

LSS Sermon Starter

July 5, 2026

You are welcome to use the following “sermon starter” content in your own sermon. Feel free to use content verbatim or edit as you see fit to adapt to your own voice and context. Client names have been changed to respect privacy.

Readings (Revised Common Lectionary)

- Zechariah 9:9-12
- Psalm 145:8-14
- Romans 7:15-25a
- Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

What beautiful, comforting words of promise, both in Jesus’s time and in ours.

Throughout the Gospel of Matthew, a hallmark of Jesus’s ministry is the work of healing.

In Matthew 4:24 we read that Jesus was well-known across the region for his healing power and *“...they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, people possessed by demons or having epilepsy or afflicted with paralysis, and he cured them.”* Chapters eight and nine are filled with miraculous healing stories. In chapter 10, Jesus sends the disciples out to proclaim the good news and to *“cure the sick; raise the dead; cleanse those with a skin disease; cast out demons.”* Earlier in chapter eleven, John the Baptist, from his prison cell, sends messengers to Jesus to ask, *“Are you the one?”*

Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

The messengers carried the good news of these experiences of healing and restoration back to John as proof that indeed, the kingdom of heaven had come near.

And here is a message of good news for you today: the kingdom of heaven has not come and gone; no, the kingdom of heaven has come near! Present tense! The kingdom of heaven is here in our world today.

We can see the kingdom of heaven come near through ministries like Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Every year, through your support for LSS, you

help to bring healing and restoration to nearly 30,000 people who are carrying heavy burdens. Let me share just a few examples with you.

So many of our young people struggle with mental health. LSS provides counseling, therapies, skill building, case management, and service coordination that make a life-changing difference for children and teens who are dealing with mental health struggles. Your support helped Hailey learn to manage a debilitating mental health condition that was keeping her from making friends and succeeding in school. You helped her achieve what she once thought was impossible – going to prom and graduating from high school!

In a small town in central Wisconsin, LSS provides a unique residential treatment program for troubled youth. Many boys in the program have been both victims and perpetrators of abuse and trauma and have often been impacted by addiction as well. LSS helps them end these cycles of violence and harm and change their lives. Your support gave Raymond the chance to receive treatment and find a safe and loving home with a foster family.

In Chippewa Falls, LSS is completing a successful campaign to acquire and re-open a substance use treatment facility that had closed its doors. This care is a critically-needed response to the crisis of addiction that so many communities are facing. Your support for LSS' substance use treatment programs helped Tom achieve sobriety. Now Tom regularly returns to the LSS center where he received services to share his "second chance story" to give encouragement to others who are seeking recovery.

Thank you for helping Hailey, Raymond, Tom, and so many other neighbors find rest from the heavy burden of mental health and addiction struggles. Through the ministry of LSS, you share Jesus's love and deep compassion with people who are suffering, and you offer hope for healing.

Jesus knows our pain and burdens, and he welcomes each one of us to come and rest in him. We can lay down that which makes us so weary, and find rest in taking up something better, the life of discipleship.