

New Opportunities

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Preacher: Pastor Scott Johnson

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..... This is indeed a special day in the life of Pendleton Center United Methodist Church.

We are going to be having some great celebrations this morning. We get to celebrate a baptism, and we're also going to celebrate the ministries of one of our members. It is a beautiful day. That is not the only reason it's a beautiful day, because any day God sends us is a beautiful day.

Even if we don't have the ideal conditions and the perfect weather, every day we get to see is a beautiful day. Amen? And because of that truth, God is worthy to be praised, and we will spend our morning doing exactly that.

[3 : 5 2] This is an opportunity to celebrate what is new. We're going to be thinking a lot about what is new today. And so, I would invite you to let that sit with your heart for a minute, that we're going to be concentrating on new things.

How God does new things. With that in mind, I invite everyone to take a moment and just share the peace of Christ with all the neighbors around you. Take a wave, take a look, and just wish that sentiment for everyone.

And so now, let's hear these words as we start our time of worship together. We see God make new things constantly. And we see God making things new constantly.

God is always blessing us as God creates, births, renews, and restores. No matter how many times God has shown us a new thing, God continually surprises us with more.

With a God that is capable of what is truly original and truly unexpected, why do we want God to only work in the ways that we can understand?

[5 : 1 0] Today, we're going to explore how we might free our minds to welcome more of God's unlimited imagination and power in our lives.

Let's pray together. Almighty and gracious God, we come to you with wonder. We come to you with hope. We come knowing that no matter the challenge before us, you can show us something new.

Let us always keep our hearts, minds open to the ways you choose to bless our lives. Amen. Our first hymn reminds us of a story back in Exodus where God kept his promises and did something new with the Israelites.

But it reminds us that he will continue to do new things and that we can trust him. So I invite you to stand as we sing, Guide Me, O the Great Jehovah. Guide Me, O the Great Jehovah.

O the Great Jehovah pilgrims through this barren land. I am weak, but thou art mighty.

[7 : 01] Hold me in thy powerful hand. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven. Feed me now and evermore.

Feed me now and evermore. Open now the crystal fountain, whilst the healing streamed not flowed.

Let the fiery cloudy pillar lead me on my journey through.

Strong deliverer, strong deliverer. Be thou still my strength and shield. Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan, made my anxious fear subside. Then the death and hell's destruction, and he said, bomb came inside.

[8 : 17] Songs of praises, songs of praises, songs of praises. I will never give to thee. I will never give to thee.

You may be seated. You may be seated. You may be seated. continue, ladies and gentlemen.

perices. celebration So as we get excited to welcome little Ava, come on.

As we get excited to welcome little Ava, you can think back to your time and what this time means for you and what it meant in the lives of those you love so you can understand why this is an important time.

God, God, God, God, God, God, God, God, God, God, God, God, Hello, hello.

[9 : 58] Welcome, everybody. All right. So let's look forward to this. So let's take this moment, open your hearts and let's enter into an attitude of praying together.

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's 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, given without price.

Today we come together as Ava's family, her godparents, her friends, to celebrate 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 that is Ava.

[11 : 03] Hold her in the gentleness of your hands and their family in the bonds of patient love. May this child grow in the way of faith and grow to be close to you, close to her grandparents, godparents, family, and forever close to her mother and father.

Let her be aware of your tender care and your righteous calling in her life. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen. Amen. Now, we also take a special moment here to acknowledge grandparents.

And so, for Ava's grandparents, we just wave your hand a little bit. We see you over there. And we have a special moment and a special blessing for you as well. Because it's an awesome responsibility to be a grandparent.

I know some of you sitting out there know that responsibility yourselves. Each of you has prayed for, supported, comforted, and encouraged Lindsay and Ryan as they have become parents.

You have loved them through hope, times of anxiety, those moments with no sleep, and times of celebration. For all that, know that God has used you and God has needed you to be messengers of encouragement and hope.

[12 : 25] That journey will forever be a part of your story as grandparents to this child and to all your other grandchildren. As Ava's grandparents, do you promise to surround them with love, inspire them with faith, and support Lindsay and Ryan as they raise your grandchildren?

Will you pray for their marriage, their parenting, and their family? If you will do whatever you can to fulfill that awesome calling, let's just hear you say amen. All right.

Being parents and grandparents is a wonderful and sometimes challenging place to be. And I would like to pray for you and all the other grandparents that are here today. Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, you have given Ava to these men and women. You have brought them this child, and they thank you. Lord, please bless them with enthusiasm for this relationship.

Bless them with stories of faith. Let them share you and your love with Ava, that they might continue to know and grow through these beloved grandparents.

[13 : 33] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. And so now we come to the more serious part. Because let's remember what baptism is.

Baptism is a series of promises that we make on behalf of little Ava because God is working in her life before she can currently understand it. That we also make promises as a community of faith to her and to God.

And of course, God acts in the midst of all of this. And so you're going to be hearing these questions, and everybody will have their opportunities to respond. But right now the questions are for the four of you.

As you each stand here, I'm going to ask you these things. Your own personal faith has a profound effect on the way you live and how you raise your children.

We gathered here are honored to participate in this sacrament that is today and forever. On behalf of the whole Christian church, I ask you, do you reject all that is evil in the world?

[14 : 37] And do you come before God, your family and your children, these witnesses and people of faith who will become part of your lives? If so, say we do.

Do you accept the freedom and the power that God gives you to resist all that is evil, all injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?

If so, say we do. Do you confess your belief in God, 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, say we do. Will you, as Ava's parents and God's parents, nurture her in Christ's holy church, that by your teaching and by your example, she may be guided to the point in her life where she accepts God's grace for herself, professes her faith openly, and agrees to live a Christian life.

If so, say we will. We do. Yeah, you may not hear that.

[15 : 50] I know that like a person. Yeah. Okay. Will you make every attempt to provide a Christian upbringing for Ava, giving her the opportunity when she is old enough to learn about God, the Bible, and Christ's holy church?

If so, all of you should say we will. As the family, friends, and congregation gathered here, do you promise to surround them with love, inspire them with faith, and support Lindsay and Ryan as they continue to raise Ava?

Will you pray for their parenting, these two beautiful children, and their family? If you will do whatever you can to fulfill this awesome calling, will you say yes? Let's all pray together.

Let's pray together.

She 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.

[17 : 26] Amen. Amen. All right. Come here, my little rock star. I know, right? Lots of Amiens. Lots of fun, huh? Who's this guy?

Lots of fun. Yeah. You want to play with that? Yeah. You can play with that. We know the name of the given to this child, right? Ava May, right? No, we talked about this part, right?

Okay. Amen. I baptize you in the name of the Father. And of the Son. See, we talked about that part.

I told you. And of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Yes, I know. I know. Guess what? It's all done now. Let's welcome our new sister in faith.

And a few small tokens for you. Here is a Bible for her and the certificate. Amen. It's always a joy to celebrate together as someone comes to faith. And we promise to raise her together.

[18 : 34] That is a joy. Let's all return to our seats. And let's move on to our next moment of celebration together. These folks are leaving.

We're going to invite Gidget to come forward. Because today is a special day as we acknowledge that this is part of the end of Gidget's walk with us as Pendleton Center United Methodist Church.

Now, we know that so much has been done. So much is important. So much is joy of the ministries of this place because of the work that Gidget has done.

Yeah, she wanted to stay down there. Well, we can't say enough. Because we know, remember last week, right? When we stood up here and we talked about the joy that was VBS and how strong we know those ministries are in this particular community of faith.

We know that that's part of your work. When we think about all the ways in which we've been able to bless different people through the ministries that this church does in mission, we know that's part of your work.

[19 : 42] We also know that all the ways children come up in this church have been touched through the Genesis Preschool has been part of your work. So when you think about people who bear fruit in their ministry, every time we think about that celebration, that's what we celebrate today.

And we know that this is your work. And so we give you thanks. And so there's a video that folks wanted to play for you. So Adrian's going to play that now.

Good morning. This is Becky Heideman. And I'm talking to you all about Gidget. How powerful a person Gidget has been for all of us.

That power is going to move to Florida. Maybe she can challenge the hurricanes down there. I don't know. But to let you know that Gidget has provided such strength to all of us.

Where do I begin? Um, I guess I'll start from the beginning. I had the privilege of working with you in the Mom's Morning Out program.

[21 : 04] That had to have been a God thing because I was probably the least qualified person for that job.

Not having children and not having grandchildren. But truly, the love of the children toward you just was overflowing.

Miss Meeland, or as my children would say, Hey, teacher. Thank you for everything you've done here at Pendleton. For our family and for our children.

You have been a blessing. And you are truly going to be missed. Miss Meeland, thank you for being my teacher. Thank you for doing all the stuff.

Teaching me all that stuff when I was little. And I love you. Thank you, Mrs. Meeland, for all of your hard work, dedication, and passion towards the children's ministries here at church.

[22 : 08] We are really going to miss you and wish you all the best of luck in your new adventure. Thank you, Mrs. Meeland, for teaching me in preschool and Sunday school best of luck. Good luck, Mrs. Meeland.

Florida. To watch you nurture children. To guide adults. To care for our church. So diligently and so carefully.

You've been an awesome person within our midst. Loving us all. And letting us love you back. In your work with the mission projects, you worked on those tirelessly.

Never complaining. Never frustrated. Never discouraged. You would just always make it happen. Always collecting.

Always moving. Packing. Hauling. Just making it happen. Things that just were behind the scenes and not really seen.

[23 : 20] And you just did it for God's glory. Hi, Mrs. Meeland. I just wanted to wish you luck on your new journey and thank you for all the hard work you put into this church, especially in the youth program.

I've had so much fun with your youth group and I'll definitely be praying for you while you take this next step. You'll definitely be missed here, but I wish you the best. Hey, Mrs. Meeland. It's Seth. It's Aaron. You know who we are, yeah.

We just wanted to thank you for everything you've done for the church and for us, too. Yeah, you've been a great role model and you've done so much for us. And we just wanted to say thank you. Yep. Literally from when we were little kids to now, we just wanted to thank you.

I hope that you'll take time to walk the beaches, spend time with your family, and listen to God.

Because I know he is not done with you yet with your work for his glory. It will continue on and on and on.

[24 : 20] Miss Meeland, I hope you'll be back. I hope you'll be back.

So just a small token of our appreciation, these flowers that decorate the altar today will be yours after we are done, as well as a small token from the congregation. Let's take a moment and celebrate, Gidget, please.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And there will be more time for celebration as all are invited to a time in the fellowship hall after service is ended where we will celebrate Gidget further.

And now we'll move into our time of readying for offering. Our ancestors in faith gathered together long ago to remember, to be restored, to be renewed.

They shared their story. They prayed together. They made an offering to God as they prepared to set out on the long journey of freedom for the promised land. Today we gather together to remember and pray, to have that time of restoral and renewal.

[26 : 01] We bring our own offerings so that the ministry of this church can continue to participate in the saving works of God. Today let us gather our gifts together and offer them to God in gratitude and praise.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[28 : 04] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Heavenly Father, we know that everything we are and everything we have come from you.

We offer you our gifts, our services, our lives. Help us to be your church here on earth and to show others the strength and the power of your love.

Amen. You may be seated. Will you join your hearts together with mine in prayer?

Holy Father, we thank you on this warm, beautiful day. You're the creator of the universe and the giver of all good things.

You are great and you should be lifted in praise. We thank you that you have not forgotten us, not abandoned us, not rejected us, despite all that speaks against us.

[29 : 12] In your own dear son, you have given us nothing less than yourself and all that's yours. We praise you that you have invited us as guests to your table of mercy and grace as we worship you.

This morning, we bring to you all that troubles us. Our world, our mistakes and sins, our sorrows and cares, our whole heart and life fits better known to you than ourselves.

We commit all this into your faithful hands. And we pray that you take us as we are. Strengthen us when we're weak and help us to be responsible with the bounties of your blessing.

Let your loving kindness shine upon us and all whom we love. Shine on those who are suffering, upon those who are sick, upon those who have experienced grief and loss.

We pray for the people of Afghanistan and Haiti, the areas that are currently experiencing flooding and those that are on the path of Hurricane Henry.

[30 : 19] We pray for those children and the school staff heading back to school shortly and the uncertainty they're facing. We pray for their families. Help us in the growth.

Process our spirituality. Increase our own appreciation of you and how you are. How you love all of mankind. Not just us or even those like us.

Impress us that like you, we can love those who are very different from ourselves. Because you love all, we ask that you help all of those oppressed, victims of hunger and racial discrimination, and those whose individual freedoms are being prohibited.

Father, make us more sensitive to you and to one another. More conscious. Bring us both humility and boldness. Shepherd us in our own spiritual pilgrimage.

Give us the courage to be merciful. The endurance to be faithful to those in our care. Just as you have with each of us. In your name we pray. Amen.

[31 : 27] 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. Today's scripture is from Isaiah chapter 43 verses 10 through 21. You are my witnesses, declares the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he.

Before me no God was formed, nor will there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no Savior.

[32 : 37] I have revealed and saved and proclaimed, I am not some foreign God among you. You are my witnesses, declares the Lord, that I am God.

Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?

This is what the Lord says. Your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. For your sake I will send to Babylon and bring down as fugitives all the Babylonians, in the ships in which they took pride.

I am the Lord, your Holy One. Israel's Creator, your King. This is what the Lord says. He who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick.

Forget the former things. Forget the former things. Do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up.

[34 : 03] Now it springs up. Do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself, that they may proclaim my praise.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Sandy, for that reading today.

Would you open your hearts and pray with me, please? Gracious loving God, we are thankful for this moment. We come with hearts open, having experienced such joy and awareness of the movement of your spirit, and now we come before you with our hearts in anticipation, praying that you would plant a seed in us, a seed that will grow and bear fruit for the honor and the glory of your name.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen. Amen. So, I'm going to go out on a limb here and assume that I'm not the only person in the room who likes to get new stuff.

[35 : 31] I like to get lots of new stuff. And my wife may be watching right now, but she could probably testify to that. But, you know, there's just something to getting new stuff.

Now, that doesn't mean you've got to devalue your old stuff. There's just something fun with the new stuff. Right? And in the Amazon world, you get to have like that Christmas morning feeling all the time.

Because the box comes and you crack it open and you're all excited for what could be inside. Right? And then you get to just have that feeling a lot, which can be a lot of fun.

But we also have those moments, don't we? We crack open that box and it's not exactly what you thought it was going to be. You pull it out of the box and maybe the color doesn't look like it looked like in the picture.

Or it doesn't work the way it's supposed to. Or whatever else could be going on. We know that feeling, too. When somehow it's just not what you expected.

[36 : 30] Now, if you've had that feeling of, this isn't what I wanted. That can sit with you for a little while. Especially when you invested time, when you got your feelings all in a particular place.

And then it just didn't go the way you anticipated. Now, having said that, we also know that that surprise feeling, that unexpected feeling, can happen in a good way, too.

Where sometimes you throw open that box and it wasn't what you thought it was going to be, but it actually worked out better than you thought. That maybe it does something in a different way. Or maybe you found a different use for it.

And so it's a good thing. I want us to live with that thought of what happens when it's not what you expected. Because we can really build our lives around a set of expectations.

Thinking that, okay, this is how it's supposed to work. I've got it figured out. This is exactly what I want. And the problem with that is that God doesn't always play by our list.

[37 : 43] That God might decide that maybe something can be a little more than what you're imagining. That maybe there's bigger or better or an element to a particular solution or situation that goes beyond what you were expecting.

But if we can't open our heads to that, if we can't open our hearts to that, we may in fact miss so much of the goodness that God has in store for us.

And that's what I want us to hear today. When we start thinking about a new thing. Because in the story that we are studying today, God does a new thing.

A thing that people were not expecting. A thing that had not been done previously. A thing that the people who were actually living in the moment, even though he had told them this was the plan, couldn't possibly get their heads around.

And my question for all of us today is, in your life, whatever the situation might be, wherever you might be wrestling with something in particular, Have you decided this is how God is going to help me?

[39 : 07] Or can you open your heart, open your mind to the possibility of a new thing from God?

So in order to appreciate that, let's get into the story a little bit. So Sandy told us, we're in Isaiah 43. We're starting at verse 10. But to really appreciate that story, you've got to know a little bit about what's happening before.

So Isaiah is kind of a complicated book in the Bible. All right? Most Bible scholars have broken it up into essentially three pieces. Okay? There's what's called First Isaiah.

And First Isaiah really deals with the person we understand as Isaiah. It goes through the first 39 chapters. And in it, Isaiah prophesies to the people.

And tells them that you guys are not really living your best life with God. Not only do we have that happening, but we have a power rising that has the capacity to come and take over the kingdom.

[40 : 12] We've seen that happen. And folks are chasing foreign gods. And folks are wondering about how they're going to live in this particular reality. And Isaiah is prophesying to them and saying, listen, you guys have got to hear what God is telling you or else something bad might happen.

Then the book shifts forward in time. And we get into what's called Second Isaiah. Where we have another voice. And what's happened at this point is apparently God has already brought that tragedy.

In other words, the Babylonian exile. And Second Isaiah tells the people that after having experienced this, God still sees you.

God hasn't forgotten you. And now God is going to fulfill the promise that God made. And that's where we kind of join the story in the middle. So that particular piece begins in chapter 40.

We're in verse 43. And we're picking it up at verse 10. And what the scene is like is that essentially God is telling the people, we need to actually figure this out.

[41 : 20] It's time to remember who I am. So God is essentially saying, look, all of you who have brought foreign gods and all of you who have chased all these other things in the world, go get your stuff, go get your best evidence.

And we actually going to make a case for who's really in charge. And he says, okay, all of you who believe somebody else is actually doing it right, come here, bring your best case.

But you, Israel, are my witnesses. And that's where we started, right? The first verse is you will be my witnesses. Okay? So you, Israel, will be my witnesses.

And here's why. Because God says, look, those of you who have put your hope in these statues, those of you who have bet on these false gods, those of you who thought all these magic spells and all of this were going to make a difference in your life, bring your proof that that has worked.

What have they actually done for you? What's different? What's better? What can you point to in your life that has actually changed because you put your hope in that?

[42 : 36] But you, Israel, tell your story. Because you have a story. Tell them what happened when you were in bondage in Egypt.

And I heard your cry. And I brought down the only superpower on earth at the time by my own hand. And liberated you.

That I brought you through the sea. That I brought you through the desert. I did that, says God. You did not do it on your own.

I did that. Tell the story. You will be my witnesses. And I'm willing to bet.

Most of us who have walked with God for any length of time have our own stories. Amen? That whatever was happening in our lives that was so big, so awful, so horrible, and God brought us through it, God again cries out, you will be my witnesses.

[43 : 46] Those of you who have put your faith in the falsehoods of the world. Those of you who have looked to all these other things to try and kill your pain. But those of you who know better, you will be my witnesses.

You will be my witnesses. Because we have a story to tell. We serve a God that works. We serve a God that does stuff.

And we can all point to that stuff. We have those stories to tell. And in case you have forgotten, go back and check God's record.

Because we have stories to tell. Now why does that matter? It's because if you were an Israelite at this time, living in exile, and maybe you had gotten sucked into all of that nonsense.

Maybe you started to feel, maybe this is feeling a little comfortable, this is starting to feel a little like home, and the story started to fade in your memory. But God says, remember what I did for you.

[44 : 52] Because I'm coming for you now. But here's the thing. If you're with me and you want to check it out in the verses, what you see is that in verse 16, it says this.

This is what the Lord says. He who made a way through the sea and a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick.

Here's where it gets interesting. God says, y'all know the story. But here's what he says next. Forget the former things. Do not dwell on the past.

I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up. Do you not perceive it? See, I am doing a new thing.

Do you not perceive it? So here's the challenge, right? Because you heard me get all in our feelings because we know who God is. We know what God has done. And God has done these amazing things.

[46 : 06] And that is true. And that is right. And that is good. But here's our challenge in the moment. As the next thing shows up, whatever the next thing might be, whether it's medical crisis, financial crisis, global pandemic, who knows whatever we're talking about, as the next thing shows up, it's a good thing to remember who God is, where God has brought you, and how God has done amazing things.

But what you don't want to do is decide that God can only work in the ways you've seen God work. What if God's plan for you is something you haven't seen coming?

What if God's work in your life is going to take a form that you just didn't anticipate? What if it's a new thing?

What if it's a new thing? And you just being who you are, where you're at, with your limited, finite human vision, can't make space for the way God wants to bless you?

Because you've decided, okay, I've seen God do this, therefore, this is what he's going to do again. When God says, I can do better than that.

[47 : 30] I can do more than that. And you're going to tell me that's all you're going to expect? You're settling for this when I can take you here? Let God be God for you.

See, here's the thing. I'm going to show you a little video. Well, Adrian, technically, is going to show you a video. And I want you to think about this, because this is going to call to mind a certain phrase that most of us have heard.

And if you don't like cliches and little mannerisms like that, you'll probably get your little, the hairs on the back of your neck will stand up a bit. But I want you to catch the message and not get caught up in the phrase. Adrian?

Thank you.

Yes, thinking outside the box.

[48 : 53] Most of us in corporate America have probably heard that term and have probably started to get that feeling in the pit of our stomach that we get when stuff like that gets said in meetings. However, there's truth to it.

See, this was a famous creativity experiment that was run. People were given this problem. Connect all the dots with four lines. And what people could not do is they assumed that you had to do it only within where the dots were drawn.

And only the people who could literally think outside the box were able to solve the exercise. In other words, people put limits on themselves that had not been given to them.

People put limits on themselves that had not been given to them. Church, where in your life have you decided that God only fits in the box that you can define?

Where have you decided that God can only work like this? Where have you told God it either looks like this or it's not going to happen?

[50 : 05] when God says, I am doing a new thing. I am doing a new thing.

See how it springs up. Do you not perceive it? Do you not perceive it?

Understand that when the Israelites were up against the Red Sea, Sea of Reeds, they had no idea. And God said, I'm going to do a new thing.

When the Israelite army was facing down the Philistines and Goliath was standing there screaming at them and they were paralyzed, God said, I am going to do a new thing.

When the world was lost, trapped in sin, had no idea what was going to be our way out. When people said, the Messiah has to look like this, he has to come like this, he has to act in these ways.

[51 : 12] God said, I'm going to do a new thing. Y'all see this little town up here? Y'all see this little girl in the town up here? that nobody's paying attention to?

I'm going to do a new thing. That you think that it has to come riding in on a horse, surrounded in glory and bright light?

What if I send you this guy from the North Country who's worked all his life just like everybody else?

But he is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. What if we as a people said, this is the most humiliating thing that can happen to a person?

this is the most torturous, painful death and we reserve it only for the worst of the worst. God said, I'm going to do a new thing and I'm going to take that instrument of death and I'm going to turn it into the symbol of the ultimate victory of God over sin in the world.

[52 : 26] We're going to turn that into where people place their hope because they know that God has saved us through him.

I'm going to do a new thing. I'm going to take this thing that everybody's scared of. No one really understands and represents the end the way most people understand the end.

And I'm going to show you through that guy from the North Country. That death is not the end of the story. I'm going to do a new thing. So where in your life do you need God to do that new thing?

Have you told God this is what it has to look like? Or can you open your heart, open your eyes, open your soul to the possibility that God's solution for you with whatever your mountain looks like, with whatever your road looks like, with however dark that valley feels to you, that the new thing that God wants to bring may be of God and may be better than what you have seen today.

Let God be God for you. let God be bigger than your own mind. Let God be bigger than your own vision.

[53 : 57] Let God do the new thing that can transform. You see, for the Israelites, that new thing was something nobody had ever seen.

That a conquered people who had been driven from their homeland in exile would be able to go back without a military conquest.

That God brought down the Babylonians and the power that brought them down said, you guys can go on back. So he made a way in the desert and they got to go back home.

I'm going to do something the world has never seen. Trust God no matter how it looks right now, no matter how it feels right now, no matter how big it is, bad it is, overwhelming it is.

Trust the God of the new thing to be exactly who you need. Amen and amen. Loving and gracious God, we thank you for your gifts.

[55 : 12] We thank you that you can see so much further than we could possibly imagine. We thank you that you hold the plan and you hold the power. That yes, Lord, we have trusted you, we have celebrated you, we have lifted you up and we are grateful for all the ways in which you have worked in our lives.

lives. But Lord, let us not limit you to the box of our own minds. Let us be open to however you choose to work, however you choose to move, even when it's scary for us, even when it's unknown for us, even when it calls us to do things we can't possibly see or anticipate.

Let our faith be bigger than our fear. Let our love for you always let us be willing to take the next step. and let us perceive the new thing that you hope for all of us.

Let us follow with love. This we ask in the name of the one who was so much that the world could not see, so much that the world could not imagine, so much that the world could not even comprehend.

but we, but we, surrender our hearts in his holy name. Amen.

[56 : 33] Amen. One of the ways in which we can experience renewal, one of the ways in which we can know God's new thing is to replenish ourselves, to replenish our hearts as we receive these gifts from the Lord's table.

So I invite you all to open your hearts as we come before God at this time. The Lord be with you. Also with you. Lift up your hearts.

Lift them up to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. It is right to the Lord's table. It is a right and a good and a joyful thing, always and everywhere, to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant with us to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for the day when justice would roll down like waters, righteousness like an ever-flowing stream, when nation would not lift up sword against nation, neither would we study war anymore.

And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join the unending hymn, Holy, Holy, Holy, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

[58 : 23] Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you and blessed is your son, Jesus Christ.

Your spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, the recovery of sight to the blind, the setting at liberty of those who are oppressed and announcing the time that the time had come when you would save your people.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry and ate with sinners. By the baptism of his suffering, death and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death and made with us a new covenant by water and the spirit.

At his ascension, you exalted him to sit and reign with you at your right hand. And on the night in which he gave himself up for us, Jesus took bread.

He gave thanks to you and he broke the bread and he gave it to his disciples and he said, take and eat. This is my body which is given for you.

[59 : 36] Do this in remembrance of me. when the supper was over, he took the cup and he gave thanks to you.

Then he gave it to his disciples and he said, drink from this, all of you. For this is my blood, sign of the new covenant which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Every time you drink this, do it and remember me. And so, as we remember these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ that we may be for the world the body of Christ redeemed by his blood.

By your spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other and one in ministry to all the world. Through your son until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

[61 : 01] Through your son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

And now, with the confidence of children of God, let's pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. 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.

[62 : 03] Amen. Amen. Amen. D Would those who are serving today please come forward.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[64 : 25] Thank you. that a table is open. There are no restrictions. All are welcome in the United Methodist Church. For logistical purposes, understand we move towards the center and come down to the front and move out across the sides.

Gluten-free station will be here on my left, your right. Come as the Spirit compels you and receive what God has freely given. Gluten-free station will be here in the United Methodist Church.

Gluten-free station will be here our With ■- Ast Hyd Lady Gluten-free station will be there
Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[67 : 47] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[69 : 43] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[72 : 05] Thank you. Thank you. You're unshakable You're unstoppable That's what you are You are God alone From before time began You are on your own You are God alone Right now In the good times and then You are on your own You are God alone You're unshakable You're unshakable You're unstoppable That's what you are Trust the God of the new thing

Let God out of the box that you may have built for him in your own mind and let God be God. Let him surprise you with all the ways in which he can take your life to places you cannot yet see dream or imagine because his way is the way the best way.

Trust him. Trust that and let your life be blessed. Now in the name of God our creator and king. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and our savior.

And in the name of the Holy Spirit our counselor and our comforter. May God bless us now as we leave to love and serve God and all God's children. Amen. ■■■■■ing the Lord to make us faites Upset Thank you.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[74 : 27] Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.