirms that truth is not merely an idea but a person—Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

In a world filled with chaos and deception, believers are called to lean not on their own understanding but to seek Jesus, the ultimate source of truth. Followers of Christ are encouraged to: Actively listen for Jesus' voice (John 10:1–5); Test spiritual claims against God's truth (1 John 4:1); Seek God's wisdom through prayer and faithful obedience (Matthew 7:7).

Questions & Scriptures that may be

helpful: So who is Jesus? Jesus is loving (1 John 14:7,16;), compassionate (Matthew 9:36; 15:32; Lk 7:13), open (John 10:9:) and "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:1–6).

How do we discern truth? 1 John 4:1 tells us to test Spirits to see whether they are from God. Believers should not blindly accept spiritual claims from false prophets but discern the source of every teaching.

How do we listen to God's voice? John 10:1–5 reminds us, as sheep, we hear and obey the Shepherd's voice. Jesus said "my sheep hear my voice."

Other ways we listen faithfully is by prayerful inquiry, rejection of passivity in practicing our faith by not sitting back but we "go" & "seek" (Mat. 7:7) our answers from God. Also, we are called to be persistent and endure in the truth through the power of the Spirit. Like Pilate, many seekers and believers are curious about God's truth revealed in Jesus Christ. Indeed, Truth is a person not just a way of speaking.

SECOND SERMON

Give me this living water

John 4:13–15, John 8:31–32

Description: Truth draws us in because it offers freedom and fulfillment. The Samaritan woman's quest for "living

water” (John 4:13–15) reveals her deeper need for spiritual nourishment. Jesus, the Living Word, fulfills our souls beyond temporary desires (Matthew 4:4, Isaiah 55:2). Practical ways to embrace this truth include: Recognizing that only Jesus can quench our spiritual thirst; Seeking God first, rather than as a last resort in times of need; Trusting over clarity. As Mother Teresa exemplified, faith often requires us to follow God’s direction even when the path is unclear.

Other Scriptures & Resources that may be helpful: Jesus declares to Satan, “Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4).

In Isa. 55:2, the prophet writes, “Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and you labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight itself in abundance, that urges us to seek nourishment in the Lord and not temporary pleasures.”

Jesus at The Feast of Booths — “Come to Me

all who are thirsty and drink” (John 7:37–38), which is a metaphor for the Holy Spirit and eternal life.

Illustrations: Often we go to God last—after increasing troubles and stress arises in our lives. For example, instead of going to the doctor’s office for a diagnosis first, we search WEB M.D. for answers instead of truth. Truth is Jesus and He is the Living Word.

Mother Teresa — Clarity vs. Trust (<https://kingdomatwork.com/clarity-vs-trust/>)

THIRD SERMON

Truth Reveals

John 4:16–18

Description: Jesus’ truth illuminates our lives without condemnation. He approached the Samaritan woman to reveal her past not to shame her, but to lead her toward repentance, faith, and hope. Similarly, God disciplines and redirects us lovingly (Hebrews 12:6; Psalm 40). Like Nathan confronting David (2 Samuel 12:1–25), truth exposes our brokenness while showcasing God’s grace and mercy. To fully embrace this truth: Be open to God’s loving correction;

Transition from hurt to healing by accepting the grace of Christ’s truth; Reflect: Are you ready to let Jesus reveal His truth in your life?

Scriptures, Questions & Other resources: Jesus says “Go call your husband...” “You are right...” “You certainly spoke the truth!”

Illustration: In the passage in 2 Samuel 12:1–25, where Nathan rebukes King David and implicates David as “the man” and leads him to see the truth of his sin and leads David to repentance. David like the Samaritan woman moves from Hope to Faith when their eyes are opened. The Samaritan woman says, “Could He Be” (the Messiah).

Heb. 12:6 that states God disciplines those God loves. We discover more than sin, reveals hope of the Gospel in God’s way.

Psalm 40 illustrates that while God disciplines those he loves, “He sets our feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along”. He had given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God”.

John 4:4 says “He had got God through Samaria...”

Jesus Christ who is the Way, The Truth and

the Life wants to be revealed.

Jesus The Truth is willing — Are we? Are we truly ready to move from our hurts to what heals in Christ Jesus?

FOURTH SERMON

Truth Heals (Sets Free)

John 4:28–30, 30–42

Description: Truth transformed the Samaritan woman—she moved from being an outcast to a powerful witness, sharing Jesus with her entire town. Embracing His truth brings restoration, purpose, and a passion to share it with others (John 8:31–36).

Practical applications include: Forgiving yourself, just as Christ forgives you; Sharing your testimony, recognizing that healing is contagious and impacts communities; Living in true freedom by abiding in Christ and rejecting the bondage of sin.

Other Scriptures and other Resources:

John 8:31–36 has a timeless message for all believers and followers of Jesus Christ: true discipleship involves abiding in Jesus as the Word, knowing the truth and experiencing freedom from the bondage of sin. So if the

Son (Logos/ Word of God) sets you, you are free indeed.

Illustration: Open the Sermon with a fable about a picture of Jesus and Peter that has been discovered in the Ancient Near East which proves the fully human and fully divine natures of Christ. Imagine presenting a fabricated image of Jesus and Peter as an archaeological artifact. This serves as a powerful metaphor for how easily we can mistake counterfeits for truth. Just as Pilate faced “Truth” and didn’t recognize it, we are called to recognize and embrace Jesus as the ultimate reality.

Lead Creators: Ryan Hall, Matt Wallis, Abdel Rodriguez and Frank Adams

GARMENTS OF THE PENTATEUCH

SERIES TYPE

Discipleship

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Garments of the Pentateuch will explore how authentic worship transformed the people of Israel from unholy wanderers to holy relationship with God. We take this same journey as individuals and a congregation. We can also use this series to address the heart behind the symbolic acts of worship.

FIRST SERMON

What Are You Wearing?

Exodus 28:1-5

This is an unhelpful question asked of people in church.

Start with clothing described in text but say this was a reflection of worship. Wear joy, wear compassion, wear your church's values.

These specific commands were about what we wear. Reflection on this passage can open up conversation about what we wear and why we wear it to worship both physically and with our attitude.

SECOND SERMON

What Are You Building?

Exodus 28:6-14

The people of God built specific altars, employing craftsmanship. Take opportunity to connect that with liturgical practices and physical spaces in our sanctuaries. For example, an altar made by former pastor.

The craftsmanship of these robes is powerful and symbolic to help people remember the story of God and their part in that unfolding

story.

THIRD SERMON

What Are You Offering?

Exodus 28:43, 29:42-46

Worship is fundamentally about giving ourselves to God. The people of God did in exodus offered their gifts to God in craftsmanship, ritual, sacrifice, telling the story of God.

As the preacher, you can go as deep as you want into Exodus 29, but the ending summarizes why we offer and how it is connected to covenant relationship with God. Touch on bread, anointing, ordination, blood of covenant, "they will know that I am the Lord their God."

RESOURCES

The heart of this series is about worship and remembering the lineage of worship we are a part of as the people of God.

Lead Creators: Mike Luzinski, Pam Bowden, Bryant Manning, Matthew Findley

NEGLECTED NARRATIVES OF NOTABLE WOMEN

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

All of our stories matter. This four-week sermon series tells some of the often overlooked stories of women in the Bible who invite us to expand our perspectives and challenge the societal norms and practices that shape the way we engage with women in our church and community.

FIRST SERMON

A Woman, A Warning, and The Wrong Verdict: The story of Pilate's Wife

Matthew 27:15-24

Pilate had oversight, power and responsibility in choosing to sentence Barabas to freedom and Jesus to death. In the middle of this story, Pilate's wife sends a warning to him about a dream she has, warning her husband to "have nothing to do with this man's death." Yet, Pilate does not listen. What messages from women in our community have we refused to hear? How might we lean in and listen more intentionally?

SECOND SERMON

Give Me My Share: The Story of Zelophehad's Daughters

Numbers 27:1-11

Zelophehad's Daughters Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah challenge social norms by demanding an inheritance that was typically reserved for sons. Their request is honored and societal practices are changed. What does the story of these

daughter's requesting their inheritance teach us about unjust laws and practices that disproportionately impact women in our community, church and world? In what ways might we be called to participate in challenging these practices.

THIRD SERMON

Love Me, Don't Judge Me: Leah's Story

Genesis 29:16-35

Often times we judge women for being in complex situations with implications that are beyond their control. How does Leah's story invite us to examine our own assumptions and projections placed on women in difficult life circumstances. How might we lead with love instead of judgment?

FOURTH SERMON

Coworkers in Christ: Priscilla's Story

Romans 16:3 & Acts 18:1-3; 24-26

Priscilla was a tentmaker and missionary who served the early church alongside her husband Aquila. She, like many other women in the Bible, has not always been the center of our stories. Her silent sacrifice, faith,

wisdom, courage and servant leadership helped co-create a space of worship and a life of faith in the early church. How might we celebrate the silent, behind-the-scenes efforts of women in our church and community?

Lead Creators: Jana Hall-Perkins, Shawn Klein, Nick Lee, David Averill

WHO'S THAT SHEEP

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

The realities of a rapidly changing culture demand that churches adapt their approach to reaching new people. What worked 5-10 years ago will not work today. Churches must take a critical look at how to effectively reach Jesus' lost sheep in their community and innovate new approaches to reach new people.

FIRST SERMON

Who's Not Here?

Luke 15:1-10

Parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin

Jesus gave us an image of God as One who seeks the lost. Looking at neighborhood demographics through MissionInsight (or some other community profiling data set), who is not here and why aren't they here? Who among our current constituency is missing? The Kingdom of God is for all, not some.

SECOND SERMON

Heal the Harm

Luke 10:25-37

Parable of the Good Samaritan

Introduce Bishop Tom Berlin's adaptation of the General Rules for Methodist Congregations: Heal the harm, Offer the good of Christ to the community, teach them to love God, others, and themselves.

Who is in the ditch and how did they get there? How might the church have participated in causing some of the harm?

We can't avoid them, but must find ways to help both corporately and individually. The church should be a healing place where we are seeking the hurting and doing spiritual triage to facilitate healing.

THIRD SERMON

Offer Them Christ

John 10:1-19 and Galatians 6:9-10

Jesus is the Good Shepherd

1995 (or whatever high watermark year for a congregation) is never coming back. Churches cannot sit back and wait for people to come, but we must go and offer the good of Christ to the community. Offering them Christ begins with us (Acts 1:8). We offer the Christ we have experienced (we can't offer them what we don't have). Matthew 9-10 show that we pray and we go.

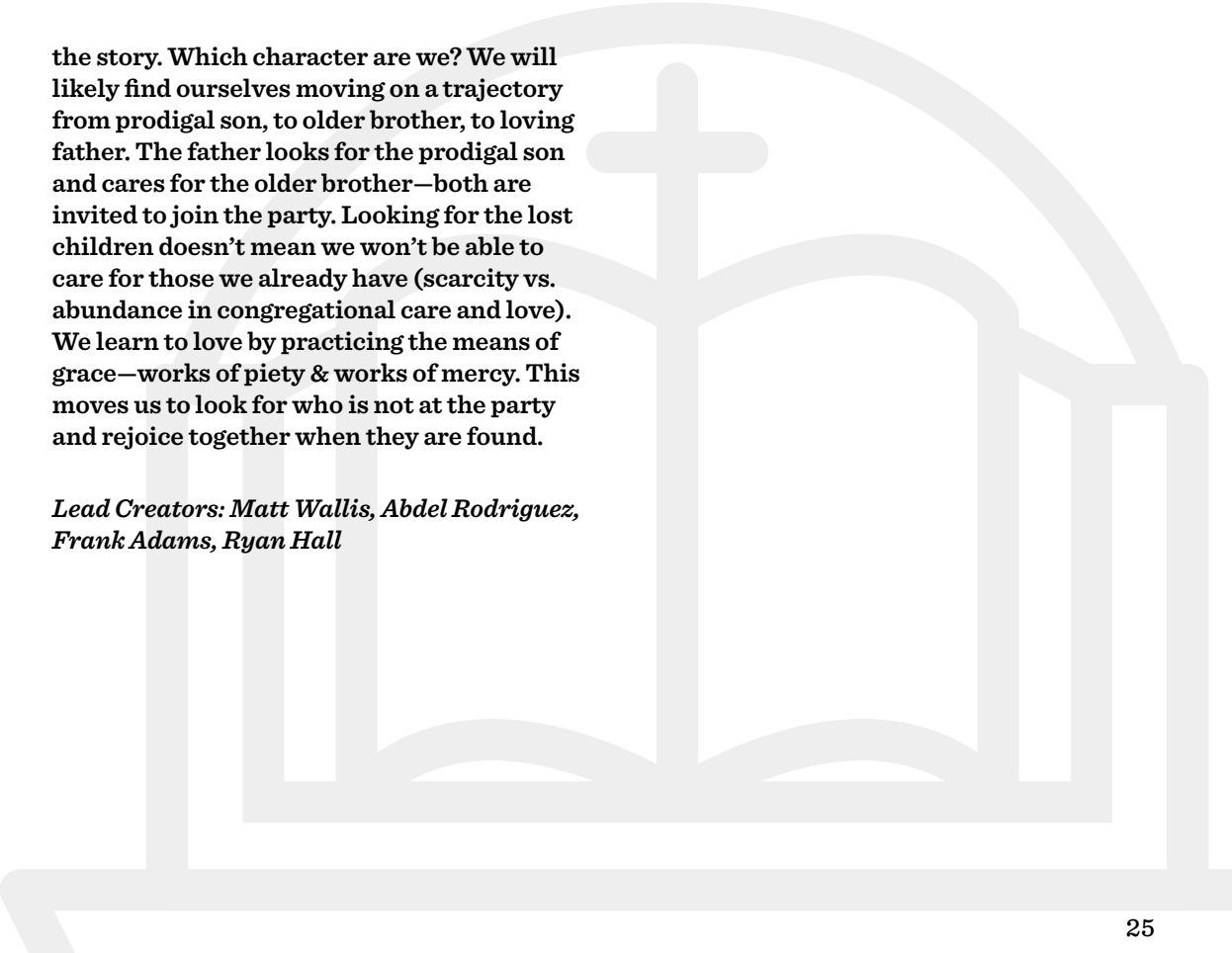
FOURTH SERMON

Teach Them to Love (God, Others, & Themselves)

Luke 15:11-32

Parable of the Prodigal Sons

In this parable we must find ourselves within



the story. Which character are we? We will likely find ourselves moving on a trajectory from prodigal son, to older brother, to loving father. The father looks for the prodigal son and cares for the older brother—both are invited to join the party. Looking for the lost children doesn't mean we won't be able to care for those we already have (scarcity vs. abundance in congregational care and love). We learn to love by practicing the means of grace—works of piety & works of mercy. This moves us to look for who is not at the party and rejoice together when they are found.

Lead Creators: Matt Wallis, Abdel Rodriguez, Frank Adams, Ryan Hall

UNNAMED BUT KNOWN

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Lifting up the stories of unnamed people in scripture. Looking at well-known text from a fresh perspective of the people who are not the main character or unnamed. Helping average people see their immense value in life and ministry. It is the small acts of faith that can make a big impact in the world and in our community. All people have influence and can use it for the glory of God and for the good of all people.

FIRST SERMON

Bearers of the Mat: Helping the Hurting

Mark 2:1–11

Focus on the friends who helped the sick man find healing. To what degree would we go to find healing, or help others find healing? What role does patience and perseverance play in discipleship?

SECOND SERMON

The Art of Giving

Matthew 26:6–13

Review Dr. Amy-Jill Levine's interpretation of this text found in *Entering the Passion of Jesus*. Three somewhat different interpretations of this event in the synoptics. Why? Exegete them together for common threads. What is a meaningful offering and to what cost will we endure to honor God; themes of expense/generosity, fear, courage and undignification.

THIRD SERMON

Communal Transformation. C

John 4:1–26

Focus is the Townspeople who respond to the woman's testimony and the community was transformed. Do our churches welcome/allow voices from the margins? How do we honor these voices and give dignity to those who have been ostracized? What voices must be centered in order for us to live faithfully in our contexts?

FOURTH SERMON

When Justice Meets Love & Mercy

1 Kings 3:16–28

Themes to address: the status of women (Solomon dignifies them); Challenging patriarchal justice (women present their case directly to Solomon); Undermining power-based authority (justice belongs to everyone); Logic-defying wisdom (challenges a rigid legalistic mindset, showing that true justice sometimes requires thinking outside the norm rather than following strict laws).

Lead Creators: Ginger Medley, Rushing Kimball, Jeremy Knight, Latricia Scriven

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

SERIES TYPE

Topical - Leadership Transition

SERIES DESCRIPTION

In this series, both pastors and congregation are invited to reflect on the powerful question Jesus posed to His disciples: “Who do you say that I am?” This question is not just about understanding Jesus, but about understanding who we are—as individuals, as a congregation, and as the community we are called to serve. In this three-week series, we will explore the layers of our relationship with Christ and with one another, deepening our understanding of our shared calling in a new season of ministry. The series is grounded in Matthew 16: 13-19.

FIRST SERMON

Week 1 - Who Do THEY Say That I Am?

Matthew 16:13-14

Possible Secondary Text: Matthew 11:16-19

What we know and believe is based on what has been passed down by others.

SECOND SERMON

Week 2 - Who Do YOU Say That I am?

Matthew 16:15-16

Possible Secondary Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

In the beginning stages of any relationship, we often rely on what others say. This week, we reflect on how the world sees Jesus, how others define Him, and what their perspectives can teach us as we begin to understand one another. For a new pastor entering a new community, this is also a time of listening - hearing the stories, expectations, and hopes of the congregation. Together, we acknowledge the different views and opinions that exist as we set the stage for a deeper connection with Christ and each other.

THIRD SERMON

Week 3 - Allowing the Spirit to Reveal

Matthew 16:17-19

Possible Secondary Texts: 1 Corinthians 2:9-11. Ephesians 3:20-21

In the final week, we reflect on the truth that ultimately, it is the Holy Spirit who reveals our true calling. We must rely on the Spirit to show us who we are as a community, to guide us in knowing what God is doing with us in this season. Just as the Spirit revealed Christ's identity to Peter, we trust the Spirit to lead us into a deeper understanding of who we are called to be—together as a church and as individuals. This week invites us to open our hearts and minds to God's revelation and guidance as we move forward in our ministry together.

Lead Creators: Rushing Kimball, Latricia Scriven, Ginger Medley, Jeremy Knight

FAITH & GAMES: FINDING GOD IN THE GAMES WE'VE PLAYED

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Ever feel like life is one big game? From Monopoly to Uno, classic board games can teach us surprising truths about faith, forgiveness, and following Jesus. Join us for “Faith & Games”—a playful and powerful sermon series where we find God in unexpected places.

FIRST SERMON

Life - Choosing Your Path

1 Corinthians 12, John 10:10

What does true life look like?

Maturity in the Spirit

Resilience when the unexpected happens

Tag: Life is full of choices, but when we follow God's direction, we discover deeper purpose. The Game of Life maps careers, families, and success—but faith gives us a greater map for living.

SECOND SERMON

Jenga - Where Are You Building?

Proverbs 8, Matthew 7:24–27

Build a house on rock.

How to have a foundation that outlasts fear

Tag: Every choice matters. Are we building our lives on Christ, or a shaky foundation? Jenga shows how fragile structures can fall—but Jesus offers strength that lasts.

THIRD SERMON

Monopoly - The Game of Control

Mark 8:36, Ecclesiastes 5, Luke 12:13–31

Wesley's rules about money

Work is not about accumulating, it's about [fill in the blank].

Stewardship based on abundance rather than security

Tag: Life isn't about how much we acquire, but how we honor God with what we've been given. Monopoly teaches us about control, competition, and money—but Scripture calls us to generosity and dependence on God.

FOURTH SERMON

Sorry - The Power of Forgiveness

Options Include: Prodigal son, Esau and Jacob, Rachel and Leah, 70x7, Joseph (Genesis), Sampson and the jawbone, Jonah, Lord's Prayer

Tag: In God's kingdom, “Sorry” isn't just a word—it's the start of healing. While the game lets you knock others back, Jesus shows us how to restore what's broken.

FIFTH SERMON

Clue - Searching For Truth

John 14:6, James 1:5

Ask, knock, seek

Embrace mystery: Sometimes things can not be solved.

Tag: In a world full of mystery and confusion, Jesus is the truth we're searching for. Like Clue, life may feel like a puzzle—but God offers clarity and purpose.

SIXTH SERMON

Uno - Releasing Control and Starting Over

Matthew on worry, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Philippians

Upward prize, heavenly call.

Life is full of reversals and skips

Surrender

Tag: In Uno, a “wild card” or “reverse” can change the game. In Christ, we are given the ultimate fresh start. No matter what's in our hand, God's grace makes all things new.

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL SERMON

Spin the Bottle

Spin the Bottle is a game of random affection, but God's love isn't random—it's intentional, faithful, and transformative. In a world that treats love like a game, we're called to love as Christ loves.

Lead Creators: Scott Ehler, Sherlain Stevens, Matt White, Will Clark

LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

SERIES TYPE

Justice

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Liberty and Justice For All is a series about how the things we do—and the things we don't do—impact the freedom and well-being of others, especially people who are already struggling. We'll look at how issues like food insecurity, environmental harm, and racial injustice are all connected, and how they show up right here in our own communities. Scripture keeps pushing us to care—not just with our words, but with our actions. This isn't about guilt or blame—it's about responsibility, compassion, and the kind of healing God actually wants to bring into the world through us.

FIRST SERMON

Week 1: A Call for Creation's Healing

Isaiah 58:6–12

God doesn't just ask us to pray about justice—God asks us to live it. This week, we'll talk about how our everyday choices impact the land, the air, the water, and the people who live closest to the margins. From local food deserts to broken infrastructure, we'll explore how healing creation is part of healing our communities. Isaiah calls us to be repairers of the breach—and that work starts now.

SECOND SERMON

Week 2: From Foreigner to Friend: Building Bridges of Justice and Compassion

Leviticus 19:33–34 & Proverbs 31:8–9

God's justice includes everyone—especially the ones we often overlook or push to the edges. This week, we'll talk about what it means to truly welcome and advocate for those who've been treated as “outsiders”—refugees, Indigenous people, and folks in unsafe or neglected neighborhoods. We'll

look at examples like Cancer Alley and how zoning, policy, and fear have pushed people into dangerous places. Scripture reminds us that speaking up matters—and so does seeing one another with dignity.

THIRD SERMON

Week 3: Restoration and the Future Hope

Revelation 21:3–5

God promises a future where all things are made new—but we live in the tension between that promise and the brokenness we see now. This week, we'll talk about hope—not as wishful thinking, but as fuel for action. What does it look like to advocate for change while trusting that God is still at work? Our job isn't to fix everything overnight, but to be people who believe restoration is possible and live like it's coming.

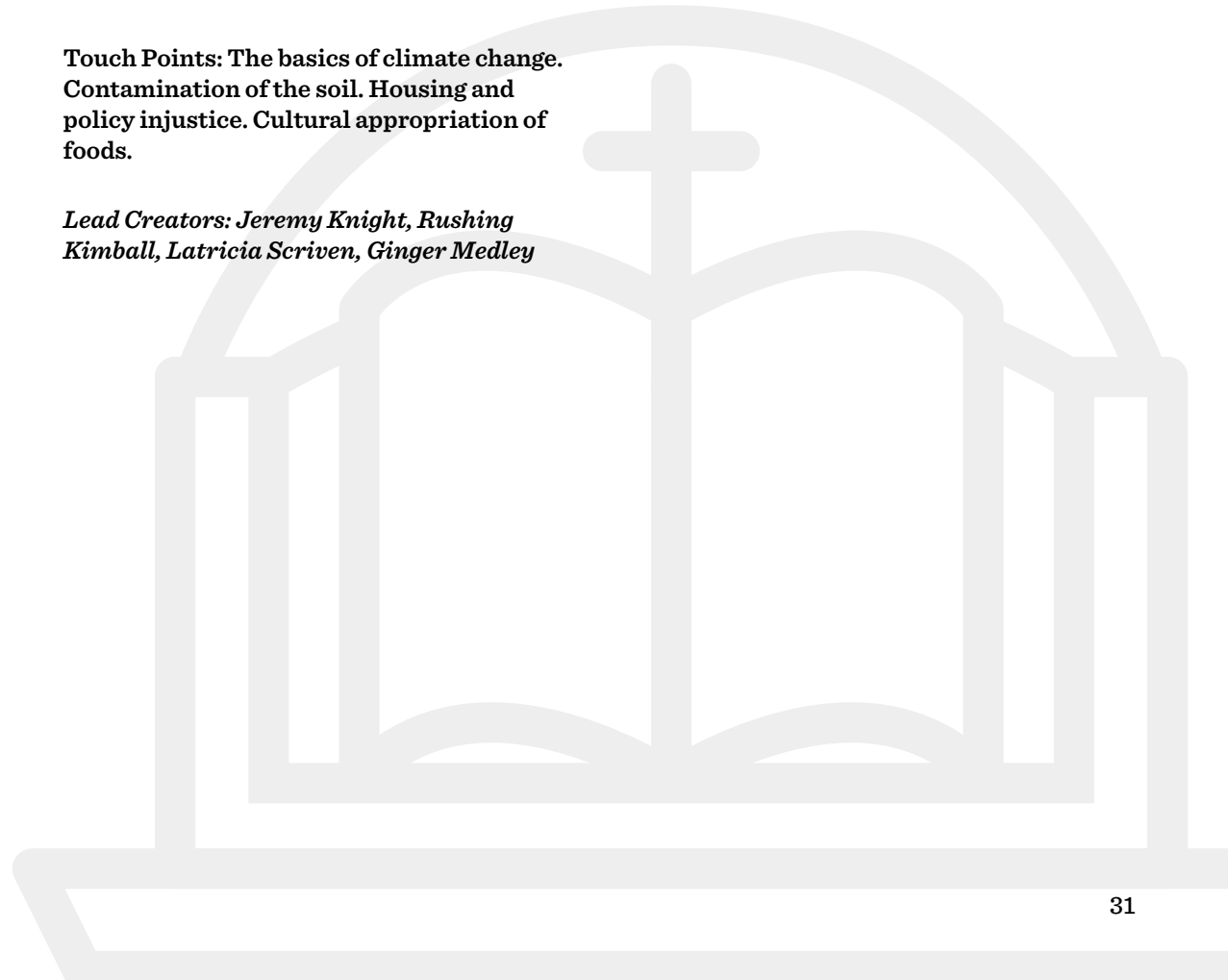
RESOURCES

Timing: Leading up to Memorial Day from Easter. Earth Day Sunday.

Resource Book: *Before the Streets Lights Come On: Black America's Urgent Call for Climate Solutions* by Heather McTeer Toney

Touch Points: The basics of climate change. Contamination of the soil. Housing and policy injustice. Cultural appropriation of foods.

Lead Creators: *Jeremy Knight, Rushing Kimball, Latricia Scriven, Ginger Medley*



FAITH AND THE PHANTOM: BIBLICAL THEMES IN THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

SERIES TYPE

Topical, Justice

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Love and relationship conquers fear and loathing.

FIRST SERMON

The Phantom (Erik) – The Outcast and Redemption

Isaiah 53:3, Matthew 12:10–11, Luke 19:10, Romans 5:8

Theme: Brokenness, rejection, and the longing for love.

“He was despised and rejected by mankind...”— Jesus, the rejected cornerstone

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

“But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

No matter how deep the scars or how dark the past, God’s love reaches into the shadows to offer healing, hope, and redemption.

SECOND SERMON

Christine Daaé – Innocence and Transformation

Romans 12:2, 1 John 4:18, Philippians 1:6

Theme: Growth, choices, and true love.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your

mind.”

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear...”

“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion...”

God’s perfect love invites us to grow beyond fear and find our identity not in what we once were, but in who we are becoming through Christ.

THIRD SERMON

Raoul – The Protector and Faithful Love

Ephesians 5:25, John 15:13, Psalm 23:4

Theme: Faithfulness, courage, and sacrificial love.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.”

Faithful love doesn't run when things get hard—it stands in the gap, sacrifices without condition, and mirrors the steadfast heart of Christ.

FOURTH SERMON

Madame Giry – The Keeper of Secrets and Wisdom

Proverbs 4:7, James 1:5, Luke 12:48

Theme: Stewardship of knowledge and guiding others wisely.

“The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.”

“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all...”

“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded...”

Sometimes wisdom means holding your tongue, and other times it means speaking hard truths—God grants discernment to guide us on that path.

FIFTH SERMON

Meg Giry – The Seeker of Approval

Galatians 1:10, Psalm 139:14, Matthew 6:33

Theme: Identity, seeking approval, and finding worth in God.

“Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God?”

“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...”

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness...”

In a world that demands we prove our worth, God gently reminds us that we are deeply known, fully loved, and already enough in Him.

SIXTH SERMON

Love vs. Fear – The Ultimate Choice

2 Timothy 1:7, 1 Corinthians 13:4–7, 1 John 4:16

Theme: The battle between love and fear in our spiritual journey.

“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

“Love is patient, love is kind...”

“God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.”

Fear may shout the loudest, but love—God's love—has the final word, offering freedom, courage, and the power to choose life over darkness.

Lead Creators: Sherlain Stevens, Matt White, Scott Ehler, Will Clark

TUTTI FRUTTI

SERIES TYPE

Discipleship

SERIES DESCRIPTION

An exploration of the Fruit of the Spirit

FIRST SERMON

Self-Control and Gentleness

Proverbs 25:28, 2 Timothy 3:1–5, Genesis 4:7, Matthew 11:29, 1 Peter 3:15

What if real strength looks more like restraint than control, and true power shows up in gentleness? Let's explore how the Spirit cultivates these quiet virtues in a noisy world.

SECOND SERMON

Faithfulness and Goodness

Psalm 36:5–10, Matthew 23:23, John 15, Psalm 23:1–6, Romans 15:14, 2 Thessalonians 1:11

In a world that rewards flash over faith and success over sincerity, the Spirit calls us back to a life rooted in goodness and anchored in faithfulness—steady, true, and deeply transformative.

THIRD SERMON

Kindness and Patience

Philippians 2:4, Acts 9:36–42, Ephesians 4:31–32, Luke 6:35–36, Titus 3:4–7, Ephesians 4:2–4, Psalm 37:7–9, Isaiah 40:28–31

Kindness and patience may seem small, but in the Spirit's hands, they become powerful forces of healing in a hurried, hurting world.

FOURTH SERMON

Peace and Joy

Philippians 4:7, 1 Peter 5:6–11, Acts 12:1–11, John 14:25–27, Isaiah 26:3, James 1:2–4, Psalm 16:7–11, Nehemiah 7:10

In the midst of chaos and uncertainty, the Spirit offers a peace that transcends understanding and a joy that can't be shaken—inviting us to live from a place of unshakable hope.

FIFTH SERMON

Love

John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 13

What if the kind of love God gives—and calls us to—isn't just a feeling, but the very first sign that the Spirit is alive and at work in us?

Lead Creators: Sherlain Stevens, Matt White, Scott Ehler, Will Clark

ANCIENT PSALMS AND CHRISTMAS SONGS

SERIES TYPE

Lectionary Based, Advent/Christmas

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Using popular Christmas songs of different genres to try to find a way to contrast and/or relate the good news of the Incarnation to popular perceptions of Christmas. Primary question: how does modern music complement or contradict the message of the Psalms?

Advent (Year A) - Using the Lectionary readings for the Psalms or Canticles

FIRST SERMON

Advent 1 - "I'll Be Home for Christmas"

Psalm 122

Theme: Our home is with the Lord. God gives a sense of home no matter where we are and at any time of year.

SECOND SERMON

Advent 2 - "Do You Hear What I Hear?"

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Theme: God rules and reigns through love. The song was written during the Cuban Crisis to contrast God's way of love versus the drumbeat of war.

THIRD SERMON

Advent 3 - "Do They Know It's Christmas?"

Psalm 146:5-10

Theme: Giving beyond ourselves helps us understand the heart of God. However, we should refrain from patronizing others in our desire to help. The pop song raised \$8 million dollars for charity, but was criticized for its patronizing tone in raising money for famine relief in Africa. How did we cultivate

generosity without a feeling of superiority?

FOURTH SERMON

Advent 4 - "Mary, Did You Know?"

Luke 1:46b-55

Theme: Mary exemplifies family relationships important to Christmas. Really, Mary did know, and the expectation for the Messiah was urgent in Mary's time—just as it is for our time.

FIFTH SERMON

Christmas Eve - "All I Want For Christmas Is You"

Psalm 96

Theme: A desire for Christ in our lives helps us to celebrate Christmas more genuinely. Could we simplify our celebrations of Christmas?

Lead Creators: David Averill, Shawn Klein, Jana Hall-Perkins, Nick Lee

CHURCH ON THE MOVE

SERIES TYPE

Topical, Leadership, Vision

SERIES DESCRIPTION

The local church is often in a place of transition. This series address a few examples of how the church, a pastor, and the congregation experiences transition.

FIRST SERMON

New Roads, Same Mission

Acts 2, 1 Peter 1:3, Ezekiel 36:26

As we step onto new roads together, guided by fresh leadership and unfolding possibilities, we remain rooted in the unchanging mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

SECOND SERMON

The All New You

2 Corinthians 5:17

New Creation

Jacob is Israel

Saul is Paul

Abram and Sarai are Abraham and Sarah

Simon is Peter

We are all invited to experience the transformational work of the Holy Spirit as we prepare to move forward. In Christ, you are not just improved—you are made entirely new, just like Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah, and Saul to Paul: a new name, a new purpose, a whole new you.

THIRD SERMON

Go!

Matthew 28, Acts 1:8, Luke 14:23, Isaiah 6:8

We are not just gathered to worship within these walls—we are sent out as Christ's witnesses, empowered by His authority and accompanied by His presence, to make disciples and carry His love into every corner of the world.

FOURTH SERMON

What now God, I'm Here.

Luke 10:1–23, Genesis 12:1–9, Psalm 46:10, Joshua 22

Where God sends, God provides—our mission begins not with strength in ourselves but blocking out the chaos, listening, and trusting in the sovereignty of the One who goes before us.

Lead Creators: Sherlain Stevens, Matt White, Scott Ehler, Will Clark

LESSONS FROM THE THRONE: KING DAVID

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

What can we learn from the life of King David? Successes, failures, and faithfulness.

FIRST SERMON

Worthy, Called and Anointed

Isaiah 43:1; 1 Samuel 16:7, Ephesians 4:1

What makes one worthy of God's call? The relationship between God's anointing and equipping.

SECOND SERMON

Worshiper, Chosen by God

1 Samuel 16:15–18, 2 Samuel 6:4–22

How we worship is directly related to our call and obedience.

THIRD SERMON

Warrior. Facing Giants

1 Samuel 17

When the odds are against us, we must rely on God and act by faith.

FOURTH SERMON

Weak and Wounded

2 Samuel 11:2

Fall, Redemption, Restoration.

ADDITIONAL SERMON

This series can culminate with our acknowledgment of Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. What does it mean to be a child of God and sit at the foot of the Throne of God?

Lead Creators: Sherlain Stevens, Matt White, Scott Ehler, Will Clark

ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Throughout scripture, many animals are mentioned—sometimes great and sometimes small. In most cases, we skim past these animals as simply supporting roles, but what if we took time to see the stories of scripture through the eyes of the beasts? This series aims to center the animals in our discussion as we wrestle with important Biblical themes like God's providence, hard truths from God, God's willingness to speak to us in new ways, and creation.

FIRST SERMON

The Provisions

1 Kings 17:2–6, Matthew 14:13–21

What is it like to be the ravens who bring food to Elijah? Or even the fish that were multiplied? What we learn from the animals that are provisions to humanity is that we as Christians are often called to be the provisions to a broken world, even if it means of giving of ourselves sacrificially.

SECOND SERMON

The Messengers

Genesis 8:8–12, John 18:25–26

God uses the animals of scripture to speak to us directly - sometimes bringing good news like the dove that returns with a leaf to Noah; and sometimes bringing bad news like rooster that crows in response to Peter's denials. By paying attention to the animals as the "speakers" of God's word, God creates opportunities for us as Christians to see creation as a purveyor of the message - even if we often set aside creation as something that we should take for granted. Holy silence can allow us to hear from creation.

THIRD SERMON

The Truths

Jonah 1:17–2:10, Isaiah 11:6–9

There are times that God uses the animals to tell us truths about the world and about ourselves. In the case of Jonah, the truth is that Jonah was going the wrong way, and in Isaiah, the truth is an eschatological one about the nature of creation perfected. What does it mean for God to use the a whale or the imagery of a lion laying with a lamb to portray truth? The whale plays a role in the salvation of Jonah and Ninevah, and the lion and lamb show us what wholeness looks like.

FOURTH SERMON

The Creation We Steward

Numbers 22:28–34

Balaam's donkey is a story often not talked about beyond children's church, but the donkey can teach Christians a lot about what it means to take creation care seriously. The donkey, much like creation, is a reliable and useful tool that must be taken care of and not taken for granted. We are called to steward creation instead of taking advantage of it, or

taking rage out on it.

ADDITIONAL SERMON

The Images of God

John 1:29–31, Luke 3:21–22, Genesis 49:8–10

God is often depicted as an animal throughout scripture. The three most potent examples of this are the Lion in Genesis (God the Father), the Lamb of God in John (God the Son), and the descent of the dove on Jesus (God the Holy Spirit). These animals help us understand the characteristics of God as powerful, peaceful, and full of hope.

Lead Creators: Jana Hall-Perkins, Nick Lee, Shawn Klein, David Averill

NEW BEGINNINGS

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Change is hard and often unwelcome, but necessary for growth. Sometimes change makes space for new things. New beginnings are God's way to leading us toward needed growth and transformation.

FIRST SERMON

Embracing the Promise of Renewal

Isaiah 43:18–19, Philippians 3:13–14, 2 Corinthians 5:17

Acknowledge the significance of new beginnings in our lives. Highlight the theme of renewal and restoration found in scripture.

Recognizing God's Promises - Isaiah 43:18–19 - "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

Reflection: Letting Go of the Past - Philippians 3:13–14 - "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Application: Embracing God's Renewal - 2 Corinthians 5:17 - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

SECOND SERMON

Finding Hope in Fresh Starts

Jeremiah 29:11, Ecclesiastes 3:1, Romans 15:13

Discuss the importance of hope in the midst of change and transition. Share personal stories or examples of finding hope in new beginnings.

The Promise of Hope - Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Reflection: Trusting God's Timing - Ecclesiastes 3:1 - "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."

Application: Holding onto Hope - Romans 15:13 - "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

THIRD SERMON

Stepping Out in Faith

Hebrews 11:1, Proverbs 3:5–6, Joshua 1:9

Explore the connection between faith and embracing new beginnings. Discuss the courage required to step into the unknown.

Walking by Faith - Hebrews 11:1 - “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

Reflection: Trusting God’s Guidance - Proverbs 3:5-6 - “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Application: Boldly Embracing Change - Joshua 1:9 - “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

FOURTH SERMON

Celebrating New Beginnings

Psalm 126:1–3, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18, Psalm 118:24

Reflect on the journey of new beginnings

explored throughout the series. Encourage celebration and gratitude for God’s faithfulness.

The Joy of New Beginnings - Psalm 126:3 - “The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.”

Reflection: Giving Thanks for God’s Provision - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Application: Living with Gratitude - Psalm 118:24 - “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Lead Creator: Matt Wallis

CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD: THE HEART OF WORSHIP

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

What if prayer was more than just words?
What if prayer were a conversation; an invitation into the very heart of God?

This five week sermon series looks into what it means to pray, to truly pray, not just out of habit, but with passion, faith, and expectation.

FIRST SERMON

Called To Pray

1 Thessalonians 5:16–19, Matthew 6:5–14

In week one, we explore our calling to pray, why it matters, and how Jesus taught us to pray.

SECOND SERMON

Finding Strength in Prayer

Philippians 4:4–9

In week two, we are reminded that prayer is our source of strength, turning our worries into peace and our fears into faith.

THIRD SERMON

Persistent Prayer: The Widow and the Judge

Luke 18:1–8

In week three, we will learn the power of persistent prayer, never giving up, trusting that God hears us.

FOURTH SERMON

Listening in Prayer

Psalms 46:1–11, especially v. 10

Week four challenges us to listen, to be still, and know that He is God, discovering how he speaks when we quiet our hearts.

FIFTH SERMON

Praying for Our World

1 Timothy 2:1–6

In the final week we will lift up our world in prayer, praying for our leaders, our communities, and those who need Jesus.

Lead Creators: Scott Ehler and Sara McKinley

WHY CAN'T I...?

SERIES TYPE

Discipleship, Seeker Sensitive

SERIES DESCRIPTION

This series asks questions and addresses struggles that many Jesus seekers and followers share when it comes to practicing our faith.

Asking, "Why can't I...?" may not provide the concrete answers we seek, yet it can help us to engage with God and one another in helpful ways.

FIRST SERMON

Why Can't I "Feel" God?

Hebrews 11:1-3 (4-40)

We long for an emotional experience of God. Seek God often, Go where God is (prayer, Bible, missions...). Faith is not about feeling but believing and experiencing through practice.

SECOND SERMON

Why Can't I Stop Making the Same Mistakes?

Philippians 3:10-14

What mistakes? I'm only human. Forgiveness vs repentance, I'm Sorry vs I am transformed. Intentionally replacing bad with good. Better tomorrow than I am today.

THIRD SERMON

Why Can't I Understand the Bible?

Proverbs 4:1-9

The Bible is Weird. The language is weird, confusing design. Reading it for facts versus wisdom (Discernment). I need help (Community).

FOURTH SERMON

Why Can't I Stay Disciplined

1 Timothy 4:6-10, 13-16

Take an honest look at my relationship with Jesus (priorities). Excuses. Too many requirements (impatience). I don't know why I need to do these things (pray, fast, study, worship...). Community, Accountability, Mentorship. Acknowledge and Celebrate Growth. See *Celebration of Discipline, Special Anniversary Edition: The Path to Spiritual Growth*.

FIFTH SERMON

Why Can't I Share my testimony?

Romans 1:13-17

Reasons: pressure, inadequacy, lack of confidence, introvert, lack of experience, lack of spiritual motivation and strength. Know my Story. Practice makes Perfect (or at least moving on toward perfection)

Lead Creator: Will Clark

GIVING UP ON CHURCH

SERIES TYPE

Seeker Sensitive

SERIES DESCRIPTION

40 million Americans have walked away from the Church in the last 25 years. Why is it that people are walking away? What can the Church of the future offer differently from the Church of the past? Join us for a conversation about the values that keep us connected to what God is doing through the Church.

FIRST SERMON

Close Minded

Acts 10:9–23

Value: Opening Minds

Peter experiences a call from God that challenges him to stretch far beyond he ever imagined and do ministry with new people, in new ways. We are a church that values opening minds because we provide a safe place to vulnerably explore doubts, celebrate unique differences, and experience the wonders of God's life changing grace.

SECOND SERMON

Church Hurt

James 5:13–16, Psalm 147:3

Value: Healing Hearts

Too many people have been hurt by the Church and unfortunately this is not a new phenomenon. By faith, we are invited to experience healing rather than lashing out in pain. Because through the Church, Christ offers spiritual, emotional, and mental wholeness to those who have experienced brokenness and pain of sin in the world.

THIRD SERMON

Broken Families

Mark 3:31–35, Psalm 68:6

Value: Enriching Families

Most every family is dysfunctional in one way or another. Jesus invited his followers to redefine family in new ways. We believe in enriching families because healthy relationships between children, youth, adults, and seniors help all of us thrive as the body of Christ.

FOURTH SERMON

Stealing Joy

Luke 15:1–10, Philippians 2:18

Value: Sharing Joy

It is easy to feel despair in modern America. There are so many things that can steal our joy. God offers us the gift of joy and invites us to share it in community. We value sharing joy because we are united through our joy when we celebrate one another.

FIFTH SERMON

Lonely

Romans 15:5–11, Matthew 25:35–36

Value: Welcoming All

Statistics clearly show Americans are more lonely and unhappy than they have ever been. It also seems we are more afraid of people who are different than ever before. The Church is an antidote to loneliness because we embody the welcoming arms of Christ.

RESOURCES

I formatted this sermon series around the values at Spring of Life UMC (the Lead Creator's church), and the formula can be adapted for your church. All you need to do is connect one of your values to a reason people walk away from the church.

Lead Creator: Mike Luzinski

PULL UP: GOD COMES CLOSE

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

God is not distant. God pulls up—right into your real life, right into your mess, and right into your story. God has shown up throughout the ages in the lives of those who need God's comfort and mercy; God shows up on purpose, for you.

FIRST SERMON

The God Who Came to Be Near

John 1:1–14

“...The Word became flesh and made his home among us.”

Summary:

Jesus is proof that God doesn't sit back and watch from a distance—God shows up in the flesh, in the dirt. The incarnation is God's ultimate “pull up”—not just to save us, but to be with us where it matters the most.

Main Points:

- God is not some distant person who shouts from the sky; God shows up in skin.
- Jesus' life shows us the nearness and accessibility of God; it tells a story of a God different than all other gods in human history.
- God still shows up today in your life, too.

SECOND SERMON

God in the Feels

Psalm 34:17–22

“...The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Summary:

God is near—not when you've cleaned yourself up, but when you're falling apart, when you need God the most. If life feels too heavy, God isn't backing away, God is moving closer.

Main Points:

- Your emotions don't scare God, God has seen it before.
- God's promise to be near in sadness, anxiety, grief, and heartbreak.
- You don't have to fix your life before seeing God in it.

THIRD SERMON

God in the Subtle

1 Kings 19:11–13

...God not in the wind/fire/earthquake, but in the whisper.

Summary:

Sometimes we expect God to show up with fireworks, and we're not alone in that. God's followers have always expected God in the dramatic events. That's how God often showed up! But God often also comes in whispers, in quiet moments, in the

background. Don't miss God just because there's no noise.

Main Points:

- God isn't ALWAYS dramatic—God can speak in the quiet and gentle, stillness.
- We have to slow down! Slowness, stillness, and silence help us notice God's presence.
- Faith isn't about constant hype—it's about attention. The church may need to be the group to hear this the most.

Illustration:

The phone is the loudest voice in our lives, and its distractions keep us from focusing, showing attention, and experiencing stillness. Maybe it's time we rid ourselves from our phones?

FOURTH SERMON

God Pulls Up Through Them

Colossians 3:16

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly...”

Summary:

God often shows up through the people around us—through friends who listen,

mentors who care, and community that reminds us of what's true. God uses people to embody God's presence.

Main Points:

- God works through real relationships. Community is important!
- Christian community is a different type of community, with a different goal.
- You're also how God pulls up for someone else. Be aware of how you're interacting in another person's life.
- Don't miss the people around you. They're doing God's work in your life.

Lead Creator: Bryant Manning

THE FOUR ALLS OF SALVATION

SERIES TYPE

Discipleship, Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

This series presents Wesley's Via Salutis faithfully to the Biblical text, yet it also offers Wesleyan theology through the easy-to-understand rubric from British Methodists called the "Four Alls".

FIRST SERMON

All Need To Be Saved (Sin)

Romans 3:21–26

Bumper: <https://youtu.be/pvzIfqtfJ2s>

SECOND SERMON

All Can Be Saved (Prevenient Grace)

1 Timothy 2:1–7

Bumper: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjuD_5Ate6E

THIRD SERMON

All Can Know They Are Saved (Justifying Grace, Assurance, Salvation)

Hebrews 11:1–3

Bumper: <https://youtu.be/unFwBJEwSyw>

FOURTH SERMON

All Can Know They Are Saved (Justifying Grace, Assurance, Salvation)

1 Thessalonians 5:23–24

Bumper: <https://youtu.be/Dl6EP-ePy4s?si=ae0xO-1uFFdCuUuw>

RESOURCES

This theme will counter the harmful influence of Hyper-Calvinist Theology among North American Protestants, particularly popular in non-denominational and Baptist circles.

Considering anti-racism as sanctification, a fact about Hyper-Calvinism must be named. Hyper-Calvinism is all about exclusion to make a specific group of people feel superior in their standing before God. Hyper-Calvinism provides misleading theological support for Christian nationalism and white supremacists movements. Two egregious, historical examples of how this became a lived reality were in the Antebellum American South with the issue of slavery and South Africa during Apartheid with the huge influence of Afrikaner Calvinism.

On the other hand, Wesleyan-Arminianism highlights the inclusive need of all God's children for the grace of God, the grace of God can change us all for the better. Historically, this is why Methodism was so well received by Black religious leaders in the 1800s like Bishop Richard Allen, one

of the founders of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. These Black leaders knew this was the full gospel, even if the white Methodists of the time excluded them from the church due to the structural influence of racism as part of America's original, collective sin of slavery and enslavement of primarily African-descended peoples for over 400 years against their will and without considering their God-given worth as children of God.

This God-given potential for change and redemption for all humanity through the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ is the "grand deposit of Methodism" that John Wesley preached through word and deed in leading the Methodist revival movement in its early stages. Wesley's "way of salvation" (via salutis) describes our journey of growing closer to God in steps of receiving prevenient grace, justifying grace, and sanctifying grace. The Methodist way of salvation has inspired generations of United Methodists. An inclusive view of salvation by God's grace leads us to transform the world because we believe everyone has a chance to be redeemed by God, and everyone has a sacred

worth to be redeemed by God. This is the full gospel that needs to be preached in this series.

Comparison of Calvinism versus Wesleyan-Arminianism:

At the Synod of Dort in 1619, Dutch Calvinists ruled against the beliefs of Remonstrants. Calvinists followed Theodore Beza's teaching on double predestination. Beza was a student of the Protestant Reformer John Calvin. Remonstrants followed Jacob Arminius' teaching on free will. Arminius was another student of John Calvin. Since then, the debate between the Calvinists and Remonstrants in Holland has shaped the conversation across many Protestant denominations concerning the nature of salvation through Christ. In fact, a branch of theology known as soteriology (meaning "study of salvation" in Greek) has dealt extensively with the points of dispute at the Synod of Dort for over 400 years.

TULIP is an acronym that represents the Five Points of Calvinism as formulated at the Synod of Dort. TULIP was first mentioned by Cleland McAfee in 1905 at a lecture to

other Presbyterian ministers in Newark, NJ. In contrast, the Four Alls is a theological shorthand for Wesleyan-Arminianism, developed by W.B. Fitzgerald in the Roots of Methodism (1903). Both sides of the debate refer to the Bible. Wesleyans emphasize God's grace while Calvinists emphasize God's Sovereignty. Historically, the emphasis on God's grace has led to more effective sharing of the Gospel, and has led Methodists to engage in ministry with the poor and marginalized of society to a greater degree than Calvinists.

1) Total Depravity (Ephesians 2:1-6)

The Image of God is shattered by sin. Only Christ can regenerate it.

Key Doctrine: Original Sin
(Chapter 6)

Versus

All Need to Be Saved (Romans 3:23).

The Image of God is tarnished by sin. Christ can restore us to our intended purpose.

Key Doctrines: Original Sin, The Image of God

(MC Article VII, Sermon 44: Original Sin,

Sermon 45: The New Birth)

2) Unconditional Election (John 15:16)

God has chosen whom He will save, and whom he will condemn. God's election prior to our actions is not dependent on our choices or free will (double predestination).

Key Doctrine: Predestination

(Chapter 3)

Versus

All Can Be Saved (1 Timothy 2:4).

God foreknows who He will save, but determines their salvation based on the faith in Christ of an individual.

Key Doctrine: Prevenient Grace (MC Article VIII, EUB Article VII, Sermon 3, Sermon 46)

3) Limited Atonement (John 10:11)

Christ died only for the elect, meaning those He knew would be His Sheep in advance.

Key Doctrines: Atonement, Justification

(Chapter 8, Chapter 11)

Versus

All Can Be Saved (Romans 5:6–8)

Christ died to atone for the sins of the whole

world, both those who would accept Him as Savior and those who would reject Him.

Key Doctrines: Atonement (MC Article XX, EUB Article VIII), Justifying Grace (MC Article IX, EUB Article IX, Sermon 5)

4) Irresistible Grace (John 6:44)

God's effectual calling to the elect cannot be resisted. If it is resisted, the calling was not effectual from the start.

Key Doctrine: Election (Chapter 10)

Versus

All Can Know They Are Saved (Hebrews 11:1)

God's grace can be rejected. However, once someone accepts God's offer of grace in their life, they can feel through faith in Christ that they are assured of their salvation.

Key Doctrine: Assurance (Sermon 7, Sermon 17)

5) Perseverance of the Saints (Revelation 14:12–13)

Once saved, always saved.

Key Doctrines: Perseverance of the Saints (Chapter 17)

Versus

All Can Know They Are Saved to the Uttermost (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

It is possible to become perfectly aligned with God's will in our lifetime by God's grace.

Key Doctrines: Sanctifying Grace

(EUB Article XI, Sermon 18), Christian Perfection (Sermon 40)

Note: Chapters under TULIP refer to "The Westminster Confession of Faith". Articles refer to the Articles of Religion for The Methodist Church and the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren, established as church doctrine since 1968. Both documents remain permanently in The United Methodist Church's *Book of Discipline* as a part of the Doctrine and Standards of the UMC's Constitution. Both are based on the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religions found in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662). Sermons refer to John Wesley's 52 "Standard Sermons" assigned to preachers on the circuits of Britain and the North American frontier in the late 1700s and early 1800s.

Lead Creator: David Averill

QUESTIONS GOD ASKED

SERIES TYPE

Topical, Seeker Sensitive

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Throughout scripture, God asks a number of questions. While we believe that there are no questions God doesn't have answers to, we can learn a lot from those questions. Throughout the course of six weeks, we'll examine some of these questions.

FIRST SERMON

Where are you?

Genesis 3:1-9

The question "where are you?" is one that is deeply relational. God knew where Adam and Eve were hiding, but the question that God asks is one in which God is looking for the wayward soul who has walked away. God still asks this question to us today, calling us into deeper relationship with the divine.

SECOND SERMON

Where were you?

Job 38:1-11

God confronts Job and his friends for making assumptions about how mercy and justice work. The assumption that Job's situation was due to his own sin is counted as sin by God. The question, "where were you when the foundations of the world were laid?" is a call to humility.

THIRD SERMON

Whom Shall I Send?

Isaiah 6:8-13

God calls out with the question "whom

shall I send?" with great expectation of our response. When we see injustice in the world, God is asking this very question, and the expectation is our response. Jesus Christ has no hands or feet on earth but ours.

FOURTH SERMON

Son of Man, Can These Bones Live?

Ezekiel 37:1-14

In the midst of grand devastation, God turns to Ezekiel and asks the question, "can these bones live?" We know they can live, but the most profound part of this question and scripture is the implication that God has invited us to be co-laborers in the process of resurrection. God awaits Ezekiel and our responses.

FIFTH SERMON

Where are they?

John 8:2-11

There are days where we need to be reminded that God forgives us and reminds us that the world cannot render meaningful judgement. There are also days where we are the ones holding the stones and are told to

drop them because we too are with sin. The Christian life calls us away from judgement of others.

SIXTH SERMON

Why have you forsaken me?

Mark 15:33–41

Jesus cries out from the cross, and we do a disservice to Jesus when we insist this is just the beginning of a psalm of praise. Jesus experienced real pain just as we do, and James Cone's *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* lays out that when Christ suffers, we can take heart, not because of the suffering, but because we worship a God who suffers and walks alongside those who are oppressed.

Lead Creator: Shawn Klein

FIRST LOVE

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

We have all experienced love in our lives. Love is a powerful motivator and inspires us to do things we never imagined we could. However, cultivating love requires discipline to help it flourish. #First Love examines the practices necessary to deepen our love for God and our neighbors.

FIRST SERMON

First Love

Revelation 2:1-7

The church in Ephesus is currently in a state of good standing, with commendable qualities such as patience, intolerance towards evil, and a steadfast dedication to righteousness. Despite these positive attributes, there exists a critical issue that cannot be overlooked. The fervent love that once burned brightly within their community has gradually diminished over time. This decline in love is not merely a minor concern, but rather a warning sign of potential downfall if left unaddressed.

As we embark on the journey to reignite the flame of their initial love, it is essential to delve deeper into the significance of love within the church. Love is not merely an emotion or a fleeting feeling, but a foundational principle that binds believers together in unity and strength. Without love, the very essence of their faith and community is at risk of crumbling.

This week marks the beginning of a crucial quest to rediscover and revitalize the

love that once fueled their passion and commitment. Through introspection, prayer, and intentional actions, the church in Ephesus has the opportunity to restore the love that is essential for its spiritual well-being and continued growth.

SECOND SERMON

Conversations Expand Our Love!

Jeremiah 29:11-14, Matthew 6:5-15

Building a strong relationship with God is a journey that requires time, effort, and communication. Just as we invest time in getting to know a loved one better through conversations and quality time spent together, our relationship with God also flourishes when we make prayer a priority.

Prayer is not just a one-way street where we express our needs and desires to God. It is a two-way conversation where we open our hearts to Him and also listen for His guidance, wisdom, and presence in our lives. Through prayer, we create a space for God to speak to us, comfort us, and reveal His will for our lives.

When we engage in prayer regularly,

we deepen our faith and strengthen our connection with God. It becomes a sacred time where we can be vulnerable, honest, and open with our Creator. As we pour out our hearts to Him, we also allow Him to work in us, transforming us from the inside out.

Prayer is a powerful tool that helps us restore our love for God, especially when we feel distant or disconnected. It reminds us of His constant presence, unconditional love, and unwavering faithfulness. Through prayer, we can renew our commitment to God, surrender our worries and fears, and trust in His perfect plan for our lives.

In essence, prayer is the key to nurturing a deep, intimate relationship with God. It is a spiritual discipline that requires dedication, consistency, and faith. As we prioritize prayer in our daily lives, we will experience a profound sense of peace, joy, and fulfillment that comes from being in communion with our Heavenly Father.

THIRD SERMON

Let Love Sing!

Psalms 100 & Psalms 63

Worship is not just a routine or a tradition; it is a profound act of love and surrender towards God. When we engage in worship, we are presenting ourselves as living sacrifices, laying down our desires and ambitions at the feet of our Creator. Through our praises, we are not only glorifying God but also acknowledging His greatness and expressing our gratitude for all that He has done for us.

Just as in any relationship, gratitude plays a crucial role in deepening our connection with God. When we offer our thanks and praise, we are not only showing our love for God but also reminding ourselves of the blessings and goodness that He has poured into our lives. The act of worship is a powerful tool that helps us grow closer to God, regardless of the circumstances we may find ourselves in.

The psalmist understood the importance of worship in both times of joy and times of struggle. It is through worship that we can find solace, strength, and comfort in God's presence. Our worship shapes us into the people God intended us to be, molding our character and transforming our hearts to

reflect His love and grace.

This week, let us delve deeper into the beauty of worship and explore new ways to express our love and devotion to God. Let us open our hearts and minds to the richness of worship, allowing it to strengthen our faith and draw us closer to the One who loves us unconditionally.

FOURTH SERMON

Staying in Love takes work.

Matthew 22:34-40, Joshua 22:5, John 15:9-17

As we reflect on the concept that love requires effort, it becomes clear that, just like tending to a garden, love demands our attention and intentionality. Much like how we nurture our gardens with care and diligence, we must also invest time and energy into cultivating our relationships, especially our relationship with Jesus.

The scriptures serve as a guide, reminding us to stay connected to Jesus and to express our love for God through prayer and worship. By prioritizing our spiritual connection and nurturing it with love and devotion, we are better equipped to extend that love to others

around us.

Throughout this sermon series, we have explored the importance of returning to our first love, emphasizing the need for ongoing effort to sustain and deepen that love. It is through this intentional effort that we can grow in our love for God and those in our lives, fostering stronger and more meaningful relationships.

Let us embrace the call to love with purpose and dedication, understanding that love, like a flourishing garden, requires consistent care and attention to thrive and bear fruit in our lives.

Lead Creator: Nicholas Lee



WORDS OF LIFE

SERIES TYPE

Books of the Bible, Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

The church seems to always have some trouble, how do we stay together and flourish during times of struggle and growing unease? Paul sent this letter to the Thessalonian church after hearing of their flourishing through a time of cruelty and mistreatment. We find hope and inspiration for our times as we open our hearts to these “Words of Life”.

FIRST SERMON

Word of Mouth

1 Thessalonians 1:8–10

There is a war of words always being waged around us. Who is right? Who is truthful? The truest and best way for any group to build goodwill with their neighbors is through word of mouth. What are people saying about the children of God? Our words are important, but more telling are the words of our neighbors. Especially in times of fearsome trouble we use our truthful words so that people can say about us, “wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God” (1:8)

SECOND SERMON

Backed Up Words

1 Thessalonians 2:3–13

There is a constant slurry of words splashing and squelching around us. We have normalized the idea that many, most, of the words coming our way cannot be trusted. Someone is constantly seeking to persuade us, push us, even polarize us. We offer words that are backed up the the reliable reality

that God’s love in action. We don’t just say loving things. We live loving lives. Especially in times of fearsome trouble we use our reliable words to reveal that “We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God’s Good News but our own lives, too.” (2:8).

THIRD SERMON

Put in a Good Word

1 Thessalonians 3:1–8

Like prey animals assuming there are threats and perils all around, many groups stay on edge, ears up to the air listening for the next whisper (or shout!) of bad news. Paul writes that trouble is predictable. He confesses he was worried and even fearful that the church had fallen apart. The joy that Timothy returns and is able to put in a good word about their endurance brings Paul life and joy. Especially in times of fearsome trouble we use our words to share the good news of overcoming so that all people may be “...greatly encouraged in the midst of our troubles and suffering” (3:7).

FOURTH SERMON

Words of Love

1 Thessalonians 4:9–12

Jesus made it clear that we are called to love each other. Most churches know this. Paul shares that assumption and then he urges them (and us) to love even more. We are never done—we’ve never achieved the standard of loving that our neighbors need. What does that love look like? It looks like sharing words of love as we live patient and quiet lives with our neighbors. Especially in times of fearsome trouble we use our words to live well so “...people who are not believers will respect the way [we] live...” (4:12).

caring. Especially in times of fearsome trouble we use our words to “do good to each other and to all people” (5:15).

Lead Creator: W. Ryan Hall

FIFTH SERMON

Last Words

1 Thessalonians 5:12–22

Last words are the remembered words. They seal up the and provide a lasting impression. In Paul’s last words in this letter he’s instructing us to use our words to encourage and bless. Rather than using words to prod the lazy into action, or drag the weak into feats of strength, our words show our patient

STEWARDSHIP: GIVING GOD YOUR VERY BEST!

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

This Stewardship Series is designed to encourage people to give their very best time, talents, and treasures to the Lord. It can be used to kick off an annual Stewardship Campaign.

FIRST SERMON

Time: 168 Hours

SECOND SERMON

Talents: You have Special Gifts and Talents

THIRD SERMON

Treasures: Honoring God

FOURTH SERMON

Dedicating All for the Glory of God

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL SERMON

Can add Dedication or Pledge Sunday and have several lay people share.

Lead Creator: Matt White

WALKING WITH NEHEMIAH: YOUR COMMUNITY IS YOUR CONGREGATION

SERIES TYPE

Books of the Bible, Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Sermon Series curated by Jana Hall-Perkins based on the book *Walking With Nehemiah: Your Community is your Congregation* by Rev. Joseph W. Daniels, Jr., the appointed pastor of Emory Fellowship: A United Methodist Congregation in Washington, D.C.

The sermon series pairs the book of Nehemiah with the process of viewing the community as your congregation and mission field; the streets as your sanctuary; and the back alleys as avenues of God's grace.

FIRST SERMON

Feel the Heartbreak

Nehemiah 1:1-4

In this Biblical text, people from Judah bring Nehemiah the news about the brokenness back home in Jerusalem. Nehemiah's heart broke. He mourned, prayed and fasted before responding to the news. For whom or for what does our heart ache and break in our community? This may be where and with whom God wants to build and use our ministry. This may be a great time to host listening sessions to hear the stories of what breaks the hearts of those in your community.

SECOND SERMON

Pray For Next Steps

Nehemiah 1:5-11

Nehemiah prays to the "God of heaven, who keeps covenant with God's people." Nehemiah asks for forgiveness and prays for guidance and success. How might we pray for our next steps?" This might be a great time to host a church-wide or community prayer meeting or gathering.

THIRD SERMON

Give It Your All

Nehemiah 1:10-11

Nehemiah gets to the space spiritually where he is ready to give it his all! How can we be united and "all in" on joining the work of God in our community? What does being "all in" look like?

FOURTH SERMON

Inspect Your Mission Field

Nehemiah 2:11-16

Nehemiah travels to Jerusalem and inspects the mission field. How might we respond to the breaking of our hearts and the next steps God has revealed in prayer? How might we go out into our communities to listen, to see, to understand the needs around us? This might be a great time to literally get out and walk the surrounding community, getting to know neighbors and paying attention to what is observed.

FIFTH SERMON

Get To Work!

Nehemiah 3:13–15

Nehemiah gathers the willing volunteers and together they begin the work of repairing parts of Jerusalem. How might we get to work on the mission of our church? How might we get to work on meeting the specific needs of our community? This is not rhetorical or theoretical. This might be a great time to invite the congregation into the literal doing of whatever has been identified in weeks 1-4. Start the food pantry, serve the meals, volunteer at the local school, host the packing party to pack care bags for youth in foster care, start the Fresh Expression, etc.

SIXTH SERMON

Build Momentum In The Mission

Nehemiah 4:13–15

Nehemiah faces opposition. However, he organizes the volunteers and encourages them to keep going. How can we build momentum in whatever mission God is calling us to live into? How do we keep the great work going long-term?

RESOURCES

<https://www.amazon.com/Walking-Nehemiah-Your-Community-Congregation/dp/1426781938/>

Lead Creators: Jana Hall-Perkins; Joseph W. Daniels, Jr.

HOPE IN A TIME OF CRISIS

SERIES TYPE

Lectionary, Lent/Easter, Topical, Justice

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Inspired by the book, *Love's Braided Dance: Hope in a Time of Crisis* by Norman Wirzba.

FIRST SERMON

When God Calls You Forward

Judges 4:5–10 & Luke 9:28–43

Looking at Deborah as a Moses-like figure.

SECOND SERMON

Spirit-Wrought Life: From Dry Bones to New Birth

Ezekiel 37:1–14 & John 3:1–8

We must rise up and be alive in the Spirit.

THIRD SERMON

Yet Even Now

Romans 8:18–25 & Luke 8:40–55

It is our moment to claim the faith of Jesus in the face of rising hatred.

FOURTH SERMON

The Ways and Means of God

Isaiah 55:1–9 & Acts 27:27–38

The ways and means of God are not our ways, they are higher, and we are called to a higher way.

FIFTH SERMON

Daughters Who Dared: Reimagining What Belongs to Us

Numbers 27:1–11 & Luke 10:38–42

We have an inheritance, and we have a right to claim it.

RESOURCES

Love's Braided Dance: Hope in a Time of Crisis by Norman Wirzba

Lead Creator: Rushing Kimball

TEMPTATION: RESIST OR SUCCUMB

SERIES TYPE

Discipleship

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Each day we face various situations which tests our integrity. To resist or succumb to temptation is all a part of the sanctification journey. Let this sermon series help members strengthen their desire to trust in the Lord and avoid temptation.

FIRST SERMON

Standing at the Precipice

Amos 5:24, Matthew 5:6–9

At pivotal moments, we face choices that shape our lives. As followers of Christ, we yearn for decisions that renew joy and revive hope, while striving to honor God's glory—though this is often easier said than done.

SECOND SERMON

Temptation: To Resist or Succumb

Psalms 27:7–10, Matthew 1:9–15

Temptation is inherent to the disciple's journey. In these moments, we are called to choose in alignment with God's word, even when such decisions are unpopular, challenging, or unsatisfying. Our choices ultimately reveal our character, integrity, and relationship with God.

THIRD SERMON

A Clean Heart

Psalms 51:1–13, Philippians 3:17–4:1

Temptation is inherent to the disciple's journey. In these moments, we are called to choose in alignment with God's word,

even when such decisions are unpopular, challenging, or unsatisfying. Our choices ultimately reveal our character, integrity, and relationship with God.

FOURTH SERMON

I Will Trust in the Lord

Jeremiah 17:5–10, 2 Corinthians 5:7

Trust forms the foundation of all relationships, and it is especially vital in our relationship with God. In faith, we are called to trust in what we cannot see, experiencing the transformative benefits of complete reliance on God. This sermon explores three profound ways in which completely trusting God can lead to a life of spiritual transformation.

Lead Creator: Pamela Green

LET US PRAY

SERIES TYPE

Topical

SERIES DESCRIPTION

This sermon series is divided in three parts. The first one answers the questions “What is prayer?” The second one instructs believers on how to pray. Lastly, the third and final sermon gives us the key to ensuring our prayers are answered.

FIRST SERMON

Prayer: More than Talking.

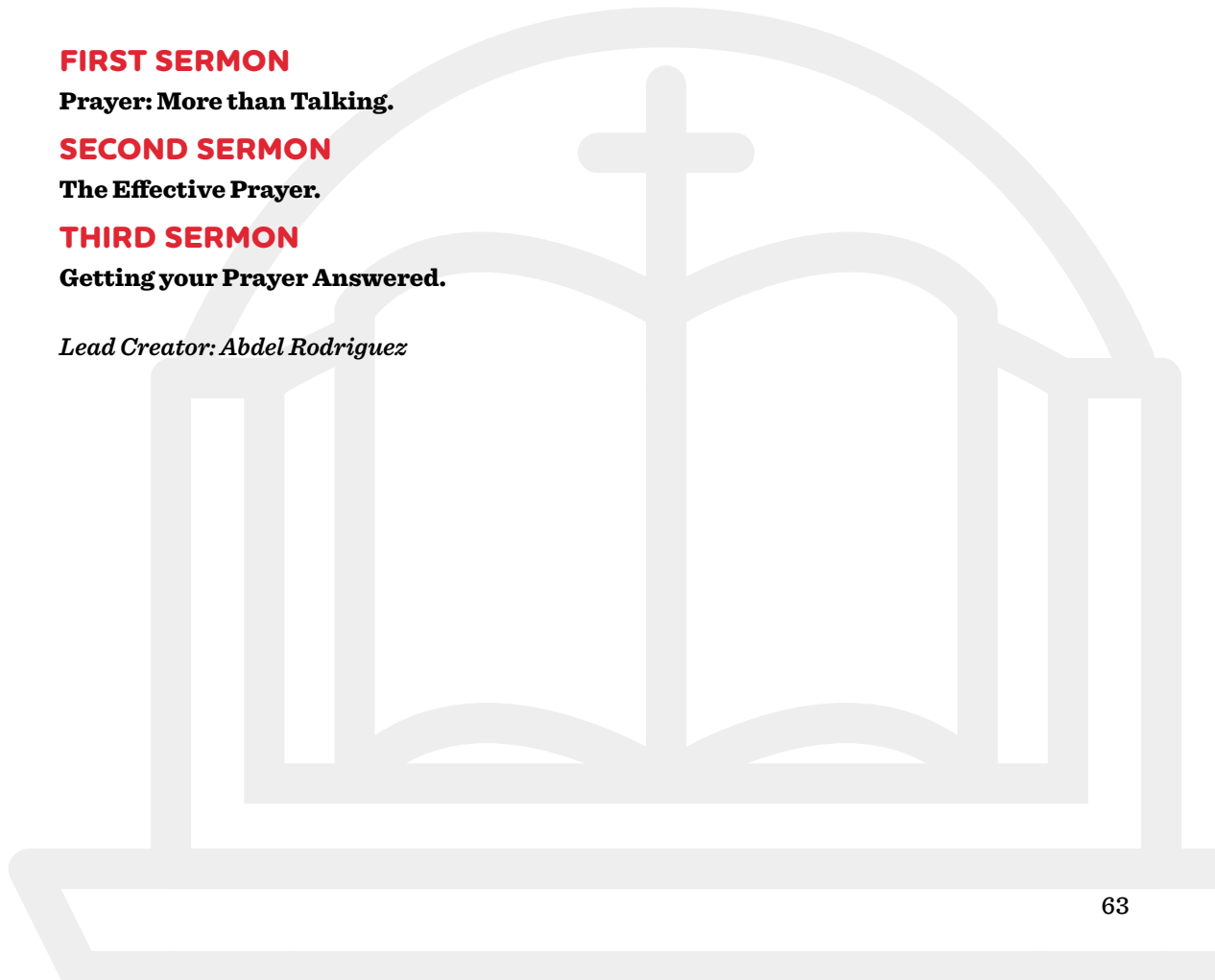
SECOND SERMON

The Effective Prayer.

THIRD SERMON

Getting your Prayer Answered.

Lead Creator: Abdel Rodriguez



THE W.O.R.D.

SERIES TYPE

Discipleship

SERIES DESCRIPTION

The word of God is the primary source for Christians to understand God's character, personality and learn to hear God's voice. Biblical literacy is in decline, this sermon series is a reminder of the importance for believers to connect to the source and learn about God.

FIRST SERMON

The W.O.R.D.

John 1:1-5 and Psalm 119:105

The Word of God is the primary source for understanding God. Jesus is the living Word, made flesh. The Word is life giving, and restores us to life. The Word gives light and guides us out of darkness, and illuminates us to light the way, and the world for others.

SECOND SERMON

The Word gives Wisdom

Proverbs 3:13-18 and James 3:13-18

There is a difference between godly wisdom and worldly knowledge. We live in a time of information overload, opportunities to gain knowledge and education. However decisions made and directions taken adversely impact lives. We godly wisdom.

THIRD SERMON

The Word teaches Obedience

Exodus 19:5-6

The Great Commandment and Great Commission are key directives from God's for the Church. We have repeatedly failed to

be obedient. We have not loved God, failed to love our neighbors as ourselves. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, as an example.

FOURTH SERMON

The Word provides Revelation and gives Direction

Consistent engagement and meditation on Scripture overtime provides us with insights and understanding for life, which then provides us with the wisdom and understanding for decisions and direction in life. We are better able to navigate life.

Lead Creator: Sherlain Stevens

CALLED TO FOLLOW: A JOURNEY OF DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES TYPE

Lent/Easter, Discipleship

SERIES DESCRIPTION

In our scriptures we have stories of some of the most amazing people in history. Have you ever wondered how they got to the positions they did? In this series will be looking at the life and transformation of some of the Hero's of our faith.

FIRST SERMON

The Call of Abraham – Trusting in the Unknown

Genesis 12:1–9

Focus: Abraham's call to leave his homeland demonstrates God's prevenient grace, drawing him into relationship and trust.

Faith Growth: Abraham's faith grew as he witnessed God's faithfulness in fulfilling promises (e.g., the birth of Isaac).

Trust deepened through obedience, even in difficult moments like the command to sacrifice Isaac.

Faith becomes stronger when we step out into the unknown and see God provide.

Reflection Question: How has stepping out in faith strengthened your trust in God?

SECOND SERMON

Moses – Empowered for a Mission

Exodus 3:1–12

Focus: Moses' call reveals God's justifying grace, empowering him to confront Pharaoh and lead Israel despite his insecurities.

Faith Growth: Moses's faith matured as he

witnessed God's power through the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, and manna in the wilderness.

Reliance on God grew as Moses learned to lead with humility and trust God's provision.

Reflection Question: How has God stretched your faith through challenges and opportunities to lead?

THIRD SERMON

Ruth – Loyalty in Discipleship

Ruth 1:16–18

Focus: Ruth's decision to follow Naomi and trust in the God of Israel highlights sanctifying grace shaping her character.

Faith Growth: Ruth's faith grew as she experienced God's provision through Boaz's kindness and her inclusion in the covenant community.

Her trust in God's care led her to become part of the lineage of Jesus, showing how discipleship impacts generations.

Reflection Question: How has loyalty to God and others helped your faith deepen?

FOURTH SERMON

Samuel – Listening to God’s Voice

1 Samuel 3:1–10

Focus: Samuel’s call demonstrates the importance of attentiveness to God’s voice in the life of a disciple.

Faith Growth: Samuel grew in faith as he consistently sought God’s guidance and became a trusted prophet for Israel.

His obedience in delivering God’s messages, even when difficult, strengthened his relationship with God.

Reflection Question: How has listening for God’s voice helped you grow in your faith journey?

FIFTH SERMON

Peter – From Fisherman to Rock

Matthew 4:18–22; John 21:15–17

Focus: Peter’s journey reflects God’s transformative power and the role of grace in discipleship.

Faith Growth: Peter’s faith deepened as he witnessed Jesus’ miracles, teachings, and resurrection.

Through failure (e.g., denying Jesus) and restoration (John 21), Peter learned to rely on God’s grace rather than his own strength.

Reflection Question: How have failures in your life been opportunities for growth in faith?

SIXTH SERMON

Mary Magdalene – A Witness to Resurrection

John 20:11–18

Focus: Mary’s call to proclaim the resurrection highlights discipleship’s role in sharing the good news.

Faith Growth: Mary’s faith grew as she moved from grief to joy through her encounter with the risen Christ.

Her boldness in proclaiming the resurrection demonstrates how personal encounters with Jesus deepen trust and commitment.

Reflection Question: How has encountering Jesus in a personal way grown your faith?

SEVENTH SERMON

Paul – From Persecutor to Proclaimer

Acts 9:1–19

Focus: Paul’s conversion exemplifies how God’s grace transforms even the hardest hearts for His purposes.

Faith Growth: Paul’s faith deepened through his suffering for the gospel (2 Corinthians 12:9–10) and his reliance on God’s strength.

His understanding of grace and righteousness grew as he preached and wrote to build up the early church.

Reflection Question: How has God used your past to shape your faith and calling?

EIGHTH SERMON

Jesus – The Ultimate Example of Discipleship

Philippians 2:5–11

Focus: Jesus models perfect discipleship through humility, obedience, and self-sacrifice.

Faith Growth: Though fully God, Jesus' human obedience to the Father demonstrates perfect trust and surrender, even unto death.

His faithfulness calls us to grow in love, humility, and trust in God's ultimate plan.

Reflection Question: How can following Jesus' example help you grow in your faith and discipleship?

Lead Creator: Matthew Findley

