

## Brand Belief or Life Story?

Sunday

September 20, 2020

9:30 a.m.

### Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor Greg

Becoming disciples,  
serving God's world.



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#### Call to Worship — inspired by Exodus 16:2-15

The ads online, on TV, and everywhere we look shout: "Buy me! You deserve me! You're only worthy with me!" Some days we shout back: "Enough!" And other days we let a theology and attitude of scarcity overtake us. On those days we allow what we have to define us, control us, and restrict us.

God provides enough. God created each of us as enough. God creates a world of abundance. But our certainty of scarcity, our idolatry of the shiny, and our fears of others prevent us from gratitude, graciousness, and sharing.

We live in an abundant world. Our creator makes it so. Move our hearts, lessen our fears in this hour. There is enough for all of us.

Praise be to the God of Abundant Love! Praise to the God of Enough!

#### Opening Prayer: Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45 (NRSV) *God's faithfulness to Israel*

<sup>1</sup> O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples. <sup>2</sup> Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works. <sup>3</sup> Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. <sup>4</sup> Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually. <sup>5</sup> Remember the wonderful works he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered, <sup>6</sup> O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of Jacob, his chosen ones. <sup>37</sup> Then he brought Israel out with silver and gold, and there was no one among their tribes who stumbled. <sup>38</sup> Egypt was glad when they departed, for dread of them had fallen upon it. <sup>39</sup> He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light by night. <sup>40</sup> They asked, and he brought quails, and gave them food from heaven in abundance. <sup>41</sup> He opened the rock, and water gushed out; it flowed through the desert like a river. <sup>42</sup> For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham, his servant. <sup>43</sup> So he brought his people out with joy, his chosen ones with singing. <sup>44</sup> He gave them the lands of the nations, and they took possession of the wealth of the peoples, <sup>45</sup> that they might keep his statutes and observe his laws. Praise the LORD!

**Scripture Lessons:** Matthew 20:1-16; Philippians 1:21-30  
(*Kingdom New Testament*)

**Sermon:** "Brand Belief or Life Story?"

#### Congregational Prayer, and the Lord's Prayer

Lord God, we thank you that you have desired to love us as part of your glorification. Thank you for calling us in your Word to cast all our cares on you. You have proven yourself faithful again and again; and so we make these needs known

publicly, because we know that you are faithful and we desire to bring glory to you. Lord, we pray for the people of this congregation who are in special need. You know what these needs are: physical needs, needs in family or at work, spiritual needs. We pray that you would, by your grace, reveal our neediness to us and reveal to us your fullness and your faithfulness.

Lord, we pray especially for young people. We thank you for them, we thank you for giving them an exciting life-calling. We pray that you would give them strength, give them wisdom, give them encouragement to explore your will.

Lord, you tell us that we are to pray for those in authority — and so we do. We pray for the governor and state legislators. Cause them to use their authority wisely, especially when it touches on the care of those who are most vulnerable and those matters that are essential for human dignity and justice. We pray that you would give them an understanding of how you have made us and what things make for equal opportunity among all people.

We thank you for the amount of freedom that we have had in this land. Help us not to take it for granted. We pray that every citizen will take proper responsibility and vote for the candidate they believe best represents the common good. For every senator and representative, we pray for honesty in their work. In your truth, we pray that you would root out any corruption in government. We pray that funds that are taken from honest taxpayers would be used wisely and well.

And Lord, we pray for the president; we pray for him personally; we pray for his well-being; for his wife and family through all the trials and difficulties of having that job.

We pray especially for this congregation and our ministry of discipleship. We thank you for all the opportunities that are given to us. We pray for people who don't normally come within the sound of your gospel, that they would hear the good news of King Jesus and be converted.

Thank you for neighborly relationships in the community. We pray, Lord, that we will be

honorable toward others. We pray that we will be able to show your kindness and care, even in small and simple ways, to those around us. Lord, you have loved us so much, and we pray that you would enlarge our hearts with love.

We pray for your church around the world. We pray, Lord, for the many churches worshiping today — and if they are being persecuted, please sustain their faith and keep them from being intimidated. And if they are bland, we pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to alight them on fire.

Here in our own nation, Lord, we pray that Christians will grow in grace and humility. We pray that we will well reflect the Lord Jesus Christ to all people.

Our congregation — right here, right now — Lord, we pray that we will be marked by gratitude for what you have done and by confidence in what you will do. Lord, continue to feed us with Your word. All this we pray in the name of Jesus the Messiah, who taught us to pray... *Our Father...*

### **Sharing God's Gifts, and Offertory ~ Barb Hosner**

#### **Offering Prayer** — based on Matthew 20:1-16

*Thank you for your continued support in prayer and finances.*

Knowing God, you have given us a never-wanting future. Yet, we often forget the nature of your divine gift. We become entangled in the snares of self-centeredness. Today, we joyfully share these many offerings as a way to release ourselves from being self-focused to being God-focused. In the name of your loving Son, we pray. Amen.

#### **Benediction**

Life is too short to waste and we do not have too much time to gladden the hearts of those who walk with us. So be ready to love and unhesitating in kindness.

And may the blessing of the deep mystery we call the triune God — Source of life, love and hope, Word of life, and ever-present Spirit of grace be with you this day and all your days. Amen.

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Outside/In-person Worship continues!

**Sunday, September 27**  
9:30 a.m.



**Vicksburg High School parking lot**  
(east side by the lacrosse field)

### Prayer for Family and Friends

#### Updates and New Requests This Week

Please pray for Jo Pope's family in Oregon. Her son and two grandchildren there had to evacuate and are OK for now. Please pray for everyone there.

Pray for Vera and Chuck Walker and family, as Vera's sister, Joyce, passed away last Friday

#### Previous Requests

Pray for persecuted Christians around the world.

**VUMC's  
Mission Statement**



### The General Rule of Discipleship

To witness to Jesus Christ in the world, and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

### For Cheer and Hello

David Bretz  
Barb Griner  
Flossie Lang  
Nona Mattheis  
Beverly Nimmo

Robert & Carmen Parsons  
Marv Starbuck  
Mina Willett  
Betty Witcher

### UMCOR needs your help

UMCOR-trained volunteers are assisting people in Iowa and Texas/Louisiana following the recent storms. Your help is needed to provide the tangible items necessary for relief work, including personal protection equipment that volunteers need to stay healthy.

A donation to UMCOR will go a long way to help as cleanup continues. Make checks payable to VUMC with UMCOR storms on the memo line, or give online at [advance.UMCOR.org](http://advance.UMCOR.org).

Sunday, October 4  
**WORLD COMMUNION  
SUNDAY**

Your generous gift today enriches  
Christianity around the world



"All that I am doing now is to prepare me  
to make a difference."

— The Rev. Cangfu Wang, World Communion International Scholar



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.  
The people of The United Methodist Church\*

### World Communion Sunday

Throughout the year, we encourage giving to United Methodist Church special offerings. **World Communion Sunday is October 4.** This offering is collected the first Sunday in October and supports World Communion Scholarships, the Ethnic Scholarship Program and the Ethnic In-Service Training Program.

If you would like to give, please make your check payable to VUMC and write World Communion Sunday on the memo line and mail it to the church or bring it to church Sunday morning with your regular giving. Or give online at [UMCgiving.org/giveWCS](http://UMCgiving.org/giveWCS).

### In Service to Our Country

Walker Polsinelli  
Tyler Smith

Geoff White

### This Week's Celebrations

#### Birthdays

9/20 Millie Hackett  
Jody Tuinier  
9/22 Lori Ensing

9/22 Jeff Preston  
9/23 Julie Oswald  
9/25 Cathy Johnson  
Sharon Pendola



## 1990's and More Youth at VUMC

This article is a bit out of order...forgive me...but last week I wrote about youth at

VUMC, so I bumped up this article one week to conclude the story of how *mission oriented* this church is in regard to youth.

The early 1990's in our church were mostly on auto pilot. We had completed and paid the balance on our 1984 renovation. Now what? What happened was: I voiced my concerns to Pastor Wally that it seemed as if our church was low on enthusiasm and goals. He agreed. What we needed were some long range plans to get us motivated and moving forward. You know what was next, don't you? By 1994, I was appointed chair of a Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) with great, dedicated members: Pastor Jim Hulett, Pastor Larry Wood, Penny Sult, Jon Durham, Bob Corrian, and Butch Vliek.

Our first order of business was to survey the congregational members for their ideas and input of what was to be the most important areas of concentration for the next few years. I do not know what other members of my committee were thinking as we awaited the results, but some thoughts on my mind: maybe some kind of food or clothing bank, more effort into outreach of community, elder care facility, etc. The results came in, and they were almost completely unanimous!: ***we needed a new larger facility to better care for our COMMUNITY YOUTH with a gym, new kitchen, bathrooms, and even shower facilities. Plus we needed more space for preschool, more classrooms for middle/high school students, and more parking.*** (To just be really honest, maybe, we may have been feeling a little left behind, because Lakeland Reformed and Nazarene churches had built nice, big youth centers. And yes, churches can get a bit competitive.)

The LRPC met and worked on all the ideas for almost a year. In October of 1994, we presented a plan to the Ad Council for approval and re-

ceived complete approval. Our plan did have specifics of how many rooms, sizes, and a general idea of total costs. We did not have any architectural drawings. There were a few obstacles to overcome: we had to purchase and demolish at least four houses to have the room to expand. After the 1984 renovation, we had already purchased and demolished: White Front Restaurant, and red brick apartment building facing Main Street, and Klein's Drug Store on the corner of Main and Washington Street. We had used this space for an expanded parking lot. So, for almost 10 years, the plans were idle, but action was going on behind the scenes. A building committee was set up somewhere in the early 2000's. Architectural plans were drawn up, contractors interviewed, price quotes secured, and a shovel full of dirt was dug up in April 2004. More later about the Family Life Center construction.

And it is not just our own youth this church is passionate about. To give you an example: John Wagner, one of our Mission Chairs, proposed that our church adopt a new log cabin to be built at Wesley Woods. We needed to raise \$10,000 for the materials. How? Joe Anderson drew up a large cabin on paper with logs we could purchase for \$100 each to underwrite the cost. In no time at all, we had filled in all the logs. Brad Addis organized a team of men from the church to then actually do some of the construction. WOW!

The following is a list of ways Hank Stamm and others have tried to support our own youth and community youth, mostly successful: The Shed after school program, Grandparents Adopt-a-Youth, mission trips, senior breakfasts and roasts, scholarships, middle school lunches, volunteer coaching at VHS, HELIX youth groups for middle school, RAW youth groups for high school, Boy Scouts meet at our church, Kids Hope, Vacation Bible School, elementary Sunday School, choirs, youth bands, Children's Time, preschool, camps, etc.

*Thoughts, memories and research by Nancy Fulton*

**There will be no Caring Ministry meeting in September. Maybe in October.**

### Coming deadlines

- ScripCents orders are due by Oct. 1.
- Items for the October newsletter are due tomorrow.

## Moving to Phase II

On Sunday, Oct. 4, we are moving forward to Phase II of back to in-person worship! We will be gathering in the Family Life Center at 9:30 a.m.

Please wear a mask — and if it's not medically advisable for you, we will trust you have your doctor's authorization. No hugging, other than "air hugs."

We have to limit the entrances into the church building, so we are asking everyone to use the ramp leading into the Family Life Center — it's handicap accessible. Other entrances will be closed off to discourage elevator usage, as it has too much common touch and does not allow proper social distancing.

Upon entrance to the Family Life Center, your temperature will be checked. Hand sanitizer will be available, and no common surface items will be handed out (bulletins, hymnals, etc.). Please avoid crossing within six feet of each other. Restrooms outside the Family Life Center will be available, but the rest of the building will be closed off. At the conclusion of worship, please exit the building using the entrance ramp. There will be no coffee and refreshments.

This all sounds so inhospitable, and we agree and apologize. But we believe we **MUST** keep you safe.

We're open to necessary adaptations as we go along. Not one size fits all, so options will be available. The service will be transmitted to the parking lot via FM signal for those who are not comfortable entering the building. And we will continue our established practice of placing the service on YouTube, Facebook, and the church website ([vicksburgumc.org](http://vicksburgumc.org)).

We look forward to the day of returning to worship in the sanctuary. We miss the congregational singing, the chancel choir, the bells, personal greetings, and everything else which made the time so special. But in the meantime, this is what we need to do.

Thank you so much to the many people who are working together to make worship possible. We are so very blessed! Thanks to you, too. Your love and support for your church family is very appreciated.