

Just Say Yes! Sermon and Worship Series

Other Books in the Study

Just Say Yes! Unleashing People for Ministry

Just Say Yes! Leader Guide

Just Say Yes! Participant Guide

Just Say Yes! DVD

Just Say Yes! Devotional

Just Say Yes! Sermon and Worship Series

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JUST SAY YES! SERMON AND WORSHIP SERIES

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References in parenthesis indicate page number references to *Just Say Yes! Unleashing People for Ministry* by Robert Schnase (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015).

UMH stands for *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989).

FWS stands for *The Faith We Sing* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000).

Overview

This four-week worship series is inspired by the book *Just Say Yes! Unleashing People for Ministry* by Robert Schnase. The weekly themes are based on the connection between scripture and the missional assumptions laid out in the book. When a church adopts these missional assumptions it creates a movement from cultures of negativity to cultures where people thrive in their faith and say *Yes* more often than *No*.

People need to be unleashed for ministry—encouraged and emboldened, equipped and sent out. Unleashed means to set free, to unbind from restraint, to set loose. Churches that unleash people for ministry rethink their operations, focus on the way God calls everyone to ministry, and reduce the resistance that holds people back from taking initiative. They create a culture of *Yes*, of cultivating God’s call to diverse expressions of ministry. They expect people to have good ideas for ministry, and they realize that new ideas can come from anywhere or anyone. They eliminate unnecessary obstacles. They unfetter laity and staff from those systems that restrain them from using their creativity and gifts. They practice a ministry of encouragement. (x)

The core principle of the book is that “growing churches say *Yes* to ministries that declining churches say *No* to” (11). When you encourage and unleash a congregation, the growth for Christ will be incredible.

This worship series is designed to help people, as disciples of Jesus Christ, embrace the power of the Holy Spirit and help all disciples creatively and passionately answer their calls to ministry. Here are summaries of each week:

Week 1: Just Say *Yes* to the Holy Spirit

This week we will delve into the profound and transformative experience of saying *Yes* to Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through this intimate connection, the Holy Spirit gives each person

gifts. These gifts are crucial to the work of Christ in the world. So this week’s missional assumption is “everyone has gifts for ministry” (55).

Week 2: Just Say *Yes* to Your Calling

Building on week 1, this week’s missional assumption is “God calls everyone to service and ministry” (57). Our focus will be discerning where your gifts, talents, and passions meet the deep needs of the world. In that intersection, you will find your calling.

Week 3: Just Say *Yes* to Growth

Saying *Yes* to Jesus Christ requires us to grow in knowledge of ourselves and who God created us to be. In order to do this, we must continually and intentionally live as disciples. Our missional assumption this week is “the ministries of the church should foster spiritual growth and discipleship” (59).

Week 4: Just Say *Yes* to Encouragement

Our missional assumption is “the work of the church is to encourage people in their callings” (62). Schnase calls this a “permission-giving” culture. Each church member can be part of building this type of church. “The most direct and personal way to contribute to a permission-giving environment is through offering the ministry of encouragement” (112).

To prepare for this series, it will be crucial to read both the *Just Say Yes! Unleashing People for Ministry* book and the *Just Say Yes! Devotional* developed to complement this series. This planning guide offers weekly focus scriptures, sermon development tools, and worship element suggestions, including song and liturgy ideas. Additional illustrations not highlighted in this worship planning guide can be found in *Just Say Yes!* Our hope is to spark inspiration in you and bless you as you serve in the name of Jesus Christ.

Worship design ideas: Use the color scheme of the book cover to design altar elements—tan, navy, red, and light teal. The incorporation of multiple textures such as burlap, denim, and satin will create added dimensions to the design. Also, purchasing or building letters that spell *YES* enhance the worship experience.

This can be as simple as placing the letters on the altar or more complex by inserting lights into three pallets in the shape of *YES*.

Week One

1 Corinthians 12:1-7

Sermon Development

Suggested Title

“Just Say *Yes* to the Holy Spirit”

Central Theme

Through the power of the Holy Spirit “everyone has gifts for ministry” (55). This missional assumption is detailed on pages 55–57 of *Just Say Yes!*

Secondary Themes

- Scripture tells us the Holy Spirit said *Yes* to us first, gave us the ability to say *Yes* to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and then blessed us beyond measure with spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:3). God considers each of us precious to the work of Christ on earth.
- With all the blessings of the Holy Spirit, why do we say *No* so much in our faith life? There are so many ways we say *No* to God and *No* to others in church and life.
- The Holy Spirit offers ways to say *Yes*. One crucial way is to commit to knowing and using our spiritual gifts. The gifts are not given to us for selfish purposes, but for the common good (1 Cor 12:7).

Illustration Ideas

The “*Just Say Yes!* Introductory Video” is available for purchase at www.cokesbury.com or your favorite bookseller. If video is not possible, here is a summary of the key points, which can be shared orally as part of the worship service: Bishop Schnase wrote the book *Just Say Yes!* for the person yearning to be set free to do

more ministry. In his work with churches, he realized the default setting is often *No*. People say *No* to other people; pastors say *No* to laity; laity say *No* to pastors; traditional worshippers say *No* to contemporary; and the list goes on. There are also systems set up to say *No*. When a person has a good idea for ministry they are told to go to multiple committees all of which can say *No*, but none have the authority to say *Yes*. He wrote this book to draw attention to this problem and invite churches into dialogue to develop cultures of *Yes*.

Bishop Schnase offers examples of the different types of *Nos* common to church life in *Just Say Yes!* on pages 3–8.

Jack (name changed for privacy) came to church with residual hurt from another legalistic and negative church. It was a church more focused on money than the mission of Jesus Christ and helping people claim their spiritual gifts. After being at the new church for a while, he talked with the pastor about the stifling experiences of the last church. With some care, he latched onto the grace-filled truth that God said *Yes* to him first. He then could embrace how the Holy Spirit blessed him with gifts to share for the glory of God. He opened to possibilities. He accepted an invitation to do a spiritual gifts inventory and to join a small group. He went from a private faith to openly seeking to follow Christ with his whole life. These explorations in scripture and conversations with other faithful followers of Jesus Christ revealed a passion for writing about scripture. He said “God gifted him to help make scripture accessible to all.” Today he helps lead small groups and develops Bible studies. Saying *Yes* to the Holy Spirit has led him to a profound sense of purpose and joy.

Call to Action

Take some time this week to explore what gifts God has given you. Even if you have already completed a spiritual gifts inventory in the past do an assessment again this week. If you are in the United Methodist tradition an online option can be found at <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/spiritual-gifts-online-assessment> or you can ask the staff at church for options. After you receive your results, take some time in self-reflection and prayer to explore how to use these gifts faithfully.

Worship Elements

Song Suggestions

Traditional

“To God Be the Glory” (UMH #98)

“I Love to Tell the Story” (UMH #156)

“O How He Loves You and Me” (FWS #2108)

“My Hope Is Built” (UMH #368)

Choral word in song or offertory: “Create in Me A Clean Heart, O God” (Carl Mueller, composer)

Contemporary

“Rise and Sing” performed by Fee

“Your Grace Is Enough” performed by Chris Tomlin

“Holy Spirit” performed by Kari Jobe

“Cornerstone” performed by Hillsong Worship

Worship team word in song or offertory suggestion: “The River” performed by Jordan Feliz.

Liturgical Elements

Call to Worship

L: Jesus said, I will ask the Father to send you a Companion, the Holy Spirit.

P: We praise you Lord for not leaving us alone.

L: Jesus said, the Holy Spirit will “teach you everything and will remind you of everything I told you.”

P: We open ourselves with great anticipation to hear what the Holy Spirit will teach us.

L: Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you. Peace I give to you.”

P: Peace to you my sisters and brothers in Christ.

(Based on John 14:25-27.)

Participatory Element (Before or After Sermon)—Holy Communion

If you are United Methodist, use the Great Thanksgiving for the Day of Pentecost on page 68 of *The United Methodist Book of Worship*. Add the following sentences to the bottom of page 68 before the breaking of the bread and after “as on the day of Pentecost.”

The Holy Spirit teaches us today and gives us the power to say *Yes* to Jesus as Lord of our lives. The spirit provides gifts for ministry and the ability to glorify God through humble service.

For other faith traditions, here is a prayer for use after the sermon:

God of grace and gifts, your love for us is staggering. In creation, you show us your extravagant generosity of air to breathe and bread to eat. In your son, you show us your unending capacity to heal and forgive and how you cover us with grace for eternity. In your spirit, you overwhelm us with your presence and power. Without your power, we could never utter the powerful words, “*Yes*, Lord Jesus, please be Lord and savior of my life.” This *Yes* changes everything. This *Yes* opens us a world of possibility to be forgiven, to serve, to learn, to truly love, and to praise you for all time. Cultivate in us a willingness to say *Yes* to all you have for us and for all the ways it will call us into the world. In your precious name we pray, amen.

Benediction

As you leave today, say *Yes* to following the Holy Spirit into the world. Believe the spirit is gifting you for ministry and claim those gifts. Go with the peace of the Lord, amen.

Week Two

Acts 11:19-29 and Matthew 16:24-25

Sermon Development

Sermon Title

“Just Say *Yes* to Your Calling”

Central Theme

“God calls everyone to service and ministry” (57). This missional assumption is detailed on pages 57–59 of *Just Say Yes!* The context for the outward nature of this service is provided on pages 61–62.

Secondary Themes

- Last week was about gifts and the emphasis that the Holy Spirit gives everyone gifts for ministry. How many of you did your assessment? This work of accepting, valuing, and committing to use your gifts is crucial to the next steps in saying *Yes* to all God has for your life.
- The early disciples in Antioch were the first to be called Christians. The church in Antioch was proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to Jews and Gentiles, and the number of believers was growing. When they heard of a need in Jerusalem, they responded with generosity. Serving is part of our DNA and is key to our calling as disciples (Acts 11:19-29).
- This week is about your calling—God calls everyone to service and ministry. Your calling, your purpose is where the gifts the Holy Spirit has given you meet the needs of the world. Calling is not only for clergy but for everyone.

- This calling will demand something of you. This likely requires us to say *No* to some selfish inclinations. It means wholeheartedly saying *Yes* to Jesus and following where he leads. It will sometimes be a physical and spiritual picking up of your cross, because it means recognizing the places in this world that break your heart and doing something about it (Matt 16:24-25).

Illustration Ideas

Harper Lee, author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, passed away in 2016. For many, this book is the main reason for knowing Lee. It is a “Depression-era tale of race relations in the Deep South, published in 1960.” Lee was also a committed follower of Jesus Christ and an active member of The United Methodist Church in her hometown. Dawn Wiggins Hare, top executive of the United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women said, “[Lee] is a shining example of the capacity of a lay person to see injustice, speak up, tell the story, and transform the world. We as United Methodists define our mission as making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Those were not just words to Nelle Harper Lee. That was her legacy.” She saw a need in the world and answered God’s call to use her talents for writing to bless others. (To read the whole article see Sam Hodges, “Harper Lee was United Methodist in word, deed,” UMC.org, February 19, 2016, <http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/harper-lee-was-united-methodist-in-word-deed>.)

The “Hope in the Baking: Bridge Bread” video is available at www.cokesbury.com or your favorite bookseller. If video is not possible, here is a summary of the video story, which can be shared orally as part of the worship service: Lafayette Park United Methodist Church is an urban local church in one of the oldest parts of St. Louis. Rev. Kathleen Wilder led a Bible study on ethics and poverty. She was not even sure anyone would attend, but over twenty faithful church members attended and were inspired. Following the study, Rev. Wilder went on vacation but made sure her people had a place to continue to meet and dream in her absence. Upon her return, ministries were born and already in the works to bless others. One man who attended the study had a heart for the homeless, and God had also gifted him with generosity of time and spirit. With his talent as an entrepreneur, he dreamed of making bread with the homeless. This is how Bridge

Bread was born. Bridge Bread is a social enterprise designed to teach people living on the street the skills needed to bake bread. The bakers learn a skill and take great pride in their tasty products. After just a few weeks of work, when they receive their first paycheck, they are able to rent an apartment. The bakers talk about the dignity and safety they experience when they receive the key to their new homes.

In order for this extraordinary ministry to begin a number of things had to occur: One man had to believe God was speaking to him, and he had to understand his gifts, talents, and passion. He had to discover a permission-giving leader in Rev. Kathleen Wilder. And he had to have a permission-giving culture at his home congregation of Lafayette Park UMC. Remarkable things happen when people answer their calling and people are there to support and encourage them.

Bishop Schnase writes,

Often Christians use the language of “called to ministry” too narrowly, applying it only to those people who pursue full-time Christian service in some form of ordained, licensed, or certified ministry. But every Christian is entrusted with the work of ministry through their baptism and profession of faith.

God’s call shapes us in small ways every day. Seeking to follow Christ affects how we relate to our families, what kind of friend and coworker we are, the sort of neighbor and citizen we become. God calls us to build up rather than to tear down, to foster justice rather than to treat people unfairly, to help those in need rather than disregard them. (57)

Call to Action

As described in *Just Say Yes!*, create a graph (L shape) with your gifts, talents, and passions on the bottom, and then write down unmet needs or places of suffering in the world that tug at your heart on the left side (58). The place where these two sides intersect is an excellent place to start answering your God-given calling. Have you heard of a ministry or organization that might be working to meet the needs you listed and could

use your gifts? If so, contact them to inquire about helping. If not, start prayerfully considering championing an effort related to your calling.

Worship Elements

Song Suggestions

Traditional

“God of Love and God of Power” (UMH #578, verses 1, 2, and 4)

“I Need Thee Every Hour” (UMH #397)

“The Gift of Love” (UMH #408)

“O Jesus, I Have Promised” (UMH #396)

Contemporary

“Blessed Be Your Name” performed by Matt Redman

“Open Up the Heavens” performed by Meredith Andrews

“Lord I Need You” performed by Matt Maher

“Your Love Never Fails” performed by Chris Quilala

Worship team word in song or offertory (duet): “Follow You” performed by Leeland

Liturgical Elements

Call to Worship

L: Jesus teaches us to say *No* to ourselves and take up our cross.

P: We say *Yes* to Jesus.

L: Jesus invites us to follow him.

P: We say *Yes* to Jesus.

L: Jesus challenges us by coming to serve, not to be served.

P: We say *Yes* to Jesus.

(Based Matthew 16:24 and 20:28.)

Intercessory Prayer (Before or After Sermon)

When you look around the world today, how is this world different than God's hopes? What needs in the world break your heart? We are going to spend some time in prayer for places of hurt and suffering in the world. After an invitation is given, silently lift up to God those things on your heart and hopes for the situation. Let us pray.

Spirit of the Lord, we beg you for your mercy and the power for transformation. Your word tells us even when we do not have the answer and when we do not know how to pray, you intercede for us with sighs too deep for words. We are reminded that no trouble the world presents can separate us from your love in Jesus Christ. We need you to intercede for us now in some desperate situations in the world and make your love known to people in need. (Based on Romans 8:26, 35-37.)

Let us pray for the needs and brokenness in our homes . . .

Let us pray for the needs and brokenness in our schools and/or workplace . . .

Let us pray for the needs and brokenness in our church . . .

Let us pray for the needs and brokenness in our country . . .

Let us pray for the needs and brokenness in our world . . .

Help us to hear how our spiritual gifts, talents, and passion can be used for your glory to transform the world. Thank you, holy Lord, for hearing our pleas and our desire to help. We pray your will be done here on earth. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

Another option would be a remembrance of your baptism. An example is the Congregational Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant, found in *The United Methodist Book of Worship* on page 111.

Benediction

As you leave today, say *Yes* to answering your call to ministry. Jesus is our example for serving and loving.

Go into the world to make a difference in the name of the Lord. Amen.

Week Three

Ephesians 4:11-16

Sermon Development

Sermon Title

“Just Say *Yes* to Growth”

Central Theme

“The ministries of the church should foster spiritual growth and discipleship” that lead to deeper ministry (59). This missional assumption is detailed on pages 59–61 of *Just Say Yes!*

Secondary Themes

- When we walk this faith journey alone, we tend to make excuses and compile lists of reasons for not taking risks and trying new things for the purposes of Christ.
- To fully use the gifts, talents, and passions the Holy Spirit is empowering in us, we must continue to grow in the knowledge and love of God. When we study the word of God, worship, pray, serve, and are held accountable by other followers of Jesus, we grow in the grace of God.
- There must be intentionality in our faith development. Each new experience of Christ centered study and community will strengthen us to use our gifts and to answer our calls to ministry. We will mature into the likeness of Christ (Eph 4:11-15). It will compel you to serve more, love more, and risk more.
- How are you connected to the supporting ligaments of the body of Christ (Eph 4:16)? Are you in a small group or an accountability group with other followers of Jesus Christ who can

encourage and challenge you in your calling? How are you growing closer to God and others right now?

Illustration Ideas

The “A New Way of Being: Sturgeon UMC” video can be purchased at www.cokesbury.com or your favorite bookseller. If video is not possible, here is a summary of the video story, which can be shared orally as part of the worship service: When Rev. Mike Will presented an idea for a new ministry to his congregation, the response was not surprising. There were only fifteen people and they couldn’t possibly imagine taking on a dream that big. The excuses of the people are all too common when avoiding change and newness; we are too small, too old, too tired, and there is not enough money. Yet with the hopeful and encouraging leadership of Rev. Will, they joined forces with the four other local churches and forged a new way of being church to their broader community. By taking a risk and learning together, they said *Yes* to God. Now their church no longer remains silent and closed but helps serve 280 families (almost 950 people) at a free food pantry and 350 people monthly at a thrift store. Lives are being blessed and a church is growing in the grace of God. If Rev. Will had started listing all the reasons not to do this new ministry, the people of Sturgeon United Methodist Church would have said *No*. They would have claimed human possibilities, not God possibilities. Rev. Will kept the congregation focused on Christ and our call to love our neighbor.

In Robert Schnase’s book *Growing in Grace*, he adds this story told by a woman experiencing encouragement from other disciples: “Each time I leave a Bible study session, I feel encouraged to do things I was fearful to do before. We always end up talking each other into things—to speak up at work, to forgive a sister, to visit someone who is grieving. We know these are the right things to do. But we need a nudge.’ Community fosters accountability. We become the voice of Christ to each other” (*Growing in Grace: The Practice of Intentional Faith Development*, [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010], 40).

If we use our imaginations, we see how congregations can be drawn into greater ministry:

Imagine a church that invests incredible energy in helping people discover their callings and to use their spiritual gifts for building up the church. Everyone is called to serve. Some respond by participating in ministries initiated by church staff and leaders. Others form ministries together with those who share common passions or interests. Others notice unmet needs in the community or world, and they initiate ministries, inviting others to help. Some encourage and mentor and cultivate the callings of other people. (66)

Pages 66–70 of *Just Say Yes!* offer stories of people who have grown through discipleship into greater ministry. Stories from your own ministry setting about people who have discovered their calling through discipleship in church ministries will make excellent illustrations, as well.

Call to Action

Through this sermon series and your personal devotion, you are developing an understanding of your gifts, your passion, and your calling. A crucial piece of growing as a disciple is being in covenant with other believers. These groups can offer encouragement, build you up in love, and challenge you to keep your motives Christ-centered. If you are already in a group, explore some possible studies to help develop your calling to serve others. If you are not currently in a group, prayerfully seek out an opportunity. Please ask your church staff for short-term studies, ministry events, and other learning opportunities that will help strengthen your ability to use your spiritual gifts and answer your call to ministry.

Worship Elements

Song Suggestions

Traditional

“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” (UMH #127)

“I Surrender All” (UMH #354, verses 1, 3, and 4)

“Seek Ye First” UMH (#405)

“We Walk By Faith” (FWS #2196)

Choral word in song or offertory: “Once Again” arranged by Craig Curry and words and music by Matt Redman

Contemporary

“From the Day” performed by I am They

“Jesus Messiah” performed by Chris Tomlin

“My Heart Is Yours” performed by Passion

“I Will Follow” performed by Chris Tomlin

Worship team word in song or offertory: “Same Power” performed by Jeremy Camp

Liturgical Elements

Call to Worship

L: The Spirit of the Lord gives us gifts so we can fulfill our purpose.

P: Our purpose is to become mature disciples of Jesus Christ.

L: The Spirit of the Lord equips us for the work of the kingdom.

P: Our work is to serve and build up the body of Christ.

L: The Spirit of the Lord ties us together for growth.

P: Our growth comes through our connection with the body and speaking the truth in love.

(Based on Ephesians 4:11-16.)

Participatory Element (After Sermon)

Hand out small pieces of paper with each worship bulletin. At the end of the message, invite worship participants to commit to a “next step” in discipleship. It may be personal devotion time or joining a small group experience. It will be beneficial to have several group study opportunities for people to join when the spirit moves them. This may be a weekly meetings to discuss their personal responses to the *Just Say Yes! Devotional*. Invite the congregation to write the pledge on the paper and during the last song place it on the altar.

Benediction

As you leave today, say *Yes* to growing in the grace of God. Allow God to work through other followers of Jesus Christ to mature your faith. Go with the love of the Lord. Amen.

Week Four

Hebrews 10:24-25 and Romans 1:11-12

Sermon Development

Sermon Title

“Say *Yes* to Encouragement”

Central Theme

“The work of the church is to encourage people in their callings” (62). This mission statement is detailed in on pages 62–64 and in the epilogue starting on page 109 of *Just Say Yes!*

Secondary Themes

- “We serve a God that sets people free, invites people along, encourages them to try, calls them to serve, and sends them forth with blessing and assurance” (113). This is our model for a permission-giving culture. Our purpose is “sparking love and good deeds” in each other (Heb 10:24-25).
- It is matter of hope and faith versus negativity and resistance to newness. “What if we believed that we have exactly enough people and resources to fulfill the ministry God is calling us to today? . . . A culture of *Yes* expects people to have ideas, gifts, and callings. It amplifies what works and encourages the passions and callings that already exist but which may remain unseen or hidden from view” (95).
- We are developing a *Just Say Yes!* culture here at this church.
- Who are you encouraging? Romans 1:11-12 reminds us that spiritual gifts strengthen us and we are “encouraged by the faithfulness we find in each other,” mutual encouragement. This

encouragement is not empty words or vague purposes. “True encouragement involves something more profound. It steels people against despair. It emboldens them in their following of Christ. . . . *Encouragement* literally means ‘to fill with courage and strength of purpose, to hearten, to give heart’” (112).

Illustration Ideas

Curtis grew up on a farm. On the farm it is crucial to learn how to use each piece of machinery. As the youngest of three boys, one summer it was his turn to learn to how to back up a large implement called a chisel. His father put him in the tractor and said, “practice.” This type of large equipment is extremely touchy and after several tries things were not going well. He made some progress and then the chisel would shift differently than he expected. To add to his pressure, his older brother was standing watching—everything about his posture showing his impatience. At one point, his brother was so frustrated that he started walking forcefully to take over. Just then, their dad stepped in and said, “Stop!” He encouraged Curtis to take his time and learn. His dad was investing and equipping him for the future. In his simple way, Curtis’s father was building him up in love and letting him grow in knowledge and maturity. His brother’s frustration and wanting to control could have ruined Curtis’s confidence, but his dad modeled a new way. Encouragement goes a long way and Curtis can back those large machines with ease.

The “Unleashing Systems: Creating a Culture Shift” video is available at www.cokesbury.com or your favorite bookseller. If video is not possible, here is a summary of the video story, which can be shared orally as part of the worship service: In Sedalia, Missouri, Rev. Jim Downing was called to serve First United Methodist Church. During his first sermon, he set the tone for the kind of ministry he wanted to unleash there—a say *Yes* church. Rev. Downing shared about three types of people: complainers, critics, and champions. Complainers think today is awful and there is nothing we can do about it for the future. They seem to believe even if Jesus shows up nothing will change. Then you have critics. They are people who can save you from wasting two hours on a bad movie or recommend you spend money at an excellent restaurant.

They can be helpful, but what we really need are champions. Those are people who are on fire with the love and grace of Jesus Christ. They are people who have an idea or hear an idea for a ministry and are willing to invest their time, energy, and passion to make it happen. Rev. Downing shut down the complaints department and unleashed a permission-giving culture. Today their motto is *Say Yes! To Life, to Love, to God* (80). They emphasize that God gives people ideas for ministries and the gifts and resources to accomplish them. They have grown from one hundred people to nearly one thousand people, and their ministries for Jesus Christ are diverse and numerous. (You can find more about their story on pages 79–80 of *Just Say Yes!*)

Describe any ways you are developing a permission-giving structure at your church. This is a good time to reemphasize your mission, vision and to invite people to dream of new ways to live into those purposes. If you completed the *Just Say Yes!* leadership training, share insights gained from that experience. An example of encouraging others in your church will enhance the message.

Call to Action

If you were asked, “Who encouraged you in your faith and calling?,” who are the people who came to mind? Take some time to write them a note of encouragement or take them to coffee or tea to encourage them. Prayerfully consider ways you can use your gifts to encourage others to answer their callings in your church. Then just say *Yes* to following Jesus Christ into the world with courage and hope!

Worship Elements

Song Suggestions

Traditional

“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” (UMH #154)

“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross” (UMH #301)

“Because He Lives” (UMH #364)

Choral word in song or offertory: “How Beautiful/When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,” choral arr. by Lloyd Larson

Contemporary

“Greater” performed by Mercy Me

“Everlasting God” performed by Lincoln Brewster

“Jesus Loves Me” performed by Chris Tomlin

“Amen (Because He Lives)” performed by Matt Maher

“Trading My Sorrows” performed by Lincoln Brewster and Paul Baloche

Liturgical Elements

Call to Worship

L: Who is in need of encouragement today?

P: Lord, I stand in need of encouragement.

L: Who is willing to share the encouragement of Christ with others?

P: Lord, help us spark love and good deeds in each other.

L: Who is thankful for this community of encouragement?

P: Lord, thank you for these sisters and brothers who encourage me with their faithfulness.

(Based on Hebrews 10:24-25 and Romans 1:11-12.)

Unison Covenant Prayer of Encouragement (After Sermon)

Lord, we commit to being an encouraging congregation. Help us to value the gifts, talents, and passions you give to your people. Empower us to support one another in answering our calls to ministry. Inspire us to be people who fill each other with courage, strength, and a boldness to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. We pledge to do all we can to rarely say *No* and often say *Yes* to taking risks for your glory. Unleash us with creativity to overcome obstacles and dream with each other of a world where all people experience your

healing, hope, and joy. Guide us in saying *Yes* to ministries that will positively transform this church, community, and world. We long to build your kingdom here. Move us to live out this covenant pledge by the power of your Holy Spirit. We confidently pray this in the name of Jesus Christ our risen savior, amen.

Benediction

As you leave today, say *Yes* to encouraging others in ministry for Jesus Christ. Do all you can to help others transform this world in the name of Jesus Christ. Go with the encouragement of the Lord. Amen.