Sermon: Belonging Across Generations
Series: On The Way Together
Text: Luke 2:41-52
Speaker: Kevin White
Date: Sunday September 6, 2026

Tell the story of me in the kayak in Florida - show picture
Funniest part - the guy's name, "Kai." He definitely did not put the Kai in Kayak :)

If it was a single person kayak I could have controlled everything. A two person kayak (ideally) has two people rowing together to move forward.

Today we're wrapping up our series, "On the Way Together: Finding and Extending Belonging in Jesus' Family. Over the last couple of months, we've talked about the fact that we weren't created to live alone.

Dave talked about how God designed us for belonging, and that even though sin damaged our relationships, Jesus brings us back into his family.

Steve showed us that belonging isn't just for us, it's supposed to be shared so others can experience God's welcome.

Pete walked us through practical ways we love and carry each other's burdens every day.

Jeremy talked about how we should be honest and that real community gets messy. How we need grace when expectations fall short.

Last week, Dorothy challenged us by reminding us that the gospel tears down cultural walls to make us one intercultural community.

Today we want to look at belonging across generations.

Today is an all church Sunday. If you look around right now, we have toddlers, kids, teenagers, young adults, parents and seniors.
If you're a kid in the StarKids program make some noise 🙂
Pursuit :)
YA's
If you are able to get a discount at Shoppers Drug Mart makes some noise
The rest of the adults make some noise
We're all here - together :)

The world constantly tries to separate us by age. The world looks at people as projects - for marketing. They literally created the word toddler - to market. The world tells us to teach kids, fix

teenagers and offer endless programs to keep families busy and interested. And the church tends to follow that model as well.

We start to see people as projects. We might look at children and young people as the future, seniors as the past, but what if we looked at everyone as a partner?

Today we want to go from looking at different generations as projects to looking at each other as partners - from project to partners. From project to partners.

When we see each other as partners we begin to see that wisdom doesn't just go from the oldest to the youngest. It goes both ways. We all have something to give and we all have something to learn.

But it's not easy. We don't all think the same. We don't all listen to the same music. We don't all communicate the same way. A three year old is different from a thirteen year old. A thirteen year old is different from a thirty year old. A thirty year old is different from an eighty year old…

(Story of my texting in full sentences and punctuation vs youth with emoji's that don't mean what. they look like)

Coming together with all this difference can be difficult. But it can also be beautiful. Age specific ministry is important. But what if we separate too much?

Think about your own journey. Who helped you? A parent? A grandparent? A teacher? Coach? Small group leader? Pastor? Friend? Were they the same age as you? Sometimes but not all the time. You probably learned from someone from a different generation at some point.

Let's look at our main passage for today. Some background. Jesus was 12 years old. In their society he was about to become a YA

Luke 2:41-44a
Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they travelled on for a day.

In those days, whole villages travelled in large caravans. Even though my image at the top was a kayak with two people in it, I actually like this caravan image better. As Pastor Andrew says, it's not either/or, it's both/and. What would it look like for us as a church to travel as a caravan? What would it look like for us to partner up with people and work together across the generations?

Back to the story. They travelled in large caravans (show a picture of a dodge caravan)

Okay seriously, back to the story. They travelled in large caravans. The women and children often walked at the front while men and older boys walked near the back. Jesus could have easily gone between the groups.

A few things we can pick up from this passage. For starters, if you're a parent, you're good. These parents lost the son of God. How's that for yikes :) Just saying. For parents, we see that Mary and Joseph had a spirituality that had a regular rhythm. They went to Jerusalem to go to the temple. They brought Jesus with them - parents, include your children in your spiritual rhythms.

Also, they were part of a deep community. So much so that Jesus could move around in the group (without being seen by his parents for a day) and be okay. He could be with the men, the women, aunties and uncles, or other community members who would keep him safe and take care of him.

How deep is your community? How wide is your community? How is your caravan?
Are we surrounding ourselves with friends, family, aunties and uncles? Do our kids have aunties, uncles and friends who can help build them up? Do we surround ourselves with teens and kids and seniors who help build us up and understand more of this world and more of God?
Dorothy talked about culture last week. Some cultures handle community differently than others. What can we as North Americans learn from other cultures?
If you were to think about your community, how often would you say you interact with people from different generations?

Back to the story - Mary and Joseph realize that he's missing. They go back to Jerusalem.

Verse 46
After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

Jesus at 12 years old models intergenerational ministry. He was listening to the teachers and elders. They were all in the same learning space together. He was asking questions - a part of the learning. He was giving answers.

Jesus is young. He's sitting with older teachers. They aren't treating him as irrelevant because he's young. They listen and go back and forth with him.

Jesus was learning from them but … everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers." Jesus wasn't just sitting there learning. He was allowed and welcomed to contribute. Sometimes we say people are allowed but we don't really give them respect because of their age. Whether you're older or younger you can contribute.

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." 1 Timothy 4:12

Psalm 145:4 says… “One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.” It’s from generation to generation. Faith doesn’t just stop with you. It moves through you to those around you.

This is what’s called “bi-directional learning.” The religious leaders didn’t see Jesus as a problem, an interruption or a project. They saw him as a partner in spiritual conversation.

Take a few seconds to think about this question - who is someone from a different generation - older or younger - who has shaped your faith? What did they teach you?

For me

- Abby - Google folders
- Hannah - how are you really doing?
- Morgan - Fridays have to be more than just fun
- Pastor Andrew - humility
- Pastor Steve - passion
- Pastor Jeremy - compassion
- Yuyee from my old church - teenager - taught me to pray
- Mrs Chin from my old church - power of prayer
- Mr. Smith from my old church - old people are fun to be around - as a senior he went to a community centre and took cooking class, he taught me (with his wife) about saving money. When his wife was sick he (in his 80’s) would get on the bus every day to go visit her - he taught me about faith and love)
- Baptism is a great example - talk about Candace and Travis - promote next baptism - Thanksgiving.

For the past few weeks we’ve been talking about the difference between “multi’ and “inter.” We talked about the difference between a multicultural church and an intercultural church. Today we talk about the difference between a multigenerational church and an intergenerational church.

A multigenerational church has a children’s ministry, youth ministry, young adult’s ministry, ladies ministry, men’s ministry, senior’s ministry… Specific ministries but they never interact.

We have that.

We also have some beautiful spaces that try to bring generations together.
Like all church Sundays, baptism services, Opentable Thursdays.

We also have ministries that are bringing together the generations in a beautiful way. Like children’s ministry. Just this past week one of the volunteers (Victoria) and her team put together a beautiful grade 5 graduation ceremony where the grade 5’s gave speeches, parents and adult volunteers celebrated them and student volunteers supported them. In the children's ministry you have all ages serving from grade 4 during their worship services all the way to seniors.

The worship ministry is another ministry that is doing an amazing job of bringing different ages (and abilities) together in a meaningful way. During the One Accord worship night, there was an art station at the back but it wasn't just for kids to keep them quiet. It was for all ages to have a space to express worship in a different way - together.

When we have an intergenerational community, good things happen. Older mentors can be anchors for young people helping them to navigate change and learn about their identity.

Younger people can bring fresh passion and new ideas...

All through the Bible we see examples of intergenerational community.

In John chapter 6 a little boy gives his lunch to Jesus. Again this is a caravan of people. Women, men, kids, all together. Learning from Jesus. When Jesus taught he taught everyone, the whole crowd. The assumption was already intergenerational. That's why in Mark 9, Jesus is blessing children and saying the kingdom belongs to such as these. They are already there! In Acts chapter 16, Paul brings Timothy alongside him to lead. He doesn't see Timothy as a project, he sees him as a partner. Think of Jesus and the disciples. Although art depicts them as gray-haired men, they were all teenagers. It was basically Jesus and his youth group. It's easy to be multi-generational. It's easy to all sit in the same room. That's a good start. God calls us to be more. He calls us to be intergenerational - we lean into our differences, share life together, serve together and allow ourselves to be changed and challenged by each other.

What would it look like if older adults didn't just teach kids - they listened to their questions and learned from them?

What would it look like if young people didn't just get guidance from older adults - they got to share their spiritual gifts with the church and build it up?

Story of Claire and Callista - leading when they were in grade 7, leading in the church in high school.

Take a few seconds to think about this question honestly - when you interact with someone who's a different age from you in the church, do you see them as a project or a partner?

As we wind down, how do we live out being an intergenerational church?

StarKids children - your voice matters here right now. Keep asking big questions about God, keep serving and just like 12 year old Jesus, be open to the fact that your wisdom can lead those who are older than you. You don't have to wait until you get older.

Pursuit youth and YA's - Young Adults - you aren't the church of tomorrow. You are the church of today. Look out for people who are older and younger than you. Talk to them, learn from them, serve with them. Your passion inspires us.

Middle aged adults - invite older adults and younger people into your life. If you have kids, although you are primarily responsible for the faith development of your kids, it also takes a whole community (like it did for Jesus). Who's in your caravan? Who are the spiritual aunties/uncles, grandparents? Who can you learn from and who can you teach?

Elders and seniors - your experience, prayers and presence and long faith in the same direction matters. Don't step back, step up. You don't have to try to be cool and know all the latest things. Just be you. We need your authentic self. We need your stories and your prayers.
Who's in your caravan? Who are you intentionally surrounding yourselves with? This is not only talking about generations, but also life stages. Are you a parent who's only connecting with other parents? Do you connect with single adults in your life? What about students? Those who are working? Retired?

I challenge you to get to know each other. Talk to people of different ages than you, ask them about their lives and interests, listen to their answers, share your stories, invite them into your life. Learn from each other.

I think a good way to wind down the series is to be challenged - Don't be so busy building your own life that you miss the people God has placed around you. Make room for others - whether it's different generations, different cultures, different pasts, different socioeconomic status… whatever… Make space :) You need others and others need you.

As we transition to the Lord's table today, we move to see the ultimate picture of belonging.

At this time, servers please make your way forward.

Jesus didn't look at the disciples as projects. He called them friends. They were partners in his mission.

It doesn't matter what your age is, what your culture is, how messy your story is, what you're going through, there is a space for you at the Lord's table. It's one table, and we all gather around it together.

The communion table is where we everyone belongs. We all come equally. We all come saved by the same grace of Jesus.

(Pick up the bread.)

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

(Hold the bread up and break it slowly.)

(Set the bread down. Pick up the cup.)

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

(Hold the cup briefly, then return it to the table.)

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We have a mobile server so if you need to be served just raise your hand.

Instructions for how to take communion are on the screen.

This table is open to all who desire to draw closer to Jesus.

As we take the bread and the cup today, look around the room. You are sitting next to people of all ages. We're praying that this journey will bring us from strangers to neighbours. From neighbours to friends, and from friends to family as we continue along the way. In Jesus name.

Communion

Benediction