



Columbia, Missouri
The Worship of God • October 23, 2022
Homecoming Sunday



THE SCRIPTURE
Luke 8:4-8

The Scripture is shared within the message today.

THE MESSAGE
“You Need to Get Out More: More Faithfully Present”
Bill Ryan

What do you image when you think of home? When I think of home, I remember ... that I grew up, 3-13, at 301 Westridge Drive, 65203 – 65201 back then. 301 was the Broadway Christian Church “Parsonage.”

Purchased by Broadway Christian Church in 1958 for \$18,500, To this day, 301 has had only two owners – Broadway and Ed and Corina Alviso. How is it that I know this? Mr. and Mrs. Alviso bought 301 from Broadway around 1972, when Don, Alice Jane Lanier and sons moved to their own home over on Fieldcrest. The Alvisos still live at 301 Westridge Drive; what a beautiful lawn! And we have been my next-door neighbors.



I say all this in part because I want to make the point that the Alvisos have a **beautiful** lawn. Next door there is a bit of a lawn problem. I have sown DECADES of GOOD seed. I have aerated. Verticutted! Fertilized, watered! Success in most areas ... but those pesky patches ... grass never survives through July 1. Conclusion: I don't have a sower problem ... or a seed problem ... I've got a soil problem!

In one way or another, we are all planters ... sowers ... and we plant ... seed, hard work, commitment. And sometimes we experience hardships in plant yield ... success ... relationships. But those other times... when the sower is on track and the good seeds find the right soil ... life is very good!

Jesus knew people ... just like us, who would know what he was talking about when he spoke of the "Realm of God" in terms of People ..., good Seed ... and a variety of types of Soil.

Let's read that passage of Scripture: Luke 8:4-8.

When a large crowd was gathering, as people were coming to him from town after town, he said in a parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed, and as he sowed some fell on a path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on rock, and as it grew up it withered for lack of moisture. Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. Some fell into good soil, and when it grew it produced a hundredfold." As he said this, he called out, "If you have ears to hear, then hear!"

A few weeks ago, as I was entering the memorial service for Broadway's own Ron Crouse, He was a member of Broadway since those early days. Ron's dear friend and fellow forever Broadway member, Claude Johnson, saw me. He pulled Pastor Mark aside and pointed at me ... and told him with a smile ... "Watch out ... HERE COMES TROUBLE!"

I was reminded' Ron Crouse always greeted me the same way! And I said to myself ... not for the first time and maybe with a semblance of pride, "Well, I HAVE always resembled that remark!!" TROUBLE! That's just one of the things which Preacher's Kids ... P.K.'s ... have always been known for!

I can't help but be reminded of a particular moment with Jesus in the Gospel of John's first chapter. There we find Jesus, on the first day of choosing his 12 disciples. On day one, he called Andrew and Simon Peter. They said YES! And it was on the second day, there by the Sea, Jesus called Philip ... and we are told Philip then called Nathaniel. It *then* went like this: "*Philip found Nathanael and said to him about Jesus, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus,*

son of Joseph from Nazareth.’ Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’”

As I stand here with you today, As a P.K. ... I’m feeling a parallel in Philip and Nathaniel’s exchange. Claude Johnson from out there, Ron Crouse and a host of witnesses all around us, seeing me here and asking, “What possible **good** can come out of 301 Westridge Drive?”

I feel such a kinship with Dane and Hayes Briley, my good friend Mark Lanier, and his brothers - fellow sons of a Broadway Christian Church minister. I’m so grateful to be a part of this amazing community ... and yet ... still recognizing that, as one of the historic PK’s here ... I have certain **responsibilities** ... to be ... unique? Incurrable? Possibly, a bit on the radical side?

As one who is rooted in the good soil of Broadway Christian Church, still, at the age of 67, I ask myself, daily, “*How can I be more faithfully present ... today?*”

Recalling our morning Scripture: There’s the Sower ... who sows the seed ... there’s the path, the birds of the air ... the rocks and the thorns ... and there is GOOD ... SOIL!

We know the Sower is God or Jesus ... the Sower is solid ... NOT in question! Good to go! And the Seed? Why! Isn’t the Seed, God’s Love? Christ’s Gospel? The Scriptures tell us that this “seed” of Love and Good News is for everyone, everywhere! The Seed like the Sower, too, is solid ... NOT in question. Like the Sower, the Seed is good to go!

So, the “Parable of the Sower” ... this message and focus for us today ... is really NOT about the Sower at all ... NOR about the Seed ... rather ... it’s all about the SOIL! Soil in its various manifestations! Soil, represented as all potential landing-sites listed: those which make up the path, the rocks, the thorn ... and then ... there’s the rich, life holding, life giving soil! The GOOD SOIL!

I believe it was in the year 1953, when the Rev. Dr. Clarence E. Lemmon approached the leadership of First Christian Church, and Dr. Lemmon’s message to the leaders of First Christian Church, in 1953 was this: “Columbia will continue to grow ... and in the foreseeable future, that growth will be to the West. Our Membership is full to overflowing. We are blessed! Together with God, we have an abundance to share!

One of my favorites of all Bible verses is when God makes this Covenant with Abram/Abraham in Genesis 12:1: “*Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of*

you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.”

I know Dr. Lemon had this Scripture-truth in his heart and mind, as his reasoning continued: “We have this abundance to share ... but our physical space is limited to this one city block. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will need to be “**More Faithfully Present**” in this western area, which will surely be the home of hundreds ... thousands ... of families. And they will all need to receive an invitation, an opportunity to join with us, in our journey with Christ!”

Ultimately, the people of First Christian Church said, “YES!” to Dr. Lemmon’s vision. So, for five years they planned. They set aside resources. They bought 21 acres of land RIGHT HERE! They dreamed, discussed, fellowshiped, studied, worked and prayed.

AND THEN ...

They set a plan into motion. By 1958, 102 charter members ... mostly with younger families ... would volunteer to join with a young minister’s family ... Bill and Narka Ryan, with pretty five-year-old bossy big sister, Kathy, (and she is still bossy, but I love her – and she is watching now from Baltimore), and cute little three-year-old Billy (trouble)! With the guidance of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, ALL OF these first “partners” joined with First Christian Church to create ... Broadway Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)!

“ACCEPTANCE AND PROMISE”
Charter Day – Broadway Christian Church
Delivered by William S. Ryan 10/5/58

What do we accept? We have received a charge and a commission to become a new church of Jesus Christ. The question arises – what have we accepted? As I see it the simple truth is that we have accepted the obligation of a particular importance. It is to be a CHURCH!

Now this may seem trite, obvious, an unnecessary thing to say. After all, we are all aware of this fact. But we are saying more than might first meet the eye.

One aspect of the obligation to build the church carries with it the necessity to be loyal, in our case, to this MOTHER CHURCH, which through its generous spirit, gave birth to the Broadway Christian Church. We need to be loyal to the liberal, progressive and sound Christian traditions and accomplishments which have made it a great church in the past and are still making it great in the present, and leads us to an expectation of greatness in the future.

The second obligation is still deeper. It is an obligation to accept the uniqueness and distinctive nature which characterizes the true Church and strive to make this a reality in this new fellowship. That reality is Christian LOVE.

I am more and more convinced that this is the distinguishing feature of the church when what is called the church is really that. Where the Church is, there is a group guided in their individual and corporate actions by the love of God and Christ.

The church conceived as a result of the work of the Son God sent to the world, a son who expressed God’s loving concern for his children. What we help to establish and continue will be part of the true church only as we express this same love.

Love shows in dealing with one another and others. Not the milquetoast sort of thing in which all agree or are alike in the church. For the church is made up of all sorts of people from different economic, social, racial backgrounds. Therefore, they have different ideas.

There is SO MUCH SIGNIFICANCE AND FAITH in this birthing story of Broadway Christian Church! I can only offer this *representative glimpse* from the charter minister’s “Acceptance and Promise” that Dad spoke during Broadway’s Charter Day worship, October 5, 1958:

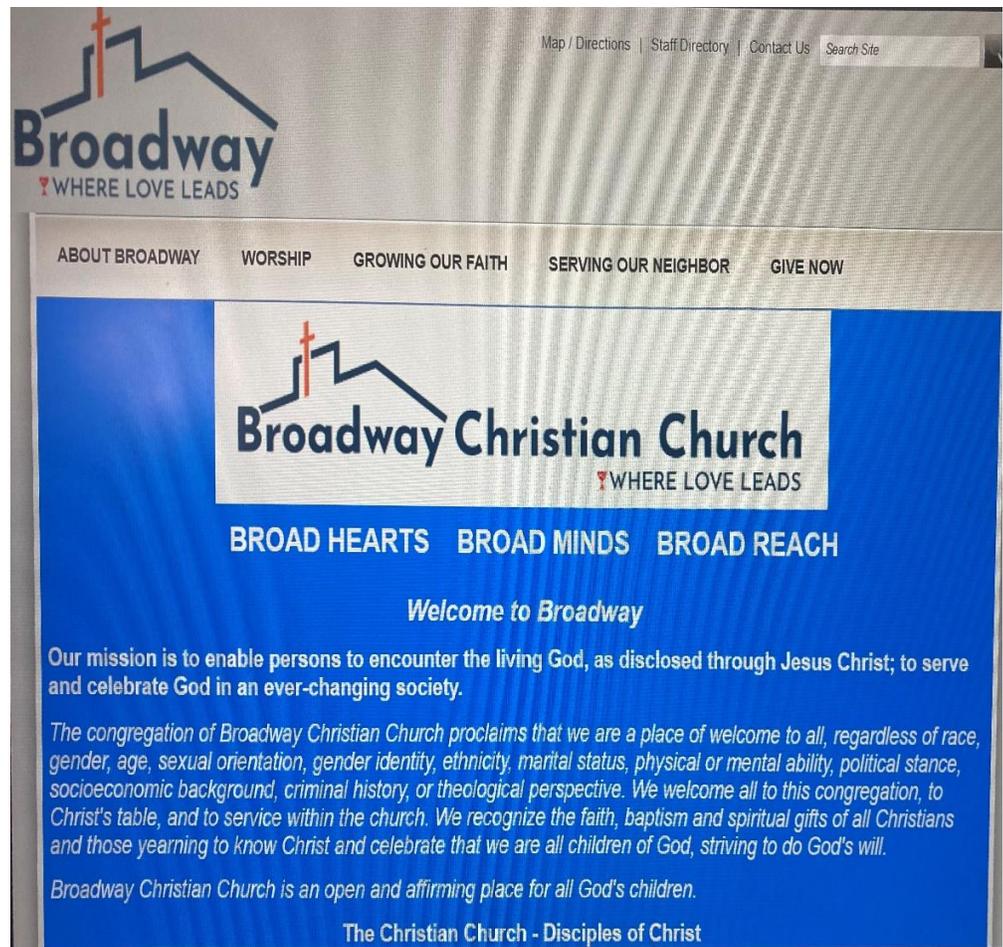
“What do we accept? ... we have accepted the obligation of a particular importance. It is to be a CHURCH! ... (which) in our case, is to be loyal to this MOTHER CHURCH, which through its generous spirit, gave birth to the BCC. We need to be loyal to the liberal, progressive, and sound Christian traditions and accomplishments which have made FCC a great church. ... The second obligation is

still deeper. It is an obligation to accept the uniqueness and distinctive nature which characterizes the true Church and strive to make this a reality in this new fellowship.

AND THAT REALITY IS CHRISTIAN LOVE!”

For 64 years, we have been telling the stories of our “birthed in love” faith community, Broadway Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)! Mission and Outreach, Justice, Inclusive and Welcoming, Fellowship, Biblical Literacy. Living as Christians who are “More Faithfully Present.”

When I think of the Good Soil of our Broadway Home, I think of the very first member of Broadway Christian Church: Elizabeth Yeager ... Oldest charter member ... maybe 70 ... THREE YEARS OLDER THAN ME!



Jeff and Frances Jefferson (A pack of Salems always in his pocket, he worked at Columbia Auto Parts, and Frances was a Pink Lady at Boone County Hospital.) They loved Broadway with their service here for 30 years ... then gave **everything** they owned to the ministries of Broadway when they died! (Mr. Jefferson had a model train set up in his garage ... as did Bob Daniel in his basement.)

Bob and Nola Daniel ... with whom the Ryan kids often sat as Dad preached and Mom sang in the choir! He was head of the Psych Dept. at M.U. ... she, an artist.

Ken and Judy Buckler ... who served so faithfully even in the midst of some of the greatest sorrows any family could imagine! Ever-present, ever-generous in body, wealth and spirit



Mr. and Mrs. Huey ... he was a carpenter who built the first toys and tables for the nursery

George and Margaret Garner: She called him Bernard ... I spent many a night and Sunday dinner at the Garner farmhouse, with my buddy, Gary! Linda Garner Poehlmann tolerated us. Thank you, Linda!

Glen and Delores Geiger ... From the beginning, Mr. Geiger barbecued the chicken every July for Broadway's Annual Meeting Sunday.

Lorraine and Vernon Bates were on my paper route!

Eileen and Ed Perry. She was the BCC financial secretary for 40 + years. He was Property and Finance Department leader from the beginning ... More than any, they remind me of when Broadway members did EVERYTHING on almost a DAILY basis! (There's the story of Mrs. Perry riding the buffer, holding it down, as another member shined the floor in the sanctuary). True, I think! And Mrs. Perry is still my second Mom!

Bush and Pauline Walden: I can still hear Mrs. Walden singing in the row behind me ... AND keeping an eagle eye on me!!

I wonder if those of us who make up Broadway today can fully recognize the gifts that these root coworkers have given us, for the living of our lives? These people are important glimpses of that first gen. BCC good soil ... in which all of us, today, are "sown" and at Home. All of us are here ... experiencing this Good Soil; being nourished, nurtured, and EMPOWERED! And in each generation of Broadway Christian Church, we can see the seed of God's Love and Christ's Gospel ... becoming the new generation of the Good Soil ... where Christ's Love is at work. That soil become Seed ... that Love, and Good News is in YOU. It BECOMES you! We are *Birthed in Love ... we have become the Love ... and we are called beyond ourselves to SHARE this Love!*

Each time I enter Broadway's space ... I know ... that the Good Soil is at work, alive with the Sower's Seed ... at HOME in you Chuck, in you Larry, in you Mark, Gertie, Edwin. Here, now, pointing us, guiding, working, laughing, playing, leading us, together, into GOD'S FUTURE! That the Holy Spirit is asking each of us here today, in this birthed in love, good soil ... How can you, Bill, you Gertie, you Eileen, Sam ... How can you be "More Faithfully Present" ... today?

Broadway Christian Church, we are partners with that Sower Luke tells us about!
Sower, seed, good Soil! And ... we DO have EARS TO HEAR!

We are ALL the Children of that unique, gracious gift of being *Birthed in Love* ... We are ALL the P.K.'s of C.E. and Prudence Lemon and First Christian Church! ... And just like, me, this first-generation Broadway PK... *don't we ALL* have certain *responsibilities* ... to be ... unique? Incurrigible? Possibly, a bit on the radical side? To risk Proclaiming and Living the Unique Love of Jesus Christ ... out there? To be ... irredeemably persistent in our pursuits of mercy and justice ... out there? To **claim** and **proclaim** the radical love of Christ ... that comes from being birthed in love and planted in this Good Soil ... Broadway Christian Church? Our Home!

So now, **we** are the sowers ... **we** have good seed and very, very good soil! AND Nathaniel inquires, "*Can anything good come out of Broadway Christian Church?*"

As Christ's Living Soil, Broadway Christian Church, we invite the world: "**Come and see!**"

BROAD HEARTS BROAD MINDS BROAD REACH