

Sermon Guides for Acts

Series Title: Ancestry

Tag Line: Our Spiritual DNA

Dates (2020): October 25, November 1

Key Verse:

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.
(Acts 2:43)

Series Overview:

We continue to live in a broken world in need of hope, and even the Church is in need of healing and clarity. Awe and generosity, inclusivity and love characterized the early church in the book of Acts, and we have the opportunity to allow these qualities to characterize our fellowship today. The book of Acts not only reminds us of where the church began; it reminds us that we are part of the ongoing unfolding of that story. The stories of the early church are our stories, and they remind us who we are, and who we can be, as a witness to the gospel today.

Colors, Images, Mood, Vibe:

Sacred and traditional symbols, such as icons, stained glass, steeples.

Feeling of tradition, timelessness, enduring relevance, being a part of something bigger than ourselves; there should also be a mood or vibe of vibrancy, action, movement: the church is a movement, not a monument.

Sermon 1

Title: Our Spiritual DNA: Awe and Wonder

Scripture: Acts 2:41-47

Key Word: Church

Theme: Awe and wonder

Main Idea: The early church was characterized by generosity, compassion, service, and love. God is empowering us to live with generosity, compassion, service, and love through the Holy Spirit. today—just like the early church.

Sermon Description:

In the wake of Pentecost, the thousands of new Christians got right to work, addressing the real needs of people in their faith community and throughout their towns and villages. As a result of their generosity and their commitment to spiritual practices (worship, prayer, scripture reading, fellowship), they not only grew in number, they grew in “awe.”

Wouldn't it be great to have a renewed sense of awe and wonder in the church? Wouldn't it be great for the world to have a renewed sense of awe and wonder today? This story suggests that the way to do that is to allow the Spirit of God to demonstrate compassion and justice in a mighty and beautiful way, through each of us.

Sermon 2 (All Saints Day)

Title: Our Spiritual DNA: Inclusion

Scripture: Acts 15:6-11

Key Word: Inclusion

Theme: The inclusion of the Gentiles into the community of believers.

Main Idea: It is in our DNA to work through division and polarization, and to draw the circle of God's grace wider to include people who have been excluded. God is inviting us to draw the circle of God's grace wider to include the previously excluded.

Sermon Description

This is All Saints' Sunday, when we will remember those in our congregation whom we have lost in the past year. It is always one of the most moving and meaningful worship services of the year. This year, we remember them in the scriptural context of Acts 15, which is a watershed moment in the fledgling existence of the infant church. It had reached a crossroads of identity, in which it had to decide whether to adhere strictly to Jewish custom and practice, or make allowance for Gentiles to follow Jesus without becoming cultural Jews.

The decision by the Jerusalem Council to include Gentiles is instructive for us. We are called to be expansive in our view of God's love, and to extend the reach of God's hospitality to more and more people. As we remember the saints of the church, we see in them reminders of how they modeled such love and grace, and remind us that we can be the same.