Here we are in the tenth chapter of Luke and one piece of scripture I regularly pray for Luke 10 v 2. That’s enough of me.

By the time we get to the tenth chapter of Luke, the disciples have spent enough time with Jesus to witness healings, miracles, teachings, and even the transfiguration.

After a peculiar debate about who can truly follow the Lord, Jesus appointed seventy others in addition to the twelve disciples to go on ahead of him everywhere that he intended to go.

It was clear at this point that the mission of Jesus Christ in the world was expanding beyond the limits of the core followers. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. The instructions to the seventy are simple and direct: Do not be overburdened by what you carry, greet each house you enter with peace, do not move about simply from house to house, eat what is offered, cure who you can, and above all say to them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.”

Jesus chose seventy people to carry out this vitally important mission to the greater area in order to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

The choice of seventy is particularly striking considering its linkage to the time of Moses when the Israelites were wandering through the wilderness. The Lord said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting and have them take their place with you.”

These seventy became part of the leadership and helped to carry the message of Yahweh to the people throughout their trials and tribulations, joys and celebrations.

So, Jesus, ever aware of the Old Testament and its ability to reveal God’s grace in the world, appointed seventy to help with his ministry in the world.

The way Jesus expanded the Gospel in the areas surrounding his ministry is relevant for how we, the church, still exist within the world today.

I would like us to look at what it means to us to be the body of Christ for the World

**1)    Reach the Community**

**2)    Focus on the present and future**

**3)    Prayer**

**Community**: Jesus commands the seventy to enter the communities where he will eventually reach.

Ministry in the church is not supposed to be focused inwardly, but instead out there, toward the greater community.

If the church is focused primarily on maintaining the status quo, and creating ministry for those already within the doors then we will wind up worshipping ourselves rather than God every Sunday.

Much to the contrary of many Christian programs we are not called to move about form house to house trying to convince people to believe in God. Jesus specifically says in the passage this morning: “Do not move about from house to house.” Instead, the church is about making relationships with the community so that others can see and experience God’s love through us. Marching door to door, or just expecting people to show up on Sunday morning will never achieve the fullness of God’s kingdom on earth.

The best way to help a church grow, and therefore participate in God’s glory, is to simply invite someone to worship that you are already in a solid relationship with.

Our faith community will grow when we have something worth sharing, and we already do – God came in the form of flesh to dwell among us so that we might be brought back to God, God died on the cross for us so that we might never die again!

**The Present**: Jesus ministry was always focused on the present and the future while also remembering the past. It is important to remember what allowed Jesus to be who he was, figures like Moses and the stories of the Israelites, but it’s important to notice that he did not try to just merely repeat what had already been done.

He used the past to help him envision a new and exciting future. Many of you have been with this church for a long time, there are things that you have experienced that have made this church what it is.

We need to remember our past so that we might envision what the future can look like.

That means that we simply can’t keep repeating everything we’ve always done, but use our story to help inform how we continue to participate in God’s kingdom today and in the future.

Jesus’ ministry was always on the move, invigorating and exciting for everyone who participated in it. Our church is and will continue to be an exciting place where worship can bear fruit in our lives and the lives of the greater community, where our missions and service can help those in need within our building and community.

**Prayer**: Jesus consistently relied on prayer throughout his ministry and therefore demonstrated for us what can be a sustaining practice as we wrestle with what it means to be Christian in the world.

Whenever Jesus faced a particular challenge throughout his life, he used prayer to return his focus to the one thing needful and allowed him to fully embody the mercy and love of God in his thoughts, words and actions.

Jesus commanded the seventy to greet every place they entered with “Peace to this house,” this is a prayer that can continue to help to bring all of us back together as the body.

We, as a church, are similarly called to be a people of prayer who rely on spending time with God in order to reflect God most fully for the world**.** Without prayer we are just like any other organization. But with prayer we become God’s holy church.

Here we are, Christians just like the ones Jesus sent out into the world.

How blessed are we to be able to worship in this wonderful church.

Jesus appointed seventy of his followers to change the world, just imagine what we can be capable of in our churches.

Through reaching out to the greater community, focusing on the present, and relying on prayer we can be like the seventy appointed by Jesus to go out sharing the good news.

Jesus is calling us, calling us to be more and do more than we have in the past, he is calling us to be nothing short of the seventy described in the Luke chapter 10.

The kingdom of God has come near. God has brought this church together in order to reach the community and help share the story of God’s interaction with God’s people.

We have the Lord’s Supper to help us reflect on the past while looking forward to an incredible future. And we are called to a life of prayer, of commitment to the church, and faith in the triune God.

Truly I tell you, the harvest is plentiful. Jesus is sending us to be his people in the world.

Amen.