

We have a lot happening here at Chapel of the Hills. We have much to celebrate. Let us take a moment to celebrate how the Spirit is working in this community. I ask you, where or how is the Spirit working?

Let us thank God for this work. Gracious and Loving God, we lift praise to you. You are doing great work in this community. We give you all the praise by recognizing that You are the one who is opening doors, moving hearts, dreaming new dreams within us. All of these moments are seeds just being planted or seeds that have finally reached fruition after much hard work. We are Your workers, Lord, in your kingdom. Put us to work so that others will come to know you and experience your love. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

We are almost half-way through our Easter People sermon series. We have learned so far that as Easter People, we are called to be Peacemakers and Followers. Today, we will talk about being the Spirit's Workers.

The scripture today takes place before the crucifixion and resurrection, during Christ's ministry. The religious leaders were trying to press Jesus to tell them plainly that he is the Messiah. Jesus told them that he did tell them plainly, but they didn't believe him. He also tried using a metaphor to explain it to them. The Sheep and Shepherd relationship would have been familiar to them, but it still wasn't enough. They needed proof in order to believe, just as Thomas needed proof of the Resurrection.

Jesus said, Look at my works. If words aren't going to convince you, then "the proof is the work I do in my Father's name" (v.25). In this context, he had just made a blind man see. He forgave the

woman caught in adultery. He had just fed the 5,000. He walked on water to get to his disciples to calm their fears. These many works of mercy were proof that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus points to these as proof because actions speak louder than words.

As Easter People, Christ calls us to continue his work, to be his Workers. As Methodists, we understand to live out our faith by practicing works of piety and works of mercy. Works of piety are spiritual practices like reading, Bible Study, prayer, fasting, regularly attending worship, participating in the sacraments and holding each other accountable.

Works of mercy include visiting the sick and the imprisoned, helping the widows and orphans, feeding the hungry, giving generously to others in need, seeking justice, ending oppression and discrimination, and ending poverty. Jesus practiced all of these works, and he calls us to do the same as Easter People.

As Easter People, we are not waiting idly to experience grace. We become Christ's workers, so that Christ can work through us. Our works don't earn grace because grace is a free gift to all. There isn't anything that we can do to make God love us more. There isn't anything that we can do to make God love us less. He loves us no matter what we do. But, when we respond to God's grace by engaging in these works, God works through us and we receive God's grace, but more importantly, others receive God's grace.

All the examples you shared this morning about how or where the Spirit is working show you are already working. You are the Spirit's Workers in which others will come to know the Lord and will understand that Jesus is the Christ. God is

working through you, so that lives will be changed. You are making a difference by the work you do. Christ calls us to be workers because actions speak louder than words.

Let's put the Works of Piety and Works of Mercy on the screen again. Take a moment to look at this list. They are also in the bulletin. **Which work is God calling you to do?** Your current spiritual practices may not be on this list, and that's ok. You may do a lot of different works and that's great. But, I would like to challenge you to select a new one. Try something different. Doing the same thing over time doesn't always provide growth or give the Spirit opportunity to use us through new and different works.

If you feel stuck or buried in grief, loss, or addiction, try a new spiritual practice. Pray about which one God is calling you to do. Maybe it's one out of your comfort zone that would certainly cause you to rely on God and to grow. Allow God to show up in new works, and allow God to put you to work, so others will come to know Christ and his love that changes lives.

One work we get to practice together this morning is the sacrament of holy communion. Let us prepare our hearts to receive his grace.