AMS Mission Awareness Service 2025 – MESSAGE

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**Christ’s Service – Our Response**

Remember the old saying: ‘Be careful what you wish for. You may get it.’

This just might be the best response to the mother in the gospel reading today. Seeing that her sons would not be going back to their lives as fisherman with Zebedee, their father, she was adamant that they should hold positions of authority with Jesus.

Simply wanting glory for her sons, she gets her heart pierced with the

repercussions of their decision to serve Jesus; even to the death of James as the first disciple to die for Christ, and the exile of John to the island of Patmos. This could be the story of a determined mother, or that of two brothers. However, it is placed here, in Matthew’s gospel, as a response to Jesus’ prediction of his impending death and the consequences to those who would follow and serve him.

Jesus reminded his followers that day that he did not come to lord it over others, but to serve. He told them that those who wished to be great must follow his lead and serve others.

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On this Mission Awareness Sunday, it’s good to be reminded that our mission as Christians is twofold. In the words of Living Faith, “Mission is evangelism the offer of salvation to all people” (Living Faith 9.1.2.), and “Mission is service, a call to help people in need and to permeate all of life with the compassion of God” (Living Faith 9.1.3).

Simply put, mission is sharing the good news of Christ’s love and forgiveness through our words and our actions.

Mission is how we look at the gospel. The church is born out of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in word and in deed – it is attitude.

When the Presbyterian Record did a ten-part series on the newly-written document Living Faith to introduce it to the church community, Kenn Stright was asked to write the section on ‘Mission – the Church Reaches Out’. In that article he said that mission was indeed attitude, the attitude each and every one of us takes with us into our service for Christ. What he finally did was speak of people - ordinary, everyday people who go about the task of being Christian in that most extra-ordinary way of ‘following the way of Jesus Christ.’

Mission is men and women, young and old — Christians, like you and me—

sharing our story, and telling of the faith that brings meaning and purpose to our lives. Mission is the whole people of God sharing the amazing story of “God with us”. Mission is the church in action, reaching out in obedience to Jesus Christ, proclaiming for one and all to hear, “I present to you this Jesus”.

How do we do this?

Teresa of Avila (1515–1582) long ago realized her place in God’s plan. She saw herself as the hands and feet of Christ. She saw her life as an expression of the compassion of the Christ for this world in its desperate need. Here is an adapted version of her famous quote. Can you say this after me…

**Christ has no body on earth but mine**, *(pause for response after each line)*

**no hands but mine,**

**no feet but mine.**

**Mine are the eyes**

**through which Christ looks upon the world;**

**Mine are the feet**

**with which he goes about doing good;**

**And mine are the hands**

**with which he blesses the world now.**

Easy enough to say.

Harder to believe.

Even harder to live out.

We need to be reminded that it’s not all up to us. We are not doing this on our own. Jesus is with us. Philippians 4:13 assures us: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

The world is in desperate need of those committed to Christ’s service. The mouth is necessary to proclaim the gospel, but hands and feet are urgently needed to bring the reality of the good news to the world.

Saint Francis supposedly said it this way “Preach the gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words”.

When have you felt Christ’s love coming through the actions of someone ‘preaching without words’? (*pause 5 seconds)*

Jesus explains his mission and ministry this way: “I am among you as one that serves.” Luke 22: 27.

When Jesus lived on earth he walked the roads of Palestine, Galilee, Samaria and the surrounding territories, taking the good news of God’s love to people in cities, towns and villages; to people on shorelines and mountains, at watering holes and synagogues. He met people where they were. He reached out his hands to comfort and heal people physically and emotionally. He touched the untouchable and took little children in his arms.

As the hands and feet of Christ in the world today we are called to do the same; to go where his love is needed and to reach out with his kindness, healing and love.

The hymn ‘Jesus’ hands were kind hands’ ends with this prayer:

“Take my hands, Lord Jesus, let them work for you;

make them strong and gentle, kind in all I do;

let me watch you, Jesus, till I’m gentle too,

till my hands are kind hands, quick to work for you.”

 (#631, Book of Praise, 1997)

In the Atlantic Mission Society, we seek to live out Jesus’ mission.

We share the good news in our regular auxiliary meetings through study and

prayer, as well as by leading services in our local congregations, and in community seniors’ homes. We reach out with compassion and care in many ways, including through Presbyterians Sharing, Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS & D), Gifts of Change, and the Advent Giving Tree.

In the past year we’ve supported many projects through these agencies and

programs, including:

-providing seeds, equipment, organic fertilizer, training, and animals for

subsistence farmers in developing countries;

-providing water and sanitation services in disaster situations;

-supporting the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Centre in Nepal;

-supporting Indigenous children at Flora House;

-supporting Christian Leadership Training in Malawi;

-supporting Bible Translation in Taiwan;

to name just a few.

Closer to home, we support the three Presbyterian camps in the Atlantic Synod, food banks and soup kitchens in each of our 6 Atlantic Presbyteries, refugee services, school breakfast programs and services for those experiencing homelessness.

In our local group we*…. (name/explain local projects or services where you have been the hands and feet of Christ…)*

On this Mission Awareness Sunday, we remember Christ’s words ‘Whoever wants to be great must become a servant… That is what the Son of Man has done: he came to serve, not to be served’. (Matthew 20:28a)

We remember that “Mission is evangelism the offer of salvation to all people” and “Mission is service, a call to help people in need and to permeate all of life with the compassion of God” (Living Faith 9.1).

We remember that God calls ordinary people to do extraordinary things!

Let us hear Saint Teresa’s words again as we close:

‘Christ has no body on earth but ours, no hands but ours, no feet but ours. Ours are the eyes through which Christ’s compassion for the world is to look out; ours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good; and ours are the hands with which he is to bless us now.’

Jesus came to serve, and invites us to follow him as one who serves. May we

follow in faith, and serve with love. AMEN.