

## **Sermon: It Takes a Village**

### **Scripture Reading: Luke 4:21-30**

This past week as I was going over in my mind how I would structure today, I was approached by a gentleman on the street just outside the Vault coffee shop downtown. He looked at me quizzically and said “remember me?” Now that is a phrase that makes my hair stand end. Life has changed over the years I used to say I know people from 3 places. School, Prison or Colour Your, now its Colour your world, politics or prison! The last 2 are treated the same just in case! So, I took up a defensive stance, just to be safe.

“It was our first weekend in Fergus and my wife and I were in your paint store. Your wife called you on a walkie-talkie thing. Your son had left one of his bags in your truck. In that bag was his jock he was about to go on the ice and need it. But your wife was in a panic because she had all your kids at the arena, and you couldn't leave the store because it was packed. That's when I offered to help to take it to the arena for you but my wife had left to go to the coffee shop. I was prepared to drive your big 16-foot truck, but I did not know where the arena was or if I would be able to find my way back. Another man was in the store he couldn't drive the truck, but he knew his way around and so the two of us drove your truck to the sportsplex and gave your wife your sons jock. The gentleman who came with me Ken this is name. Ken MC Manus, we laughed saying it truly takes a village to raise one child!”

I remember that day and it was nice to get a friendly reminder from above my old friend Ken McManus.

Today, we gather with hearts full of gratitude as we reflect on the past year and the many ways God has blessed our church. In particular, we pause to give thanks for four wonderful ministers who have given their time, energy, and love to serve this congregation. Each of them has brought unique gifts, and together, they remind us of a truth that echoes throughout scripture: it takes a village.

Our passage from Luke 4:21-30 reminds us that Jesus himself was shaped by the community around Him. He was speaking in His hometown, among people who had seen Him grow up, people who had been part of His "village." And yet, as He shared His calling, He was met with skepticism. This passage challenges us to recognize and appreciate the blessings that come through the people God places in our midst.

Today, we celebrate four individuals who have been part of our village—each contributing in their own special way

### **Recognizing Our Ministers:**

First, we give thanks for Jeff Hawkins, whose long-time connection to our church has been a source of strength and joy. Your humor has lifted our spirits, reminding us that faith is not only about reverence but also about joy and laughter. I remember in particular one service where you threw out what I can only describe as a dad pun and I retorted with a dad pun of my own and you and I began back and forth really seriously bad dad puns. I would have gone on longer if it wasn't for the sharp elbow delivered to my ribs quickly, as every husband who sat in church and spoke out has received

from his wife, signal stop. You have shown us that a cheerful heart is indeed good medicine (Proverbs 17:22), and we are deeply grateful for the warmth and light you bring.

Second, we celebrate Felica Urbanski, whose love for music has enriched our worship in beautiful and profound ways. I always knew when I saw the violin resting here, we were going to have rich message supported by great music. With your violin, you have led us into moments of deep reflection, praise, and communion with God. Through your melodies, we have heard echoes of heaven, and we thank you for using your gifts to draw us closer to the Lord.

Third, we honor Tom Watson, who has captivated us with an engaging style of storytelling. Your ability to weave God's truth into narratives has touched our hearts and opened our eyes to the beauty of the Gospel in fresh ways. You your stories of our town to remind of the connections we share and how no matter whether we jump into Winnebago and become snowbirds or stayed here in our town we are still connected. I toyed with the idea of having my son Graham come today unfortunately he is working as he does most weekends. I wanted him to bring his drone. I remember one of your stories I can't remember if it was Elsie Dunsmore who is flying the drone or Elsie was the one stepping out of the shower naked, when the drone burst through the glass! I thought that would have been fun. Then I had nightmares that the drone would swoop down, buzz Tom and then Graham would make a sharp left and it would burst through one of our Stain glass windows. I know there is seven years bad luck for breaking a mirror. I didn't want to toy with how many years of bad luck there would be for breaking one of God's stained-glass windows. Jesus Himself was a master storyteller, using parables to teach and inspire. Thank you for carrying on that tradition and for making the Word come alive for us.

Finally, we express our deep appreciation for Marion Loree, a strong and steady presence in pastoral care and administrative support. While much of your work happens behind the scenes, its impact is immeasurable. I for one am truly thankful for the time you spent with me after the loss of my mother and of how comforting that was to me. You have been a pillar of strength, offering compassion, wisdom, and organization, ensuring that the work of this church moves forward smoothly. Your quiet faithfulness reflects the servant-hearted love of Christ, and we are profoundly grateful.

**It Takes a Village:** Each of these ministers reminds us that the church is not built on the gifts of one person alone but on the collective efforts of many. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 that "there are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord." We are truly blessed to have a village of faithful servants who embody this truth.

To our four ministers, we say thank you. Thank you for your time, your talents, your love, and your service. Your presence among us has been a gift, and we pray that God will continue to bless you as you follow His call.

May we all be reminded that God calls each of us to contribute to the village. Whether through laughter, music, storytelling, or steadfast service, we each have a role to play in building up His kingdom. Let us go forward with grateful hearts, honoring those who serve and seeking ways to serve one another.

Amen.