

Worship and Missions . . . a Crucial Intersection

By Rev. Dawne Phillips, CTC Director of Missions

What happens when planning for worship includes planning for the connection between worship and mission?

According to Rev. Dr. Chris Hayes at Keller UMC, *“Connecting our mission and service as disciples of Jesus Christ with weekly worship and preaching is the most important way a whole congregation can be on the same page about who we are called to be as God's people. Thinking theologically about what God is calling us to do in worship allows us to fruitfully and faithfully live out the good news of Jesus Christ in our daily living. At Keller UMC we try to tie our worship of God, study of scripture, and hands-on action and service into one authentic package of discipleship. Our goal is to find consistency between our worship, study, and daily living all in the image of Jesus Christ and his unconditional love of all people.”*

A Lenten focus provided an opportunity for the congregation to consider “giving it up” in real and tangible ways. With sermons focused on giving up self, giving up food, giving up clothes, giving up media and giving up waste, a Lenten calendar encouraged children, youth and adults to participate in a daily discipline of giving in real and tangible ways.

Children drank water instead of milk and put the money they saved in a Lenten mission bank, chose toys to give away, recycled old electronics, gave up bottled water, and gave up buying something new to donate funds to their Lenten bank.

Youth packaged food for the backpack ministry, baked and delivered treats for their neighbors, gave up desserts for missions, added a quarter to their mission bank for every movie they watched, and worked to eliminate “convenience products” from their routine.

Adults donated to local soup kitchens, purchased items for the backpack ministry, participated in ‘Miles for Missions,’ made contributions to micro-finance ministries through UM Global Ministries, and chose to wear something “old” for Easter Sunday donating the cost of a new outfit to missions.

Items that were collected were brought to the Sanctuary and blessed as a part of the worship offering and a visible reminder of sacrificial giving. According to Rev. Molly Simpson, the collective missional impact was huge. *“It’s really important to help people realize that both mission and worship are part of daily life, not just Sunday life. During Lent, people were able to find ways to engage their faith throughout their week and we saw people in the community doing amazing things. Each time we collect something whether it be food for our backpack program during Lent or school supplies each fall, we see it as an act of worship. So people bring items to the sanctuary where they are part of worship until they are sent out to help more people experience Christ’s love.”*

For more information about the details of this time of focus, feel free to contact Rev. Molly Simpson at mollys@kellerumc.org.