



Centennial United Methodist Church
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*Radical
Hospitality*

September 20, 2020

CENTENNIAL MULTICULTURAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

September 20th, 2020 – 10:00am – Facebook, YouTube, and ZOOM

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost: Year A

GATHERING

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING PRAYER (in unison):

Loving God, we thank you for your everlasting grace, love and mercy. Praise be to you! Although we do not deserve your love, you love us always and care and guide us on our journey. Today we come before you with open hearts to receive what you have prepared for us; transform our minds to continue walking on the path of goodness and humility. May your holy spirit descend today and revive us with your Holy Fire. We pray in the name of Jesus, our Saviour. AMEN.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

L: Sing songs of hope and peace.

P: God's love and power have lifted us.

L: Sing songs of mercy and grace.

P: God's mercy and forgiveness frame our lives.

L: Thanks be to God for all God's love and mercy.

P: Praise be to God for the healing power God extends to each one of us. AMEN.

HYMN:

All Who Hunger

TFWS 2126

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison):

Holy God, we come again before you with our hearts open to your presence. On many occasions, we have not followed your teachings. We have seen you hungry and we have not given you food, you have asked us for drink and we have ignored you, you have been ill and we have not gone to visit you. Please forgive us and heal our selfish hearts. May we be a blessing to the lives of our neighbors and to the little ones you love deeply. Fill our hearts with goodness and love towards our fellow siblings in your Kin-dom that each day we can continue to be good examples of your presence and compassion. We pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Moment of Silence

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

Pastor: Dear siblings in Christ, God has heard your prayer. God's compassion is always present. God forgive us as we come with humbled hearts. Rest assured that God has forgiven you and gives you new strength and kind hearts to continue the path that our Good Shepherd invite us to go.

All: Thanks be to God! We are forgiven, hallelujah. Amen.

HYMN:

We Gather Together

UMH 131

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER (in unison):

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.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY PRAYER (Unison):

Holy One, you have given us all that we have and all that we are. Through these gifts and in our lives, help us be the shepherds and healers and lovers that you are calling us to be. May these gifts we bring be used to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, to bring medicine to the sick and provide a hospice bed for the dying, to offer hope to those who thirst for it in their lives and to bring friendship to those who sit in jail cells. May these gifts bring your kingdom to everyone who longs for its presence in every circumstance, we pray. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON:

DEUTERONOMY 10:12-22

A reading from Deuteronomy...

12 And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? 14 To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. 15 Yet the LORD set his affection on your ancestors and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations—as it is today. 16 Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. 17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. 18 He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. 19 And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. 20 Fear the LORD your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. 21 He is the one you praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes. 22 Your ancestors who went down into Egypt were seventy in all, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.

Leader: The Word of God
People: Thanks be to God

THE GOSPEL LESSON:

MATTHEW 25:31-46

Hear the Word of God in the Gospel according to Matthew the 25th chapter, beginning with the 31st verse.

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' 41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' 44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' 45 "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' 46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Leader: The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

People: Praise be to you, Lord Christ

SERMON:

"Radical Hospitality Part II"

Pastor Uziel Hernández Martínez

Good morning friends! It is such a blessing to be together again. This morning as we continue on our worship series based on Robert Schnase's book, "Five Practices for Fruitful Congregations." We continue our discussion about radical hospitality. Today, we focus on the intentional attitude to be a community of faith that is willing to learn and be transformed by the life giving and life transforming Spirit of God as we do the holy work of the Kin-dom of God.

Bishop Robert Schnase mentions in his book that, "The church is the presence of Christ in the world, the means by which God knits us into community in order to transform our lives and the lives of those around us."¹

¹ Roberth Schnase, *Five Practices for Fruitful Congregations*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018), 23.

Let us pray:

Out of our ordinary, everyday lives, you have gathered us here, Holy God. Speak to us as we gathered in trust and faith in you. Let your Word shine in our minds, hearts and souls. That we take your good news to all those who we meet. May your Holy Spirit equip us and transform us to be your church and your Kin-dom of love and compassion. In your name, we pray, trust, and hope. Amen.

It is not enough just to create more practices for the sake of creating more practices. Our heart and lives need to be transformed by those practices too. We practice radical hospitality because we have experienced radical hospitality from God and others. The work of the Kin-dom of God is grounded in the actual witnessing that we are beloved children of a loving and compassionate God. What we do as a church is related to the personal and collective transformation of a loving God. In other words, we transform others because God has transformed us too or because God is transforming our humanity as we journey together.

Verse 45 of the gospel reading, the scriptures offer us the following affirmation, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' The ministry that we engage as members of the body of Christ is to do everything in our power to love and care for our siblings in Christ just as Christ loved and cared for us. Treating each other with love, compassion and grace will knit our community to be one where our lives and the lives of others around us will be transform as we encounter Christ. In a way, we are not finish products but ongoing expressions of God's love as we write a new chapter of God's beloved community.

There is a story of an elephant who from a baby used to get tied to a stake to drink water and eat his food. The person who cared for this elephant did this to maintain him in place and not wander off. As a baby elephant, the elephant would not get loose from the stake because the stake was strong enough to keep him in place. The elephant tried multiple times but with no results. Eventually, this baby elephant grew to be a big and strong elephant. After years of being tied to the stake, the elephant learned to stay in place and never tried to get loose. The elephant continued staying in place tied to a small stake even though he was much bigger and stronger. The elephant had been conditioned to stay in place because of the stake but could break free anytime he wanted. The elephant never did so because in his mind he could not break free.

Friends, today, God is inviting us to consider the stakes that can hold us back as we respond to God's invitation to practice radical hospitality. Believe me, practicing radical hospitality will require us to engage those stakes more than ever. Radical hospitality is grounded in relationship building. And many times our own imposed stakes can get the best of us. These imposed stakes can be observed in the way we do ministry. If we are not a learning congregation, it can be hard to open ourselves to the possibilities for growth. If we are not grounded and/or interlaced in God's grace, it can be hard to have faith and hope in the work we engage. If we are not willing to change our attitudes and practices, we might not have the flexibility to see God in the unknown and uncertain. Today, we consider that we can break free from those stakes with the power of God.

God invites us to build and knit a community that brings good news and life for all who are part of our community. We knit our community by remembering that a learning attitude is necessary. It is necessary to listen to the giver of life, Jesus, and believe in the power of restoration and redemption. We are reminded that there is always room to grow. We are not finished products. We are on our way to sanctification. Thus, we open our minds with faith and trust to Jesus' learning methods. Jesus learning method was relational. Jesus engage people where they were and was willing to give up his own self to others when eating with sinners, homeless and people in the margins. He was willing to get himself dirty. Jesus was willing to be associated with the least, last and lost. He was willing to let go of his selfishness.

In the parable of the sheep and goats, Jesus remind us that our task is to care for the most vulnerable lives and continued his mission of feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, visiting the sick and those in prison. Jesus surrounded himself with the social context of his time. Thus, it is important for us to understand and surround ourselves with the social context of our time, knowing the persons, communities and context we are invited to feed, give and visit. Furthermore, there are no shortcuts to relationship building. Relationship building starts and ends with getting to know the Other, trusting in the Other and learning with the Other. We are invited to be with the Other in close approximation to their reality because their reality shapes and forms who the Other is. What is our Social Location? And who are the Others in our Social Location? Let us not be hold back by the stake of assumptions but get to know the reality of our social location.

The core of the praxis of love we find that God's grace is interlaced amid the body of Christ and the Others. God has not abandoned us nor the Other. God's grace is available and present in all humanity even when we reject God's grace. God is present, creating and recreating the Kin-dom without any conditions and even when the human response is negative. Obviously, God invite us as the body of Christ to be part of the interlaced grace God give to the world to create and recreate. But God's grace is not limited to our limits. In the building of relationship with Others, we will encounter Jesus because Jesus is already there to meet us. Jesus told the women after the resurrection. Go and tell my disciples that I will meet them in Galilee. In a way saying, I will meet you in the mission field, in the social location of your ministry

Our attitude in response to radical hospitality is important. It needs to accommodate the uncertainty and self-giving mechanisms. Nonetheless, in the uncertain and in the self-giving we will experience transformation. That is the mystery of the cross. We believe that just as Jesus was transform into new life, we too will be given and transform to new life. Practicing radical hospitality will take us out of our comfortable zone and from the known. But we respond with faith and trust in the midst of uncertainty and the unknown. When facing the uncertain and the unknown, faith in our Savior can ground us to be strong in the hard days to come. We have faith

that the community of believers can also be our source of strength. The gathering of believers is a means of God's grace. We have faith that we are entrusted in Jesus arms and no matter what dangers or fears we might experience nothing will separate us from the love of God. Jesus taught us that if you have faith like a mustard seed your life, ministry and work will grow to be a great bush that will host life giving characteristics. Thus, we put our faith in Jesus and let Jesus drive our lives.

God's response to us is that God will not leave us nor forsake us. God's love will be with us as we share good news of the gospel by practicing radical hospitality. God has been faithful to us even in the midst of this dark and chaotic time. God will be faithful and show us even more God's glory in the days to come. You are important for this task. We have been brought for a time like this. God want us to experience the transforming power of the love of God for humanity. God is love and God's love is here and now. Many times the dark and chaotic times can blind us or stop us from reimagining God's Kin-dom in the here and now. But God invite us to receive this love in action with all our soul, heart and mind. Remember we have a mission, the mission of sharing love to everyone, to shared God's love to the last, lost and least. Sometimes starts by restoring this holy love in the body of Christ for this to happen. God has not abandoned us. God is just beginning a divine endeavor. And God is inviting you and me to be part of it and share it with the world. In the name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING:

Pastor: Dear brothers and sisters, God has given us a mandate to love your God, that we love one another, just as he has loved us. Now that we leave this place, go with the certainty that God has given you the strength, love, and tools to be able to impact the lives of your neighbors, friends, acquaintances, or simply that person who has some need. Go filled with the power of the holy spirit and with the confidence that he will be with you wherever you go. Now go with the blessing of the father of the son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Hallelujah! AMEN.

GOING FORTH**CREDITS:**

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**Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 20th, 2020
Hymns**

All Who Hunger TFWS 2126

All who hunger, gather gladly; holy manna is our bread. Come from wilderness and wandering. Here, in truth, we will be fed. You that yearn for days of fullness, all around us is our food. Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger, never strangers; seeker, be a welcome guest. Come from restlessness and roaming. Here, in joy, we keep the feast. We that once were lost and scattered in communion's love have stood. Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger, sing together; Jesus Christ is living bread. Come from loneliness and longing. Here, in peace, we have been led. Blest are those who from this table live their lives in gratitude. Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

We Gather Together UMH 131

1. We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;
he chastens and hastens his will to make known.
The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing.
Sing praises to his name; he forgets not his own.

2. Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,
ordaining, maintaining his kingdom divine;
so from the beginning the fight we were winning;
thou, Lord, wast at our side, all glory be thine!

3. We all do extol thee, thou leader triumphant,
and pray that thou still our defender wilt be.
Let thy congregation escape tribulation;
thy name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free!

Jesu. Jesu UMH 432

[Refrain:]

Jesu, Jesu,

fill us with your love, show us how to serve
the neighbors we have from you.

1 Kneels at the feet of his friends,
silently washes their feet,
Master who acts as a slave to them.

(Refrain)

2 Neighbors are rich and poor,
neighbors are black and white,
neighbors are near and far away.

(Refrain)

3 These are the ones we should serve,
these are the ones we should love;
all these are neighbors to us and you.

(Refrain)

4 Loving puts us on our knees,
serving as though we are slaves,
this is the way we should live with you.

(Refrain)

5 Kneel at the feet of our friends,
silently washing their feet,
this is the way we should live with you.

(Refrain)

****PRAYER LIST****

At W. Willows: Mae Foster, Henrietta Day, Art Huenkemeier.

At Home: Micaela Serrano, Aida Bejesus, Cleo English, Carol Waxler, Lee Magnuson, Aylin, Fredy & Eugenio Mejia.

Undergoing Treatment/Rehab: Nancy O'Leary, Keith Sodergren, Ken Dahlgren, John Paul, Jonathan Garcia, Maynard Wibom, Rev. Bettye Mixon, Tara & Ismael Arencibia, Jerald Grady, Chuck & Kim Whitmore, Silvia Duran, Pat Nelson, Ellen Dean, David Russ, Jo Harrington, Pastor Uziel.

BIRTHDAYS

9/21 Frances Perez

9/22 Jim Gentry

9/25 Ismael Arencibia

9/25 Rosalinda Salazar

9/25 Jocelyn Saucedo

9/26 Maricruz Trancoso

Joys & Concerns

Kyle Montgomery, Dave Holland's 37 year old friend that suffered a brain aneurysm in the Walmart parking lot a while ago is stable, but still in a coma. Part of his brain is not coming back. He will be going to rehab this week. Please continue to keep him and his family (he has two children) as he continues to struggle to recover.

Bev Dahlgren told us about Aiden, a 13 year old that is suffering from cancer. He contracted cancer at the age of two, recovered, and at 4 it returned. He has been cancer free for 10 years. The cancer has returned at 13 years of age as blood was found in his urine (a malignancy in his kidney) He only has one kidney as he lost the other one during his cancer when he was younger. He is going through testing and a possible surgery this next week. Unfortunately, he cannot have any more chemo as he has already reached his limit. Please keep him and his family in your prayers as they face a very scary future.

Just an update about my brother, John and his wife, Yvonne. They returned to their home near Eugene, Oregon. They are staying in, windows closed, with the air conditioner on high. They're hoping the weather will improve with the winds dying down.

Thank you for continued prayers for so many affected by these west coast fires.

Pam

I received a phone call from Ellen Dean regarding Jo Harrington Ellen talked to Jo's daughter Noreen Slade. Noreen said her mother is doing well, but will remain at East Bank Rehab Center for at least another couple of weeks. This is good news, but please continue to pray for Jo's recovery.

We hope you will worship with us again.

Due to COVID-19, our physical building and office is closed but our mobile office is open Tuesday – Thursday - 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. You can call 779-444-0369, or email: Centennialumc.rockford@gmail.com if you need any assistance.

When you need to reach Pastor Uziel in the case of emergency, please contact him at 224-723-7003 or - centennialumc.pastor@gmail.com



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