

McCabe United Methodist Church

August 5, 2018

Pastor Mark Ehrmantraut

Good Morning Church!

We gather in the power of the Risen Christ. This power is alive and moving among us this morning.

Over the past couple weeks we've been exploring some of the Big Questions.

We asked: Why do we need Christ?

What do we need the greater Christian Church?

And this week, we get specific. We ask: Why do we need THIS church? Why do we need McCabe?

Then next week, we'll consider the question, whose church is it?

Let's Pray:

Mighty and holy God, God of mercy and compassion, may the words of my mouth and the meditations on our hearts be acceptable in your sight. You are our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.

I did a quick count. How many churches would you guess are in town?
(Take some guesses...)

My quick count, I counted about 100 churches.

So it begs the question... Why do we need this church? Why do we need McCabe?

It used to be that a Lutheran or Presbyterian or Methodist church, all you had to do was open your doors and wait. People would come. I'm a Lutheran so I go to the Lutheran Church. I'm Presbyterian so I go to the Presbyterian Church. I'm Methodist so where's the Methodist Church? That's what you did.

Well Friends, as you're well aware, those days are gone.

The only denomination that still has "brand" loyalty is? (Guess?) Yes. The Catholics. The Catholics, more than any other denomination build a building and the people tend to come. Yet even for the Catholics this loyalty is lessening.

So why McCabe?

One reason why people choose McCabe is because someone invites them, and you know who the inviters are, right?

The best inviters, the best invitations are from the people gathered here this morning. People inviting friends, family, and neighbors.

The religious folks in this morning's Scripture struggled with the idea of neighbor. They struggled with the idea of invitation and compassion.

Jesus was questioned, What's the most important commandment? We have 613 commandments. Which is the most important?

And Jesus said: Love God and Love neighbor with everything you have. Love God and neighbor.

It was a good answer, but it was a little vague. After all, who's my neighbor? Who's in... Who deserves God's love and my love, and who's out... not deserving, not worthy enough for us to care about.

And Jesus, as he often did, he told a story. He said: There's this guy. He's been robbed and badly beaten. He'd actually been left to die along the road.

Fortunately, there were people coming by.

A man of God, a priest, came by. The priest went right by the beaten and battered man. In fact, he didn't just go by him. He went to the other side of the road basically saying: You're not worth my time. I'm too important being a man of God. You're too dirty for me to help you, plus, it might be too risky for me. You're not like me. I don't know enough about you.

Then, a temple assistant, a Levite, a man by birth chosen to be a steward of the temple and everything that is of God, this temple assistant came upon the injured, beaten man and decided, too, that he wasn't worth his time.

Then, think about a person who really grates on your nerves.

They rub you the wrong way.

They're like fingernails grinding down a chalkboard.

I ask this, because, for the Jewish listeners the Samaritan would've been a dirty, disgusting, heathen of a man. And Jesus took this guy, who would've grated on the nerves of the Jewish people, and Jesus made him the hero of the story. Jesus said: that's who stopped to help the struggling guy.

This is the upside down theology of Jesus, isn't it?

Jesus made the goat the hero.

The last shall be first.

Love your enemy and let them bring out the best in you.

The rejected are invited.

If someone takes your shirt, give them your coat too.

If they slap you on one cheek, turn your other cheek for them.

The Samaritan would have been the guy the religious folks loathed and rebuked.

And Jesus said, you know what, the Samaritan's the hero of the story.

The Samaritan's your neighbor, so go and love God, and go and love your neighbor.

Why is it important that McCabe exists?

What does it look like for us to love God and to love our neighbors?

Jerry's going to share a few concrete examples of how McCabe lives out loving God and seeks to share this love our love of neighbor.

(Jerry Suko sharing about Awana, Open Door Community Preschool, the Banquet)

(Pastor Mark resumes)

Why does McCabe exist? We exist to make a difference. We exist to love God and love neighbor.

Have you ever been on the south side of the building around 8:15 a.m. or around 3:30 on a school day?

There are people from our neighborhood all over the place. Some seem like they're happy and celebrating. Some are lost and struggling.

In our neighborhood...

In our community...

And in our world...

God has placed us right here right now to make a difference.

Did you know, when we go door to door in the neighborhood, when we canvas the neighborhood knocking on doors? For example: We've done this inviting our neighbors to the neighborhood block party, and to the Amazing Chemistry Show, did you know that we can be within a block of McCabe and people will ask us, Where's McCabe? How do I get there?

Friends, McCabe has something to offer. McCabe is a place where lives change. The people from McCabe care about one another, and want to reach new people. People from McCabe are bringing Jesus, and mercy and compassion to the community and to the world.

On Friday evening, we were down at the river. You may or not have seen something about it in the bulletin over the past few weeks. McCabe's Celebrate Recovery church plant baptized 4 people, not in the Jordan River, but in the Missouri River. We baptized an infant right here this morning.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon each of us as we come together to worship and grow and serve.

I've heard people from McCabe say:
McCabe is an easy place to come in the doors and feel like you're home.
People accept you. Some are even witty and funny.
McCabe makes a difference. The Church is reaching out. We're being called to partner, to reach out, to serve.
Being part of McCabe is Life changing. There's a challenge to improve your life.
McCabe has been there through the good and the bad that has given me.

100 or so churches in town...
Why McCabe?

Part of who McCabe is is helping people connect with Christ through music, right?

McCabe's one of the few churches in town with a powerful choir singing every weekend during the school year. They were even on tour last weekend bringing the music to churches in our region.

We have special music at every service every weekend.

We have the big, powerful organ and God has blessed us with great organists.

We have bell choirs and Palm Sunday Cantatas.

We have praise bands that continues to evolve and develop with musicians sharing their God-given gifts.

I'm in worship some weekends in awe of the music. As I listen, as I worship, I look up and see out the sanctuary window, God's miraculous work in all its beauty and in full view.

McCabe is a Solar Oven Partner.

McCabe does 300-400 shoeboxes around Christmas.

McCabe has a little food pantry that gets repeatedly filled and used.

McCabe offers faithful, Christ-centered children and youth opportunities. There are small groups for adults.

McCabe currently has 5 different worship options on a given weekend.

Your McCabe family has a team of people working on updating the church's communication and media presence. One of the statements coming from this group says:

We're a church where you come as you are. Everyone is welcome. We base our programs on the Bible – helping you navigate the challenges of everyday life in today's world.

What do you think? Does that begin to get at who we are? Is that who we want to be?

We're a church where you come as you are. Everyone is welcome. We base our programs on the Bible – helping you navigate the challenges of everyday life in today's world.

Come as you are, word for word, is not in the Bible.

Yet when we read Scripture, the Jesus I know repeatedly said: Come as you are.

Come as you are...

Come celebrating and thankful.

Come broken and hurting.

Come on top of the world, or, come tired or weary or outcast. Just Come...

Our MISSION is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our INVITATION is to Come. Seek. Grow.

Our GOAL is to welcome you as you are.

Come as you are.

But if you come, don't expect to stay as you are.

Friends, I believe we're living and worshipping and serving together, in part, to help raise up and form the next generation of leaders and saints.

I believe God has placed us right here, right now, and God is calling us, and even challenging us, to continually examine how we're living out Loving God and neighbor.

McCabe isn't just a building.

McCabe is a MOVEMENT.

Come as You are, and then go, changed.

Go to make a difference in the world.

Let's pray:

God of the music and the missions and the everything. We gather this morning as a people called McCabe. God use us, and use this your church, to help people connect with you and to make a difference in your world. We pray in the name of the greatest difference maker ever. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Offering

How do you answer the question: Why McCabe?

Do you remember how you got here? Maybe this is your first time, or maybe this is your 5,000th time. We are invited to come as we are. We are invited to meet the Living Christ, and then to go into the world to make a difference. During this time of offering, I invite you to consider what this looks like in your life?