**Hillside UMC Sermon Prep Sheet**

***Pastor Chris Neikirk***

**Date: Sunday, January 31, 2016**

**Sermon Title: Proclamation 2016: The Year of the Lord’s Favor**

**The Reward and Everlasting Covenant is Ours**

**Scripture: Isaiah 61:1-11 *(New International Version)***

1The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 3and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor. 4They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. 5Strangers will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards. 6And you will be called priests of the Lord, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. 7Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours. **8“For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them. 9Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the Lord has blessed.”** 10I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

**Call to Worship: *(8:30 am)* – Based on Psalm 25**

Leader: Who, then, are those who fear the Lord? He will instruct them in the ways they should

choose.

**People: They will spend their days in prosperity, and their descendants will inherit the**

**land.**

Leader: The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.

**People: My eyes are ever on the Lord, for only he will release my feet from the snare. May**

**integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope, Lord, is in you.**

**Basic Theme: *The Year of the Lord’s Favor is now. Isaiah spoke of a time when God’s chosen people would no longer be oppressed. A time when God’s people would finally be set free. Israel was looking for a King who would restore them to earthly power. They failed to recognize that they were indeed a part of the agenda of God. God’s desire was to renew, rebuild and restore what sin had destroyed. God removes our guilt and shame and made with us a new covenant through Jesus Christ.***

**Sermon Snapshot (Key Points): Jesus fulfilled this ancient prophecy bringing about the Year of the Lord’s Favor. However, this was not an actual year, but rather a present reality that began with our Savior’s birth, continued with his baptism and ministry, climaxed with his sacrifice on the cross, set us free from the bondage of sin and death, and gave us life eternal through his resurrection. Because we have been set free, we are called to carry our God’s agenda of rebuilding, restoring and renewing other by allowing God’s love to flow through us as we serve others. Let go of your guilt and shame and claim your reward now as part of this new and everlasting covenant.**

**So What? What is holding you captive? Freedom begins with surrendering our hearts. Will you embrace the Year of the Lord’s Favor as an opportunity to allow God to capture your heart and set you free? We are called to love God so that we can freely love others as God’s love flows through us. Will you join God’s agenda? Who are you called to serve? Will you let go of your guilt and shame? Will you claim your reward as part of this new covenant?**