

# January 2024

## SERMON SERIES: “Becoming the People of God”

### SUNDAY 7<sup>th</sup> “Becoming the People of God” – COMMUNION

First Reading: Genesis 1. 1 – 5  
Focus Scripture: Mark 1. 4 - 11

We are on a constant journey of becoming as we travel a path that we share with faithful followers in the Hebrew and Early Church scriptures, guided by the divine Love who forms us individually and communally into the people of God. Remember your baptism. It isn’t just an empty ritual for Sunday mornings. It is a way of living that keeps our eyes open for the descending doves of the Spirit. It is a choice that we can claim to embrace the possibilities in front of us instead of the doubts within us. It is an opportunity to know that we are loved and claimed and that whatever darkness is hiding away in our past or our hearts need not define us anymore. It is a family we’ve entered, who will run with us as we search for what we are looking for, and who will avoid saying “told you so” when we realize what we are looking for has been with us all the time.

Opening:	UMH # 145	“Morning Has Broken”
Prayer:	TFWS # 2117	“Spirit of God” (vs. 1, 2, 5)
Doxology:	UMH # 94	Praise God, ... All Blessings Flow - Alleluia
Benediction:		“On This Day of Celebration”

### SUNDAY 14<sup>th</sup> “Becoming the People of God”

First Reading: I Samuel 3. 1 - 10  
Focus Scripture: John 1. 43 - 51

Maybe the lesson here is that we shouldn’t make assumptions. When we look around at our community, we think these folks want nothing to do with us. They don’t care about our message. They won’t want to belong, to connect. So, we don’t bother because we know how it will go. But perhaps Samuel and Nathaniel have a different message. Keep speaking, keep inviting, keep telling your story. Who knows who is really listening?

Children’s Moment: Megan Houpt

Opening:	UMH # 593	“Here I Am, Lord”
Prayer:	TFWS # 2176	“Make Me a Servant” x 2
Doxology:	UMH # 94	Praise God, ... All Blessings Flow - Alleluia
Benediction:	TFWS # 2130	“The Summons” (vs.1, 2, 5)

### SUNDAY 21<sup>st</sup> “Becoming the People of God”

First Reading: Jonah 3. 1 – 5, 10  
Focus Scripture: Mark 1. 14 – 20

One of our constant questions when addressing a biblical text is, “Who are we in this story?” If we’re honest with ourselves, we can’t help but identify with Jonah. Maybe this is our story too. And it is good to be honest enough with ourselves to admit that. But the real call of the book of Jonah is to be more like the God who sent him; the one who believes in second chances; the one who doesn’t give up issuing the invitation, even when the response isn’t what was hoped. We ask again and again; we invite again and again. We make ready, roll out the carpet, and focus on hospitality again and again. That’s what it means that God didn’t give up on Jonah. We don’t give up on one another and on the community around us. We are in the business of making disciples who make disciples.

Children’s Moment: Pastor Brandon

Opening:	UMH # 428	“For the Healing of the Nations”
Prayer:	TFWS # 2165	“Cry of My Heart”
Doxology:	UMH # 94	Praise God, ... All Blessings Flow - Alleluia
Benediction:	UMH # 344	“Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore”

### SUNDAY 28<sup>th</sup> “Becoming the People of God”

First Reading: Deuteronomy 18. 15 - 20  
Focus Scripture: Mark 1. 21 - 28

Sometimes our call is to silence the demonic voices. And the best way to do that is to present a better narrative. We are to tell a better story about how the world can work in God’s kin-dom, how the church can represent a better way of being the kin-dom of God. Sometimes shouting and pointing fingers just raises everyone’s blood pressure. It might be better to bring healing to a broken world with kindness and gentleness. It’s not avoiding confrontation with evil but refusing to play the same games. We do so by walking in the way of Jesus.

Opening:	UMH # 127	“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”
Prayer:	TFWS # 2161	“To Know You More” (vs. 1, 2)
Doxology:	UMH # 94	Praise God, ... All Blessings Flow - Alleluia
Benediction:	UMH # 632	“Draw Us in the Spirit’s Tether”

# February 2024

SUNDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

"Becoming the People of God" – with Communion

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40. 21 - 31

Focus Scripture: Mark 1. 29 - 39

Jesus had a singular focus in the moment: time with God. He knew what it was to wait on God. He knew the effort it required and the focus it needed. He knew that the only way to walk and not faint, to run and not be weary, is to continually take time to be with God, to set aside everything else to fully be present with the source of his strength and direction. He knew his wings would come only when he would wait on the Lord.

A part of waiting on the Lord means not getting caught up in what we can’t understand or explain. Instead, we trust that he did what he was called to do. Just as we must do what we are called to do. These are wings we fly with, as the people of God we are becoming. The wings of call, the wings of service, the wings of love that bring us into the kingdom we seek to embrace and promote. So, let us walk and not be weary, let us run and not faint as we seek to represent the God upon whom we wait.

Opening:	UMH # 110	“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”
Communion Songs:	TFWS # 2036	“Give Thanks”
	TFWS # 2025	“As The Deer”
	TFWS # 2162	“Grace Alone”
	UMH # 620	“One Bread, One Body”
Doxology:	UMH # 94	Praise God, ... All Blessings Flow - Alleluia
Benediction:	TFWS # 2238	“In the Midst of New Dimensions”

SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

"Crossing Over" - Transfiguration Sunday

Scripture Reading: II Kings 2. 1 - 12

Focus Scripture: Mark 9. 2 - 9

All people are called to “drink the cup” that Jesus drank; all people are called to “be baptized with his baptism.” We all must follow Jesus on the way to the cross and be prepared to take up his mantle when we are called.

The characteristic urgency of Mark continues when the cloud dissipates. Immediately, Jesus instructs the disciples to “tell no one,” and get back to work. In Mark, just like in the Book of Kings, “crossing over” brings growing pains. But ready or not, the time is now for the followers of Jesus to respond to his invitations to ministry. For Mark, the need for disciples- both then and now- to grasp Jesus’ true identity in light of the cross could not be more urgent. For “behold, the Kingdom of God is at hand.”

Children’s Moment: Megan Houpt

Opening:	UMH # 77	“How Great Thou Art”
Prayer:	UMH # 454	“Open My Eyes, That I May See” (v.1, 2)
Doxology:	UMH # 94	Praise God, ... All Blessings Flow - Alleluia
Benediction:	See Below	“I Am the Light of the World”