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## 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.

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

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## Key Questions

### What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about spiritual formation and how to open ourselves to God's grace.

### Why is this sermon important?

It is important because when we care for our own spiritual life, we are able to more effectively love our neighbors and shine God's light.

### What is the good news?

The good news is that your identity is found in the light of God's unconditional love.

### What are the next action steps?

You are invited to pray, read the Bible, and love your neighbor.

### What is the context of this sermon?

This is the fifth sermon in a series on neighboring. It utilizes material from [NeighboringMovement.org](http://NeighboringMovement.org)

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## Metadata

### Topics

24th Sunday after Pentecost / in Kingdomtide [Green]

November 19, 2017

The Good Neighbor Experiment - Intro to Spiritual Formation

Galatians 5:22-23

First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

Preaching Target Word Count: 1,400

- Change Lives
- Grow
- Make Disciples

## **Sermon Books of the Bible**

- Galatians

## **Tags**

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, neighbor, neighboring, practice, community, spiritual, spirituality, spiritualformation, formation, discipline, spiritualdisciplines, grace, love, God

## **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

**Introduction** **6**

Galatians 5:22-23, CEB

Galatians 5:22-23, NRSV

Response to Scripture

Sermon Starter Video

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The Good Neighbor Experiment

**Neighboring Ingredients** **7**

Abundance

Gifts and Assets

Design

Free to Fail (Joy)

Spiritual Formation

Relationships

Celebration

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**Defining Spiritual Formation** **9**

You are Spiritual

Non-Physical = Spiritual

You are Being Formed

Personal Example

Psalm 23 Throughout the Day

Spiritual Formation and Design

You Make the Practices Spiritual

Holy Spirit Brings Transformation

Practices help us Surrender

Flashlight Example

Focus and Goal of Spiritual Formation are Not the Same

Trinity is the Focus

Still Ourselves + More Like Christ

Fruit of the Spirit + Neighboring Ingredients

Trouble of Focusing on the Goal instead of Practices

Flashlight Example: Just stay in the Light

## **Conclusion**

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Good News

Call to Action

Invitation

Closing Prayer

## Introduction

### Galatians 5:22-23, CEB

<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against things like this.

### Galatians 5:22-23, NRSV

<sup>22</sup>By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

## 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.

## Opening Story

[Text here]

### **Transition**

[Text here]

## 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](http://NeighboringMovement.org).

## Neighboring Ingredients<sup>1</sup>

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.

I want to remind you of the neighboring ingredients we have been considering during this series with a few words about each one.

### **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

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from The Good Neighbor Experiment Leaders Guide: Session 1.1 Why Neighbor?

**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.

***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.



## Defining Spiritual Formation<sup>2</sup>

### You are Spiritual

The word spiritual is very popular in Western culture these days -- and rightfully so. I am confident the popularity of the word is the result of our longing for greater depth than pop - culture can provide. Even so, the meaning can be difficult to tack down.

#### ***Non-Physical = Spiritual***

I find it most helpful to view the spiritual as this: the non - physical aspects of you. That's all. If something is a part of you and it isn't physical, then I would call it spiritual. This is broad but clear. The aspects of you that are spiritual include your: will, emotions, thoughts, desires, and soul.

### You are Being Formed

When talking about spiritual formation, we need to understand that the non - physical aspects of ourselves are all being shaped or formed all the time. The things that form us spiritually are the things we focus our attention upon. We become the thing we are constantly focused upon. This is why Jesus warns/promises us: where your treasure is, there will your heart be also [Matthew 6:21].

#### ***Personal Example***

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*We can see formation happening in harmful ways.*  
*If we consume terrifying news, we will become fearful people.*  
*If we consume hatred, we will become violent.*  
*If we consume scarcity, we will become greedy.*  
*And on and on.*

.....

#### ***Psalm 23 Throughout the Day***

We can also picture formation in life-giving ways. What if every advertisement, pop - up, and billboard you saw or heard for an entire day contained phrases from Psalm 23? Messages of provision, abundance, rest and giftedness. I believe such a steady stream of messages would have a tremendous impact on a person. Why? Because we are constantly being formed by the things we focus upon.

#### ***Spiritual Formation and Design***

This is where spiritual formation and design overlap. Our homes, our cars, our devices are designed to turn our focus to certain things. If we are unconscious of the thing we are being directed toward it can be shaping our very souls without us even knowing it.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from The Good Neighbor Experiment Block 1.5 Intro to Spiritual Formation

## You Make the Practices Spiritual

Throughout history, Christians have done certain practices, often called spiritual disciplines. We often think doing these practices will make us more spiritual, but actually it is the other way around:

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*If you do a practice so it will shape you, it is a spiritual practice.*

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Practices such as worship, study, small groups, prayer, meditation, and acts of service can all shape us. The surprising twist is that the we could also include less “religious” practices such as sleep, play, and slowing down. And in the context of the Good Neighbor Experiment, I would emphasize that celebration and neighboring are very important spiritual practices.

## Holy Spirit Brings Transformation

With all that being said, there is one element we must not overlook: the Holy Spirit is what breathes life into the spiritual practices. We can do the practices all we want and they can have a positive impact on us, but the deeper, inner transformation which is a hallmark of Christianity is a result of the Spirit’s power working through the practices to help us experience God’s love in a way that changes us.

### ***Practices help us Surrender***

The spiritual practices are a way in which we can surrender to the Holy Spirit. However, I will just warn you now, that when you are dancing with the Holy Spirit, it is the Spirit who will lead, so don’t be surprised when you feel like you are losing control, because you are. At times, giving control of our lives to the Holy Spirit will feel frightening, which is why Jesus describes discipleship with language such as “taking up your cross daily.” Our manufactured identity may be dying, but hold tight, the journey doesn’t stop there. Because...we are a resurrection people!

### ***Flashlight Example***

Spiritual Disciplines help us step into the light of God’s grace

They don’t turn the light on and off

They don’t show the light where to go.

## Focus and Goal of Spiritual Formation are Not the Same

I know this looks like semantics, but I promise it isn’t. By focus, I mean that which we are constantly turning our attention toward, the goal is what we want our spiritual formation to produce in our lives.

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*The focus of spiritual formation is the Trinity.*

*The goal of spiritual formation is to become people who are ground in the Trinity and bear the fruit of the Spirit.*

*If we keep our focus on the Trinity, the goal will be the natural result.*

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***Trinity is the Focus***

The Trinity is the focus, and by engaging in spiritual practices our intention is to follow the leading of the ever-flowing love, creativity, joy and mercy of the Trinity. We don't earn it, we experience it! In spiritual formation we turn our attention toward the Trinity so the Trinity can guide us moment by moment.

***Still Ourselves + More Like Christ***

In Christian spiritual formation, the goal is becoming more Christ-like. We are still our unique selves (we don't become Christ) and we live our lives with our families, doing our jobs, interacting with our neighbors, but we do all these things the same way Jesus would. We do all these things with greater and greater love.

***Fruit of the Spirit + Neighboring Ingredients***

Another description of a Christ - like person would be the fruit of the Spirit:

love,  
joy,  
peace,  
patience,  
kindness,  
generosity,  
faithfulness,  
gentleness, and  
self-control.

You may notice there is a lot of overlap between this list from Galatians 5, and many of the key ingredients of Neighboring Soup: abundance, joy, relationships, and freedom to fail.

***Trouble of Focusing on the Goal instead of Practices***

What often trips people up is focusing on the goal. In other words, we pay attention to whether or not we are becoming more Christ-like. This leaves the person endlessly looking at themselves. We start asking ourselves unhealthy questions such as, "Am I more loving today than I was yesterday?" or "I'm not as patient as Tony, am I doing something wrong?" etc. The remedy to this issue is simply to keep the Trinity as our focus, trust that as we do so our lives will bear the fruit of the Spirit.

***Flashlight Example: Just stay in the Light***

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**Conclusion<sup>3</sup>**

It is helpful to understand that spiritual practices can keep us in God's light throughout life's positive and negative events.

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*With both positive and negative experiences, we can return to a spiritual practice and rest in the light of God's love and provision for us.*  
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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from The Good Neighbor Experiment Block 1.5 Intro to Spiritual Formation

## Good News

The good news is that your identity is found in the light of God's unconditional love.

## Call to Action

A spiritual practice such as solitude or spiritual conversation, or worship or meditation, can be a space where you can give that energy back to God, remember who you are, and go on for the next day.

## Invitation

## Closing Prayer

Jesus, I am sorry for all the times in my life when I mess up.

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*And if anything comes to mind, ask God's forgiveness.*  
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Forgive me of my sin and all that I know is wrong.

Thank you that you died on the cross and rose for me.

I trust you with my life.

Help me receive your forgiveness.

Please fill me with your Spirit and help me to follow you.

In your holy name, Amen.