



A SERMON

by Rev. Victor H. Floyd: August 31, 2025



THIS IS THE FINAL SUNDAY OF OUR WORSHIP SERIES: *Peace and Perseverance in Poetry*. Throughout August, we've journeyed together through the deep waters of biblical Wisdom literature.

Today, as we conclude this series, our worship service will be a celebration—a finale woven with sacred texts and stirring music. You'll hear a variety of passages from the Bible's Wisdom tradition, paired with songs from the Broadway stage.

Why Broadway? Because sometimes, the truth jumps out—not just from scripture, but from a spotlighted lyric or a moment of unexpected grace. Wisdom has a way of finding us wherever beauty lives.

The Holy Spirit—closely aligned with Holy Wisdom—thrives beyond the walls of religion. She is the breath that catches in your chest before a painting. She is the fire behind a performance that pierces your defenses and touches your soul. She's the one who reveals the face of Christ in the eyes of the immigrant, the poor, the unhoused, the laborer.

She's here today. I invited her.

This service is an offering—a moment to glorify God and remain open to the movement of Holy Wisdom among us and in us.

Some verses from Wisdom's greatest hit.

Ecclesiastes 3

*For everything there is a season
and a time for every purpose under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die;
a time to plant and a time to harvest,
a time to break down and a time to build up;
a time to weep and a time to laugh;
a time to grieve and a time to dance.*



“Corner of the Sky” from *Pippin*

Sirach¹ (Ecclesiasticus) 2:1-6

*My child, when you come to serve the Lord,
prepare yourself for an ordeal.
Set your heart right and be steadfast,
and do not be impetuous in time of calamity.
Cling to God and do not depart,
so that your last days may be prosperous.
Accept whatever befalls you,
and in times of humiliation be patient.
For gold is tested in the fire,
and those found acceptable, in the furnace of humiliation.
Trust in God, and God will help you;
make your ways straight and hope in the Lord.*

¹ Because it was excluded from the Jewish canon, the Book of Sirach was not counted as being canonical in Christian denominations originating from the Protestant Reformation, although some retained the book in an appendix to the Bible called "Apocrypha". We read it for edification and guidance.



“You Will Be Found” from *Dear Evan Hansen*

Although much of the Old Testament is about Jewish identity and promoting its unique monotheism. Later, in the gospels, that theme soon gives way to reforming the terrible sins that can be done in the name of religious tradition. Jesus was not crucified for healing people. He threatened a tradition, he destabilized a cultural identity, and, more than that, he rattled the cages of the powerful—in the temple and in the empire.

Come From Away tells the true story of how a small town in Newfoundland, Canada, welcomed and supported 7,000 passengers from 38 diverted flights after the September 11th terrorist attacks. It’s about generosity and kindness of the residents of Gander, Newfoundland, who opened their homes and hearts to the stranded travelers, fostering a spirit of community and hope amidst tragedy. They loosened their idea of cultural identity and welcomed people quite different from themselves—immigrants and strangers “come from away”. They expanded their traditions in order to do God’s will.

In these painfully-divisive times, be reminded that unity is not uniformity. It is by God’s grace that strangers becoming allies. The beauty of prayer offered together, even when it doesn’t all sound the same—glorifies God. The musical offers us a glimpse at the world described wisely in Psalm 133. In these painfully-divisive times, be reminded that unity is not uniformity. It is by God’s grace that strangers becoming allies. The beauty of prayer offered together, even when it doesn’t all sound the same—glorifies God.

Psalm 133

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.

It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion.

For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore.



“Prayer” from *Come From Away*

And now, two Wisdom passages about the challenge of human relationships.

Ecclesiastes 9:7-9

Go, eat your bread with enjoyment and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has long ago approved what you do. Let your garments always be white; do not let perfumed oil be lacking on your head. Enjoy life with the partner whom you love all the days of your vain life that are given you under the sun, because that is your part to play in life and the hard work at which we toil under the sun.



“With So Little to Be Sure Of” from *Anyone Can Whistle*

Can individuals be refined? Are we really able to grow into something *more* through forging relationships with one another? Through community?

Proverbs 27:17

Iron sharpens iron,

and one person sharpens the wits of another.



"For Good" from *Wicked*

In *Plan B*, Anne Lamott writes of an eighty-something-year-old man, A. J. Muste who, during the Vietnam War, stood in front of the White House night after night with a candle. One rainy night, a reporter asked him, "Mr. Muste, do you really think you are going to change the policies of this country by standing out here alone at night with a candle?"

"Oh," Muste replied. "I don't do it to change the country, I do it so the country won't change *me*."

Keep your lights trimmed and burning! Surrender neither your values nor your joy to those who conspire to bring fear and fascism into this world, for it was to an occupied nation that Jesus spoke these words:

John 14:27. *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.*

Amen.

