1. Introduction
   * 1. **Thank you** to Suzanne, Doug, Jennifer Fry, all the other leaders…your faith in me
     2. Bishop Palmer at Annual Conference struck me right to the heart—“**You don’t have the right to wait till you are perfect at something to do it, because you will fool yourself to believe that you did it and not God!”** 
        1. It is not one more class, one more book, but being humble leader and being authentic in your faith, and listening to the Holy Spirit
        2. Join me in Prayer: **God of all wisdom and healing power, help open our ears, our minds and our hearts to your loving words and experience. Bring your Spirit to guide us on this journey together. Amen.**
   1. **Last Sunday of our series—“Life together with Luke”** 
      1. **Hard to believe** that Pastor Suzanne started planning this series months ago and did not know the major transition we would all be going through as a community.
      2. But that is **Luke for you**…instead of telling you shows you
   2. **What have we learned so far from Luke this series…**
      * 1. Jesus **impacts us today** as we are living out our faith…
        2. **Good Samaritan**—what it means to be a neighbor…not a vague understanding but Jesus calls it through action examples
        3. Persistent Neighbor—community of love, compassion, and acceptance
        4. In Suzanne’s beautiful farewell message—we are called to share and spread our **gifts** no in how we see fit but to share our God-given gifts
        5. Doug reminded us—**Safety Zone**, filled with God’s grace and love.

* 1. **Theme for today…Living with Luke—Living into God’s interruptions** 
     1. We face **daily interruptions** all the time…
        1. school starting—kids interrupting our schedule
        2. Cell Phones—technology taking our focus off our plans
        3. **Deeper Interruptions**—the call that stops us of friend or family is sick, the test result, the job loss or transition, it is those big interruption
        4. **Still Deeper…divine interruptions**—
           1. God interrupting our day both with minor and deep interruptions
           2. The divine interruption of our Pastor moving on and a **new Pastor coming**
           3. **Divine coming in a whisper of the Spirit, to the force of Grace**
     2. **What does the passage of Luke say about God’s interruptions?** 
        1. **Out of the Ordinary comes the Unexpected** 
           1. Jesus teaching in the Synagogue on the Sabbath—Rabbi—Teaching critical part of his ministry.
           2. Luke mentions an inconsequential woman—aliment for 18 years—no one notices her and not out of the ordinary. Literally looked over.
           3. Jesus does the unexpected—stops teaching with words and shows in action on the holiest of days, the Sabbath.
           4. He knows time is limited, and yet he stops and heals the unexpected woman, who did not ask to be healed, on an unusual day.
        2. **God’s interruptions are never expected**.
           1. If it made sense or part of your plan, it would not be an interruption.
           2. It typically involves the least expected, the unusual, and not logically perfect
           3. God’s interruptions will be uncomfortable.
           4. One of my favorite pieces of wisdom I received from Pastor Suzanne as she mentored me in my discernment journey to ministry

I am supposed to feel uncomfortable, butterflies in the stomach—sign of the Holy Spirit working and not my own.

* + - 1. This passage in Luke is not only about God’s interruptions **but Challenges us to look at how we handle God’s interruptions?** 
         1. I believe God is constantly interrupting our lives and interacting in our lives through people and experiences.

Important to reflect on how we are handling those interactions.

Are we listening to God’s Spirit whispering to us, challenging us

Or are we tuning out or avoiding the interruptions in our lives

* + - * 1. **How do the different characters in this passage react to God’s interruption?**

**The arthritic woman**

For 18 years only seeing half the world, always staring at the ground.

Defined by her ailment, her issues, feeling the weight of the world’s judgement confining her to one perspective.

She wasn’t expecting healing that day, she didn’t ask Jesus to interrupt his teaching on the holy day of Sabbath.

Yet God’s interruption happened, Jesus chose that day to stop and lift her up, accept her and take her in **without questions or qualifiers**, to heal her and bring her back into the community.

1. Her response is so amazing and inspiring to me—She responds to God’s grace with immediate praise to embrace love, healing, with joy and gratitude.
2. With the healing hands of Christ she let go of the grip she had on the past 18 years of pain, insults, and loneliness…all of it loosened and wiped away in Christ’s healing presence.
3. Looking up into Jesus’s eyes she accepted God’s love and mercy and claimed her new dignity.

The second half of the story is **the Synagogue leader**…

React to this healing miracle… frustrated and upset that this interruption happened on the Sabbath—**against their interpretation of the law of Moses.**

**At first glance**, …context of the synagogue leader during this time of author of Luke—common characteristics of human nature.

Roman dominated territory, Greco-Roman culture

Holding together their traditions, to hold tight, reinterpreting to specific details all of the laws.

Don’t we tend to do the same—when we feel threatened and afraid to loose something or change?

Imagine holding what you value so much in the palm of your hand, no imagine the times when we are challenged to share it, change it, or loose it…

If you are like me, my knee jerk reaction is to grip my hand tight. But what does that do?

It hurts after a while, nails and muscles tense

No one can see it—I can’t and can’t share it

we hold on so tight that we seem to lose sight of what is important the intent of God’s love and love for one another in order to be right

1. See Jesus is not saying that keeping the Sabbath is wrong.
2. He is showing them that they are clenching so tight to the interruptions that they are missing the point.
3. I love his reply…comparing his liberating actions to something as simple as untying a donkey. Our actions of healing and liberating love should be as mundane as taking care of our modern day version of locking our cars. **Loving, caring and accepting each other as who we are should be part of our everyday actions** 
   * 1. I can identify with the Synagogue leader in my journey
        1. Big step to move from “listening” to God’s calling to “doing” God’s calling
        2. I have been like the Synagogue leader
           1. Holding tight to “my” plans, ideas, and perspective of my future
           2. I grip my hand around my calling of worry, stress, fear of the unknown, self-doubt the tighter my grip in my hand.

Problem with my tight grip on God’s calling—

I no longer allow God in

All I feel is pain and stress

* + - * 1. God’s healing power comes in through prayer and others…calling me to loosen my grip and listen to God’s way in my heart and vocation

Through meditation and prayer, I continue to turn around the negative thoughts of self-doubt

With the loving wisdom and care of mentors like Pastor Suzanne and Doug, I learned to embrace my gifts and explore God’s work in my life

My family and friends have shown me acceptance and love, giving me confidence to move out of my perspective of what “I should do” and see the world from God’s perspective, grounded me when I needed it, and helped me along the way.

Last but most important this entire community, for accepting me for just who I am, for identifying my gifts, and challenging me to continue on this journey. Your prayers and support have a very real impact on my vocational journey and I could not do this without you.

All of these opened my hand to experience and follow God together.

* + 1. So how is God interrupting your life? How are you living into God’s interruptions? What has been your reaction? Does fear or self-doubt have a tight grip on God’s calling for your life?