

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Sunday, November 20, 2011
Student Sunday-Commitment Sunday-Thanksgiving Sunday



We are the Bridging Generations

by Pastor Larry Moffet

There are so many things I am thankful for. High on the list is the fact that this is a church of life-long learners. We are all students, people from all walks of life, and all backgrounds who want to keep learning and serving.

I think that is why this congregation is has an affinity with students. I see very little patronizing. Students report they feel at home here.

Genuine interest and care are reciprocal here.

We can bridge the generations.

Jesus said that true interest and connection with is a sure sign we are his sheep.

Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

I love this passage because the sheep are confused and the goats are too. Who isn't! The sheep are the ones with no guile. With no calculation. The sheep just see and care for those who need it most. Later they realize when they do care for others, the least of these, they know Christ. So do we.

Jesus was always teaching and learning. sometimes with sideways stories, sometimes with humor in tough situations. Matthew has him telling this humorous parable just a few days before his crucifixion.

When we focus on “Bridging Generations” we have to know a little about each other. We have to understand a little about what makes every generation different from the last. Our lives are shaped by different realities.

From the very beginning, this current high school and college age generation has fascinated me. Traits others see and describe include

- Ready to be involved.
- Want to make a difference.
- Want to know how things work.
- Some use the term sheltered, or “a sense of entitlement”

What I know is this: I hear the people who are in this youngest generation always asking “What am I here for? What is my purpose?”

You have heard me talk about our **Tuesday Tutoring program**. Students from NWU and UNL work hard to understand the realities of middle school boys, most of whose parents are refugees from various wars in Africa or economic distress in South America.

Angelo Stabler shares deeply from his experience growing up one step away from disaster. College students whose backgrounds are very different listen carefully and tune in to the realities he describes. Last week he got real: he listed where all of his homeboys (close childhood /teenage friends) are. Only one is not in prison, or debilitated by drugs, or dead.

Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

A fast-growing connection with more and more NWU students and students at **Dawes Middle School** is happening right now.

Yesterday **Appleseed coordinated a number of UNL students** who wanted to learn how to impact public policy on Immigration issues.

Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

At the same time yesterday the men of **Theta Chi** helped the men of the Uni Place Business Association put up 48th St.'s Christmas decorations.

Thursday students met with people from Sub-Saharan Africa for a meal and a learning session. **Those are just some of the events of this past week. These things don't just happen. Every member of our staff took turns hosting.**

Students: Bridging happens because the giving of our members keeps it all working: from utilities to open doors.

My hope is that everything I do can be a part of a bridge between generations, between people of different backgrounds.

Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

A national columnist who writes in our local newspaper, Ruben Navarette, quoted a new book, *Millennial Momentum: How a New Generation Is Remaking America*. Morley Winograd and Michael D. Hais explore ways in this generation of Americans is impacting everything from politics to pop culture.

"We don't argue that Millennials have a sense of entitlement," Winograd says. "Millennials don't think of themselves as entitled," Winograd said. "They think they're having a conversation, like they would with their parents. They're negotiating. They're not thinking the world owes them an entitlement. They just think they have a right to argue for what they want – which strikes everyone else as entitlement."

Hais said, "It's not that they expect any particular outcome. They just think: 'We should work this out, and everyone will be happy. That's how you raised me.'" In fact, the authors insist, about the only place that expectations come into play is when Millennials expect their elders to live up to their rhetoric.

"They're so used to following rules," Winograd said. "They're so earnest that they take people at their word. If you say something, then they think you must really mean it.

"Sheep," it is true: when you see someone hungry or exposed, or a stranger or sick or captive and you are there for them, that the power of Faith and Love are at work. You see Christ. Jesus himself is present.

The passion to be there for the least ones is something that is Bridging the Generations right here, right now.

It is easier for us to look for a bridge to the future than to be the bridge. It is a challenge to think of ourselves as the bridge. That is exactly what we are. Our life together, our generosity is making the future possible here.

Every generous word, every generous act, every generous gift will make it possible for someone to cross over into the future that God has in store for us.



***GOSPEL - MATTHEW 25:34-40**

8:30 Megan Treloar, Jamie Krahn, Chelsea Dappen 10:45 Luke Evans Matt Semett

Reader 1: Then the Ruler will say to those on the right hand,

Pastor Jamie : ‘Come, you that are blessed by our God! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;
³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing,
I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’

Reader 1: Then the righteous will answer,

Reader 2: ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?’

Reader 3: And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’

Reader 1: And the Ruler will answer them,

Pastor Jamie leads us all: 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

Reader 1: Then the Ruler will say to those at his left hand,

Pastor Jamie 'You that are accursed, depart from me
into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and fallen angels;
⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food,
I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,
⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me,
naked and you did not give me clothing,
sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

Reader 1: Then they also will answer,

Reader 2: Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty

Reader 3: or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?

Reader 1: Then the Ruler will answer them,

All: **'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'**