

John Sampson  
"Extraordinary Time!"  
Text: Deuteronomy 5:12 - 15  
Preached at KVCC  
June 3, 2018

Will you pray with me?

God, may the words of my mouth, and the meditations of all of our hearts, be acceptable to you, our rock, and our redeemer.

Amen.

Ordinary Time.

We're in a period in the church calendar that has the somewhat dull and uninspiring title of Ordinary Time.

It's a season that stretches from Pentecost all the way to the first Sunday of Advent.

And it's called Ordinary because there are no special holidays, or observances during this stretch of the year.

It's a time when our focus can drift back to the ordinariness of our lives – to our commitments to ourselves, and our families, and our community. It is in the ordinariness of these times that we raise our families, fall in love, fall out of love, vote for our political leaders, find an assisted care facility for our aging parents, or maybe for ourselves. It's the time we take our pets to the vet, and celebrate our grandchild's first birthday. In Ordinary Time we live out our lives according to the rhythm of our shared human experience.

But our reading this morning cautions us.

It recognizes how most of our week is caught up in work, in the ordinary activities of life. And that is good. And that's how it should be. But our spiritual ancestors invite us to put a limit on the inertia of our lives, and carve out for ourselves a moment – they suggest a whole day, the seventh day, the Sabbath – to lift our heads up out of our day-to-day lives and consider the ways God's spirit is moving through not only through our lives, but also the wider world.

And although the Sabbath is set aside from the rest of the week it is never disconnected from it. The Sabbath is our time to reflect deeply and spiritually about our lives, to search for a more profound meaning already present and embedded in what can seem so ordinary. And as we meditate on our lives, as we give ourselves the time to contemplate the wonder already present to us, I think we have the possibility of seeing what we can take for granted is not so ordinary after all. I think actually we can see that our lives, and the world around

us, are really quite extraordinary. Because our lives are filled with God's presence – right here, and right now.

So this summer we're going to do something a little bit different. This summer I am going to offer an occasional preaching cycle called Extraordinary Time, which will explore the movement of God's Spirit through our lives, through the ordinariness of our shared experience.

Instead of me choosing the topics for the sermons, I am inviting all here today to share with me what you would like me to preach on. What are the questions and concerns that are arising in your lives that you would like to hear me respond to from the pulpit? What topics that you think about in your day-to-day lives that you would like us to consider here in worship? Where do you need help recognizing God's Spirit working and moving in your lives today?

You could ask to hear more about a specific topic – say forgiveness for yourself and others. Or maybe you'd like to hear about a specific passage in the Bible – say the one about respecting your parents when you find it so difficult to do so. Or maybe you're concerned with the direction of our country and you'd like to explore what it could possibly mean for us to live as one nation under God.

The sky's the limit. Your lives, and your experiences, and your questions are the limit.

Each of you should have gotten a slip of paper in your bulletin, and you should have also been offered a pen as you entered. If you are missing either of these, please just raise your hand and an usher can provide you with what you're missing.

Please take a minute and think about a question, or topic, or concern you have that you'd like reflected on during the summer, and when you're ready simply write it down on your slip of paper. You can write down more than one topic if you'd like. And when you are ready please come forward and place your slip in this basket.

[People write their topics.]

Thank you.

Thank you for all you've shared. And if during the week you think of something else, feel free to email it to me.

I'm really looking forward to exploring Extraordinary Time with you, of finding the places that God shows up in our day-to-day lives, and in the questions that haunt our hearts and minds. The first reflection based on what you have shared this morning will be shared not next weekend, because we have our Gospel Choir with us, but the following weekend.

I'm excited for this, and I hope you are too. Amen.