Worship In The Round
Wesley Hall
September 14, 1997

9:55 a.m.

**PRELUDE MUSIC**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

O'come, let us sing unto the Lord,
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving;
and show ourselves glad in him with psalms;
and we are the people of his pasture and
the sheep of his hand. Praise ye the Lord.

**PRAISE TEAM / PRAISE SONGS:**

What a Mighty God We Serve
How Great Thou Art
(See the rightmost column for lyrics)

**SINGING TOGETHER**

#5 And We Worship You
#43 Spirit Song

**PRAYER TIME**

Sharing our Concerns & Praise Prayer
Call to Prayer
Pastoral Prayer
Greetings

**PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**SHALOM TIME**

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*NEW TESTAMENT LESSON*  James 3:1-12

(responsively)

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers,
because you know that we who teach will be judged more
strictly. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at
fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his
whole body in check.

When we put bits into the mouths of horses
to make them obey us, we can turn the whole
animal, or take ships as an example. Although they
are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are
steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants
them to go.

Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes
great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a
small spark. The tongue is also a fire, a world of evil among
the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the
whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and creatures of the
sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man,
but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of
deadly poison.

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and
with it we curse men, who have been made in God's
likeness.

Out of the same mouth comes praise and cursing. My
brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt
water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree
bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt
spring produce fresh water.
Small Sparks & Forest Fires

Proclaimer: Katurah Worrill Johnson
Date: Sunday, September 14, 1997, 9:55 a.m.
Temple: Worship in the Round, Wesley Hall
College Avenue United Methodist Church

Text: "Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark." James 3:5b

Pericope: James 3:1-12

Behavioral Purpose: To move the hearers to recognize the power of their tongue and to consciously use small sparks to create rather than destroy.

I. Introduction: Sticks and Stones

II. Small Sparks of Ill-Spoken words

III. Small Sparks of A Dreamer

IV. Small Sparks of The Creative Tongue
    In the Beginning... Created in His Image

V. Choose the day to Sow Seeds of Faith
Small Sparks & Forest Fires

I. Introduction: Sticks and Stones

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me." I was a child when I was first told these words. I was then told to repeat these words. "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me."

I was then expected to believe these words. And I did. So much so, I found myself speaking those words to other children, and yes even to my own child.

Now that I know better, now that I am wiser, looking back I'm certain that the intention was to make sure that I would not fight; that I would assume a posture of non-violence. When other children mocked my brown skin and my curly hair, I looked at them and wondered about my own self-worth.

I looked at them and they were quite different; fair skin, straight, blond hair. And although I was told that I was a child of GOD, created in His image, and that GOD makes only masterpieces, I wondered, "Am I just as good as they, even though I'm different."

A few years later, in another place, in another state, I found myself in the company of children whose skin was brown like mine, whose hair was similar to mine, but they too mocked me. They made fun of the way I talked. You see I was born in San Antonio, Texas, lived there until I was 5; then attended 1st-3rd grades in Hawaii. I delect was quite different from children born and bred in Georgia.

Those who didn't make fun of my speech made fun of my stature and called "Tree Top." I nickname that detested. Again I
was told: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me."

Again I was assured that GOD doesn't make messes only masterpieces, and that those who mocked me and made fun of me were jealous. The bottom line was that the words they spoke was not reason enough to fight, nor were they reason enough to allow my feelings to be hurt.

It was not until much later, that I realized that these words of advice were not words of wisdom. I realized that the intention was most likely not only to keep me from fighting, but also to help me accept the fact the I had no control over what another person says. I know that I reflect upon these matters I can say even the advise may not have been sound, and for the most part, I didn't fight much, I knew that more times than not, the tongue was small member that could bless and curse all in the same breath.

This little snap shot out of my experience is probably universal. Each and every one of you can remember a time that words hurt.

II. Small Sparks of Ill-Spoken Words

Ill-spoken words can ruin a person's reputation. Ill-spoken words have sparked many fights and ignited many wars. Ill-spoken words have been small sparks that have pitted brother against brother, sister against sister, colleague against colleague, and have sparked legal suits, the had to be settled by judge & jurors.

You'd think that a picture speak a thousand words, but it's the words, the caption above the paparazzi snapshot that closes the sell of tabloid newspapers to inquiring minds.
Remember Adolph Hitler, a man who dropped out of school, but rose to position of political and military dictatorship in Germany, spewing words of hate: 6 million Jews killed; words of war: nations of the world took sides; Words spoken, 3 score years ago (though Hitler is long dead) the seeds he planted yeilds hatred today: skin-heads & cowards in white sheets, swasticas spray painted on public property is the evidence of the destructive power of the tongue, words spoken outlives the speaker.

Small sparks of the past set Forest Fires today.

III.  Small Sparks of A Dreamer

Remember Martin Luther King. Born in America; Land of the Free. And because of his African heritage, he was incarcerated along with a nation of African Americans, socially, economically, politically by signs of "whites only," sometimes posted and most times understood -- an unspoken law. Dr. King whose, tongue spoke Small Sparks that set separation ablaze, bringing the walls of separation. Dr. King a Drum Major for Justice, a Prophet who proclaimed the love of Christ whose Dream of a world free of racism is a Dream that is yet to come to full fruition.

Why? One reason is that we must invite the power of GOD's word into our hearts. The news headlines is a testimony of the we are yet to live the Dream. Small Sparks & Forest Fires.

IV. Small Sparks of the Creative Power of the Tongue
In the Beginning . . . Created in His Image

Remember we were created in GOD's image. GOD whose tongue was the creative force that brought the universe into the being. The Creative GOD of whom we were created.
"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with GOD... The Word was made flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1:1,14) "In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), GOD spoke, off of his tongue rolled small sparks, words, that created order out of chaos. GOD spoke, his words set on fire the course of nature:

* light and darkness were separated;
* waters in one place, dry land in another;
* producing vegetation, seed-bearing plants of various types;
* marking seasons, days and years;
* creating great creatures of the sea and the air.

God spoke, his words set on fire the course of humankind, created in their image, their likeness. And all was good.

In the image of GOD we were created, with tongues that have the power to create, to cultivate, to encourage on the one hand, or tongues that have that have the power to divide, to destroy and to undermine.

What about you? What kind of forest fires has your tongue sparked lately?

Have the small sparks of your tongue brought discord, disharmony, distrust in your household, lately?

Have the small sparks of your tongue encouraged your spouse of your love -- affirmed in your child that he/she is loved, that you are proud of him/her.

Have the small sparks of your tongue bound up the demonic spirits of hate, depression, sickness, and loosed and released love, peace of mind and healing within your life.

If you faced the Master today, would the testimony of your tongue condemn to death or lift to everlasting life.

The small sparks of your tongue will tell the story.
Worship In The Round
Wesley Hall
October 12, 1997 9:55 a.m.

Prelude Music

*Call to Worship
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?
Though a host should encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear; though war should
rise against me, in this I will be confident/
Wait on the Lord: Be of Good Courage,
and he shall strengthen thine heart:
WAIT I SAY, WAIT ON THE LORD.

**Praise Team / Praise Songs:
Let's Just Praise the Lord
Let's just praise the Lord
Praise the Lord
Let's just lift our hearts toward Heaven
And praise the Lord.
(repeat)

When I Look Into Your Holiness
When I look into your holiness
When I gaze into your loveliness
When all things that surround me become
shadows in the light of you.

Worship In The Round
Wesley Hall
October 12, 1997 9:55 a.m.

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WAIT I SAY, WAIT ON THE LORD.

**Praise Team / Praise Songs:
Let's Just Praise the Lord
Let's just praise the Lord
Praise the Lord
Let's just lift our hearts toward Heaven
And praise the Lord.
(repeat)

When I Look Into Your Holiness
When I look into your holiness
When I gaze into your loveliness
When all things that surround me become
shadows in the light of you.

When I found the joy of reaching your heart
When my will becomes enthralled in your love
When all things that surround me become
shadows in the light of you
I worship you
I worship you
The reason I live
Is to worship you
(repeat)

*Opening Prayer

*Singing Together
#18 His Name is Wonderful

Prayer Time
Sharing our Concerns & Praise Prayer
Call to Prayer
Pastoral Prayer

Parish Announcements

*Shalom Time
When is Good not Good Enough?

Proclaimer: Katurah Worrill Johnsn
Date: October 12, 1997
Place & Time: 9:55 Worship in the Round, CAC

Text: Mark 10:21: Jesus looked at him and loved him. . . .

Scripture Mark 10:17-31 The Story of the Rich Man

Behavioral Purpose: To move the hearers to understand that goodness is not enough, we are saved only through the grace of God.

I. INTRODUCTION: A Gathering of Theologians

II. He looked at him and loved him.

III. Between 2 Crosses

IV. Through the eyes of Jesus
WHEN IS GOOD IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH?

I. INTRODUCTION: A Gathering of Theologians

A number of years ago, there gathered in Britain, a group of theologians, some were pastors, others were professors, authors, scholars, all were deep thinkers in the area of sacred writings, particularly the Holy Scriptures.

They held firm opinions, ideologies, philosophies. They gathered to do some GOD-Talk -- to talk about the nature of GOD and humanity, the distinctiveness and the commonalities of the religions of the world.

The primary mystery that they sought understanding was this: What was Christianity's unique contribution among the world religions? They debated, discussed, developed arguments, and dissected concepts.

After some time, C. S. Lewis walked in, and asked, What's the rumpus about?

Lewis' response to the question that these fellows had spent so much time debating was instantaneous and simple. He said, "Oh, that's easy. It's grace.

Those who had gathered considered this simple 5-lettered word for a brief time longer and soon they brought their Great Debate to an end? How do you suppose it ended?

They all agreed. They all had to agree. No other religion, theology, philosophy had any thing like the thing called grace.

The notion of a GOD's love coming to us free of charge with no strings attached is contrary to our every instinct.

After all, we are a merit-driven, award-giving, want-to-be-seen, gotta-be-recognized generation.

GRACE doesn't fit, it doesn't compute.
II. He looked at him and loved him

Although the word grace is not mentioned, grace is a key element in this story of the Rich Man. Grace is the answer to the question: When is good not good enough? Never.

The grace is manifested through the eyes of Jesus. Jesus looked at the Rich Man who was a Good Man and loved him; loved him with unmerited love, with unconditional love.

Even before the Rich Man responded to what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus knew his heart.

Yes, He saw the goodness. But he also saw that the Rich Man coveted not GOD but he coveted the power and the prestige that came with his wealth. His money had become his god.

Therefore his goodness was not good enough. But Jesus loved him any way. GOD says (Jeremiah) that the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Only I, the Lord search the heart. Jeremiah 17:9,10

Does that mean that trying to be good is useless? No. What this means is that unless we invite the love of Christ into our hearts then everything we do is nothing it's loud like a resounding gong and is noisy like a clanging cymbal.

The gospel of grace is the Good News brought to us by Jesus himself. And it is through His (the) eyes (of Jesus), that GOD is able to look us and love us unconditionally.

I once heard Jesus described as a prism through whom GOD is able to look at humanity and love us inspite of ourselves.

Through the eyes of Jesus, we recieve GOD's grace & mercy.
Notice how the Rich Man approaches Jesus. Dressed in his expensive clothes, he has a sense of confidence -- confident in his own self worth because he has kept the law, he is a good man. The vision that came to mind when he called him Good Teacher was that of a politician, whose intention was to flatter Jesus, win his good favor through flowery words & flattery.

Why? With Power & Prestige comes the art of persuasion. And especially because wealth was considered GOD's reward for being a good person, the Rich Man has a skewed view of himself. He sees himself on this same level as Christ.

In other words, by addressing Jesus Good Teacher, he was exalting himself equal to stature with Jesus. Jesus sees straight through him.

The Bible says the that Word of GOD is sharper than a two-edged-sword, able to penetrate, divide, judge the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Jesus is the Word. Through his eyes nothing is hidden from God's sight. (Hebrews 4:12-16)

Notice the Rich Man doesn't call him Jesus, Son of David as the Blind Bartimaeus does. Nor does he call him Jesus, Son of the Most High GOD, as the Demon-possessed Man does. Nor does is simply say, Teacher, as does the his Disciples, or the Pharisees.

And of course Jesus pierces the attitude of the Rich Man's heart and by asking, Why do you call me good? No one is good -- except GOD alone.

Looking through the eyes of Jesus, what would GOD see if he were to look at you at this moment? Would he see the shallowness of a good person and an uncircumcised heart?
Paul talks about circumcision of the heart but I just learned that it is first mentioned in the OLD TESTAMENT. Circumcision is a covenant, therefore a circumcised heart means to love and to serve GOD from your heart.

III. Between 2 Crosses

Remember the crucifixion scene. Jesus facing death had been betrayed by 1 disciple, abandoned by 10 disciples. Between 2 crosses He hung.

On one side of him hung a Thief. The Thief looked at the bruised and battered man hanging next to him. Somehow he was able to see in Jesus Divine Love. The Thief was willing to place his trust in him. He asks Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." (Luke 23:42)

Jesus promises him life eternal in paradise. Through the His eyes, Jesus was able to look beyond the sins he had committed. Thus, the Thief was saved by the grace of GOD.

That group of theologians realized that unlike Christianity, all those other religions, was based on some process to earn approval.

The Buddhist has the eightfold path, the Hindu has the doctrine of karma, the Jew has the covenant of Moses, and the Muslim has the code of law. Only the Christian, You and I, are seen through the eyes of Jesus, and are loved unconditionally, given life eternally -- it's called grace.

Jesus talked about grace often, rarely using the word. Consider the prodigal child, the runaway who rejects all that you have taught and all that you stand for to live a life that is completely opposite from what you believe is right.
But through the eyes of Jesus the child who returns home and because the father, or mother, has a circumcised heart, the child is welcomed back home with a banquet, without questions, without condemnation, and without explanations.

Consider the man possessed by the demon of alcoholism, abuses both wife and children, through the eyes of Jesus, the man is made whole, freed from sins.

What about the woman, who had was an outcast because she had had several husbands, through the eyes of Jesus, she hears the gospel of grace, goes to the townsfolk had never given the time of day, and preached the message of grace -- a message so powerful the hearts of people were changed. They were saved for GOD was able to look at them through the eyes of Jesus.

If were left up to any one of us, when asked what one must do to be given eternal life? We'd most likely say, "Be good."

But the life and ministry of Jesus teaches us differently. We must cry, Have mercy on me, O GOD, according to you unfailing love, and your great compassion. Blot out my transgressions, cleanse me of my sins and create in me a pure heart.

And because the GOD we serve is a GOD of unconditional love who looks at us through the eyes of Jesus we are saved by grace.
Worship In The Round
Wesley Hall
October 28, 1997 9:55 a.m.

PRELUDE MUSIC

**PRAISE TEAM / PRAISE SONGS
We Have Come Into This House
We have come into this house and gathered in His name to worship Him.
(repeat)
We have come into His house and gathered in His name to worship Christ the Lord.
Worship Him, Christ the Lord.
So forget about yourself and concentrate on Him and worship Christ the Lord.
Worship Him, Christ the Lord.
Blessed Be the Name of the Lord
Blessed be the name of the Lord
He is worthy to be praised and adored.
So we lift up holy hands on one accord
Singing, blessed be the name,
Blessed be the name,
Blessed be the name of the Lord
(Repeat)

(Chorus) You are the potter,
I am the clay.
Mold me and make me,
This is why I pray.
Change my heart O God,
Make it ever true.
Change my heart O God,
May I be like You.

RESPONSIVE READING (reading together)
Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come and my righteousness to be revealed.
Everyone that keepeth My covenant, even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.

*OPENING PRAYER
#45 There's Something About That Name

*SINGING TOGETHER
#37 More Precious Than Silver

PRAYER TIME
Sharing our Concerns & Praise Prayer
Call to Prayer
Pastoral Prayer

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

*SHALOM

*GOSPEL LESSON  Mark 10:46-52
Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is the son of Timeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"
Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"
Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."
So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you."
Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.
"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.
The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."
"Go," said Jesus, "Your faith has healed you."
Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

SPECIAL MUSIC   Amazing Grace
Sarah Warnes, flutist
Donna Kiefert, piano

THE GOOD NEWS   "Blind and Begging"
Pastor Katurah Johnson

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS
Offertory
Offertory Prayer

*CLOSING HYMN
#24 I Only Want to Love You

*BENEDICTION

*Congregation standing, for who are able
**Congregational welcome, and join the singing as
Blind and Begging

Proclaimer: Katurah Worrill Johnson

Service: 9:55 a.m., Worship in the Round
Wesley Fellowship Hall
College Avenue UMC

Date: October 26, 1997

Pericope: Mark 10-46-52

Text: Mark 10:59
"Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus."

Behavioral Purpose: To move the hearers to cast off restrictions that keep them from seizing the opportunity to face Jesus.

Introduction:

I. Bartimaeus: Non-Person, Blind & Begging
II. The Crowd: Thrill-Seekers, Cold & Uncaring
III. Out-shouting Naysayers
IV. Casting-Off Cloaks & Dismantling Mantles
V. The Good News: Ain't too Proud to Beg
I. Bartimaeus: Non-Person, Blind & Begging

Bartimaeus. The Blind Bartimaeus, whose name means the Son of Timaeus. Thus he lacks his own identity. The Begging Bartimaeus: physically handicapped, visually impaired, socially rejected, religiously outcasted & poverty struck.

This nameless bum, blind & begging, is completely disenfranchised, he's a non-person, whose inability to see was considered to be a curse of GOD, relegating him impure & unclean by both the good people of the neighborhood and by persons in the faith community.

II. The Crowd: Thrill-Seekers, Cold & Uncaring

Picture the scene, Jesus flanked by people who wanted to travel in his inner circle. This crowd considered themselves persons of privilege & prestige who were cold & uncaring, who wanted the beggers among them to be quiet, so that they could be ignored. Today, we call people who follow the rich & famous groupies who are driven by selfish motives.

The season was the annual pilgrimage of Jews to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Because of the signs of wonders witnessed by the people, Jesus had become a magnet, and a large crowd followed him.

The stories of miraculous healings, storms quieted, and the restoration of life to the lifeless had preceded him. If these events occurred today, Jesus would be hounded by CNN, NBC, CBS, & the paparazzi.

The crowd was constantly present & persistently desiring to be entertained by the Miracle Worker, had reached a fever-pitched level. They were mostly thrill-seekers, who wanted the exclusive attention of Jesus, Son of David.
Thus the crowd were vexed at the sight of a non-person, a blind bum, begging to be heard, shouting to be seen by Jesus.

The crowd tried to shut him up. "Be quiet" they told him. But the sightless man had the spiritual insight to know that Jesus was more than a prophet, a priest, a pastor, but sensed that as the Son of David, he was the long-awaited Savior.

III. Out shouting Naysayers

Blind & Begging, Bartimaeus could not & would not be silenced. He shouted louder, out-shouting the nay-sayers, the pompus leaders, the would-be socialites, the pious church folk. He shouted all the more, refusing to be relegated to the shadows of the passing crowd. He was determined to seize the moment to have a personal encounter with the Jesus.

How do you handle the naysayers in your life? Do you validate them by listening? Those well-meaning persons who always speak words of discouragement rather than words of encouragement; those who speak words of doom & despair rather than words of optimism & assurance? Or do you silence them? Do you out shout them?

Bartimaeus was steadfast and determined. So above the noise and excitement, Jesus hears the cry of the lonely and pitiful man.

At this point in his ministry, Jesus who is acutely aware that his days are numbered. Afterall, He was on the road that would soon lead to his own suffering, his own rejection, his own death.

But Praise GOD that Jesus hears the cry of the down & out, the last and the least, the lost and the unloved. Just as He heard the cries 2,000 years ago, and because He lives, He hears the cries, those who are not too-proud to beg, today.
Yes, Jesus hears the cry of the Blind and Begging Man. Jesus stops and calls the man to come to him.

IV. The Casting-off Cloaks & Dismantling Mantles

Bartimaeus does a curious thing. When he hears that Jesus had heard his cry and has asked that he come to him, Bartimaeus throws off his cloak, an outer garment called a mantle used not only to protect the wearer from the weather but to sleep under. Often the mantle of a poor person could be used as collateral. This poor begger throws his cloak aside.

*What does this mean? Could this mean that we too must cast off our cloaks to meet Jesus?*

For Bartimaeus, throwing off his cloak, meant exposing himself, his frail existence to the world that had rejected him. For Bartimaeus it meant sacrificing the single thing that has value so that he may meet Jesus, just as he was.

I suspect that his cloak provided him protected from the stones that heartless people would throw at him. His cloak provided him a place of refuge when the proud looked down upon him is scorn. His cloak provided him solitude when he wanted to cry.

So what does throwing off one's cloak, casting one's outer-garment aside mean for us today? What are our mantles, the outer garments that we cover ourselves with?

Casting off our cloaks means sacrificing our "I'm in control attitude."

Throwing aside our cloaks means to dismantle our mentality that "I am the master of my destiny."

Our cloaks may be the security of financial independence, a security that fails to fill a spiritual void in our lives.
For those in abusive relationships, our cloak may be defining our
self in terms of our abuser. So casting off that cloak means to be
defined by our own selves.

What is your cloak that covers you, keeping you separated from
wholeness and healing? Is your mantle keeping you from experiencing the fullness of GOD's love in Jesus Christ?

V. The Good News: Ain't to Proud to Beg

Bartimaeus siezed the moment. A Blind Man was not too
proud to beg the Savior of the World. And the One, who was

"anointed to preach the good news to the poor,
and to proclaim freedom for the prisoners,
recovery of sight for the blind
and release of the oppressed..." (Luke 4:18),

hears and responds to the cry of those in pain.

How many of you know the hymn Just as I am. Charlotte Elliott
writer of this hymn, covered herself with a cloak of depression, self-pity & anger. She had lived a carefree life in early 19th century England. She was young, talented & popular. Then she was stricken at the age of 30 with rapidly failing health, and became a bed-ridden invalid.

Then she heard the good news of Jesus witnessed by a Swiss Evangelist. He told her:

"You must come just as you are, a sinner, to the Lamb of GOD, that taketh away the sin of the world."

She lived until she was 82 years old never regaining her health and enduring much pain.

From that point on, she celebrated life, life in the fullness of GOD's grace.
He knows, she said, He alone knows my fight against overpowering weakness.
He knows my resolve not to give into depression and the desire to give up hope,
for He sees me, guides me, guards me. His grace surrounds me, & His voice continually bids me to be happy & holy,
in His service just as I am.

Hymn #
Just as I am:
without one pleas, but that thy blood was shed for me,
and tht thou bidst me come to thee,

and waiting not, to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,

though tossed about with many a conflict,
many a doubt, fightings and fears within, without,

poor, wretched, blind, sight, riches,
healing of the mind, ye, all I need inthee to find,

thou wilt receive, wilt come, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
because thy promise I believe,

thy love unknown hath broken every barrier down,
now, to be thine, yea, thine alone,

O Lamb of GOD, I come, I come.
APPENDIX B:

BARBARA ALLEN'S
STATEMENT OF FAITH
TO: Committe on Pastor Parish Relation  
FROM: Barbara Allen

I am requesting recommendation for certification as a Declared Candidate for the Ordained Ministry of the United Methodist Church.

I hereby state that I know God as a pardoning God and I do have the love of God abiding within me.

I do desire to be as true and wholly perfect in that love as it is humanly possible to be, in conversation and through a living example.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He gave His life to pardon my sins. I have the faith to love, trust and obey Him.

I believe that faith in Christ is required for salvation, but faith without work or action is liken unto a child that is (beautiful and glorious to behold) not allowed to mature. This is faith that never reaches the full potential of what could be on of God's shining victories.

The past eighteen months I have served as a certified Lay Speaker for a small rural church (that did not have membership or finances to support a part-time minister) with an average attendance of five.
One year later, one Sunday in April (by the grace of God) there were thirteen (both adults and children) baptized. The average attendance is now twenty (some Sundays there are forty in attendance).

I have come to the realization (I have been accepted by Jesus Christ and have been pardoned for any sins committed against God and my fellow man) that I have been saved by grace and all is well with my world, and for the rest of my life not only do I have a Savior, but I also have a blessed friend.

I realize that I have never had an earth quake kind of experience in my calling to be a servant of the gospel of Christ. It was a slow steady stream of events that led me to know I had only one way and that was preaching the gospel of my risen Lord.

The call came as a sun rise slowly coming up over the horizon: first, there was the dawn (I had been saved by grace), then as the sun began to rise ever so slowly the joy of serving became an overwhelming part of me-teaching Sunday School-singing in the choir-serving on local, district, and conference boards and witnessing by example for others to see the love of Christ in me.

Through gainful employment over the past ten years, I have served those who needed shelter, food, clothing and emotional support in a loving and caring manner, but the more I serve in my own way, the more God reveals to me that I must give all-not
just part time or when my job allows me the time to do so. It must be in full time service in God's work and in God's way.

I have been questioning, God why now? I am a woman, over sixty years old. Who will listen? What good could I do in such a short time? He revealed to me in a blink of an eye that time or being a woman is not the issue: the issue is obedience to the call, and in realizing this now I know God judges me to repentance, pardons me, receives me by the grace that is demonstrated in Jesus Christ, and gives me hope of life eternal.
I bring forty five years experience in working with and loving people (a lot of this time has been spent in loving the unlovely).

I have a back ground in the Social Services work area.

I have served as a Certified Lay Speaker (when needed) for the ten years.

I have served four years as President; two years as Vice-President of the United Methodist Women of the Vincennes District.

I served four years as Christian Social Involvement Secretary for South Indiana Conference United Methodist Women.

I was part of a Gospel quartet for ten years (spreading the gospel through song) singing for church, revivals and community functions.

I attended the School of Christian Mission (U M W) ten of the past fifteen years and attended the Regional School four years.

I have been involved in television community services programs: several ten minute spots and one thirty minute taping.

I am presently serving as Certified Lay Speaker twice a month for a small church.

I am also presently teaching an adult Sunday School Class and have been for the past twenty years. Before that, I taught in the children's department for fifteen years.
I really don't know what I am expected to say as I could go on and on because I do what most people do everyday: I get up each day and do the very best I can at whatever I have committed myself; work, church, vacation, etc. The only thing that might be different from all others—is that each morning I thank God for the opportunity to tell someone about the love and saving grace of our Lord.

My parents are deceased and my children and grandchildren are about a four hours drive from Odon. My children are very supportive and spend much time in prayer for me.

My closest personal relationship is my husband. He is also my dearest friend (he is retired) who supports me and the work of the church in every way that is possible for him to do. So as far as affecting my future in the ministry is concerned, he will be a positive effect in every way.

My future plans for the ministry in the United Methodist Church is to attend the United Methodist Church Local Pastor's License School in July of 1991 and hopefully pastor a small rural church that same year.

I plan to enroll in theology classes next fall (correspondence) through St John's University and attend the training sessions each summer as required by the South Indiana Conference.

Barbara Allen
APPENDIX C: EXAMPLES OF PASTOR ALLEN'S SERMONS
Welcome, Announcements and Recognizing Visitors

*Call To Worship ........................................... 641
*Hymn ......................................................... 369
*Psalter ........................................................ 788
*Gloria Patri .................................................... 70

Old Testament Reading ............. Isaiah 55:1-9

Prayer Hymn .................................................... 174

Prayer Concerns and Praise:
Friendship Class please come for prayer and anyone
else who feels led to come.

Followed by praying The Lord's Prayer in unison:

Hymn ............................................................. 378

Celebration of Giving:
*Doxology and Prayer of Dedication:

Children's Sharing Time:

Special Music ............... Carlisle Singers

Message "The Parable of The Extra Year" Pastor

*Hymn ................ vs. 1-4 ......................... 402
*Benediction:
*Sending Forth .............................. 349
*Postlude ................................. Extinguish Candles

(  )

Mar. 19th  UMYF (Youth Meeting) (RC) 2:00 P.M.
Mar. 19th  Lenten Service
(Pleasantville) 7:00 P.M.
Mar. 26th  Lenten Service (Shelburn) 7:00 P.M.
Apr. 2nd, 3rd, 4th, Revival Service
(New Lebanon) 7:00 P.M.
Apr. 5th, 6th, 7th, Revival Service
(Rose Chapel) 7:00 P.M.
Apr. 9th  Lenten Service (Mermon) 7:00 P.M.

Thought for the Day:
Ordinary religion consists in rules and
regulations by which we think we please God.
The faith Jesus brings into our hearts inspires
love for God and humanity which mere rules
never could.

Father, O merciful master, shine the light of
knowing you into my heart, and open my mind to
grasp your message of good news. You, O Christ,
my Lord and my God, are the light of my soul
and body. And to you I give glory, together
with your eternal Father and your life-giving
spirit, now and always and for evermore.
Amen.

(  )
Luke 13: 1-9    The Parable of The Extra Year:
Luke 12: 54-59

If something dreadful were to happen to you today, would it mean you are a bigger sinner than the others sitting on your pew? Jesus deals with such questions in our Scripture passage today, and uncovers even deeper concerns we ought to be worried about as he tells the parable of the extra year.

In the preceding chapter, Jesus accuses the crowd of ignoring the signs of moral crisis, even though they could read the evening sky. (Luke 12: 54-59) Jesus urges a pragmatic approach to such spiritual hypocrisy- hasten to repent! So this much is clear from these verses: Hypocrisy leads to moral crisis, to willful spiritual ignorance, to a day of reckoning. Let us continue on as if there were no chapter break to the first verses of chapter 13.

There were some folks in that crowd listening to Jesus- or perhaps they rushed in just then to the edge of the crowd and caught the last words- who assumed Jesus was speaking of very wicked people who richly deserve God's punishment in full strength. Thinking to have Jesus' confirmation on their view, they related the latest news: Pilate had slaughtered some Galileans who were in Jerusalem. On what pretext this slaughter was done is unknown, but he "mingled" their blood with the blood of their sacrifices (v.1). And the tellers of the tale must have been eyewitnesses to the carnage. But surely these were exceptionally wicked men.

Jesus replied, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way, they were worse sinners than all other
barenness. That is a devastation charge: yet Jesus, as well as the earlier Old Testament prophets, clearly accused the Jewish nation of rejecting its calling. Many scholars think Jesus deliberately refused in this parable to use the image of a vine, though that would be the natural image since he dealt with a vineyard. Rather, he chose to scorn the common idea of Israel being the chosen vineyard of God by speaking of Israel as a fig tree planted in a vineyard. So it is the nation that has become a hypocrite, morally unwilling to read the sky. If Jesus said their failure to acknowledge and respond to him as Messiah put them in a danger far more urgent than worrying about being killed or a falling tower, what would he say about our time? About us as we go to great extremes to legitimize homosexuality. And we make excuses for those who put drugs and alcohol into their mouths to steal away their brains: Have we as churches become merely heavens of memories or hives of entertainment rather than troops in a war against the prince of evil?

The parable of the barren fig tree, the parable of the extra year, is given for each of us as well as the first-century crowd around Jesus. The Bible says that every Christian is saved to serve God: it teaches that we are to be spiritually fruitful. Is it possible to be spiritually fruitful if we deliberately turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to God? Hypocrisy is willing self-deception. As individuals and as a church we must not deceive ourselves about the purpose of our existence and our part in the great plan of God.
The Certainty of Judgment

The second theme of this passage is judgment. Now, Jesus' comments on the slaughter of Pilate and the unfortunate ones killed in the fall of tower tell us that we are all rushing toward judgment—some just get there quicker. He read the fate of few the doom of the entire nation. Those who perished are reminders of our own unworthiness. If we are spared, it is by grace, and we should not presume, but repent. Our tendency toward hypocrisy makes it hard for us to see our unworthiness. Our hypocrisy makes us excuse ourselves when we are less than we should be, and our nature makes us seek a way out of judgment if it must come. The story is told of W. C. Fields on his deathbed reading. A friend noticed the Bible and asked why Fields was reading it. "Oh, just looking for loopholes," said Fields. But there are no loopholes, according to this passage. Judgment on sin, like slaughter by Pilate and the falling of the tower, is sever and fatal and inescapable unless we repent.

The Everlasting Mercy—Almost.

And that brings us to the third theme in this passage, the mercy of God. In fact, some folks say the parable emphasizes the mercy of God rather than the coming judgment. It does both, and it points up the patience, the forbearance of God. So long as time shall last, (God stands with arms outstretched, like that old rugged cross on the hill, willing to receive all who will repent. And in that light, this parable holds out hope for every sinner—give him one more year!

Let us ask some relevant questions for us all: If you knew you
had one more year to live, what changes would you make in your life? Would your values suddenly change? Would you turn to Jesus for salvation? If, as a Christian, you knew you had one more year to bear spiritual fruit, where would you begin?

These are not idle questions; none of us know how much time we have left. There are limits to the patience, the mercy of even God. And in this parable we see both mercy and its limits in the phrase "one more year." Jesus preached an eminent day of reckoning: indeed, even if he does not come back soon, all will, in less than a century, go to him. Are we ready? Are we living as people who are ready?
New Lebanon United Methodist Church  
December 15, 1996  
The Third Sunday of Advent

Prelude  
Pastor  
Liturgist  
Organist  
Pianist  
Song Leader  
S. S. Superintendent

Lighting Candles  
Rev. Barbara Allen  
Warren Fulk  
Mary Willis  
Barbara Ridge  
Claudia Hancock  
Missy Ridge

Welcome, Announcements and Recognizing Visitors

*Call To Worship  
*Hymn vs 1-3-6  
Psalter Psalm 25:1-10  
*Gloria Patri

Children's Sharing Time:

Old Testament Reading  
Isaiah 61:1-11

Prayer Hymn vs 1-4  
Prayer Concerns and Praise:

Followed by praying The Lord's Prayer together:

Hymn

Celebrating the giving of our gifts to God:

*Doxology and Prayer of Dedication:

Special Music:

*Gospel Reading John 1:1-8  
Nikki Message  "He's The One! He Did It!" Pastor

*Hymn  
*Benediction:

*Sending Forth  
*Postlude  
Extinguish Candles

Thought For Today:
In the business of this season it is easy for us to forget that the real reason we celebrate is because of Jesus. Today's message is intended to remind us that Jesus is the reason for the season of Advent and Christmas.

Prayer of Meditation:
O Loving Father who brings salvation and light, I pray today that you will help me see you more clearly and love you more dearly. Make my life to be an example of your grace and love. Help me to share the good news of Jesus Christ as we celebrate this Advent season. Help me to bring acts of kindness and love to the world on your behalf. 
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Prayer Concerns:
Bill and Pauline Junior Vaughn  
Scotty Irvin Warren Cole  
Keith Rigdon Evan Bright  
Rev. Sharon Summers  
James (Butch) Shyrock

Dates to Remember:
Dec. 17 United Methodist Women  
Christmas Party. 4-H Bldg.  
(Has Been Cancelled)
Dec. 22 Christmas Program.  
7:00
Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Communion  
Service. (NL)
Jan. 5 Church Leadership Blessing

Feb. 22-23 Y.A.C. Youth Annual Conference  
French Lick Springs Resort  
Deadline for registration is Jan. 22, 1997
John 1:1-8  "He's The One!  He Did It!

"He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light" (vss. 7-8)

I'm sure you are all familiar with the scene shown on television and in the movies in which the eye-witness jumps up and point to the guilty party proclaiming, "He's the one! He did it!"

The story scene is often the climactic ending of an action-packed story in which the case is unsolvable until that very moment. In one dramatic instant the case is solved, the verdict rendered, and the innocent party is freed. The hero for the moment is the eye witness, the one who saw everything and is willing to come forward and testify to what he or she saw.

According to John the gospel writer, John the Baptist was such a man. In this first chapter of the gospel, we are presented with the figure of John the Baptist. The gospel makes very clear what his role was in regard to the message, person, and ministry of Jesus. John is the first one to testify that Jesus is the light of the world, and the Word who was in the beginning with God.

The gospel also makes it clear who John the Baptist is not. Did you notice what was read? The gospel says that the Baptist is (1) not himself the "light," (2) Not Elijah or the prophet, and (3) not the baptizer of Jesus. That point is clear in this week's reading.

It is also substantially different than what we are told by Mark in the beginning of his gospel (which was our text for last week.) John the Baptist (according to John's gospel writer)
is a witness. That is it. He does not anoint Jesus for ministry, and he does not have any special powers. He is the eye-witness. According to the Gospel of John.

Why do you think that is? I think it has more to do with his John's understanding of who Jesus was than it has to do with his rejection of John the Baptist's ministry. You see, John (the gospel writer) understood that Jesus was the "Word made flesh." He knew Jesus to be the "Light of the world." who brings God's salvation to God's people. This Light and this Word are eternally with God. In fact, they are themselves the very embodiment of God. In that case, there is no need for someone to baptize or anoint this Word made flesh because it has been anointed by God since the beginning of time. The Baptist was clearly not this light, so his function (according to John the gospel writer) only could have been to bear witness to Jesus who is the Light. John the Baptist is "the pointer."

I'm no artist, but if I were I would paint a picture of John the Baptist using this gospel writer's description. In my mind I can see a haggard, thin man clothed in a camel's hair loin cloth, beard flowing, with very strong arms. In my picture, the arms would be proportioned extra large and very muscular. The Baptist would be looking off in the distance, squinting to see a fain form. His arms would be outstretched with the finger extended-pointing to something very spectacular, and very moving for him. This picture of the Baptist shows him as the one who points to Jesus as the Christ. He is a witness. He is one who testifies that Jesus is indeed the Light of the
I think the reason this image is so vivid for me is the need for one such as him in our world today.

We live in a world that is filled with every manner of evil. We are daily bombarded by the news of evil happening everywhere. Children are abused. Elderly people are not taken care of. Poor people are left to fend for themselves, while the systems that create the poverty continue to steal their souls. War, famine, gang violence, injustice—such evil is a way of life for so many in our world.

We look for a superhero. We want someone who will come and show us a better place. Someone who will take away the madness and leave us in a peaceful state of life. We look to our politicians, our generals, our civic leaders, our teachers, and preachers, and corporate executives, but in the end, nobody seems to have the answers to us. We need a John the Baptist who will testify that Jesus is indeed the Light of the world.

Have you ever heard someone say they believe babies must know what God looks like because they have just come from his side? I have a friend who strongly believes this. And apparently she's not the only one. In the book "Chicken Soup for the Soul" Dan Millman relates the story of Sachi. Sachi was a four-year-old girl whose mother brought a baby boy home with her from the hospital. Sachi liked to spend time alone with the new baby, and the parents were quite naturally a bit concerned about this for fear of jealousy.

One day they took a peek into the room where the baby and Sachi
were sitting together, and they heard Sachi say to her brother, "Please tell me what God is like. I'm starting to forget."

As Christians, we claim to have an understanding of what God looks like. We believe that God came to us in the human form of Jesus Christ. If that is so, then Jesus must look like God. But sometimes we forget this, Not only do we forget what God looks like, we even forget that God came to earth and is with us still. We forget that God's goodness and love are available to all who will follow Christ. We forget that God brings salvation to those who call upon the name of the Lord. So many problems of the world would find solutions if only we would remember what God looks like, and turn to Christ, and follow his ways. We need a baby to remind us to look for God in the eyes of others.

We need John the Baptist to point out God's Light to us. This Christmas season, as you prepare to celebrate the birth of this holy child, will you point to God who came in the form of Jesus to bring light to the world? Will you be such a witness? Will you share the love of Christ with the world? Will you?
Thought for Today:
The celebration of our Lord's resurrection is not limited to a single event in time, nor is resurrection his alone. Each Sunday is Easter Sunday, and we, like him, shall be raised.

Prayer of Confession:
Father of mercy, when faced by the wondrous power of our Lord's resurrection, and the implications his rising has for each of our lives, we are truly humbled in your presence. We seek your forgiveness for all the evil we have done, the sin which is ours alone. Free us, as you freed Christ, that we might not sin again. In Christ glory we pray. Amen.

Prayer Concerns:
Jerry Phegley Sr. Frances Phegley
Junior Vaughn Warren Cole Edith Clark
Rebecca Phegley Hazel Phegley
Sally Unger Rebecca Redford
Mark Sandusky

Dates To Remember:
April 2 Board Meeting 7:30
April 6 United Methodist Youth Cluster Meeting Sullivan 3 to 5 P.M. Please mark on your calendar and try to attend.

Welcome, Announcements and Recognizing Visitors:
*Call To Worship ..................................... 177
*Hymn ...................................... vs. 1 ................. 302
*Psalter  Psalm 67:1-7  791
*Gloria Patri ........................................ 70

Old Testament Reading .............. Isaiah 25:6-9

Prayer Hymn .............. vs. 1 ........................ 314

Prayer Concerns and Praise:
Friendship Class please come to the altar to pray and anyone else who feels led to come.

Followed by praying The Lord's Prayer in unison:
Hymn ................................................ 310

Celebrating the giving of our gifts to God:
*Doxology and Prayer of Dedication:

Youth Sharing Time:

Special Music:
*Gospel Reading  John 20:1-18  Melissa Phegley
Message "The Cross Is Empty: New Bread, Pastor and New Life"

*Hymn ....................... vss. 1-3 ................... 364
*Benediction:
*Sending Forth ........... vs. 1 ....................... 672
*Postlude ........................ Extinguish Candles

"For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 1 Cor. 5:7-8

This is the day of great celebration. This is the day of great acclamation. This is the day of great affirmation. This is the day on which, with all the saints on earth, and in heaven above, we proclaim; Christ is risen; the Lord is risen, indeed!

On this day, our Lord's day and on every Lord's day hereafter, we gather to praise God and to acknowledge that Christ has been raised from the dead; that the tomb is empty; that death is vanquished; and that we, by the grace and power of God, are set free from sin and its deadly consequences, made new creatures in Christ, now and for eternity. Today in prayer and praise, Scripture and song, we remember the one who revealed himself to Mary Magdalene and sent her to the others with the witness "I have seen the Lord!" John 20:18

Today, we recall the one who said to Martha, sister of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25-26).

Today, with Nicodemus of old, we stand before the master and receive the news that "... no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born from above"...(John 3:3).

So often Christians gather for worship on the feast of Easter, we focus our attention on the empty tomb, the risen, Lord, God's victory over death. And rightly so. Yet, too often we fail to take into account the parallel affirmation that, like Christ,
we too have been raised; that we too, are granted the gift of
new life; that we too bear responsibility for living our lives
in new, indeed resurrected, ways. As Charles Wesley has written:

Soar we now where Christ has led
Following our exalted Head
Made like Him, like Him we rise,
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

If we are not new creatures in Christ, if we have not been
delivered from our sins and given new life, if we have not been
raised, and if our lives are not transparent to the values of
new like in God's kingdom, then the raising of Jesus was in

God's intention from the very beginning was to send his Son
that we might be "born anew," that we "might not perish,"
that we might be restored to God, reclaimed by God, through
the merits and sacrifice of Jesus alone, Jesus was buried; and
Jesus was raised for us, for you and me. And that makes a world
of difference.

Throughout his gospel, St. John departs from the Jewish tradition
that like Ezekiel's valley of dry bones, sinew on sinew, flesh
on flesh, at the command of God, an understanding which was
shared by many in the early church as well. It was St. Paul
who proclaimed, "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall
be raised" (1 Cor 15:52). But not so with John. For John, new life is not something for
which we must wait; not something that can only be experienced
at God's command and in the time of God's reign.

New life—indeed, resurrected life—is ours in the present.

It is God's gracious gift of love to God's children, the
consequence of being forgiven of our sin, the gain from Christ's
death on a cross, that is ours today. That is what Jesus was speaking about when he encountered
Nicodemus, and what he spoke of with Martha, the sister of Lazarus.

Those who trust are born new; those who trust do not die, but
have eternal life with God, beginning now.

What we know and experience as death is but a physical
transition, an exchange of one form of being for another.
Over the centuries, it is this understanding, and not that of
the older concept of the general resurrection from the dead
that has become the heart of the church's teaching about new
life in the Spirit.

At the same time, however, we continue to hold on to some of
the old tradition. Our cemeteries are arranged so that those
interred face the east, that they might be raised at the
trumpet's sound and face their Master.

There is an old Moravian tradition still practiced in some faith
communities today, where the living go out into the cemeteries
to scrub the headstones clean and gather in the early hours
of Easter dawn to sound the trumpet and face the east, in
anticipation of the resurrection of Christ and the general
resurrection of the dead.

But such practices are only a remnant. Even St. Paul seems to
be of two minds on the subject.

In the closing chapter of his first letter to the church at
Corinth, his teachings are grounded in the old Jewish/early
Christian understanding; yet earlier, in the very same letter, his heart and mind seem to be in transition.

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\text{(1 Cor 5:7-8)}
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For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

For Paul, Christ is our paschal lamb, and for John, who writes many years after Paul, Christ is our Passover. The deed is done. In the words of the Creed, "He was crucified, dead, and buried. On the third day he rose from the dead."

By this act of atoning grace, the deadly shackles of our sins have been broken, our former lives of malice and evil cast aside, and the gift of new life—new life in Christ, our risen Lord—a new life of sincerity and truth, has begun; new bread, new life. Christ is risen: the Lord is risen indeed!!!
WORKS CITED


