

Message: “The Challenge of Building a Village Part 1”, Week 3 of “Challenges Series”, presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 10-02-2016 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.

Why are we here?

We're here because God desired a family. God is in the business of relationships. Therefore, we, as the body of Christ should be in the business of relationships. The Bible offers guidance in this area, telling us what it means to care for one another and how to reach out. It also informs us that we are to value the sacredness of relationships and of the work of God over material things... we are also to remember that being in community makes us stronger in every way.

Galatians 6:2,7-10 tells us ⁷“bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. ⁸If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the spirit, you will reap eternal life from the spirit. ⁹so let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. ¹⁰So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.”

In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus says, ¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal;²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

James 5:16 says, “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.”

And, finally, in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 we find: ⁹“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. ¹¹Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? ¹²And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

Brothers and sisters, it is our duty as Christians to live in community with one another and to continue to broaden that circle. Amen.

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At the mere mention of the word *community*, people often eye you suspiciously, smile tolerantly, and hope you change the subject. They fear that you're going to tell them they have to sell all they own, move to a commune, wear hemp clothes and garden from daybreak till sunset. But, they misunderstand what community truly means.



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What do you picture when you think of community?



**LIGHTS...
CAMERA...
ACTIVISM.**

racial justice WAR FREE SPEECH
FREE TRADE global warming
human rights ABUSE OF POWER identit

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In the fall of the year, Linda, a young woman, was traveling alone up the rutted and rugged highway from Alberta to the Yukon. Linda didn't know you don't travel to Whitehorse alone in a rundown Honda Civic, so she set off where only four-wheel drives normally venture. The first evening she found a room in the mountains near a summit and asked for a 5 a.m. wakeup call so she could get an early start. She couldn't understand why the clerk looked surprised at that request, but as she awoke to early-morning fog shrouding the mountain tops, she understood. Not wanting to look foolish, she got up and went to breakfast. Two truckers invited Linda to join them, and since the place was so small, she felt obliged.



"Where are you headed?" one of the truckers asked. "Whitehorse." "In that little civic? No way! This pass is dangerous in weather like this." "Well, I'm determined to try," was Linda's gutsy, if not very informed, response. "Then I guess we're just going to have to hug you," the trucker suggested. Linda drew back. "There's no way I'm going to let you touch me!"

"Not like that!" the truckers chuckled. "We'll put one truck in front of you and one in the rear. In that way, we'll get you through the mountains." All that foggy morning Linda followed the two red dots in front of her and had the reassurance of a big escort behind as they made their way safely through the mountains. Caught in the fog in our dangerous passage through life, we need to be "hugged." With fellow Christians who know the way and can lead safely ahead of us, and with others behind, gently encouraging us along, we, too, can pass safely.

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God intends for us to live in agape community... That is, one of love and trust and care. Community is the gift of a rich and challenging life together, one that we need and can receive with joy. Community is meeting that hunger within each of us for deeper relationships.

But, we live in a culture where independence is valued. We elevate those who are independently strong so much so that we hide our weaknesses from each other. We work hard on our public face.



The apostle Paul, who probably considered himself quite independent before he met Christ, claimed the strength that comes through a total dependence on God when he said God's "power is perfected in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)).

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Today, as we talk about the challenge of being a village, I'd like to focus in on one of the areas where waunakee is coming together as a community: Waunakee Community Cares Coalition.



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Christian community is simply sharing a common life in Christ. It moves us beyond the self-interested isolation of private lives and beyond the superficial social contacts that pass for “Christian fellowship.” This is what our creed says. This is the people we claim to be. As Christians, we reach out to the hurting, to those who may not share the same beliefs we do, to lift up and care for one another.

