

# The Treasure of the Ordinary

by Don Parsons

**Note:** Hymns are from *Voices United*. Other suggestions from *More Voices* are 143, 145, 161, and 171. This outline refers to Minutes for Mission, which are available as a booklet or as downloadable RTF files from UCRDstore.ca.

## GREETING

Friends, we gather as those who are challenged to be the church in today's world.

**As a grateful people, we are called  
to celebrate God's presence,  
to live with respect in creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.**

We offer our worship to God,  
trusting that we will become the church  
God dreams we can be.

## HYMN

*Voices United* #582, "There's a Spirit in the Air"

## OPENING PRAYER

Praise to you, gracious God, for this day, this earth, this life.

**Praise for the web of miracles that blesses us,  
and for your faithful presence that sustains us.**

Praise to you for laughter and tears, for courage and hope.

**Praise for our sisters and brothers  
in this global village of earth—  
one family in your name.**

We praise you for the love that Christ has revealed,  
living, working in our world. Amen.

## M&S SNAPSHOTS

**Introduction:** On this mission and service Sunday, we are invited to think about people all over the globe as we seek to live the way of Jesus in our world.

We think about friends in United Churches who are supported by M&S and others in refugee camps; those who depend on the church for a daily meal, and others whose health care or education is enhanced because of our gifts. What we share—the treasure of the ordinary—helps to fulfill God's dream for the whole family of earth.

## Congregation Singing

*Voices United* #575, "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me"  
(verse 1)

## Mission Snapshot

Tell one of the Minute for Mission stories.

## Congregation Singing

*Voices United* #575, "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me"  
(verse 2)

## Mission Snapshot

Tell another Minute for Mission story.

## Congregation Singing

*Voices United* #575, "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me"  
(verses 4 and 5)

## CHILDREN'S TIME

Ask the children if they are involved with projects at school or at home that help others. Answers might include UNICEF donations at Hallowe'en or Christmas, serving at a soup kitchen, donating coins through Lent, etc.

Invite them to think about how Jesus might have helped others when he was their age. Encourage them to use their imaginations. Ask why we care for others. Suggest that it is important for us to share with others, because we are "family" for each other.

## RESPONSIVE PSALM

Psalm 98, *Voices United* p. 818

## GOSPEL

John 6:1–14. You might read this as a drama, assigning parts for Narrator, Jesus, Philip, Andrew, and the congregation.

## MUSIC

## SERMON

See Sermon Notes, page 33.

## HYMN

*Voices United* #567, "Will You Come and Follow Me"

## OUR TITHES AND GIFTS TO GOD

### Prayer

We are grateful, Holy God,  
that you welcome every gift we bring,  
no matter how modest or ordinary  
—a widow's penny,  
the anointing perfume of a woman of the street,  
a lad's lunch of loaves and fish.

Help us to offer our gifts with open hands, generous hearts, and lives dedicated to your will in this place, and throughout the world. Amen.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

**Refrain:** *Voices United* #948 “O God, hear my prayer...”  
(*sung twice*)

There is so much that fills us with gratitude this day,  
Caring God.

We are grateful for the sounds of worship in this place:  
the friendly greeting we have received, music and word,  
centring silence, insight offered to us by our children, and  
conversation over refreshments.

Even in the midst of life’s turmoil,  
we are grateful for the sounds of caring hope:  
the quiet presence by the hospital bed,  
a caring phone call,  
the sound of generosity as we respond to need both in  
this community and half a world away.

Holy God, there is within us the sound of gratitude  
and yearning.

Today we yearn for those in our world who do not know  
what a home is:

those who are hungry, sad, frightened, discouraged.  
We yearn for those who care in places where nightmare  
needs are traumatic and life is raw.  
We yearn for those who confront systems of brutality  
and oppression throughout the world (*name countries in  
turmoil*).

Wherever your dream for this global village of Earth  
is being thwarted, hear our prayer.

Gratitude—and yearning—is the sound of our praying this  
day, O God,  
offered to you in word, in silence, in singing.

**Refrain** (*sung twice*)

### THE LORD’S PRAYER

#### HYMN

*Voices United* #507, “Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples”

#### SENDING FORTH

Now as we go into the world beyond these walls,  
we are challenged to be the presence of Jesus,  
offering each other, and all those we meet

a caring word,  
a warm embrace,  
an extended hand—the treasure of our ordinary gifts.

And as we go,  
may the grace of Christ attend us,  
the love of God surround us,  
and the Holy Spirit enliven and comfort us and all whom we  
love this day, and always. Amen.

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ministry. He is currently Interim Minister of Worship and  
Preaching at Eglinton St. George’s United Church, Toronto.

## SERMON NOTES: THE TREASURE OF THE ORDINARY

- We live in an age of superstars, the biggest, the most exciting. But what about things that are unimpressive? the ordinary in life?
- Often the smallest things have changed the world. Talk about examples such as splitting the atom, micro computer chips, tiny transistors, how the space program depends on 49-cent gaskets.
- Jesus referred to the treasure of ordinary things: sharing a cup of cold water, yeast in dough, a tiny mustard seed, a widow’s mite, a lost piece of silver, one lost sheep, and one sparrow falling to the ground. The treasure of the ordinary was for Jesus a way of helping people understand the presence of God in their midst.
- Today’s gospel reading is about a huge, hungry crowd with no food. The disciples’ inventory of what food there was only produced one lad whose dotting mother had put barley loaves and fish in his knapsack. “But what are they among so many?” the disciples mumbled to themselves. Jesus smiled. This adolescent’s willingness to share his bread and fish had the potential to satisfy them all. Jesus knew that this ordinary lunch was really a treasure.
- Today’s service reminds us that each gift to the M&S Fund makes a huge difference. We are like that young boy with his ordinary lunch, believing that through such modest gifts God’s dream is being fulfilled.
- Recount some of the ways ordinary M&S money is used as a treasure throughout the world.  
The treasure of ordinary gifts in the hands of God becomes a miracle of life-giving love for this church and for our love-hungry world.