

“The Anointed Ones”
I Samuel 15:34-16:13
Rev. Joyce Kirk-Moore
June 18, 2006
San Dimas Community Church,
United Church of Christ

Babies are in the news these days. They are on the cover of many celebrity magazines.

Apparently, Hollywood is having a baby epidemic. It took me four years and two surgeries to get pregnant with Brittany. Motherhood was something I longed for ever since I was a little girl watching mommies on TV commercials. My two best friends had trouble getting pregnant too. Miraculously we all conceived six weeks apart.

Then when I was seven months along, my friends delivered premature baby boys who both died within hours of their births. I was devastated for them and for me because I began to imagine the worst for the impending birth of my own child. Then Brittany was born weighing only 5 lbs. 9 ounces, but very strong. It was many months before I could relax into motherhood and enjoy this precious gift of life with which I was blessed. The reason this story is relevant, I hope, is because today we celebrate our youth who have reached a milestone in their lives and we try to realize that their lives are a blessing that we cannot control, that we cannot even assure their safety, but that we can only celebrate and love them.

Reading our biblical text for today I wondered how Jesse felt when David, his youngest--was chosen as the anointed one? He surely would have wished this chosenness to happen to one of his older, more experienced sons. How his heartstrings must have longed to keep David close and protect him from the challenges, dangers, even the temptations that lie ahead. But David was meant to dance, to dance before the Lord. He was destined for greatness even though greatness is often accompanied by great loss and sorrow. This scripture tells us that the prophet, Samuel, listened for the voice of God which led him to a shepherd boy.

In David's humbleness of stature and vocation as a shepherd resided all the necessary potential for the next king of the nation of Israel. And David would say "yes" to God's anointing for better or for worse. God did not judge fitness for God's purposes to be based on length of years; a glowing resume of experience, a heritage of nobility. God works with those anointed to do a work God deems necessary and to bring that work to completion.

A few months ago I attended a meeting of church leaders where we heard about the characteristics of the different generations, such as what's called the "G.I." or "Greatest" Generations, the Boomers, etc. The Millennials is that generational category that includes those born between 1981-2000. Here are some of the characteristics of the Millennials. They are collaborative, civic-spirited, pluralists, spiritual, eclectic, cyber-literate, tolerant, optimist about the future, interested in community, and politics. But the most interesting characteristic to me was that Millennials are rebelling against the culture by cleaning it up. They are seeking ways to reform and save some of the mess others have made. In fact, they mirror some of the drive of the "Greatest" Generation in their belief that they have power to change the world for the better in

big and necessary ways. They, like David, may be the young ones, but we see in them the potential for God's work to redeem, restore, and reclaim God's world.

So today we celebrate our graduates, some of our Millennials, these "anointed ones"--anointed by God, blessed by us. You in a sense belong to us, but before you ever belonged to us, you belonged to God. How blessed we have been to share life with you, both joys and sorrows, struggles and successes. And how we celebrate the possibilities that await you.

Alison Kopanke, we've watched your broken bones heal, your achievements, your setbacks, your artistry with film. And we love you so much. You will always and forever be our window into the world of a future God will guide you through.

Vanessa, Robertson-Rojas, I watched you grow as a little girl at the Claremont church and as a young woman at the San Dimas church. I've watched your generosity of spirit, your social consciousness, your gifts in music and art. I feel so deeply privileged to have been part of your life to this day. Like your Dad, I would prefer that you stay close to attend art school, but even more than that, I want you to dance.

Alicia Arch, I believe teaching to be the most undervalued of professions, and I'm so grateful that God has anointed you to the ministry of teaching. I love the fact that like your mom, the tears are close to the surface, because that tells me you are sensitive to the deep needs of others and that sensitivity along with many other abilities you have will contribute to your success as a teacher.

Our Allison is in Greece digging up ancient artifacts, but we hold her close to our hearts. When Tom and I married, she was finishing the 4th grade. I think since she can't be here today, she'd like me to celebrate the other meaning of this day--Father's Day--because I know how much Tom means to her. When we imagine God, as father, we think of the qualities that make father's great--an ever present one to turn to for guidance and answers, a safety net when we really mess up, one who tells the truth lovingly and gently, a comfort and non anxious presence in our difficult moments, one who teaches us things we need to know (I always have said that God gave me Tom before the girls had to take algebra.) One Christmas Allison gave Tom a plaque for his office that says, "A father is someone who carries pictures where his money used to be." Today we thank God for all who have blessed us with the gifts of fatherhood, and we are grateful for the fatherly qualities of God.

Every good father, every good parent, takes the greatest joy in watching their children dance. I don't necessarily mean literally but metaphorically. God must have smiled as David danced before him and when David reached the pinnacle of Israel's greatness. And God must have shed tears as well. But the fact is God anointed David to be part of God's dream for the world. Today, Alison, Vanessa, Alicia, and Allison, we anoint you to dance God's dance for all humankind and we say thank you for allowing us the joy of watching your dance. Lee Ann Womack's song, which Lisa used as background for the slide show, expresses so dearly my hopes for you:

*I hope you never lose your sense of wonder
You get your fill to eat but always keep that hunger
May you never take one single breath for granted
God forbid love ever leave you empty handed
I hope you still feel small when you stand beside the ocean
Whenever one door closes I hope one more opens
Promise me that you'll give faith a fighting change
And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance
Dance...*

All of us are part of God's dance in human history. Our small part will make a difference. Our dance is one for the whole world to see. I pray that we dance with the world's children and with the church past and future.

I pray that our journey is joy filled so much so that only dancing can adequately express it. And I pray that none of us will sit it out, simply because we're afraid of what we don't know. While we dance we can always "***put our hand in the hand of the one who stills the waters***" to give us courage. For we are part of a great and glorious dance that God choreographs throughout creation. So today and in the all the days to come may we say "yes" to God's anointing, to the Spirit of God placed within each of our hearts, and may we take our place in God's dance for all creation.