**Sermon Notes/Media**

**October 23, 2022**

**S33**

It always requires a lot to

* step back,
* open up,
* pay attention
* and then decide how to move within the flow.

Sort of like skydiving. I think.

I’ve never skydove (skydived?) but it must be cool.

Still, the first time you do it (don’t try – do) it must be like that.

You finally get to the door realize on one side you are safe and on the other side you are not so sure. You’ve done everything you can prepare

* in many ways check everything
* and then you decide to jump

And, once you do you no longer have the security of being inside that plane. Jumping from a plane. Soon to be falling at 120 mph from 15,000 feet (almost 3 miles up) as the ground below you gets closer by the second.

Y have no control of the wind around you; the vortexes, vibration, and an errant eagle, pelican or both. All you have is what you have prepared to do, decided to do and are now doing with the hoped for exhilarating outcome ahead.

* You considered the jump
* Opened you heart (maybe even closed your eyes for a second)
* And now paying attention
* Are navigating in the midst of what you cannot control.

And you can do all this because others you know and trust have done it before and are helping you to do it now.

Whenever we come together on Sunday, it’s as if we are returning for another jump. This is a place for many of us where we rely on all the preparation before us, millennia of teachings from the earliest of times to this moment. Those who have gone before and who are here now and know the uncertainty of life and made their life a path, a GPS for others to follow, even as we follow others ourselves.

And we have a view, don’t we.

**S33 – Click**

Any of us who have ever looked out of the window from a plane know that with the beauty comes a sense of how big everything is around us and how from such a height everything can seem overwhelming.

**S33 - Click**

Everything from a distance can seem just fine and beautiful –but also needs attention, as well.

Yes, the world needs is love. Imagine if we all loved one another.

**S33 - Click**

When we step back and open our eyes to a larger perspective, the beauty of God’s creation is vast, God’s reflection is ever being revealed from the heavens (an original concept of the reflection of God’s love) to ground beneath our feet.

**S33 - Click**

And if all we ever had to do is to look up or down, well we could spend all our time in our own little worlds, limited to no more than we can see and a small protected slice of the world around us, and we can redline everyone else from ever moving into the neighborhood or

disrupting our idyllic lives.

In our Call to Worship, we pray with gratitude, not for a protected bubble in the vastness of God’s creation,

* but for *being* God’s creation in the uncertainty of the vastness;
* *seeing* those around us;
* allowing the spirit to move us in our expression of love for our family, our community, our work and ministry –
* and above all, for the stranger who needs us.

We do not allow ourselves to ever be held hostage to the events of the world, instead practicing *who we are in the world*, even in the most uncertain of times.

When we live in such a “connected” way, we remember that Joy is always with us. It is from that place of Joy and gratitude that we feel our call to others:

from the newborn in our families

**S34**

to the newborns being bombarded out of hospitals and homes into shelters by Russia’s heinous invasion of the Ukraine and attack on the sanctity of life.

Even there, Joy is a relentless determined power that is more than simple glee. It is at the core of creation – and at the core of each of us. It can be depended on even – perhaps most – even in great sorrow.

**S34 – Click**

And Jesus knew the sorrow in his times.

When Jesus shared his parable about how God would turn the world upside down (in his subversive way),

* how the exalted would be humbled and the humble would be exalted,
* he was speaking about the Joy that will not be deterred by hubris, arrogance, or power of those who use people only for their own purposes.

He was talking about

* systems that deny right to others as ways of elevating themselves in power and pride; those who forget they are not God, but a reflection of God;

He was talking by extension today of those who believe they can take

* Rights and choices away from women
* Tell people how and who they will love
* What they can or cannot read
* How they should or should not use prayer

He was talking about those who felt no compunction about illegally shuffling immigrant seeking asylum at our borders to other states as a political stunt

He was talking about those being marginalized by others to secure their own sense of joy by stealing it from others.

**S34 – Click**

In Jesus’ First Century Palestine, the people he challenged forgot what they had been taught.

* He challenged those who refused to treat others with dignity and respect, for they too were of the same love of God reflected in us all. Just as we must.
* He taught that Nobody is any better than anyone else; just as we must teach
* He reminded us how we just all need one another

and as we need to be remindned

* that when we decide who is in and who is out; who can be invaded and who cannot; who can make choices for their own bodies and who cannot; who can vote and who cannot –we are undermining the sanctity of creation, we are in opposition to God, some might say.
* A very foolish place to be

And so, when leaders have lost their way – they need to be reminded

* Everyone is equal in God’s eyes and the Greatest of Commandments is still the same:

**S34 – Click**

Love God with all your heart and your soul and your might

And love one another as yourself.

As people of the world some 100 generations since Jesus taught us about God’s justice and spoke out, spoke out enough for others that he paid with his life…

As people in this democratic republic that formed some 246 years ago founded on a reflection of Jesus’ and other religious teachings all blended into one with God’s love, we have a choice of calling those we believe will best serve others

* Loving God and one another as ourselves in the support and creation of policies that help us navigate the uncertainty of our times
* Speaking for our God-given rights and calling out those who willingly accept others suffering or lives as lives collateral damage to their quest for lies big or small…

It’s why we come here, I think.

To the open door of the plane

* step back and look around us, seeing each other and the stranger
* opening up our view to the vastness of God’s creation
* paying attention to the needs in this world as best we can
* and then decide how we will move within the space we inhabit in helping others to be loved as we love ourselves.

If this were Jesus’ time, a path that would lead to crucifixion would be one choice. Being subversive and upsetting and challenging enough to be snuffed out by the powers whose plans he was disrupting and undermining so that all would know how they are loved by God and not forgotten.

But since this is our time, we have as powerful a voice to speak and make sure that others who seek to love God with all their heart and soul and might and others as themselves are our representatives in navigating our lives together. Without being nailed to a cross.

Vote.

Because…

**S34 – Click**

We’ve had enough crucifixions.