

# The Encounter

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Preacher: Pastor Jennifer Stamm

[ 0 : 00 ] I'm ready. I'm ready.

I'm ready.

I'm ready.

I'm ready.

I'm ready.

[ 3 : 00 ] I'm ready.

I'm ready.

There are sign-up sheets for various times here, and we'll pass this around. You can also sign up on our website for a slot, so just encourage you to do that.

We haven't had an updated one in a long time, and so it would be great if everybody, if you're a part of the church connected, please get your picture taken, because you may not want it, but we do.

So thank you. We'll start this over here, and we'll pass that around. We'll be right now.

[ 4 : 59 ] We're going to go through VBS, and now here we are, and we'll have a great week, and we'll have a great week, and we'll have a great week. And we'll have a great week, and we'll have a great week. So thank you for this summer. perché are there other announcements that need to be highlighted today this morning.

morning. Then I invite you to just prepare your hearts and let the music that you're going to hear and be a part of help you to worship the Lord.

Good morning, everybody. And good morning to everyone online. I just want to take a second.

The band traveled to Lockport to a community and unity event yesterday, and I just wanted to take a moment to say how much we appreciated seeing some of the familiar faces of our church there yesterday. So thanks for those of you that were able to come out. Music has a way of waking us up spiritually, but the two songs this morning we're going to open with are going to do two more things. The first one's going to wake you up mentally because it's to a familiar tune, come thou fount of every blessing, but with different words, so pay attention. And the second one is an oldie but a goodie shout to the north that's going to wake you up physically. We're going to do a little aerobics today. So if you don't remember or you're new to the song, it's shout to the north and the south, the east and the west, Jesus is savior to all, and lord of heaven and earth. So not too taxing, but I'm going to invite you to stand.

Let us walk this road together, pilgrims traveling side by side. Let us brave the stormy weather, in the rock we save the stormy weather, in the rock we save the height. Let us share our joys and flowers on the journey here we go. If we walk this road together, God will guide us as we go. Let us walk this road together.

[ 7 : 39 ] Let us walk this road together. Brothers, sisters in the fold. Caring not for wild weather, but by faith, faith, strong and bold.

Let us walk this road together. Who can know where God will send us? So words of the gospel seed. Still by faith, we journey onward to a hungry world in need.

Let us walk this road together. Let us walk this road together. With our hands and hearts entwined. Let us feel the spirit's tether, drawing us full heart and mind.

Let us walk this road together. We will praise and pray and worship brothers, sisters, servants, home. On the road of grace and glory, ever faithful to God's call.

that God is holy to God.

[ 9 : 20 ] The faith was on and safe Of the great and glorious king You are strong when you feel weak In your brokenness complete Shout out to the Lord and the Son Sing to the East and the West Jesus the sinner to all Lord of heaven Thus the women of the truth Set and sing to broken hearts Who can know the healing path Of our Lord and King of love Shout out to the Lord and the Son Sing to the East and the West

Jesus the sinner to all Lord of heaven and earth We've come through fire We've come through rain We've come through time By the power of His name We've fallen deeper in love with you You've heard the truth Of our lives Shout out to the Lord and the Son Sing to the East and the West Jesus the Savior to all Lord of heaven and earth Jesus the Savior to all Lord of heaven and earth Lies of church with broken wings We've filled His place with songs again For our love who reigns on earth But our God who reigns on earth By His grace again we'll fly The Lord and the Son We've come through time

We've come through time And we've come through time And we've come through time For our■■ You may be seated.

Good morning. Good morning. So we have a different call to worship today.

We began a journey last week, and for these four weeks we're going to be training our travelers' mindset, our hearts and our souls, expanding our horizons, our understandings, and our love for the world and all of its people.

[ 12 : 59 ] So last week we focused on leaving home, and this week we find ourselves in the encounter with things that sometimes feel far from home. Far from home, even on our streets, that everywhere is the world of meaning, different folks, and another world, and all of us are really in the sense of meaning.

Jesus often crossed paths with others not from his tribe. He did not shy away, and he most often sought out these opportunities.

He met people in their daily lives and locales, such as the Samaritan woman at the well and her community, and engaged with them at the point of their deepest yearning.

When we seek out and open to new encounters, new people, new relationships, we allow ourselves a spiritual rendezvous with humanity.

And in this act, we discover more deeply within us than we had previously imagined. How can we shift our perception, redefining strangers as friends we have not yet met?

[ 14 : 07 ] How can we shift our perception, redefining our hearts, and our love for the world of meaning?

Please pray with me. Sojourning God, your spirit extends everywhere on every path, inviting us to move with curiosity and compassion towards each other.

Open us to the depth of our connections, even when it seems difference is so profound. Show us our shared humanity, so that we will know what others love, see that we love the same, and share the burdens and the love.

Nudge and guide us, we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I want to say good morning to people who might be watching online.

And I didn't, you all may know who I am, but I'm Kathy Stengel, one of the pastors here. And I want to share something before we move into a very special time of baptism.

[ 15 : 23 ] One of the things that often goes unnoticed, because simply where they sit is our accompanist, and yet we can't do what we do without them.

Right, Loretta? Amen. Amen. So, a couple of things. One is that Loretta is now married.

She got married, and she is now Loretta Grenda. And we celebrate that special time. But don't clap yet, because there is something else.

And that is that she has agreed to be our permanent, she was here on a temporary basis, or provisional, or however you want to say that. And she has decided to stick with us.

And so we're... I saw her on a picture out with the band playing, and I was like, yes, that's our Loretta.

[ 16 : 27 ] So, we're grateful. And so, at this point, I'd like to invite Adrian Fulby, who's our lay leader for the service, to join me up here.

And I'd like to invite Baker to bring his parents and his godparents on up. Are you a happy boy?

You look like that face. I'll give that to you, and you can let him hold it if he wants to. Do you see the water?

Okay. Go ahead. Brothers and sisters in Christ, through the sacrament of baptism, we are initiated into Christ's holy church, which is not simply the here and now, but it is into whatever church and faith community we find ourselves in.

We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All of this is God's gift offered to us without price.

[ 17 : 51 ] Today, we come together as Baker's family, godparents, and friends to celebrate in the sacrament of holy baptism. Let's pray. Gracious God, every child is a miracle of love, and today we thank you for the miracle of Baker.

Hold him in the gentleness of your hands and his family in the bonds of patient love. May this little boy grow in the way of faith and grow to be close to you, close to his grandparents, godparents, family, and forever close to his mother and father.

Let him be aware of your tender care and your righteous calling in his life. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen. Nathan and Anne-Marie and Baker have an incredible support system.

And those of you who are present over there and those up here are key. And those who can't be with us make up an incredible support system.

How much support does it take to raise a little boy? A lot. People have been and each of you has prayed for, supported, comforted, and encouraged Nathan and Anne-Marie as they have become parents.

[ 19 : 09 ] Loved them through hope, anxiety, lack of sleep, and celebration. This journey will forever be a part of your story as Baker's very special family and friends.

What? What? You ready? Just give us a minute. So, one down.

So I ask as his, you want to come stand closer to the water with him so he can kind of be near it. Right? We're going to get to that in just a minute.

Okay? Okay? As his grandparents, godparents, family, and friends, do you promise to surround them with love, inspire them with faith, and support Nathan and Anne-Marie as they raise Baker?

Will you pray for their marriage, their parenting, and their family? And if you will do whatever you can to fulfill this awesome calling, will you say yes? Yes.

[ 20 : 17 ] Let us offer this prayer for each and every one who loves this little boy so much. Heavenly Father, you have given Baker to this family and to so many friends. We all thank you for this little boy.

Lord, bless everyone with enthusiasm for their relationship. Bless us with patience as Nathan and Anne-Marie parent Baker, and have loving patience with Baker always.

Bless us with stories of faith. Let us share you and your love with Baker that he might grow to know you through those who love him. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen. And now, as those of you who are up here parents and godparents, I ask you to answer these questions because your faith, what can I give you?

It's all right. We, gathered here, are honored to participate in this sacrament that's for today and forever. And your faith, all of you, and how it is that he grows up with you makes a difference.

[ 21 : 34 ] So on behalf of the whole Christian church, do you come with your whole hearts before God, your family, your children, and these witnesses and people of faith? And do you promise to reject all that is evil in this world?

If so, then say, we do. Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist all that is evil, all injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?

If so, then say, we do. Do you confess your belief in God the Creator, Jesus Christ, God's Son, and our Savior, and to the best of your ability, put your trust in God's grace and promise to be faithful to God?

If so, then say, we do. Will you, as Baker's parents and godparents, nurture him in Christ's holy church, that by your teaching and your example, he may be guided to the point in his life whereby he accepts God's grace for himself, professes his faith openly, and agrees to live a Christian life?

If so, then say, we will. We will. Will you, members and friends of the Pendleton Center United Methodist Church, make every attempt to support Nathan and Marie and Baker in providing a Christian upbringing for this little boy?

[ 22 : 49 ] When he's here in church, in child care, or just running around, will you help him to learn about God, the Bible, and learn how welcome he is in Christ's holy church?

If so, then say, we will. We will. Water. The part that he loves has always been a part of our Christian story right from the beginning, and so let us pray over this water.

Eternal Father, you have always brought forth water for your people. You created the world and the waters that nourish us. You sent the living water through Christ and your Spirit.

Pour out your Holy Spirit to bless this water and baker who will be baptized with it. Clothe him in righteousness throughout his entire life, that this day, being claimed by you as a part of this household of faith, he will be marked forever with the sign of eternal life.

All praise to you, Eternal Father, through your Son, Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever. Amen. Hey, Baker, come here.

[ 24 : 00 ] Let's go see the water. I usually tape it on.

Ready? Don't touch it. Look at this. What do you think?

What name is given this child? Baker Carl. What a big name for a little boy. Baker Carl, I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

May you always know how blessed you are in the family, in the household of faith. Amen. So, he would rather play in the water, but I introduce to you our newest member of this household of faith.

And he wants the microphone. Maybe he's going to grow up to be a preacher. Would you greet him with Ralph the Moon? So, if you look at your own book bible, and then your book that's called Navy.

[ 25 : 35 ] and it's a story of endless repentance in all of us. And inside it says, With God, never forget that you can be amazing in all days.

And then there's a question in there for you all. So in my life, I'm not going to say that. I'm waiting for you all. I'm waiting for you all.

I'm waiting for you all.

I'm waiting for you all.

I'm waiting for you all. Good morning.

[ 27 : 44 ] A little too close. Good morning. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Steve Sosnowski. I'm one of your trustees. Together with my wife, Kimberly, who's on the finance team, and my daughter, Caitlin, who's a youth leader, to say that we're involved in church is an understatement.

It's kind of what we do. It's part of our life. It's part of our existence. Before we even get started, though, I do want to just, again, reiterate what an amazing job the VBS team did.

The program they put together, the effort these kids put in, and the adults, the leaders, everybody from start to finish. If you had any part of it, please give yourselves a round of applause.

I mean, 170 kids, joyful, loving the Lord. It was pretty amazing. Thank you.

Chairman me, just to cover our expenses.

[ 29 : 27 ] And we're basically looking at closing that gap. So that's what we're here to kind of talk about. We're not here to panic anybody. And you might have not even known that because we're not the kind of church that runs around like the sky is falling.

I mean, you come in here and it's joy. It's pure joy. From our songs to our outreach to the meals to the kids, it's just pure joy. You don't see it.

So we just want to be transparent and we want people to know where we stand. Many of us on the leadership teams have felt that our general population probably doesn't even know because, again, we don't walk around acting like the sky is falling.

You can look in the newsletter, though, as I am guilty as well as not always reading. Mary puts in a lot of good information. A lot of us kind of wind up putting that on the coffee table or the nightstand and you don't always get all the way through.

So there is a lot of information in there, some of these concerns. But I guess when it comes to the ministries of this church and you think of what we do and how far we reach, I can't imagine it any other way.

[ 30 : 41 ] And without funding, those are the kinds of things that we would be unable to do. And I just, like I said, from my heart, I can't imagine it any other way.

Like most churches, we saw a drop in attendance and engagement during the pandemic. People move. People pass away. Others just stopped attending. This has had an impact. The finance team is doing several things in the upcoming weeks to help us move forward.

And all departments and all ministries are being charged with really looking at what they do, why they do it, and how they do it to see where we can do better. So for now, please consider giving what you can.

Share with the church what you can. And don't feel that we're asking you to choose between supporting missions or moments or regular giving. As disciples, we're called to do both. I know, you know, personally, some of the strategies my wife and I use to give a little more is, you know, we get a raise and we give an extra portion to the church.

We get a bonus. We give an extra portion to the church. We win the occasional lottery ticket. We give a portion to the church. And every once in a while, we have a good casino night. And we've given a good portion to the church.

[ 31 : 58 ] She's giving me the stink eye back, though. She's like, don't say that. She's like, please don't say that. It's literally one in a million. But I know, again, these are just small things.

Be as creative as you can. Anything is helpful. And if you'd like more information, check with Mary's updates as they come through the bulletin or talk to any of the members of your finance team. So Psalm 116, verse 12 reads, What shall I return to the Lord?

For all is goodness to me. Remember that all we have is a gift from God. Please do what you can to help us close the gap. Thank you. Thank you. So this will be available.

And as you heard Steve say, if you have any further questions, please go back, check the newsletter. Mary has given us great information over those months. And it's all there for you if you'd like more detail on what's going on. So that said, let the Spirit move you today, and let's give what we can.

Amen. Amen.

[ 33 : 56 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Loving and gracious God, you have shown us that the essence of love is in what we share with each other. So, Lord, let our love be real for you today in the ways in which we give, not only to each of your children, but also to you through our gifts of time, attention, and love, but also through this gift of our finances to your house and your work.

[ 38 : 19 ] Let it be given to the honor and the glory of your name. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen. Amen. Please take your seats. We come now to our conversation with God, our time of praying together.

There is a lot on our hearts today. We have some concerns. For example, we're aware that Del Full has been taken to the hospital, and we want to keep that family covered in prayer. We also know we have some families that are grieving.

But with that, we also want to be mindful of the things for which we give thanks. And so I'm going to ask Mary to come forward because she has a word of praise she wanted to share with the church today. Good morning.

Good morning. I'm Mary Zupo. I'm Mary Zupo. I've been a church member here for about the last 12 years. And I've been volunteering here for the Vacation Bible School every summer, and it's one of my favorite missions.

I'm going to read a list of words, and I want you to keep them in mind for later. I enjoy participating in Vacation Bible School.

[ 40 : 00 ] For one week, Pendleton Center opens its doors to the local area children, kindergarten to sixth graders, to join in and learn who Jesus Christ is.

Through praise, worship, song, music, dancing, story time, arts and crafts, science, all using Bible theme and verses with each activity every day.

To lead and help guide the 160 plus children, we need approximately 22 to 25 teenagers, many who come from our church here, to help us as tribe leaders, to help guide all those children.

All these kids are a godsend for us. Of course, we do have many of the adults here that help volunteer, but we can't do it without our youth group.

Remember those words I spoke earlier. These are the qualities or marks of a disciple. I witnessed many of them every moment of every day during VBS in every single tribe leader, many of whom are from this church and from other churches.

[ 41 : 29 ] The icing on the cake is this. Every day they stayed after to clean the entire church, spick and span top to bottom, and then prepared for the next day's activities, setting up the crafts.

At the end of the week on Friday after the last child left, they took down every single decoration, cleaned as if they were a professional cleaning team, thoroughly every room in this church, even the bathrooms.

They put their heart and soul into Vacation Bible School and did it with joyful hearts.

Yes, many hands are involved in orchestrating VBS every year, but it's our kids, actually your kids, who make it possible.

Moms and dads, family, friends, pastors. I have watched these leaders we have had this week grow up in the past 12 years that I've been here, and have grown into the young men and women that they are becoming, and they are disciples of Jesus Christ.

[ 43 : 01 ] And we are blessed beyond measure to have them. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for that word, Mary.

And as, of course, we know, even in the midst of challenges that may be affecting us on one hand, there is always blessing to be found on the other. And with those two things in mind, let us open our hearts and go to God together today as we pray.

Gracious and loving Lord, we are indeed thankful for the gift that is this moment, thankful for the gift that is this time, as we have celebrated so much already today, celebrated the gift of welcoming a new brother into our circle of faith, the gift it is to have this beautiful day and raise a son in which to enjoy it, the gift of one another, the gift of laughter and friendship and love that we share as a church community together.

Your spirit at the center that gives us strength as things challenge us, gives us wisdom as problems present themselves. Lord, you have made yourself known to us in a variety of ways, and your people come with grateful and overflowing hearts today.

And we know that your story is one that continues to unfold in each and every one of us and each of us together as this church family. We come today because there is so much for which we give thanks, so many things that we might overlook, the gift of each step and each breath, the smile on a friend's face, so many things that we might simply pass by.

[ 44 : 45 ] But we know that you are in each moment and in each gesture. And Lord, so our hearts and our spirits are full, and we come saying thank you and praising your name.

And Lord, it's because we know that you are with us in these ways. It's because we have known your story that has brought us this far on the journey. We know that as these challenges present themselves, that you are with us and will see us through.

So for all the ways in which we know there are people among us who need your healing touch, whether that healing be for something physical, whether that healing be for something emotional, where hearts are broken or relationships are not at their best, or whether that be healing that helps people move forward with a question, where you offer guidance and wisdom.

Lord, God, you carry us forward in all the ways in which you know our best. So Lord, help us to keep our hearts and eyes focused on you. Let us always be ready to receive that call on our hearts to take the next faithful step.

Lord, we come today knowing we serve a God who is with us. No matter how the world may feel at times, we know that our God is with us.

[ 46 : 06 ] And so yes, we praise your name today, Lord. Because you and you alone are worthy. We know that we could not have come this far without you. And we can't go any further without you.

So Lord, we thank you for who you are and the ways in which you continue to shepherd us along. All of this we lay before you in Jesus' most precious name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Good morning.

Good morning. The scripture today is from John 4, verses 7 through 26. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, Will you give me a drink?

His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?

[ 47 : 11 ] For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

Sir, the woman said, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well and drank from it himself as did also his sons and his livestock?

Jesus answered, Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.

Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life. The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.

He told her, Go, call your husband and come back. I have no husband, she replied. Jesus said to her, You are right when you say you have no husband.

[ 48 : 20 ] The fact is, you have had five husbands and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true. Sir, the woman said, I can see that you are a prophet.

Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem. Woman, Jesus replied, Believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.

God is Spirit and His worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth. The woman said, I know that Messiah, called Christ, is coming.

When He comes, He will explain everything to us. Then Jesus declared, I, the one speaking to you, I am He. This is the word of the Lord.

[ 49 : 34 ] Thanks be to God. So I love this encounter of the Samaritan woman.

It's both totally surprising and transformative in our lives. In many ways, if Jesus was not the Son of God, this encounter would never have taken place.

Because talking to this woman, Jesus crosses just about every possible barrier in His day. She's a woman. It was beneath a man to talk to a woman in public.

According to Hebrew law, a man shall not be alone with a woman in an inn, not even with his sister or his daughter, on account of what men may think. A man shall not talk with a woman in the street, not even with his own wife, and especially not with another woman, on account of what men might say.



Obviously, the right thing to do for a Jewish man, especially a holy man like Jesus, was to avoid women. There was even a group of Pharisees, the religious leaders, who came to be known as the bruised and bleeding.

[ 50 : 54 ] Because of their desire to avoid any contact with women, it caused them to look down or up every time a woman was nearby to avoid eye contact. So naturally, they were caused the bruised and bleeding rabbis because of how often they bumped into things.

Secondly, she's a Samaritan. Most Jews went around Samaria as they traveled from Judea to Galilee. And even though it was much longer, they wanted to avoid the Samaritan people.

They were their enemies. When the Jewish exiles came back from Babylon, they found that the central section of their territory was occupied by the Samaritans.

And they claimed to be the true descendants of Abraham and opposed their return. The Samaritans were partly Jewish, racially mixed, and had other peculiarities in their religion.

They worshipped at their own temple until the Jews destroyed it. Jesus asks later in the story, Who is my neighbor? He uses the Samaritan to tell the story of the good Samaritan.

[ 52 : 06 ] Your neighbor is your enemy. That's who you are to love. Love your enemy. And finally, this woman was a moral and social outsider.

She came to the well at noon to avoid the other women who would have come in the morning. She's come with her big jug, and that was a difficult job for someone to do.

And as we're about to find out, she had five husbands and is now living with a man who was not her husband. And this probably has something to do with why she's coming to the well alone at noon and avoiding everyone else.

We don't know if that number of husbands is her fault or the fault of the men. But either way, she's a moral and social outcast in her town. This woman was despised.

A Samaritan woman of bad character, a moral, social, ethnic, and religious outsider. No self-respecting Jew, especially a rabbi, would ever, ever talk to her.

[ 53 : 12 ] But Jesus talks to her and asks her for a drink. And after she questions why he would do such a thing, he says, if you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

Living water means running water and she thinks that he's talking about something in the physical realm. Sir, she says, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep.

Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well and drank from it himself as did his sons and his flocks and his herds?

Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

So it becomes clear that Jesus is talking to us on a spiritual plane. He's talking spirituality, something that can completely fulfill her spiritual thirst.

[ 54 : 20 ] A spring of living water welling up inside us to eternal life. The water is the spirit and as Jesus tells us later in John's gospel, on the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood and in a loud voice said, if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me, as the scripture had said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this he meant the Holy Spirit whom those who believed in him were going to receive.

She wants that living water. The woman says to him, sir, give me this water so I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.

She's ready for this deeper life-giving water that will keep her from having to return to the well. He tells her, go, call your husband and come back.

I have no husband, she replies. And Jesus says to her, you are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is that you've had five husbands and the man you now have is not your husband.

[ 55 : 30 ] So what you have said is quite true. What's he doing? Is he changing the subject? Is he condemning her? No. He's pointing out that she has been seeking to quench her spiritual thirst in other ways.

In order to experience his life-giving water, she's going to have to stop looking for it elsewhere. She's going to have to repent as well as believe to turn from seeking fulfillment to finding it in Jesus.

But rather than get into her marital history, she tries to change the subject to where they should worship. Sure, sir, the woman says, I can see that you're a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem. Is true worship found on Mount Zion? She says, let's get off my personal life and turn this into a theological debate.

Jesus responds, believe me, woman, time is coming when you will worship the Father, neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know.

[ 56 : 44 ] We worship what we do know. For salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.

For they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. It's not about the place, but it's about the spirit.

It's not about where you are externally, but where you are internally. Worship him sincerely and according to who he is. The woman has one more dodge.

She says, I know that Messiah called Christ is coming. And when he comes, he will explain everything to us. And Jesus simply says, I am, speak to you, am he.

One day the Messiah will sort it out, she says. And in return, Jesus says, I am the Messiah. This is the only time he reveals that fact prior to his trial.

[ 57 : 51 ] It's amazing that he says it to the Samaritan woman, this outcast. Just then his disciples return and were surprised to find him talking with a woman.

But nobody asked her, what do you want? Or asked him, why are you talking to her? And then leaving her water jar, the woman goes back into town and says to the people, come and see a man who told me everything I ever did.

Could this be the Christ? She becomes the first evangelist going off to tell everyone, come and see a man who told me everything I ever did.

She's excited to tell people that Jesus knows all about her. And to top it off, she goes to the people that she's avoiding. She goes to everyone, her fears, her views that others have of her no longer have a hold on her.

And she leaves her water jar, the very reason she went to the well in the first place. And because of her witness, the town comes to hear Jesus and many become believers.

[ 59 : 05 ] So what are these implications for us? The gift of God's grace is available to everyone no matter how much of an outcast they are.

The Samaritan woman could not have been more of an outsider in all ways. Not seeking God, yet God graciously comes to her and reveals himself to her and turns her into the very first missionary.

And it's worth saying time and time again, it doesn't matter what you've done, no one is too far from the reach of God. For it's by grace that you have been saved through faith.

And this is not from ourselves. This is truly the gift of God. Not by works so that no one can boast. Grace often comes when you are at your very lowest point.

this woman is so alone because of her sin and Jesus comes to her and reveals himself only to her. And it's when you are at your worst that Christ died for you.

[ 60 : 13 ] sharing the news of Christ's love is a natural outcome to having that true, deep relationship with Jesus. This story is all about testifying about God, his grace, and seeking out people who are different from us.

See how this woman upon meeting Jesus goes and tells others about him. Even when it might further harm her reputation. telling others about Jesus sometimes has a negative connotation for those being talked to and those doing the talking.

People being evangelized to feel like we should keep it to ourselves. And sometimes we feel like maybe we should keep it to ourselves also.

But maybe the problem isn't our methods, but truly meeting and experiencing the love of Jesus. Consider the words of C.S. Lewis from his book Reflections on the Psalms.

But for the most obvious fact about praise, whether of God or anything, strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honor.

[ 61 : 28 ] I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise. The world rings with praise. readers, their favorite poets, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game.

I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it. Isn't she lovely?

Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that that's magnificent? The psalmist, in telling everyone to praise God, is doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about.

I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses, but it completes that enjoyment of ourself. Jesus didn't have to train this woman in evangelism.

He revealed his grace towards her, showed her who he was, and in response she wanted to tell everyone else about him, even at the expense of her own self-dignity.

[ 62 : 41 ] Our greatest needs as followers of Jesus is not for training, but to be captivated by the beauty and the majesty that is our God, to enjoy him, to marvel at who he is and what he's done for us.

Take a minute and try and comprehend how much God loves you, how much he delights in you, and how full of grace and mercy he is.

To be honest about who you are and what he has rescued you from, and to consider the eternal bliss that he offers us. We are called to spread the news of God to all people, not just in our backyard.

And recently I had to go into an area of Buffalo, and I was talking to someone about going, and they said, I don't think you should go. That's not an area, a good area. And my response was, the world is not a good area right now, and if we aren't the ones to step out and go out and help, it's not going to get any better.

So our United Methodist Social Creed says, we believe in God, creator of the world, and in Jesus Christ, the redeemer of creation. We believe in the Holy Spirit through whom we acknowledge God's gifts, and we repent of our sin in misusing these gifts.

- [ 64 : 10 ] We affirm the natural world as God's handiwork and dedicate ourselves to its preservation, enhancement, and faithful use by mankind. We commit ourselves to the rights of men, women, children, youth, young adults, the aging in all people with disabilities, to improvement of the quality of life, and to the rights and dignity of all people.
- We believe in the right and duty of persons to work for the glory of God and the good of themselves and others, and in the protection of their welfare in so doing, and the rights to property as a trust from God, collective bargaining, and responsible consumption, and in the elimination of economic and social distress.
- We dedicate ourselves to peace throughout the world, to the rule of justice and law among nations, and to individual freedom for people throughout all the world.
- We believe in the present and the final triumph of God's word in human affairs, and gladly accept our commission to manifest the life of the gospel in the world.
- We are called to do that. We are called to bring people to Christ. The joy of bringing people to Christ fulfills more than any amount of food.
- [ 65 : 38 ] Doing God's work is the greater satisfaction, and only God can give the spring of living water, that spirit, that eternal life. It's up to us to travel the road, travel the journey, invite people to the feast, as we create relationships that last forever.
- I invite you to take the road less traveled. Turn strangers into friends. It may be scary, but you'll find it so rewarding. Who's willing to stand up and take their chance?
- Those serving today, please come forward.
- Thank you.
- Thank you.
- [ 67 : 28 ] Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. So with the Spirit as your leader, with the Spirit calling you, come as the Spirit directs.
- Rex Rex Rex
- Rex Rex Rex Rex Rex Rex Rex Rex Amen.
- [ 70 : 46 ] Amen. Amen.
- Amen. Amen.
- Amen. Amen.
- Amen. So at the event yesterday, I was given this prayer card, and I thought how perfect for today's sermon and theme.
- It's from Colossians 3, verses 12 and 14. You, chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.
- [ 73 : 44 ] And our final song that I'm going to invite you to stand for is Live Like That. Please stand.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 74 : 40 ] I want to live like that And give it all my plan So that everything that saves you Wants to renew And God is who I am And this is where I'll stand Breakfast, the amendment Never holding back I want to live like that I want to live like that Am I proof That you are what you say you are That grace can really change your heart Do I live like you are the truth

People lost And even if they don't know my name Is there evidence that I can change When they see me and they see you I want to live like that I want to live like that And give it all I have So that everything that saves you Wants to you And promise who I am And this is where I'll stand And this is where I'll stand I want to live like that I want to live like that I want to live like that I want to live like that I want to show the world the love you gave for me

I want to live like that I want to live like that And give it all I have So that everything I say and do Points to you Points to you Love is who I am And this is where I'll stand Breakfast be abandoned Never holding back I want to show the world the love you gave for me I want to live like that I want to live like that I want to live like that I want to live like that

One announcement Jennifer Wilson passed away last week And her viewing is at Pruden Camp today From 1 to 4 There will also be visitation with family here Monday from 10 to 11 And then her service will be at 11 So I invite you to do the benediction with me God in the spirit revealed in Jesus Christ Calls us by grace To be renewed in the image of our creator That we may be one And I will be one for the world Today is the day God cares for the integrity of creation Wills the healing and wholeness of all life Weeps at the plunder of earth's goodness Today is the day God embraces all hues of humanity

Delights in diversity and difference Favors solidarity Transforming strangers into friends Today is the day that God cries with the masses of starving people Despises growing disparity between rich and poor Demands justice for workers in the marketplace And so shall we And so shall we Today is the day that God deplores violence in our homes and streets Rebukes the world's warring madness Humbles the powerful And lifts up the lowly And so shall we Today is the day that God calls for nations and peoples to live in peace Celebrates where justice and mercy embrace Exalts when the wolf grazes with the lamb And so shall we Today is the day God brings good news to the poor Proclaims release to the captive Gives sight to the blind And sets the oppressed free

[ 79 : 52 ] And so shall we Make you go out with the peace and love of Christ And carry his work into the world Amen Amen Thank you.

Thank you.