

Week of the Laity Resources



Created to be Creators

Genesis 1:26 and Proverbs 18:16

January 21 - 27, 2019

General Introduction

In the life of the church, many traditions focus on the ministry of the clergy members. However, there is more to a congregation's life that one office can contain. Those who help with the upkeep of the church, teach Sunday school, lead outreach efforts, new member classes, lead children's ministry and hospitality, all play a vital role that should not be diminished due to the absence of a title.

We are a priesthood of all believers. Even though our gifts are varied, they are all needed. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:17) All of our gifts are perfect for who we are and in the time in which we live.

Many members do not know how to contribute. There are times when there is no blueprint or other ministry to mimic. Your gift is made for expression where you are so you will blaze the trail and offer what your community needs. Enjoy the journey and allow God to create something new!

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Opening Prayer

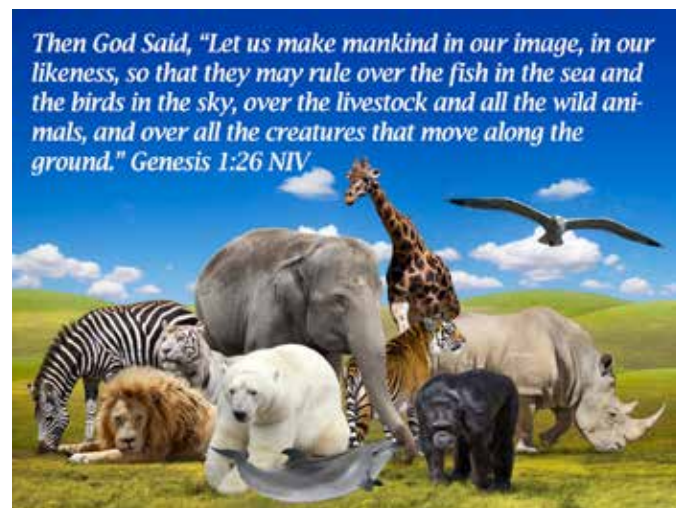
Scripture Focus

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground." Genesis 1:26 NIV

One of the most popular interpretations from the creation story is that Eve took humanity off track from a lifetime in paradise to one full of toil. The why and how tend to be cast aside as irrelevant. During Eve's encounter with the serpent, she was told that by eating the fruit she could be like God. What she had apparently forgotten was that she was already like God in all of the ways that mattered the most.

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She thought that she was lacking something. She didn't know who she was. Eve is often berated as the villain, who made childbirth hard and put humanity in the position where we have to work. The same is true for many of us who are sitting in the pews waiting to become who we need to be in order to serve or



contribute to the life of the church within and outside of the walls of the building. However, how many of us though redeemed under the saving work of Christ fall victim to short term memory loss when it comes to who we are in light of God's kingdom? How many of us think we have nothing to offer the work of the Church or have messed up so greatly that God would no longer want to call us son or daughter?

We were created with gifts, talents and skills that are meant to meet the needs of others. Too often we can't see the greatness of that which is in our hands or the impact we could make. When we get solely focused on the future that we can't see, we diminish what is possible and deny the world our gift. We already have what we need to partner with God to nourish the hungry, set the captives free and strengthen the weak.

To make any measure of change in a world whose light seems to be dimming, we must first believe there is a place and need for us. Your gift will make room for you. "A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great." Proverbs 18:16 You do not have to be clergy for that to be so because we are a priesthood of all believers!

Questions

1. What do you think it means to be made in the image of God?
2. How does that connectedness to the Creator impact how you view yourself and others?
3. When God created, before anything physical was made, God first spoke, do you habitually speak affirmatively what you wish to create in the world? Why or why not?

4. Dr. Myles Munroe said, "You must decide if you are going to rob the world or bless it with the rich, valuable, potent, untapped resources locked away within you." What resources has God given you to offer to the world? What can you do tomorrow to use those resources or gifts?

5. If you already use your gifts, how have they made a "way" for you?

Closing Prayer

Worship Resources

Note: Feel free to express your gifts in planning the worship service. Music, poetry, skits and art are all expressions of creativity that can be used to help people understand the message God is sharing. Week of the Laity would be a perfect opportunity to engage some of the members who don't know how to use their gifts during worship.

Call to Worship

L: The LORD is my God and my guide.

P: Lord give us courage when we are fearful.

L: Help us see our purpose.

P: Give us space to use our gifts.

L: And wisdom to seek us for their development.

P: Help us to see ourselves as you see us.

L: We are grateful to join You in Your Work in the World.

P: As you continue to create, we join you.

Prayer

Prayer by Maya Angelou

*Father, Mother God,
Thank you for your presence
during the hard and mean days.
For then we have you to lean upon.*

*Thank you for your presence
during the bright and sunny days,
for then we can share that which we have
with those who have less.*

*And thank you for your presence
during the Holy Days, for then we are able
to celebrate you and our families
and our friends.*

*For those who have no voice,
we ask you to speak.*

*For those who feel unworthy,
we ask you to pour your love out
in waterfalls of tenderness.*

*For those who live in pain,
we ask you to bathe them
in the river of your healing.*

*For those who are lonely, we ask
you to keep them company.*

*For those who are depressed,
we ask you to shower upon them
the light of hope.*

*Dear Creator, You, the borderless
sea of substance, we ask you to give all the
world that which we need most -- Peace.*

Children's Moment

Supplies needed

a seed and a plant

Scripture Reference

Genesis 1:26, Proverbs 18:16

Note: For the children's moment, remember that simple concepts are easier for children to understand. There are also children who learn better with the use of visuals, sound and movement. This moment is for the children so illustrations will be welcome.

Share the passages with the children.

If I gave you this seed, would you think that I had given you a wonderful gift? Wait for the children's answers. When this little seed is placed in soil, given water and sunlight, it begins to grow. As it grows bigger, it begins to look like this (show them the plant). This plant gives us _____ (vegetables, fruit or flowers depending on the seed and plant chosen). That is its gift to the world. We all have gifts. My gift is _____. I use my gift to _____. Ask them to name some gifts or talents. All of the gifts that we have were given to us by God not just for ourselves but for everyone to enjoy. We were all given something special. It is our job to use those gifts so that we can bring beauty to the world.

Pray over them that they may find ways to use their talents and gifts for the Kingdom.



Sermon Resource

Scripture Focus:

Genesis 1:26, Proverbs 18:16

Sermon Title

Be Fruitful

Theme of Sermon

When the first people were created, they were told to be fruitful and multiply. Fruitful is not a state relegated only to creating children. We also produce fruit from our gifts and the use of them in our work, ministry and family life.

Suggested Structure for the Sermon

Note to the laity: We stand in a faith that proclaims “we are a priesthood of all believers.” Proclaiming the good news is not only a moment for the pastor or minister. All of us who carry the Word in our hearts can share its powerful message with others. A member(s) of the congregation or pastor may preach the sermon. Below is an outline that she or he can utilize:

- I. In the beginning God created**
- II. We are image bearers of God**
 - A. Know you have a gift**
 - B. Value what you were given**
 - C. Don't compare**
- III. Your gift is for the World**

Sermon: Be Fruitful

God produced trees, animals, land, sea and humanity in the course of being fruitful. As the only members of creation created in God's image, we were charged to be fruitful. Our thoughts, words, works of our hands and hearts all have the ability to produce.



Our Gifts Are Valuable

One of the greatest pitfalls to fruitfulness is not believing that anyone will value what you have. Not seeing what you have to offer the world, the body of Christ or your congregation creates the dormant churchgoer, who walks in and out of the sanctuary but never discovers how what God has given them can aid others. We are far more gifted than we realize. The seemingly nothing that we possess can greatly impact the world. The mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds about 1 millimeter, yet it grows into a bush that can reach six to twenty feet. Mustard is strong and distinct even though it comes from a seed that is insignificant in size. How much more power is found within the person who taps into the infinite gift that God has implanted within him or her.

Know Your Gifts

Unfortunately, we are not labeled by our God given gift. Some of us just know through growth, affinity or revelation via exposed talent. Others are not that fortunate. Explore who you are and what you love. Gifts or value being buried under guilt, low self-esteem or self-worth is a common foe to standing confidently as an image bearer of God but each of us is purposed, destined and have the ability to produce great fruit.

No Comparison

One of the ways to destroy your fruitfulness is to yield to comparison. We were created by a potter to have different personalities, gifts, passions and skills. No two of us are exactly alike. We weren't meant to be. It was intentional that we entered the world as designer originals. Relinquishing that privilege is an affront to the Creator and a losing effort for those who try to become who they were never meant to be. There is greatness in you as you were created.

We were created to create. Therefore, be fruitful in thought, word and impact for others are waiting.

Suggestions for Communion

Note for Worship Planners

The center of worship is the moment when we gather around the table of Christ to remember the most graceful act ever done for us. The bread represents the body of Christ. The cup represents the blood of Christ. Invite everyone to prepare their hearts and minds for the sharing of Holy Communion.

Benediction

Now let us go into the world offering the work of our hearts and hands that You created us to accomplish. Amen.



Music Suggestions

Chalice Hymnal

Processional of Opening Hymn–
Be Thou My Vision – 595

Communion Hymn
Let Us Break Bread Together – 265

Discipleship Hymn or Contemporary Song
In the Bulb There Is a Flower --638
Hills & Valleys – Tauren Wells
What Can I Do– Ty Tribett

Opening Song -
How Great Thou Art – 33
Your Spirit – Tasha Cobbs Leonard
(Contemporary Song)

Discipleship Song –
I Surrender All – 175
Oceans (Where My Feet May Fail)– Hillsong
United (Contemporary Song)
You Say – Lauren Daigle

About the Author

Best described as a “Citizen of the World” whether home or abroad, LaShaundra aims to positively impact the lives of those she encounters. After returning to the States after a short term assignment in South Africa through Global Ministries, LaShaundra found herself fighting for space in a crashing market. In response to fruitless job-hunting during the height of the recession, LaShaundra stopped asking for a job and created her own through 3C: Creative Communications. Through 3C, she entered the world of speaking, training and coaching.

Since 2009, she has worked with hundreds of ministries, nonprofits, entrepreneurs and companies to navigate the social media landscape, craft their visions and build dynamic teams. Watching leaders learn how to cultivate healthy communication or witnessing the intersection between vision and lived reality are moments LaShaundra revels.

Over the past nine years, her work has transformed as she lives more and more into her calling. In this season, her energy is primarily spent helping others discover and boldly own their purpose and calling. LaShaundra is the creator of the S.T.O.P. (Spend Time on Perfection) Retreat, which offers women dedicated time to work on their visions in a safe space while practicing self-care. Her goal is to hold several across the country during 2019. For youth, who have an inclination for entrepreneurship, she offers a summer program under her non-profit Sofia Creates.

Her educational background includes a Master of Divinity from Columbia International Seminary, Master of Arts in Digital Media Production from Emerson College and Bachelor of Arts in Radio & Television Production from the University of Central Florida. Her supplemental certifications are John Maxwell Team Speaker, Coach & Trainer and Social Media Marketing from Hootsuite. She is also an authorized partner of 5 Behaviors of a Cohesive Team and Everything DiSC.

LaShaundra currently lives in Biloxi, MS and travels as needed while intentionally supporting the dreams of her husband John McCarty, III and bonus children, Caleb and Kylar.





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