Sunday Morning Worship Resources
Love Extravagantly
Exodus 1:7-20,

Joyful Noise (Tentative)
Ah, La, La, La
Love Can Change the World
No Longer Blind
Open Up

Promo Spot – Bethany Theological Seminary (Video)

Announcements

Dean's Speech

Introductory Comments about Responding To God's Spirit in Worship
This is holy ground. When we enter this space for worship we metaphorically “remove our sandals” (Exodus 3:5) in expectation that we will experience God—as we raise our voices together in song and praise; as we quiet our hearts in prayer; as we attend to God’s word, proclaimed to challenge and inspire us; as we partner with God, sharing our resources and gifts to transform the world through our offerings; in the faces of those sitting beside us and in midst of the gathered body.

When we experience God in worship, we may be moved to respond to that powerful and mysterious encounter. But our responses may vary, even as the worship elements and mood of the service vary. At times we may be moved to shout “Amen!” or “Alleluia!”. At times we may be moved to raise our arms in praise or offer “silent applause” (demonstrate). At times we may be moved to dance and leap for joy! At times we may be moved to clap while singing a song of praise. At times we may be moved to laugh or cry. At times we may be moved to sit for a moment in holy silence. At yet other times we may be moved to reach out to a neighbor with a hug or a hand squeeze. When you are moved by the God’s Spirit, we want you to respond.

However, we do want to offer this gentle reminder: This is worship, not a performance. Those leading in worship are not on stage for their own glory, but to guide us to an encounter with God. Sometimes when we are moved by their leadership, we are not sure how to respond, so we revert to the familiar: applause or even “fan screams”. So we offer this question for your consideration...When we respond in this way during worship, is our focus on the person or people leading in worship or is our focus on the God we have gathered to worship?
In addition, there are those among us who are simply wired differently than others. Loud, spontaneous outbursts, as infectious as they are, actually prevent some from being able to be a part of worship. Some among us are affected so harshly by sharp noises, that they must either cover their ears or leave the arena. Therefore, while we want you to respond to the nudgings of God’s Spirit, we ask that you refrain from raucous applause and “fan screams” so we might truly be bound together in love as one body gathered in Christ to worship and praise our God.

Our God is an awesome God. Let us enter into this—and all of our times of worship—together, because God is indeed worthy of our worship and our heartfelt responses.

Speaker Introduction
This morning we welcome Dana Cassell as our preacher. Dana Cassell currently serves as pastor of Peace Covenant Church of the Brethren in Durham, North Carolina. She firmly believes that God is doing a new thing with our church, something big and messy and much larger than our ancestors could have ever imagined. She looooooooves her 9 pound Chihuahua-Terrier mix dog named Franny and is pretty proud of introducing pimento cheese to her congregation’s Love Feast menu. Sister Dana, we eagerly await the message God has given you to share with us.

Call to Worship (Screen)
R 1:  This!
R 2:  This new day is a gift from our God!
All:  Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
R 1:  This! This is a day of promise and possibility.
All:  Let us embrace the opportunities before us.
R 2:  This! This is a day to bask in God’s extravagant love for us, made known to us in the gift of this new day, in the gift of God’s faithfulness throughout history, in the care and support we receive from family and friends, and in the gift of Jesus Christ.
All:  Let us bask in God’s extravagant love for us and for all people.
R 1:  This! This is a day to shower others with extravagant love in God’s name: to open ourselves to new friendships, to deepen our existing relationships, to listen with compassion to those we deem “different” or with whom we disagree, to extend a helping hand to someone in need, to serve with grace and humility.
All:  Let us shower others with extravagant love as we bear witness to our God.
R 2:  We gather—right here, right now—to worship our loving God at the start of this new day.
All:  God is love! As we worship together, may our hearts be tuned to, our spirits clothed in, and our lives bound together by God’s extravagant love.
Invocation
God of Unconditional and Extravagant Love, wrap your arms around us as we gather to worship you. You are always present with us, in our waking and in our sleeping, in our joy and in our struggle, but sometimes we miss the signs of your faithful presence and compassionate care. Right here, right now, as we gather to sing and to pray, to listen and to learn, to share and to serve, open our eyes and our ears, our minds and our hearts to your loving presence within, among, and around us. May your unconditional and extravagant love sustain and inspire us in these moments and as we move through this new day and each new day, that we might live with courage and love with abandon, always, always, bearing witness to your caring and compassionate presence in a hurting world. Amen.

Song: Alabemos

Offering
The Bible repeatedly calls God’s people to care for those in need as an expression of God’s extravagant love. While not poor in spirit, many of the people in Haiti live in extreme poverty. Haiti, which occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola, is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Much of the country is rural and underdeveloped, with a lack of infrastructure and limited access to clean water, medical facilities and emergency transportation. Natural disasters such as the devastating 2010 earthquake, which claimed the lives of over 300,000 people have further impeded progress.

Because of the limited access to medical facilities, Haiti is the most dangerous country in the Western Hemisphere to give birth; without skilled doctors and nurses providing care before, during, and after the birth process, both mothers and babies are at risk of death—often from preventable causes. In the midst of this struggle, Midwives for Haiti, has been working to alleviate suffering since 2006: training nurse-midwives; expanding services at the hospital in Hinche, a remote mountainous community, where previously there was only a doctor available to deliver babies during daytime shifts Monday through Friday; providing both pre-natal and post-natal care to mothers living in even more remote locations via mobile clinics; providing education and resources to Matwons, the traditional birth attendants who provide care at most births, but whose only training is knowledge passed down through the generations; and building and staffing a birth center in Cabestor, another remote village.

One of their newer outreach efforts is providing all new mothers they serve with a baby care kit filled with simple items we take for granted, including diapers. This week, these old t-shirts that had been crowding your closets and drawers, will be transformed into diapers that can be used, washed, and used again and again and again. A seemingly small gift to us, but for a mother and baby living in a remote, rural area of Haiti, without access to a Walmart or Target, Costco or Sam’s Club, a diaper has more value. Since 2010, churches in Iowa, Minnesota, and Montana—including Church of the Brethren congregations in the Northern Plains District—have made and shipped over 33,000 diapers to Haiti. Many of these were sent to orphanages, but more recently, diapers have been sent to
Midwives for Haiti for inclusion in their baby care kits. This week, our goal is to make 2,400 diapers, a one-year supply for Midwives for Haiti. (Pause if necessary until all baskets of t-shirts have been brought forward)

Let us join together in a prayer of blessing:

God Who Calls Us to Love as You Love, Unconditionally and Extravagantly, these t-shirts are symbol of our love. We know you are constantly making all things new. Bless the hands that will work faithfully this week, transforming something old into something new. Bless the staff and volunteers of Midwives for Haiti, who work selflessly to transform the lives of those they serve. And bless the mothers and babies who will receive these diapers. Fill the mothers with your unconditional and extravagant love for their children. Watch over and protect the babies, that they might grow in faith and learn to bear witness to your love. Amen.

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 1:7-20

Hear now the Word of God recorded in Exodus, Chapter 1, verses 7-20:

But the Israelites were fruitful and prolific; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

Now a king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.”

Therefore, the Egyptians set taskmasters over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more the Israelites multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, “When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.”

But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live.

So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?”

The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.”
So God dealt well with the midwives; and the Israelites multiplied and became very strong.

May God bless the reading of this word.

**Song:** Beloved, Let Us Love One Another

**Sermon**

**Time of Silence**

**Song:** Beloved, Let Us Love One Another (Reprise)

**Discipleship Moment**

**Song:** Love Can Change the World

**Benediction/Blessing**