

## **Stewardship Program**

### **Sacred Hospitality**

#### **Overview**

This four-week Stewardship program focuses on how resources, financial and human, are enlivened through the transformational power of Sacred Hospitality. Sacred Hospitality is not just being “friendly” if a stranger happens to come through the church door. It is how we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, open the “doors” of our self to embrace and transform others, those familiar as well as stranger, through our mutual encounter with the Spirit of God. Sacred hospitality is an intentional reaching out to welcoming all people with the transformational grace and mercy of Jesus Christ in the church, our local community, and the world.

This four-week program utilizes four separate scriptures that, each week, leads the congregation to reflect on how they, individuals, and congregation, are empowered as Disciples of Sacred Hospitality. The resources that individuals, and cumulatively as a congregation offer can empower the congregation to be empowered, through Sacred Hospitality, to transform people’s lives.

#### ***Theme***

Discipleship of Sacred Hospitality: Encountering the Spirit of Transformation through the Extravagant Welcome of Jesus Christ.

Discipleship of Sacred Hospitality’s mission (purpose/vision) is, through our ministry and outreach, to actively engage Christ’s extravagant and transformational welcome within our community and throughout the world.

Through our Discipleship of Sacred Hospitality, we have and continue to encounter the transformational Spirit of Jesus Christ through us, others, community and the future.

#### **Scripture**

Mark 9:37 – “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

## Stewardship Presentation

### Week 1

**Us:** Abram meeting God through visitors (We encounter God/Christ through our hospitality to the stranger/alien/outsider)

Scripture reading – Genesis 18

Song – Change – Carrie Underwood

#### Transformation in Us

#### Genesis 18

The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup>He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. <sup>3</sup>He said, “My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. <sup>4</sup>Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. <sup>5</sup>Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” <sup>6</sup>And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.” <sup>7</sup>Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. <sup>8</sup>Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. <sup>9</sup>They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” <sup>10</sup>Then one said, “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.”

**Reflection:** *In this story, it is Abram and Sarai’s hospitality to the travelers that transformed their lives. The travelers happen to be messenger’s (angels) of God. Hospitality to the stranger, no matter who, is always a transformational encounter with God and Jesus Christ. Through our resources we open the door (to the building and our hearts) and set the table (to feed body and soul) that invites, welcomes and ultimately embraces as family the transformational sojourner Jesus Christ. What seemed to be impossible and unmovable, through subtle hospitality, the simple gift of giving, transformation, change, the impossible can happen. Listen to the words of Carrie Underwood’s song “Change”, how the world says fool to those who believe change can happen. But Sara laughed and the world was changed, through a simple welcome.*

#### Change

#### Carrie Underwood

What'cha gonna do with the thirty six cents  
Sticky with coke on your floorboard  
When a woman on the street is huddled in the cold  
On a sidewalk bench trying to keep warm  
Do you call her over hand her the change  
Ask her a story ask her her name  
Or do you tell yourself

You're just a fool  
Just a fool  
To believe you can change the world

What'cha gonna do when you're watching t.v.  
And an ad comes on  
Yeah you know the kind  
Flashin' up pictures of a child in need  
For a dime a day you can save a life  
Do you call the number reach out a hand  
Or do you change the channel call it a scam  
Or do you tell yourself

You're just a fool  
Just a fool  
To believe you can change the world  
Don't listen to them when they say  
You're just a fool  
Just a fool  
To believe you can change the world  
Oh the smallest thing can make all the difference

Love is alive  
Don't listen to 'em when they say  
You're just a fool  
Just a fool  
To believe you can change the world  
And the world's so big it can break your heart  
And you just wanna help  
Not sure where to start  
So you close your eyes  
And send up a prayer into the dark

You're just a fool  
Just a fool  
To believe you can change the world  
Don't listen to them when they say  
You're just a fool  
Just a fool  
To believe you can change the world  
Oh the smallest thing can all the difference  
Love is alive  
Don't listen to them when they say

*Our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ is not only to welcome the stranger but, empowered by the Spirit, change people's lives in the name of Jesus Christ. Such Sacred Hospitality requires not only our selves but the financial resources to support, enhance and empower this mission.*

## Stewardship Presentation Week 2

**Others:** The Magi meeting Christ at the manger (Other people's lives are transformed through their encounter with us in hospitality)

Scripture reading – Matthew 2

Song – Shining Shine – Earth Wind and Fire

### Transformation of Others

#### Matthew 2

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

**Reflection:** *The light of the stars has always led people, world travelers or spiritual sojourners. The Magi are spiritual sojourners, searching for this place where God touches the world. When they encounter Christ, their lives are transformed, they return a different way. Our ministry of Sacred Hospitality embodies the transformational presence of Christ with the people we embrace in our community. Through hospitality we are not only the shining star that welcomes others but also we empower people with the transformational star of Christ in their lives.*

#### Shining Star

#### Earth, Wind & Fire

When you wish upon a star  
Your dreams will take you very far  
But when you wish upon a dream  
Life ain't always what it seems  
What'd you see on a night so clear  
In the sky so very dear

You're a shining star  
No matter who you are

Shining bright to see  
What you could truly be (what you could truly be)

Shining star come in to view  
Shine its watchful light on you  
Give you strength to carry on  
Make your body big and strong

Born a man child of the sun  
Saw my work had just begun  
Found I had to stand alone  
Bless it now I've got my own  
So, if you find yourself in need

Why don't you listen to these words of heed

Be a giant grain of sand  
Words of wisdom, yes I can

You're a shining star  
No matter who you are  
Shining bright to see  
What you could truly be

You're a shining star  
No matter who you are  
Shining bright to see  
What you could truly be

You're a shining star  
No matter who you are  
Shining bright to see

What you could truly be  
Shinning star for you to see  
What your life can truly be  
Shinning star for you to see  
What your life can truly be  
Shinning star for you to see  
What your life can truly be

*The sojourner encounters the transformational Spirit of Christ through our Sacred Hospitality, through the light of Christ, shining through us. Through worship, congregational gatherings, Sunday School experience and the many Bible and faith development programs the congregation (the stable) has the Spirit of Christ to extravagantly welcome and transform, give the gift of the light of Christ, to the sojourner's life. Through our extravagant and sacred financial and volunteer commitment, such ministry will continue and grow in the name of Jesus Christ.*

## Stewardship Presentation Week Three

**The Community:** Christ's extravagant welcome to the Kin-dom of God (our call is to go out to the world)

Scripture reading – Matthew 25:31 –

Song – Cries of the City – Avion Blackman

### Community

#### Matthew 25:37-46

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' 40And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' 41Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; 42for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' 45Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

*Jesus did not have a mailing address. His ministry was not confined to a single location or within the walls of a building. His invitation to discipleship was always, "come and follow me." Ministry was always "out there" wherever the needs of humanity and Jesus' ministry meets. In this reading Jesus makes it vividly clear that Sacred Hospitality is desperately needed in the wider community (outside the walls of the church). Sacred Hospitality is a place where healing, compassion, hope, love, and acceptance is always experienced; where healthy and safe companionship and community is assured; where physical needs of food, shelter and clothing are met; where human integrity and God's peace and justice is for all people/all of God's children. Sacred Hospitality is to hear the voices, the cries of all humanity, to hear the cries of the city.*

### Cries of the City

Avion Blackman

I woke up early in the morning  
The sun was glaring in my eyes  
The sirens crying in the city  
They're off to save another life  
They cry woe, is anybody listening?

They cry woe, does anybody hear?  
They cry woe, is anybody listening?  
They scream woe, does anybody care?  
My next door neighbor has a baby  
She is only 6 months old  
She cries all night, it drives me crazy  
Whenever she's hungry, dirty or she's cold  
She cries woe, is anybody listening?  
She cries woe, does anybody care?

She cries woe, I need someone's attention  
To rescue me from such despair  
A million voices in the city  
And they're singing the same song  
Lonely hearts in desperation  
Searching for strength to carry on  
You see everyone's longing for affection  
It's something we rarely do receive  
We just want to be wanted  
To be loved, it is all that we need  
We cry woe, is anybody listening?  
We cry woe, does anybody care?  
We cry woe, I need someone to save me  
And rescue me from such despair  
Is there anybody there to hear them calling?  
Is there anybody there to hear them cry?  
Is there anybody there to hear them calling?  
He is there with you, He is there with you  
He is there with you, He hears your cries  
He is there with you and He'll never leave you  
He is there with you  
You see the preacher on the corner  
He stands there every afternoon  
He reads his Bible and tries to warn ya  
That the Lord is coming soon.

*Sacred Hospitality is to follow Jesus "out there" wherever the needs of humanity and Jesus call of "come follow me" meets: "as you have done to the least of these you have done unto me" becomes a reality through Sacred Hospitality. Our financial and volunteer resources empowers our ministry to go out there with Jesus to meet the needs of the community.*

## Stewardship Presentation Week 4

**The Future:** Hospitality is to care for the world. How do we go out into the world to experience sacred hospitality?

Scripture reading – Isaiah 65:17

Song – From a Distance – Nancy Griffith

### The Future

#### Isaiah 65:17-18

17For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. 18But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.

*Alone, we cannot change the world. A cynic would say “who cares”. A narcissist would say “only for me”. Faithless “why try”. This reading’s images project an eternally hopeful perspective that what we do here is a piece to the larger picture. (Kingdom of God). Sacred Hospitality is a ministry of presence, whether next door or across the ocean. No one is ever alone, no part of creation is expendable, no life is insignificant.*

#### From a Distance

[Nanci Griffith](#)

From a distance the world looks blue and green  
And the snow-capped mountains white  
From a distance the ocean meets the stream  
And the eagle takes to flight  
From a distance there is harmony  
And it echoes through the land  
It's the voice of hope, it's the voice of peace  
It's the voice of every man  
From a distance we all have enough  
And no one is in need  
There are no guns, no bombs, no diseases  
No hungry mouths to feed  
From a distance we are instruments  
Marching in a common band  
Playing songs of home, playing songs of peace  
They're the songs of every man  
God is watching us, God is watching us  
God is watching us from a distance  
From a distance you look like my friend

Even though we are at war  
From a distance I can't comprehend  
What all this war is for  
From a distance there is harmony  
And it echoes through the land  
It's the hope of hopes, it's the love of loves  
It's the heart of every man  
It's the hope of hopes, It's the love of loves  
It's the song of every man

*The world is God's, it is sacred and all that exists is sacred also. Sacred Hospitality assures that no one is never insignificant, no part of creation is expendable, but will be cared for with the utmost of integrity, as God cares for us with such divine integrity. Our financial and volunteer resources extends our ministry and mission into areas and ways well beyond our vision but into the hands of God's Spirit.*