

Stewardship of Attention

Every year, January is an opportunity for us to focus on stewardship. This year we are focusing on *stewardship of attention*. Assembly favorite poet Mary Oliver has said, “To pay attention, this is our endless and proper work.” To whom or to what do we give our attention? Our lives are full of things vying for our attention, it is easy to get distracted. How do our focuses or our distractions shape us? How is giving our time different than giving our attention? In this series we will explore biblical texts related to the themes of paying attention, receiving attention, and action and contemplation. A central text for the series is, **“Fix your attention on God; you'll be changed from the inside out.” Romans 12:2 (The Message)**. In response to the frantic busyness of the holidays, this series will invite us to reorient our lives and to truly pay attention to each other, our selves, and to God’s deep love. As we ground ourselves in that deep love, we are better able join with God in the healing of the world. Richard Rohr writes, “From a contemplative stance, you’ll know what action is yours to do and what is not yours to do-- almost naturally. Without inner transformation, there is no grounded or lasting reform or revolution.”

As we continue to live into our three-year hospitality goal, we seek in this series to link hospitality and stewardship, and specifically stewardship of attention. How does a community of Jesus-followers pay attention to shaping our welcome, being good guests and attentive hosts? If we want to grow as a hospitable people, we will need to learn to pay attention to who is among us. If we cannot focus on the way God is coming toward us, we will be unable to pay attention to others who might be coming toward us.

Throughout this series we will try to give attention to the ways of and priorities of God's heart. Ultimately, it's more than just slowing down, caring for our bodies, ourselves, our neighbors for the sake of being better people--we do so as part of the call to follow in Jesus' footsteps. And there is a diversity of ways to realign our attention to be more in line with the priorities of God's heart, the ways of Jesus. We will explore some of those ways in our Second Hours.

Small groups will be worship leading during this series, we'll host Goshen College's *Parables*, and Second Hours will include short videos from *The Work of the People* followed by further conversation about the sermon topics or more contemplative options.





Date	Preacher	Theme	Scripture text
1/13	Gretchen Kraus	Prioritizing Attention	Luke 10:38-42
1/20	Susan Mark Landis	Peacemaking and attention	Mark 5:25-34
1/27	Lora Nafziger	Fix your attention on God	Romans 12: 1-2 Proverbs 4:25-27
2/3	Gwen Gustafson Zook	Paying attention to true our identity in Christ	2 Corinthians 3:1-6 Philippians 4:8
2/10	Wilma Harder	TBD	TBD
2/17	Goshen Colleges' Parables	"I am searching"	Psalms 130 and 139
2/24	Carmen Horst	The Transfiguration	Luke 9:28-43

