Sermon: There Your Heart Will Also Be
Scripture: Matthew 6:19-23
Preacher: Rev. Will Burhans
Date: October 25, 2026

For about 185 years this church has stood on this plot of land doing its churchy thing, looking beautiful and raising heads and lifting eyes toward the heavens, opening space for prayer and for worship, for community and for serving. Sometimes it's been a place of comfort and care. And sometimes it's been a place of challenge and provocation, pushing the people who come through the doors to think more deeply, act more lovingly, live more faithfully. It's the church doing its churchy thing. Reminding people that there's a God above and beneath, within and between, it all and a God of love at that. Over all these years, we've come here to light candles in the dark of Christmas Eve to proclaim the Light Come into the world as a babe in a manger and then we've come here months later to extinguish the candles as we read of his suffering and his death in Holy Week out of Holy Love. What a thing we do together here, how odd and ancient and beautiful. We tell our children about this man from God who taught people that they are loved and taught them to love, even and most especially the unloveable. Sometimes here there are rituals of death and departures and sometimes baptismal rituals of births and arrivals, sometimes people coming together in loving union and sometimes we hold vigils to grieve how we can be torn apart.

All because we believe that God created the world and keeps creating the world with beauty at its heart. And here we give space and time and flesh to that beauty through beautiful music from here on the

chancel or lively even edgy music down there in Ripley Chapel and artists making art up on the 3rd floor. We believe giving time and space for such things, for such creativity and beauty, pleases God. We wouldn't do it if we didn't think God's heart was in it all. And God's heart is in our teaching of children about His beloved son through whom we are all beloved children, and God's heart is in the welcoming of strangers and the building of beds for those with no beds and in raising money for firewood and handing out sandwiches on the streets of Cambridge. We wouldn't do such things if we didn't think that God's heart was there and if we didn't think that exactly there is where God wants our hearts to be.

And it must please God when we gather in one another's homes and read scripture and poetry and break bread together and share what's on those hearts of ours with one another, that touches God's heart also for where God's heart is, is where our hearts ought to be as well, right? In learning of one another's struggles and seeking to be there for one another and then together for others… it's what church is supposed to do and to be and it's where our heart is and where God's heart is.

How do we please a God who is pleased with a baby born in an animal manger and with a man homeless and wondering? How do we please a God whose heart goes out to the diseased and the ostracized and those threatened and hurt by power. We go there too… until we get caught up in ourselves as we inevitably sometimes do and then to our own hearts dismay and God's as well

we become possessive of things and dismissive of people,
we get protective of ourselves and less concerned about others,
we place our resources too much in banks and not enough in the hands of those in need,

we get distracted and busy and numbed and find our hearts are somehow unbeknownst to us for a while not in it anymore nor do we sense God's heart there and though we get caught there at times our church stands here doing its churchy thing, reminding us of God and what it is that please Him/Her/Them.

So this is why we've chosen for our Stewardship season this theme for our pledge drive - where our treasure is there our hearts will also be. It's about reminding ourselves that the church, this church, is a treasure and where our hearts are, but this quote from Jesus also offers us a diagnostic tool for our lives asking us where is our treasure, our attention, our focus, our energy going cause that's where our heart are bound too. God asks us: are you living a life of love towards me and others or are you living mostly toward yourself. Is the way you spend and invest your money directed toward my heart, knowing what pleases me, or are there ways that our investments and our check books and our things betray distract us? We must ask that as individuals and as we ask for your financial support as a church we must ask that of ourselves as a church as well.

This week I attended a webinar - at the invitation of a member of this church - on the injustice of investing in for-profit prison corporations, a multi-billion dollar growing industry, which is not only an investment in human suffering but also investing in bad business for our society's well-being on many levels. You don't want your treasure to be used for the building of private prisons aligning mass incarceration with financial profit, I'm safe to assume right, because that's not where your heart is, it's not where my heart is and it's doubtful that's where God's heart is either. Jesus said he came to see the prisoner set free not to make money off of their suffering. Where your treasure is there your heart will also be and the heart,

honestly, can become diseased, if we are not careful. And this is just one example of how it can happen. Jesus was pretty concerned about how our money is used and how it uses us and how we can misuse it in our treatment of others. He talks about it a lot in fact, asking us who do you serve, who do you want to please here?

We need to keep organizations like the church financially healthy and vital for the good that this church and so many churches offer for the health of our society and world, that our hearts can be better aligned to where God's heart is. I'm not saying the church is the only organization aligned to God's heart, by any means, but it's one of the central ones that asks the question - are our priorities and actions and investments aligned to God's heart. Let's read scripture and decide. Let's sing out about what's most important. Let's remember what is beautiful and right in this world and lend our treasure and our hearts to that. Let's seek together to please a God who is pleased by love. Where God's heart is, is where our hearts ought to be also… in Jesus name, Amen.