
Graphics and Audio Notes

- There **will** be a sermon starter video.
- There **will** be notes and / or scripture to show on screen during the sermon.
- [Include other notes about graphics or media during the service here]



Text highlighted in this way have a slide prepared to be on screen.

Text highlighted in this way are a reminder for Andrew during delivery.

Text highlighted in this way are direction for Andrew during delivery.

Key Questions

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about neighboring and the importance of design and being free to fail.

Why is this sermon important?

It is important because when you design your calendar, home, and spiritual life you can be a good neighbor.

What is the good news?

The good news is that where two or three are gathered together, God is there.

What are the next action steps?

You are invited to be part of The Good Neighbor Experiment Lab.

What is the context of this sermon?

This is the second sermon in a series on neighboring. It utilizes material from NeighboringMovement.org

Metadata

Topics

- Share
- Share Christ

- Transformation of the World

Sermon Books of the Bible

- Acts

Tags

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, neighbor, neighboring, practice, community

Sermon Audio at 9 a.m. Worship

Sermon Audio at 11 a.m. Worship

Sermon Video

Promo Text / Series Introduction

Love your neighbor is a simple guide to living from Jesus, yet sometimes we struggle to live this way in our actual lives. During this worship series, you will be invited on a journey of spiritual formation, engaging your actual neighbors where you live and together we will begin to experience what it means for our congregation to be a good neighbor. Invite a friend to join you for worship at First United Methodist Church from October 22 to November 26 for The Good Neighbor Experiment.

Worship Planning Notes

Hook

- Jesus invites us to love our neighbor. Let's figure out how to do it together.

Objectives

- Spiritual formation
- Engaging our neighbors
- Being a good neighbor as a congregation

Tie-Ins

The Good Neighbor Experiment Practice Group

Sermon Titles, Scripture and Notes

| Date | Sermon Title | Scripture Text | Notes |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| October 22, 2017 | Why Neighbor? | Mark 12:28-34 | |
| October 29, 2017 | Community by Design | Acts 2:37-47 | |
| November 5, 2017 | Humble Servants | Matthew 23:1-12 | Guest Preacher, Andrew Present All Saints Day Daylight Savings Time Ends |
| November 12, 2017 | Asset Mapping | John 6:5-13 | |
| November 19, 2017 | Intro to Spiritual Formation | Galatians 5:22-23 | |
| November 26, 2017 | Celebrate Abundance | Luke 15:11-24 | United Methodist Student Day |

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Introduction

Acts 2:37-47, CEB

³⁷When the crowd heard this, they were deeply troubled. They said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

³⁸Peter replied, “Change your hearts and lives. Each of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹This promise is for you, your children, and for all who are far away—as many as the Lord our God invites.” ⁴⁰With many other words he testified to them and encouraged them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” ⁴¹Those who accepted Peter’s message were baptized. God brought about three thousand people into the community on that day.

⁴²The believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. ⁴³A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were united and shared everything. ⁴⁵They would sell pieces of property and possessions and distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them. ⁴⁶Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity.

⁴⁷They praised God and demonstrated God’s goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved.

Acts 2:37-47, NRSV

³⁷Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

³⁸Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” ⁴⁰And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴¹So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Response to Scripture

One: The word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

Design

The word “design” is pretty popular these days, and for good reasons!
People are discovering that the way something is designed has a big impact on if, how, and why we use it.

Definition of Design

When used as a verb, the word design means “to decide upon the look and functioning of (a building, garment, or other object), typically by making a detailed drawing of it.” A conversation about design can go a million directions.

To keep it simple, just bear in mind that almost everything you use on a daily basis was designed by a group of people.

From the buttons on the coffeemaker,
to the layout of your house,
to the layout of this sanctuary — it has all been designed.

Design Matters

Design impacts our lives every day and we can use design to actually change our lives - to help you become the person God desires you to be.

An intentional change can lead us in the direction we want to go.

Whether we want to exercise more,
pray regularly, or
be a better neighbor,

design can be a fulcrum point which helps us move, when our tendency is to simply stay where we are. Design can also work against us, which is why we must give it proper attention.

Design is one of the ingredients of being a good neighbor.

The Good Neighbor Experiment

The sermon today is part of The Good Neighbor Experiment worship series. During this series, we are focused on the simple guidance from Jesus to love our neighbor. We are part of a national neighboring movement which was started in Wichita by colleagues in The United Methodist Church. This sermon and series have been developed using their content from NeighboringMovement.org.

Transition

With that said, let’s explore the design utilized by the first Christians.

Transformative Design of the Early Church

Christianity has deep roots when it comes to design, probably because Jesus had a brilliant understanding of what it takes to transform a person’s heart.

Jesus and the Disciples

When it was time for the first disciples to discover a whole different way of living, they stepped out of the flow of their normal lives and went on a 3 year camping trip together. That might sound a little crazy to us, but at the time, it was customary to leave everything and follow a wise rabbi.

Pentecost

After the extended camping trip, Jesus' disciples eventually received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the church was born. In the early chapters of the book of Acts we gain an insight into the way the early Christians designed their lives to foster both community and transformation. Throughout Acts 2:37-47, we see some very important ideas.

Day of Pentecost

We see the lives of the disciples were compelling to the bystanders who were hearing about Jesus in their own language.

Furthermore, Peter gives a short sermon that portrays a clear picture of who God is and the type of life God is offering to humanity — it is a good life.

We need to note that a clear and compelling picture of the life we want to live will be essential to any life change we want to make.

Design of the Early Church

After Peter's sermon we get into the design of the early church.

We learn that they devoted themselves to:

the apostles' teaching,
fellowship,
the breaking of bread and prayers.

These activities stoked the fire of the Holy Spirit and changed the hearts and lives of those practiced them.

As they experience the astonishing love of God they go a step further, committing to this Way of life with design changes that make it easier for them to remain in the community and focused on the gospel. Here is what they did:

- Had all things in common
- Sold their possessions and goods and distributed the proceeds to all as any had need
- Spent much time together in the temple
- Broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts
- Praised God

And not surprisingly, in the midst of all of this, they had the goodwill of all the people!

Transition

They designed their lives in the way that helped them live as followers of Jesus Christ.

Neighboring Ingredients¹

During this worship series, we are taking a closer look at the Jesus command to love our neighbors – the actual people that live next to us.

Design is one of the key ingredients in neighboring and I want to remind you of the other neighboring ingredients with a very brief explanation.

Abundance

Abundance

Neighbors view the world with abundance over scarcity. The markers of abundance are joy, hope, optimism, and contentment – seeing the good in people and in events.

Gifts and Assets

Abundance

Gifts and Assets

Neighbors believe that all people have skills, talents, and assets. When we share our assets, we experience wholeness and the community gets stronger. In a world that usually focuses on needs, neighbors point to assets.

Design

Abundance

Gifts and Assets

Design

Neighbors design their homes, calendars, and relationships to create space for other people. Neighbors adjust their routines and rhythms to make neighboring the path of least resistance.

Free to Fail (Joy)

Abundance

Gifts and Assets

Design

Free to Fail (Joy)

Neighbors approach failure with joy. Failure is informative and helps shape what comes next. Neighbors are unafraid to try new things because they are free to fail.

Spiritual Formation

Abundance

Gifts and Assets

Design

Free to Fail (Joy)

Spiritual Formation

Neighbors prioritize their spiritual health so they can build healthy relationships with others. Spiritual formation helps us operate as people who are loved unconditionally, and who love others non-coercively.

¹ Adapted from The Good Neighbor Experiment Leaders Guide: Session 1.1 Why Neighbor?

Relationships

Abundance
Gifts and Assets
Design
Free to Fail (Joy)
Spiritual Formation
Relationships

Neighbors value meaningful relationships knowing that community is essential for health and happiness. This ingredient is essential, and for some people it will be the easiest and most obvious, while for others it may feel the most awkward.

Celebration

Abundance
Gifts and Assets
Design
Free to Fail (Joy)
Spiritual Formation
Relationships
Celebration

Neighbors celebrate often with gratitude, inviting others to join when possible. Celebration produces joy and aids us in the ability to be free to fail. Celebration recognizes abundance and encourages future experimentation.

Transition

You don't need to feel responsible for fully understand all of these ingredients. We will continue to consider them during this worship series and, at times, will focus on just a few of these ingredients.

Design Life with Others

Experience with Others

The Good Neighbor Experiment Lab

The Good Neighbor Experiment is meant to be experienced with other people, in community, and that is certainly by design. We have a group that will practice using these neighboring ingredients beginning this Thursday night at 6:30 p.m.

Wesley Small Groups

Our ongoing Wesley Small Groups are an example of this type of group, as well. They are designed to help you grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ as you worship, grow, give, serve, and share.

Transition

Lean on your community as part of the design so that you will succeed with the changes you desire. This is NOT a sign of weakness, it is the way we were created to operate.

This is where another ingredient of neighboring comes in - being free to fail.

Free to Fail

If you have had bad experiences with unhealthy small groups, you may have images of a small group of people sitting around condemning you, laying guilt on you, and shaming you because you have failed to live up to their golden standards — whatever those standards are. But being part of a small group and holding each other accountable does not have to be filled with judgment. It can be bound with love...

Commitment of a Healthy Group

When healthy groups gather, they are gathering because of a commitment to grow in love of God, love of self, and love of neighbors (put these 3 together and I would call it an abundant and eternal type of life).

Steps to Grow

There can be specific steps that the Holy Spirit invites the group to take to grow in these ways. Meeting regularly to share how you are doing with these steps, whether it is a certain type of prayer, being present to our neighbors, or looking through the lens of abundance.

Accountability and Checking In

It is a time of checking-in with each other. Amazingly, that is all it takes for there to be accountability.

On the occasions when someone is struggling or failing with a certain spiritual practice, then the others are committed to offering each other grace, forgiveness and care.

And the beautiful part is that when folks in a community offer grace to each other it creates a safe space to explore why this is happening.

Conclusion

Good News

The good news is that where two or three are gathered together, God is there.
When we gather here to worship, God is there.
When we meet with our neighbors, God is there.
When we gather in small groups, God is there.

Call to Action

So, I invite you to be part of the practice lab that will be taking these ingredients and putting them into action in El Dorado. Sign up online or call the church office and plan to be here on Thursday night to begin to practice being a good neighbor.

Invitation

Closing Prayer²

God of Connection,

Open our eyes to discover your treasures hidden among our neighbors.

Open our ears to listen deeply to their stories.

Open our hands to receive the giftedness they bring into our lives.

Stir our minds with curiosity about this wondrous world.

Lead our feet forward, moving only at the speed of trust.

Free our hearts to join the work you are already doing in our neighborhoods.

Plant the seeds of patience among us, as we learn to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Plant the seeds of grace among us, so failure leads us to your love.

Plant the seeds of community, that we would discover your kingdom among us.

² Adapted from The Good Neighbor Experiment Leaders Guide: Session 1.3 Community by Design.