**Women’s Sunday**

***Make Connections – Outline***

**October 2022**

Contributors:

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| **WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE**This worship outline contains all elements needed for the worship service. The order of the service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outline is flexible and allows opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. Sermon materials are included as *samples* and not to be preached verbatim. |

**Key to Songs:**

* **SB =** *The Song Book of The Salvation Army*
* **HC =** *Hallelujah Choruses*
* **SS =** *Songs of Salvation*
* **TB =** *The Band Tune Book of The Salvation Army*
* **HT =** *Hymn Tune Accompaniment CDs*
* **Blue Text =** *Lyric Video* on the *Worship Services Video Resources* website**:** [**http://wsvr.viscomapps.com/**](http://wsvr.viscomapps.com/)

**Preliminary Music Video**

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| Woven Together (Psalm 139) – *Stuart Townend* | <https://youtu.be/m5FQXAhG3Xk> [4:51] |
| **Additional Optional Music** |
| Raise a Hallelujah w/Lyrics - *Bethel Music* |  <https://youtu.be/FRo7kFl7hBw> [4:24] |
| Good Good Father w/ Lyrics - *Chris Tomlin* | <https://youtu.be/-ak0OoFBw3c> [4:49] |

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| **Drama – “Love Connection”** |

**Welcome, Announcements and Offering**

**Call to Worship**

Being connected is a longing of the human soul. By definition, *connection* is “a relationship in which a person, thing, or idea is linked or associated with something else.” As individuals we look for those who share similar life stories and experiences. At times feelings of loneliness, doubt and a sense of being incomplete can override the truth of what it is to be united in Christ, both individually and corporately. So today, let us seek out Christ as He reminds us how we can be woven together in a deeper connection with Him.

**Praise and Worship**

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| HC#135/SB#270/SS#130 – Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord | HC-135TB-792 – same SS-130 | HCD12-T15 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** |
| HC#250 – Hear the Call of the Kingdom | HC-250 | HCD23-T20 |
| **HC#203**/SB#935/SS#61 – **They Need Christ** | **HC-203**TB-886 – sameSS-61 | **HCD19-T13** |

**Choric Reading – “While I Speak to Thee”**

**Reader 1:** Before Thy face, dear Lord, Myself I want to see. And while I every question sing,

I want to answer Thee. [*pause*] While I speak to Thee.

**Reader 1 & 2:** Lord, Thy goodness show.

**Reader 1:** Am I what I ought to be? O Savior, let me know.

**Reader 2:** Am I what once I was? Have I that ground maintained, wherein I walked in power with Thee. And Thou my soul sustained? [*pause*] While I speak to Thee.

**Reader 2 & 3:** Lord, Thy goodness show.

**Reader 2:** Am I what I ought to be? O Savior, let me know.

**Reader 3:** Have I a truthful heart? A conscience keen to feel, the baseness of a false excuse. The touch of aught unreal? [*pause*] While I speak to Thee.

**Reader 3 & 4:** Lord, Thy goodness show.

**Reader 3**: Am I what I ought to be? O Savior, let me know.

**Reader 4:** Have I the zeal I had, when Thou didst me ordain. To preach Thy Word and seek the lost. Or do I feel it pain? [*pause*] While I speak to Thee.

**Reader 4 & 5:** Lord, Thy goodness show.

**Reader 4:** Am I what I ought to be? O Savior, let me know.

**Reader 5:** O Lord, if I am wrong, I will not grieve Thee more. By doubting Thy great love and power, to make and keep me pure. [*pause*] While I speak to Thee.

**All:** Lord, Thy goodness show. Am I what I out to be? O Savior, let me know.

(by Herbert H. Booth, *The Song Book of The Salvation Army*, #697)

**Testimony**

[*Select someone who can speak on the theme of connection and its importance to self, community, and God*]

**Congregational Song**

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| SB#838 – How wonderful it is to walk with God | TB-463 – Abide with me | HTD6-T1 (4 vs.) |
| **Additional Optional Songs** |
| SB#815 – Help us to help each other, Lord | TB-57 – Amazing Grace! | HTD3-T2 (4 vs.) |
| SB#795/**HC#114**/SS#145 – What a friend we have in Jesus | TB-385 – What a friend**HC-114 (Hyfrydol)**SS-145 | HTD7-T21 (3 vs.)**HCD10-T14** |

**Scripture Reading – 1 Thessalonians 5:5-11**

**Message – “Woven Together”**

**Time of Reflection (Video)**

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| So Will I (100 Billion X) Lyric Video – *Hillsong United* | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2U7ffUM5Ec>[06:51] |
| **Additional Optional Song** |
| SB#1031/**HC#283** – **Lord, if Your presence** | TB-740 – same **HC-283** | **HCD27-T13** |
| SB#568/**HC#30**/SS#117 – **All that I am** | TB-546 – same **HC-30**SS-117 | **HCD2A-T20** |

**Benediction**

Lord, we thank You for this time spent together—together with each other and together in Your presence. As we go from this place today, help us to be encouragers. Help us to build each other up in ways that carry over into our private moments when we are doubtful and lonely. Help us to feel complete, knowing we are part of a body of people who long to make each other better, becoming more like Christ.

And so now, *“just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness”* (Col. 2:6-7, NIV). Amen.

**Postlude Music Video**

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| Woven Together (Psalm 139) – *Stuart Townend* | <https://youtu.be/m5FQXAhG3Xk> [4:51] |
| **Additional Optional Music** |
| Raise a Hallelujah w/Lyrics - *Bethel Music* |  <https://youtu.be/FRo7kFl7hBw> [4:24] |
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| **DRAMA****Love Connections**by Major AmyJo Ferguson |
| **Theme:** | Connection and Community. |
| **Scripture:** | 1 Thessalonians 5:10-11 |
| **Synopsis:** | Game Show contestant looks for a church love connection. |
| **Characters:** | **Host** -Bubbly and overly energetic game show host. **Contestant** - A bit confused; not where she wants to be, but knows she wants love and acceptance.**Gladys** - A very busy church lady with a huge schedule trying to meet everyone’s needs, but not really helping anyone.**Taylor** - Says a lot without meaning much. Very educated and out there, but never quite grounded. |
| **Props/Sound Effects:** | Index cards for contestant.Very long sheet of paper with “SCHEDULE” written on back so audience can see. Recording of Game Show music for intro and outro of scene. |
| **Setting:** | Set can be as simple or complex as one wants to make it. Three chairs are needed with some sort of divider (like on the *Dating Game*). Hang up large hearts and decorate with old Valentine’s Day items to make the stage eye-catching. |
| **Length:** | 3-4 minutes. |

[*Host enters bantering with the audience and very enthusiastic.*]

**Host:** Hey everybody! Those old pews giving you splinters? That new drummer on the worship team just a little too enthusiastic? If you are looking for God in all the wrong places, you have come to the right place on the All New “LOVE CONNECTION!”

[*Game Show music plays intro*]

Our first contestant is a single mother of three who…

**Contestant:** [*enters looking around bewildered*]Ummm…I’m sorry. I thought this was a dating show.

**Host:** Sort of. I mean, you don’t attend church, do you?

**Contestant:** Well, no, but I… Isn’t that a little personal?

**Host:** You mean going on TV to discuss your love life and date complete strangers is less personal than talking about church?

**Contestant:** When you put it that way, I suppose it’s not.

**Host:** Great! Let’s welcome our churches. First, representing the First Church on First Street, Gladys Smith. And representing Skyward Church, Taylor Thompson.

[*Gladys and Taylor enter from the opposite side of the stage from Contestant and take their seats.*]

**Taylor:** It’s just Sky-ward [*makes expansive motion with hands*].

**Host:** Oh, my apologies. Representing Skyward Church is Skyward.

**Taylor:** No, my name is Taylor Thompson, but we prefer not to use the “C” word, it tends to give people the wrong impression.

**Host:** The “C” word? You mean you are not a church?

**Taylor:** Oh no! We are. We just don’t call ourselves that.

**Host:** Ohhhhhh Kaaayyy. [*Turning to Contestant*] Well you know how this works. You have three questions to put to our eligible churches and then you get to choose which church you would like to worship in.

**Contestant:** Well, I thought this was a dating game, so….[*Looks down awkwardly at cue cards*.] Umm…ahh…church #1, you invite me over for a romantic…I mean…regular dinner. What do you fix?

**Gladys:** [*produces VERY long sheet of paper with SCHEDULE printed in large letters on back for the audience to read*]Oh, honey, you’re going to need to be more specific. Do you mean “Pie, Pastry, and Praise” on the first Monday of the month, or “Diets and Discussions” on the first Friday, or “Lunch and Learn” on the first Saturday, or my personal favorite “Bacon, Breakfast and Brunch” on the second Tuesday after the first Monday--so sometimes it’s actually the third Tuesday of the month. Or if you’re that kind of person, there’s always “Fruit it up Fridays.”

**Contestant:** What kind of person?

**Gladys:** Well, you know a “fruity” person.

**Contestant:** Okay?! Same question, church #2.

**Taylor:** We prefer fellowship to take place synergistically within the incomprehensible movements of God’s ethereal Spirit.

**Contestant:** WHAT?

**Taylor:** We don’t schedule dinner, but we do have coffee bar open before and after service.

**Contestant:** Oh, that sounds nice. Church #2, what would we do on a date? I mean church date…ahem…day.

**Taylor:** We worship.

**Contestant:** Could you be more specific?

**Taylor:** No.

**Contestant:** Ummm…okay… Church #1, I really want to feel secure and at home in a relationship. Oops, that really doesn’t make a lot of sense.

**Host:** No, continue.

**Contestant:** Well, I mean, it’s sort of silly to say it to a church that all you really want to do is feel comfortable and like you belong there.

**Host:** You mean living together and sharing in life, making deep and meaningful connections – “LOVE CONNECTIONS.”

**Contestant:** Exactly.

**Taylor:** Didn’t the Apostle Paul say something along those lines? “We might live together with Him and share His life.” (1 Thessalonians 5:10b)

**Gladys:** I think he did, and something about “encouraging each other and building each other up.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

**Contestant:** Do either of you do that?

**Gladys:** Well, it’s not on the schedule, [*hesitantly*] but I’m sure we do…sometimes.

**Taylor:** Yeah, it’s totally what we do. I mean [*hesitantly*] that’s what we are supposed to be doing.

**Host:** Well, that’s all the time we have today, but join us tomorrow to see if maybe YOU can make a LOVE CONNECTION!

[*Game Show music plays outro and contestants leave; blackout.*]

***Women’s Sunday***

***Make Connections – Sermon***

**October 2022**

***WOVEN TOGETHER***

**by Captain Chrissy Cooper**

**Text:** 1 Thessalonians 5:11; James 3:5-12

**Introduction**

Ever since I was little, I wanted to do things on my own. I pride myself on being a strong independent woman. Even though this is true for me, more often than not I instantly regret it. And even though I think of myself as independent, I quickly learned in the last year that I need others around me. The year 2020 was an extremely difficult—yet powerful—year for me. As an extrovert, staying at home was not an easy feat. I was devastated as the events and camping season were canceled. I live to be with people. I live to pastor. I live to teach others about Christ. I felt like my purpose was being ripped away from me by something I could not control. It only took about three days of the stay-at-home order to realize I was not made for isolation.

We, as people, are not made for isolation. We are made to live together. Life is better together. This experience called life is so much richer when you have a little tribe around you who helps you, encourages you, keeps you sane, bails you out, gives you grace, and holds you together. Togetherness is part of God’s design.

If you look into 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul gives us great insight into how we are to live in community. Here we see Paul writing a letter of encouragement to the church in Thessalonica. I love this letter because even though this church is far from perfect, he instructed them and encouraged them to be more like Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV) says, *“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”*

**Encourage One Another**

This brings us to the question: What does it mean to encourage one another? First let’s look at what encouragement means. Encouragement means “the action of giving someone support, confidence, or hope. Persuasion to do or to continue something. The act of trying to stimulate the development of an activity, state, or belief” *(Lexio.com*). It doesn’t mean that we should simply butter each other up or praise people to get their approval. It doesn’t mean we should only send each other motivational texts or screenshots of Bible verses. It means we come alongside each other in the hard times.

One of the biggest ways God shows Himself to us is through our friends. Friends who are the hands and feet of Jesus. When I say it’s better together, that doesn’t mean that you should just spend time with your friends. It means to be honest with each other, and that’s a different thing. It’s so easy to show each other our fancy Facebook-selves. You know what I mean when I say, “fancy Facebook-selves,” right? Facebook is the place where we post pictures of our kids with clean faces, and vacations, and all of the good things that are happening in our lives. It’s not lying necessarily. Maybe a better word for it is selective truth-telling, where we share only the positive, only the easy, the darling, the good things. And really, that is what Facebook is for! It’s not an appropriate place for struggles, disagreements, or deep truth telling. Although let’s be honest – we all have that one friend who totally uses social media inappropriately. It isn’t the place to tell the whole ugly weird truth. But that whole ugly weird truth has to get told somewhere. That’s why you need your own little tribe – a place where you can share the good, but also the ugly and weird. A place where you can say, “You know, I really wasn’t a good mom today,” or a place where you can say, “my marriage is harder in this season than before.” A place where you can say, “I’m not okay, I’m scared, I’m tired, I’m broken...”

In my experience you either choose honest connection, or you choose competition, comparison and isolation. It’s so easy to find yourself competing and comparing, and the only way through this is honesty. When you let someone into your life and let them see behind the perfect Facebook exterior. There is no secret formula, but they do include two things: time and guts. Friendship takes time. And at least for me, I feel like I rarely have time for anything, so my time with those closest to me only happens when I get it on the calendar and treat it like a work meeting. If your life feels anything like mine, weeks fly by and the weekends go even faster. All of a sudden, a month has passed, and I haven’t spent any time with the people who I most need to connect with.

Friendship takes guts—willingness to be vulnerable and to engage in conflict. Making new friends is kind of like dating. It can be awesome, but mostly it’s nerve-wracking. You are putting yourself out there and taking risks. I could tell you so many stories of trying to be someone’s friend and they weren’t mean about it, but they made it pretty clear that they weren’t accepting applications for new friends. It’s hard, but the alternative is harder, because the alternative is isolation. My best friends are not my best friends because we *avoid* conflict. They are my best friends because we talk about it. We have hard, honest conversations with each other. We cry, we discuss, we apologize, and we make up. Sometimes we get into the mindset that if something goes wrong in a friendship, it’s over. The opposite is true: when something goes wrong in a friendship that means it’s a normal friendship. That’s when we have the opportunity to build something beautiful with each other.

**Encouragement**

Biblical encouragement does not mean we let people continue in their sin. Biblical encouragement always, *always* points us to Christ. The Bible is full of scriptures that tell us to guard our tongues. James has a lot to say about this in James 3:5-12. He writes:

***5*** *So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!* ***6*** *And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.*

***7*** *For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind,* ***8*** *but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.*

***9*** *With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.****10*** *From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers these things ought not to be so.****11*** *Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?* ***12*** *Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water”* (ESV).

The tongue is a powerful tool that we can use either for good or for evil, to encourage or discourage. Sometimes people use this idea of not allowing others to sin, in the opposite direction, where they discourage them from even trying. It is incredibly easy to become a discourager. Think about this in your own life. When you open your mouth what flows from it? Is it negative? Is it discouragement and frustration? Is it always a complaint? It is all too familiar to praise God through worship on Sunday morning, and then talk bad about the people who are worshipping with you. Just like water cannot be both fresh and salt, we can either be an encourager or a discourager. We can’t be both. The Bible tells us to encourage each other and build each other up. Not pick apart about what could have been done better. Be an encourager. Encourage each other to be better. Do not discourage each other.

**Choose Togetherness**

My husband and I had been married a little over two years when I miscarried for the second time in four months. I was devastated. The only thing I ever wanted since I was a little girl was to be a mother, and I felt like that was never going to happen for me. I had lost two babies and I wasn’t willing to try again. I felt like everyone around me was pregnant, and here I was, doing exactly what God had asked me to do, and yet, I could not sustain a pregnancy. I was crushed and I was angry. Specifically angry with God. I was at the College for Officer Training (seminary) at the time, and I had a close group of friends who surrounded me in prayer. I remember one specific meeting where I couldn’t even get through a praise and worship song without crying. I felt like the whole world was on my shoulders, that life wasn’t fair, and that God didn’t care. This group of ladies surrounded me, brought me once again to the feet of my Savior, and helped me through those dark few months. They very easily could have let me suffer alone, not allowing me to ruin their happiness and their joy, but they didn’t. They chose to mourn with me while I was mourning. Our unwillingness to reach across our own happiness or our own pain ruins relationships. I know friendships that have ended because of a failure to comprehend the complexity of joy and pain, because someone wasn’t there when a friend needed them the most.

This is the heart of friendship. Rejoicing with those who rejoice and mourning with those who mourn. If you can’t enter into other people’s pain when everything is going well for you, then you will never experience transforming friendships. If you can’t celebrate with someone when your own heart is breaking, that means that you will miss out on the best that friendship has to offer. I’m not talking about faking it or pretending your pain isn’t real. I’m talking about acknowledging the fact that joy and loss are both real. Both are happening all around us. They are unavoidable parts of life and unavoidable parts of friendship.

**Conclusion**

What I know about life is that it’s better when we do it together. Better when we share, better when we tell the truth, better when we are in it together. Let’s work, on God’s behalf, to be the kind of friends who consistently point each other to Christ and not to the world.

**Sermon Outline**

Introduction – illustration of a time where even though strong and independent, being community made you better, stronger and have a deeper relationship with others and Christ.

1. Encourage One Another
	1. Definition of encourage
	2. Social Media (being genuine)
	3. Personal Perception (not putting yourself down; being true)
	4. Friendship takes time and ‘guts’
2. Do Not Discourage
	1. Beware of the tongue
	2. Self-check
	3. Encouragement in Christ is …meeting people where they are and pointing them to Christ
3. Choose Togetherness
	1. Illustration of a time when you felt alone, devasted and/or unworthy
	2. Surround yourself with loving and compassionate people
	3. Take time/offer to walk the path of loneliness/hardship with others, draw close during times of sorrow and lament

Conclusion – summarize the idea of encouragement and togetherness. Challenge the congregation to identify how they can be woven together (with each other and with Christ).