

April 19, 2026  
Second Sunday after Easter  
Sermon Series: Broadway in Three Acts  
Rev. Carrie Winebrenner

“Being Alive” Based on Acts 2:38-47

**Acts 2:38-47**

38 Peter replied, “Change your hearts and lives. Each of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 This promise is for you, your children, and for all who are far away—as many as the Lord our God invites.”

40 With many other words he testified to them and encouraged them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” 41 Those who accepted Peter’s message were baptized. God brought about three thousand people into the community on that day.

42 The believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. 43 A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles. 44 All the believers were united and shared everything. 45 They would sell pieces of property and possessions and distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them.

46 Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. 47 They praised God and demonstrated God’s goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Let us pray. *Gracious God, as your Word has been read and heard among us, quiet our hearts and open our spirits. By your Holy Spirit, awaken within us the courage to be truly alive. Amen.*

*\*\*Note to the reader. Anything in **red bold italics** was sung rather than spoken.*

Y’all know, I have always loved a good Broadway musical.

Give me a stage full of characters trying to figure out their lives, a story told through song, and that one moment when the music swells and suddenly everything becomes clear—that's my happy place.

So, imagine my delight when, in sitting with the scripture passages for these three weeks...a soundtrack began ringing in my ears. It felt a little like stepping into a three-act Broadway production...three weeks, three songs, three moments when the music helps us hear the gospel in a new way.

If that isn't a Spiritual Showstopper, I don't know what is! Together, we will explore those showstoppers, beginning with one of my favorite modern torch songs ...”Being Alive” from Stephen Sondheim’s Company.

The show centers around a man named Bobby. He is surrounded by friends who are all married or partnered, and he insists he is perfectly happy being single. But throughout the musical, he watches the couples around him and sees all the ways love can go wrong—arguments, misunderstandings, disappointment. Little by little he convinces himself that keeping his distance might be the safest way to live.

He understands that loving someone means...

*“Someone to hold me too close...Someone to hurt me too deep...  
Someone to sit in my chair....and ruin my sleep...”<sup>1</sup>*

And somewhere along the way, he decides these things aren't good. He begins to believe that maybe the safest thing to do is keep his distance.

So he protects himself.

Not because he hates people. But because he's afraid of being hurt.

We all know Bobby. At times, we are Bobby.

Being part of a society, of a community, of a family ensures this. Because sometimes living in community can cut too close, hurt too deep. Especially when that community has hurt us before.

But just before that torch-song final number, something...shifts...Bobby has a life-changing realization that brings “Being Alive” to fruition. It's not naïve. It's not Bobby suddenly discovering that relationships are easy. He already knows they're hard.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.songlyrics.com/stephen-sondheim/being-alive-lyrics/>

But now he knows...the risk of being hurt is still better than the emptiness of being alone.

In “Being Alive,” Bobby finally realizes that what he really longs for isn’t a life protected from pain. What he longs for is connection.

Because, as Bobby belts by the end of the song, “Alone is alone... not alive.”

And as strange as it might sound, that insight from a Broadway musical is actually very close to the truth that we discover in Scripture.

From the very beginning of the Bible, God tells us something important about human life. We were never meant to do it alone.

We see this truth unfolding in the passage we heard today from the early church in the Acts of the Apostles.

Just before the verses we read, Peter has preached a sermon at Pentecost.

Thousands of people have responded to the message of the risen Christ, and they have been baptized.

But what fascinates me is what happens next. Luke does not simply say, “And they all went home.” Instead, he tells us that something new began to take shape among them.

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching. To fellowship. To the breaking of bread. To prayer.

They shared their meals.

Their resources.

Their time.

In other words, they began to discover what it meant for a community to be alive together.

But if the Book of Acts shows us what the early Christian community looked like once it began to take shape, another story in Scripture shows us something just as important.

It shows us the moment when faith itself begins to come alive again.

In the Gospel reading for today, two disciples are walking along the road to Emmaus. The events of the crucifixion have left them confused and heartbroken,

grieving what could have...should have been. Everything they had hoped for seems to have fallen apart.

So they do what people often do when life feels overwhelming.

They walk together.

They talk it through.

They try to make sense of it all.

And somewhere along that dusty road, the risen Christ comes alongside them—though they do not recognize him.

He listens as they speak about their grief.

He opens the Scriptures to them.

He walks with them until evening falls.

And when they finally sit down to share a meal together, something remarkable happens.

In the breaking of the bread, their eyes are opened. They recognize him.

And afterward they say to one another,

“Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road?”

Their hearts were burning. Something inside them had come alive again.

But notice something important about that moment. It did not happen in isolation.

It happened in conversation.

It happened in companionship.

It happened in the presence of another traveler on the road.

Their hearts came alive because they were walking together.

I can't help but revel in the beautiful community we all created last week during our annual Hands On Fort Wayne day of service. Were not our hearts burning within us while we met for lunch at the Towne House? Or worked shoulder to shoulder at Moody Park, Wellspring Interfaith, St. Joseph's Women's Shelter, the Pride Center, or around a recycle truck?

Were we not filled with the Holy Spirit as we filled Blessings for the Backpacks, goodie bags for South Side High School, packing and delivering food, or while writing letters of support and thanks for folks near and around the world?

That is a community, a church that is being alive together.

And that insight brings us right back to that strange, beautiful song...

*Someone you have to let in  
Someone whose feelings you spare  
Someone who, like it or not  
Will want you to share  
A little, a lot...*

Community forces us to let people in. Faith calls us to share...a little...a lot.

It asks something of us. It interrupts our plans and challenges our independence.

But it also does something extraordinary. It awakens us to life.

And friends, we will witness this life again in just a few minutes, because today we celebrate a baptism.

Sometimes when we think about baptism, we imagine that it is mostly about the individual person being baptized. But in the Presbyterian tradition, baptism is never just about one person.

It is about the whole community of faith. Because when someone is baptized, something remarkable happens.

The entire church makes a promise.

We promise to walk alongside this child.

We promise to teach the stories of faith.

We promise to pray.

We promise to encourage.

We promise to help them discover what it means to follow Christ in the world.

To support Henry Richard in being alive. In other words, we promise that he will never have to figure out life alone.

*Someone to crowd you with love  
Someone to force you to care  
Someone to make you come through  
Who'll always be there  
As frightened as you of being alive*

Because to be alive is not simply to exist. To be alive is to belong to one another. To be alive is to care for one another. To be alive is to walk the road of faith side by side.

Because we know, thanks to Bobby...that "Alone is alone... not alive."

The risk of being hurt is still better than the emptiness of being alone.

(Turning and looking at Henry and his parents) And so today, Henry, you begin that journey. Not alone. But surrounded by a community that promises to walk beside you.

A community that will pray for you, teach you, encourage you, and love you as you grow. With a pipe organ that just may ruin your sleep. Or a whole host of aunts and uncles, grandmas and grandpas, ready to crowd you with love.

(Back to the congregation) In Henry's baptism, we are all in the waters...we, as a church, are made anew. In the water that will be poured. In the vows we make. To be a community, in the good...and in the pain. Because being alive...really alive... means you'll always have...

*Somebody need me too much*

*Somebody know me too well*

*Somebody pull me up short*

*And put me through hell*

*And give me support*

*For being alive, being alive.*

Because this...this is what being alive looks like.