



Connect Share Explore

Traditional Worship • September 2

- Prayer Concerns: Russell Kincheloe
- Today's Sanctuary flowers given by Phil & Suzanne Jamison to the glory of God in honor of their 55th wedding anniversary.
- Today's choral selections are provided by the Temple Choir under the direction of Don Travis. Organist: Barbara Waite.
- Ushers (2): Kathy Zelle, captain; Chuck Taylor, Warren Heinsohn, Jack Buttrum, Ed Ancona, Thornton Patberg (balcony), Margo Borre (balcony)
- Ushers (9): Greg & Linda Stilwell, captains; Chuck Taylor, Jacque Hardin, Nelson & Joyse Rivers
- Greeters (2): Sue Anderson, Patricia Helm, Nancy Hughes
- Greeters (9): Marty Van Stone, Wanda Erwin, Carla Bolin

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

"Deck Thyself. My Soulness With Gladness" by J. Brahms

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: God said, "Six days shall you labor,"

People: "But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord."

Leader: Jesus said, "Come to me, all who are weary,"

People: "And I will give you rest."

Leader: We come to rest from our labors this day, so that all other days, we can give rest to the world.

People: Let us rest in the worship of God.

CHORAL INTROIT

"Fill My Cup, Lord" by Richard Blanchard

*CHIMES & SERVICES OF LIGHT

*FIRST HYMN #64

"Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty"

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Please turn to those around you and pass the peace of Christ.

CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us listen for God in the silence.

PASTORAL PRAYER

GIVING OFFERING

"If Thou But Suffer God To Guide Thee" by P. Manz

*DOXOLOGY *the congregation stands as the Ushers return the offering to the Altar.*

#94 in Hymnal

ANTHEM

"In Remembrance" by Buryl Red

KIDZ MOMENT

SCRIPTURE READING

James 1:26-27

²⁶Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.

²⁷Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE TFWS #2203

"In His Time"

MESSAGE *by Pastor JillAnn Knonenborg*

Share: Everyone Serves

So for the past few weeks we've been talking about the vision that our church council and other church leaders have discerned for Methodist Temple. It's not a vision for adding to the building or a capital campaign or anything like that. It's a vision of how God is calling Methodist Temple to do what we do. The why of what we do. There are lots of churches in Evansville, in fact there are a lot of United Methodist churches in Evansville, and all of them have the same mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. That's the mission statement of the United Methodist Church all over the world. What we're talking about is the unique way that God wants Methodist Temple to do that work. Each congregation has its role to play. So what is ours? And what we've discerned together is that we are called to be a safe, healthy community where people can connect with one another, share their gifts through service, and explore the Christian faith. We connect, share, and explore. Today I'm going to get a little bit deeper into what we mean by sharing our gifts and what it might mean for your life.

Will you pray with me? Gracious God, as I strive to deliver your message this morning may you increase and we decrease. For it is written that only in giving up our lives will we find them.

I want you to take a moment and think back to high school. This will be a shorter trip down memory lane for some than for others. I was talking a member of the youth group to a couple of weeks ago. I asked her if she had seen one of the church's Facebook events and was she going to go to it? And she said 'oh nobody uses Facebook anymore.' And I said I use Facebook. And she said, 'Oh I'm sorry. I meant young people don't use Facebook anymore.' All of 25 and I'm already over the hill.

I want you to think back to high school and I want you to think about all the classes that you took. There were some classes that were required for every student. Everybody took freshman English. Everybody took algebra. Right. And at least as of 10 years ago we called those your core courses. If you didn't pass your core courses, you hadn't earned a high school diploma. Other classes were called electives because you could elect to take them or not. They were optional classes that you took if you liked the topic. I think shop or drama or sociology. You needed to take some electives, but it didn't matter which ones. You just picked the ones that you liked. A lot of Christians treat service to the poor as an elective on our discipleship journey. We only need to serve the weak and the vulnerable if we're good at it or we like doing it. Sometimes we act like reading the Bible, showing up for worship, & giving money, those are the non-negotiable core courses for a Jesus follower. We can sign the work of mercy and justice to pastors and missionaries and people who get paid for it.

But service to the poor is not an elective. Service to the poor is a required course for anyone who claims that Jesus is Lord of their life. By service, to be clear, I mean freely offering our time, our energies and ourselves. We can choose to serve our own egos. We can choose to serve a person we idolize. Or we can do what Jesus did and serve the least of these. When we were baptized, service to the poor was added to our list of core courses for life. The letter of James, which Kerry just read from, was written by Jesus's half brother. Normally, in the Bible the letters are named after the person or church who is supposed to receive the letter, but in a few cases, like James, it's named after the sender because it was a general public letter intended for anybody to read.

James's main concern throughout his letter seems to be that our actions should match our words. He notices that a lot of his fellow early Christians claim to love Jesus and to love people, but they don't act like it. They talk a big game, but then the turnaround and ignore their poor and downcast neighbors, or worse they look down on them as less than. Service to the poor, James tells us, is not an elective. He says that true religion is to care for the orphan and the widow. Throughout the Bible, orphans and widows are referred to as a sort of catch all term for the most vulnerable members of society- the people who have nothing going for them. In a world where men made all the money and owned all the land, a woman without a husband or a child without a father would probably starve to death. From the first books of the Old Testament, all the way through revelation at the end of the New Testament, God's greatest concern is that orphans and widows are protected. God demands that the poor be provided for even when it means cutting into profits or inconveniencing the better off.

An example: The law required that farmers leave the edges of their fields unharvested so that anyone who was hungry could come and pick some free food. And when the prophets railed against kings and high priests, it was because they feasted while widows and orphans starved. It's not a coincidence that so many of the women who Jesus healed, the young man who Jesus raised from the dead, were widows and orphans. He understood that his first obligation was to them. The church that James writes to has forgotten all that. They prefer to be, as James puts it, stained by the world, to hoard money, to only hang out with impressive people, to climb the ladder of success. Ironically, the very same things that make them respectable in the eyes of the world are the things that defile them in the eyes of God.

We Christians have had a lot to say over the years about purity, but making bad choices in relationships, suffering from addiction, being unemployed- these things don't disgust God though they certainly do make him weep. What disgusts God is when people who have everything share nothing because service is not an elective. So what is this true religion that James talks about? True faithfulness to God, according to Jesus's brother, means caring for the orphan and the widow in your midst. No matter if you like doing it or if you're great at it. No matter if the world thinks that orphans and widows don't deserve to be served. Of course, in our society today many widows and orphans suffer as much as they did in ancient days. But I invite you to think about who else who in our community right here in Vanderburgh County has the most need with nothing to offer in return?

True Religion means acting in the interest of the vulnerable and the marginalized even when that contradicts our self interest. Religiosity that makes God rejoice means going to the scary, ugly places in the world and discovering that they are filled with flawed, beautiful people, and then you get down on your knees and you wash their feet because you are their servant. You are alive for their benefit. In other words, true religion is exactly what Jesus Christ did for you. No one else can pay that forward on your behalf. It is your class to take.

Why is service required for everybody? For a long time I thought we were supposed to serve the poor because that showed we were worthy to go to heaven after we died. If God tells you to do something, you better do it if you don't want to end up in the hot place. But Jesus's life in the words of scripture show us that there's so much more to it than that. We don't serve the poor to earn fire insurance. It's not about us at all. We serve the poor because that was why God called us into his family in the first place. God wanted us to be a part of the people who are supposed to change the world.

God's great project is not just sorting people into Heaven or Hell. God has told us that He wants to transform the world we are standing on right now. We pray every single Sunday. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Each day God is working through us to remake the world into what it's supposed to be- a place where everyone is valued, everyone is fed, and end everyone is loved. Service to people who are poor or hungry or ignored, that's the whole point of being a Christian, being one of the people who God has called to remake the world. Now if you're skeptical, if you think that the world is a lost cause and the best we can hope for is some peace and quiet after we die, then remember with God all things are possible. Do not doubt the power of the Holy Spirit. And if you're skeptical because you think you're too young or too old or not smart enough or strong enough. Remember that God equips all who are called. If He called you, then He has equipped.

Service will look different for each person. Some of us served by ladling green beans soup kitchen, by working a hotline, building a house. Some of us offer our skills pro bono to those who can't afford it. Some of us serve by visiting sick friends and family in the hospital. Some of us served by noticing a lonely kid in the cafeteria and having lunch with them. Some of us served by passing laws that protect the poor. We can all serve by educating ourselves about how to serve better and most importantly by making friends with people who don't live like us or talk like us or look like us because of the greatest gift that we can share is our hearts.

If you're looking for a way to serve, to share your gifts for the benefit of the world, I invite you to take that connect card if you haven't already and mark the circle that says serve people in need. And you're welcome to leave that in one of the baskets when you exit if you didn't have a chance to put it in the offering plate. One of the pastors- maybe me- will reach out to you and help you discern how you are going to take your core class in service. Whatever form it takes, remember not to skip class. Every day, if we look closely we will discover opportunities to serve others in big ways and small ways, and in each one God is bringing us closer to a world of love and justice and peace. Amen.

COMMUNION

Virginia Adye

*LAST HYMN UMH #432

"Jesu, Jesu"

*CHIMES & SERVICE OF LIGHT

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

"March" by R. Dinda