



November 26, 2022– January 6, 2023

Prayer Practice

Prayer of Gratitude

Spend some time in prayer exclusively to thank God for your many blessings. Start small and close to home and enlarge the vision of your heart to thank God for who he is and how he works in your life. Let thanksgiving fill your heart.

Our Memory Passage for Advent

John 1:1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being **4** in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

Saturday, November 26, 2022

Read: Luke 12:25-40 Consider where your treasure is as you read these verses. Would relinquishing your possessions for charity be difficult for you?

Sunday, November 27, 2022

Please worship with us at 9:00 or 10:30 am. Live streaming is available on YouTube, Facebook and the FPCA website. Welcome!

This week's devotions were written by Leslie Wise.

Monday, November 28, 2022

Read: Luke 12:40

Reflect: Yesterday was the first Sunday in Advent. One candle shining in the darkness. The candle of hope. We wait dressed in purple. A color of repentance and preparation. How do we walk out into a holiday world that is brimming with tinsel-like shine and shimmer? As a child, I loved opening that package of silver tinsel. It was draped over a tree that was being festooned with the expectation of Santa's arrival. Yet, I was always aware of this deeper pull. A pull to the manger, the shepherds, the star and the magi. I learned to navigate the season with an Advent heart of waiting. Because of this, I can throw the tinsel high without guilt and watch it shimmer like a star as it falls on the tree. May the hope of Jesus shine as brightly this season.

Prayer: Sometimes, one candle is not enough to illuminate our dark spaces. God, please help the light within us, however dim, to shine into the world. You promise that a "dimly burning wick you will not extinguish." How precious is that promise to us. Oh come, Emanuel.

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

Read: Luke 12:32

Reflect: Waiting rooms. They can be places of worry, concern, anxiety, and impatience. “What will the doctor find? How long do I have to wait? I’ve been waiting for a while now to be seen. Isn’t my time important too? I’m just going to reschedule.” The worry mounts, frustration, and anger. Suddenly, your name is called. All is forgiven! Unfortunately, this pattern follows me whenever I need to wait. The guilt arrives when I realize my inability to trust God in the waiting. God has chosen to give the Kingdom to His “little flock” and knows our every human weakness. I may continue to sweat and agonize upon entering a waiting room, but I can learn to trust that our Shepherd waits with me there.

Prayer: Our waits can seem interminable. Help us to be cognizant of others who sit with us in waiting rooms. Calm our anxious hearts that race with uncertainty and fear. Gently remind us that we do not wait alone.

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

Read: Luke 2: 8-20

Reflect: While growing up, my aunt sent our family beautiful Advent calendars made in Germany. They glittered with pictures of the Nativity scenes or shepherds in the desert. My sisters and I loved to open the little doors each day and look at the picture inside. The best part was opening the big church doors on the 24th! We helped to open those doors together with great fanfare. An Advent calendar continues to be part of my Christmas celebrations. Yet, Advent calendars, as we know them, have changed with the times. The 25 Best Advent Calendars for 2022 feature beauty products, craft beer, wine, gin, chocolate, or toys! Advent has reached into the secular world. The message is too wonderful to stay contained! While I prefer my classic Advent calendar, I'm not above a piece of chocolate! Purchase an Advent calendar of your choice this season and enjoy with others what is behind each door. Traditions can be built while waiting.

Prayer: Jesus, you add the sweetness to our lives. Help us to taste and see that you are good. The world can't help but acknowledge You. We know all knees will bow to You one day. Times have changed but You remain the same.

Thursday, December 1, 2022

Read: Luke: 12:35-40

Reflect: For quite some time now, I've been asking myself, what is my purpose? Do I really have one at this stage in my life? These questions became much more acute after retirement. I've tried many activities, but they often left me feeling empty and sad. What was I to do? I felt as though I needed to reinvent myself to stay current and relevant. Upon reading Luke 12:35-40, I sensed a glimmer of hope, a wind for my flat sails. "Be dressed ready for service...Truly I say to you, he will gird himself up to serve. Blessed are those slaves." The pressure to reinvent myself began to ease. Serving is not second best. It is not something to do "in the meantime". We have this confidence from Jesus; that those who serve are blessed. There is great purpose to be found serving the King.

Prayer: Father, we don't know the hour when Jesus will return. Help us to be dressed in readiness while waiting. We pray that the Holy Spirit will help keep our lamps lit with the oil of hope and expectation until the Master returns.

Friday, December 2, 2022

Read: Luke 12:25-29

Reflect: Jesus' words in these verses are so familiar to us that they may become trivial. How do we keep them fresh in our hearts? Jesus asks us to consider the ravens, lilies and grass when describing His care. One definition of the word consider is to 'think about and be drawn to a course of action, meditation, to learn thoroughly and examine carefully.' Jesus directs us to consider nature when we worry. Studies have emphatically shown the benefits of spending time outdoors. While it might not be a panacea for our troubles and concerns, it can often provide clarity to our thoughts and relief from tension. Take a walk this week. Bathe yourself in the care given to creation. Even a nighttime stroll can calm and restore an anxious soul. While the lilies are now past their summer bloom, Jesus continues to adorn us with His care and provision through all seasons.

Prayer: Jesus, you advise us with the words, "Do not keep worrying." How often do we fall short and clutch our anxieties tightly in our hands? Help us to open our fists and receive the peace we so often need. You are waiting to clothe us with goodness and mercy all the days of our lives.

Saturday, December 3, 2022

Slowly read the familiar words of Luke 2:1-24 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon. Close your eyes and reflect on the passage, imagining the drama as it unfolds.

Sunday, December 4, 2022

Come celebrate the second Sunday in Advent! Join us for traditional worship at 9 am or our contemporary South Ridge service at 10:30. We also livestream on YouTube, Facebook, and at FPCAmbler.org.

Prayer Practice

Sit quietly, perhaps with a lighted candle, and turn your attention to God's presence. You may want to set a timer for just 5 minutes as you begin this practice of centering prayer. Your mind will wander and that's ok. Each wandering thought brings the opportunity to turn back to Jesus.

December 5, 2022

Read: John 1:1-5 This is our memory passage. Perhaps read it aloud a few times.

Reflect: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Such mystery! And this Word who is God, spoke all creation into being. Amazing! Do we see Jesus in all of God's Word? Does this help us to value Scripture all the more? The Word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (Ps 119:105.) Let's also reflect on the power of our own words to create, build, and encourage, as well as to wound and tear down. Words are powerful and The Word is all powerful.

Prayer: Word of God, we thank you for sharing your words of life, love, and light. May we listen deeply and let them teach, transform, and nourish us. May we share them with others and use our own words to bring you glory and bless those you love.

Tuesday, December 6, 2022

Read: John 1:1-5 This is our memory passage. Can you challenge yourself to recite verse 1 without looking?

Reflect: As I write this, the last autumn leaves are falling from the beech grove outside my window. Sun catches them as they float, the light turning them brilliant gold. Earlier this morning, dawn's early rays caught drops of sparkling dew. The light shining through makes beauty of the mundane. The Light of God shining through us makes us beautiful. We can steep in the light as we read and reflect on the Word, as we spend time in prayer, as we recognize the presence of God all around us. And as we do, the Light shines through us beautifully.

Prayer: Jesus, you are Light of the world! We ask you to fill us anew with the light of your Spirit and shine through us that others may see your beauty.

Wednesday, December 7, 2022

Read: John 1: 1-5. Recite this passage once again. Repetition builds memorization. Perhaps write it out.

Reflect: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. This verse is highlighted in my Bible. Do you ever feel overwhelmed by the darkness in the world? Sometimes it seems there is darkness at every turn. But I am encouraged as I remember that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness will never overtake it. The battle rages on, but the war has ended, and the Light has won. Ultimately, all will be well.

Prayer: Lord, we thank you that your light shines bright in dark places. You bring hope, peace, love, and your own presence within us. We rejoice that the darkness will never overcome your great light!

Thursday, December 8, 2022

Read: John 1:12-13

Reflect: Those who believe are given the right to become children born of God. What does it mean to be a child of God? We get to call the God of the universe our Father! Because Jesus takes away our sin, we can come before the throne of God with confidence, giving him all our cares and concerns. It means the throne of judgment has become the throne of grace. As children, we are dependent on our Father and he meets our needs, teaches us his ways, and covers us with his love. It means we have a divine inheritance of life in God's kingdom here and now and with him forevermore. Glory to God!

Prayer: Father, thank you for giving us a new identity as children of God. May we live out of that status with humility, gratitude, faith, and love. May we reflect on the wonder of it all, giving you thanks and praise.

Friday, December 9, 2022

Read: John 9:5

Reflect: Jesus, light of the world, ascended into heaven over 2000 years ago but sent his Spirit to stay with us until his return. Advent reminds us we are waiting for Jesus' return. In the meanwhile, his Holy Spirit fills us, guides us, and points us to Jesus. We are invited to live in the light of God and to shine in the darkness with hope and love. Such an honor.

Prayer: Lord, we wait for the return of Jesus, light of the world. As we wait, may we live by the light of your Word, one lamp-lit step at a time, and may we shine in dark places for your glory. Thank you for your eternal light.

Saturday, December 10, 2022

Read Isaiah 40:1-11 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

Do these glorious words make your heart sing?

Sunday, December 11, 2022

We will gather for ONE special Advent service today at 10 am, followed by a Christmas Tea and Youth Bake Sale.

If you are physically able, come join the celebration!

If you are not able to join us, tune in to FPCAmbler on YouTube Facebook, or FPCAmbler.org .

Prayer Practice

Use Scripture as a launching point for prayer. Isaiah 40:11 is part of this week's passage. Can you thank God for tending his flock, for being the Good Shepherd, for gathering his lambs and carrying them close to his heart, and gently leading those who have young?

He tends his flock like a shepherd:
He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.

**This week's devotions were written
by our missionary Beth Hedges**

Monday, December 12, 2022

Read: Isaiah 40:1-2

Reflect: Life is filled with bad news, everything from our own lives and families to worldwide problems. In Isaiah chapters 12- 39 Israel is warned about Assyria, Babylon, and exile. But here in Isaiah 40 there is a new idea; there will be future comfort and tenderness from the Lord. Where do you long to hear a word of comfort and tenderness from the Lord?

Prayer: (Take a moment to offer the Lord your bad news) Lord you know the bad news: illnesses, violence, war, deaths and more. Speak comfort to me Lord amid my life. Show me the amazing reality that sin has been dealt with at the Cross. Help me to hope in the truth that You will come again and make all things right. Comfort me O Lord and speak tenderly to me.

Song: Handel's Messiah takes many texts from Isaiah and especially Isaiah 40. "Comfort Ye" Isaiah 40:1-2. And "Ev'ry Valley" Isaiah 40:3

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Read: Isaiah 40:3-5

Reflect: A “voice calling in the wilderness” has come to mean a lone voice futilely calling out for change. But in the Bible, this is John the Baptist, pointing to the Greater One to Come. Then, as prophesied, Jesus comes and there are miracles, healings, the casting out of demons and the proclamation of God’s Kingdom. Isaiah’s words here were fulfilled as “The Word became flesh and is dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14). Today, God is still revealing His glory through his Holy Spirit at work in our lives and the world.

Prayer: God, Your Glory is beyond what I can know and understand. When Your glory appeared people were afraid, but You said to them “Do not be afraid” offering comfort in Your presence. Work in my life, Spirit and prepare a way for the LORD to come to me. Where there are crooked things and obstacles to your coming, remove them from me. In this Advent season Jesus, I remember your first coming and rejoice. Help me to be ready for Your second coming that I may rejoice then as well.

Song: Handel’s Messiah “And the Glory of the Lord” Isaiah 40:5

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

Read: Isaiah 40:6-8

Reflect: Often at funerals we take comfort that the person is not really gone if we remember them, but most of us do not remember our great-grandparents. They have withered and faded, just as we will someday. This is the message here: that we are like grass and flowers, here today and gone tomorrow. What remains is God's Word which endures forever. It is from the Word of God in Isaiah, written around 600-700 BC, that we have this amazing description of Jesus which we know even today:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given;
And the government shall be upon His shoulder;
And His name shall be call-ed Wonderful,
Counselor, the Mighty God, The Everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace (9:6 according to Handel's Messiah)

Prayer: God I thank You for Your Word that endures. I thank You for the many scriptures that show the enduring truth of Your Word. Help me to meditate on Your Word so I can know You, Father God and know You, Lord Jesus and know You, Comforter Spirit. Let me know the power and comfort of Your Word even as I remember that my life is temporary.

Song: Handel's Messiah "For Unto Us a Child is Born" Isaiah 9:6.
Also "Behold a Virgin Will Conceive" Isaiah 7:14

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Read: Isaiah 40:9-10

Reflect: “Go tell it on the mountain... and everywhere... that Jesus Christ is born.” In this season we are the ones who can tell people the glad tidings, the good news. We can share that in Jesus are rule, reward, and recompense (compensation) in the midst of sin and suffering. We can help others have hope in God’s good rule where there is blessing and restoration. We can share our own experience of Jesus and invite others to trust Him. Good news indeed.

Prayer: I praise you God for the good news that Jesus has come and will come to rule, to bless and to restore. For those who need this good news, I pray. Help me to share the good news and also to be good news in all that I do in this advent season. Show me who needs this message of good news and show me what I need to do to be good news.

Song: Handel’s Messiah “O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion”
Isaiah 40:9

Friday, December 16, 2022

Read: Isaiah 40:11

Reflect: God comes to rule but as a shepherd. He cares for his people, gathering them in his arms with gentleness and tenderness. This is something that we all need, a little gentleness, a little kindness, a little tenderness. In this busy season little acts of kindness can be great blessings: gentleness with the store clerk, kindness in the grocery store, or patience in the mall parking lot.

Prayer: God, I thank you that you are the gentle shepherd. Would you gather me in your arms in this season, showing me your tenderness and gentleness. I pray for those who work very hard in this season, help me show them your tenderness and gentleness. "Show who you are and fill me with your heart and lead me in your love to those around me."

Song: Handel's Messiah "He Shall Feed His Flock Like Shepherd"
Isaiah 40:11

Saturday, December 17, 2022

Read and reflect on Matthew 1:18-25 and Isaiah 7:10-17 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

Sunday, December 18, 2022

Come worship with us as we celebrate Advent at 9 am for our traditional service or 10:30 for our contemporary South Ridge service.

FPCAmbler is livestreaming on Facebook and YouTube, as well as at [FPCAmbler.org](https://www.fpcambler.org)

Prayer Practice

Jesus is Immanuel which means "God with us."
Reflect on the presence of God with us...with you.
Turn the gaze of your heart toward him and marvel that the
King of kings, Lord of lords, Creator of the universe and
Savior of humankind is with us.

This week's devotional was written by Leslie Wise

Monday, December 19, 2022

Read: Isaiah 7:10-17

Reflect: Ahaz was an unholy king. His transgressions were well documented in 2 Kings: 16. "He did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord." Incense was burned on the high places; the temple was desecrated. Ahaz sacrificed his son to Molech. Despite his depraved actions, Ahaz received a sign from Isaiah that is a bedrock of our Christmas message, Immanuel. God with us. God gave the wicked King Ahaz a promise that was to resonate throughout eternity. Even in the face of our shortcomings and rebellion, God declares His mercy and redemption.

Pray: Help us not to present only perfection before you. Help us not to despise our frailties for in them we find the uncommon strength that comes only from You.

Tuesday, December 21, 2022

Read: Luke 1:26-38

Reflect: After my children were born, I sent out birth announcements. They happily described the name and details of the new baby in our midst. While we don't have physical details of the baby Jesus, we're given details of his conception and birth as told to Joseph in a dream. We are not given the inner workings of how Joseph felt about this dream but, "he got up and obeyed." Joseph did as the angel commanded him. Some days, that is all we can do. Nothing else. One step in front of the other. We can get up and press toward our day. Joseph was blessed by his actions. And the world has been blessed by his faithfulness.

Pray: Help us not to grow weary in doing good. Help us to observe the faithfulness of Joseph when faced with weariness or impossibility. Please carry us when even that one step seems too much to bear.

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

Read: Luke 1:26-38

Reflect: One of the most beautiful works of art depicting the Annunciation was painted by African American artist Henry Ossawa Tanner in 1898. The painting shows Mary sitting on a rumpled bed, her hands clasped on her lap. Bare feet are peeking out from under her peasant like garb. She is portrayed perfectly as the adolescent she was. I often see the same expression on my teenaged granddaughter's face- questioning, skeptical times but with an expectant heart.

This painting hangs in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Take a look at this painting either in the museum or online.

Look at the colors of the rug, a rumpled bed, the angel depicted as a column of light to the left of Mary. There are no religious trappings or halos present here. God entered into Mary's life just as she was, and it pleases Him to do the same for us.



Prayer: Please give a heart of love for the youth of our congregation. Help us to open our hearts to their special gifts and to pray for protection as they navigate an uncertain world. Thank you, God, that young and old are given the privilege to proclaim Your message.

Thursday, December 22, 2022

Read: Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:22,23

Reflect: The fourth Advent candle was lit last Sunday. The candle of joy. The deep purple on the altar is preparing to give way to white, the liturgical color of celebration. Joy is breaking through. Our time of watchful waiting is nearing an end. The sign Isaiah gave to Ahaz 700 years ago will soon be made Flesh, Immanuel, God with us; what was spoken has come to pass. God keeps His promises in His time. We can be 'fully assured that what God has promised, He is able to perform.'

Prayer: Help us to be mindful of those whose Advent season may not be over. Help us to grieve with those who grieve. Allow us to give generously with our hearts and hands; to comfort those with the comfort we have been given.

Friday December 24

Sing: *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

Reflect: It's Christmas Eve day. There is last minute shopping to be done, presents are waiting to be wrapped, family may be coming in. A trip to Urgent Care for somebody is usually part of the scenario.

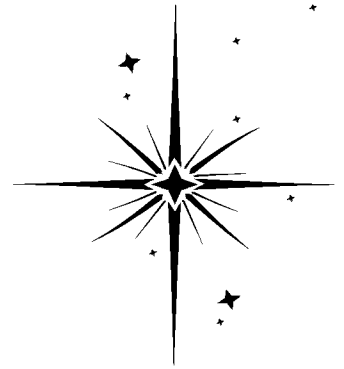
It would be tempting to start early with the eggnog and call it a wrap. This might not be the Christmas that God imagined for us, but this is what we now have. Sometimes, it takes a concerted effort to be silent, to think about what God has done for us. Consider a verse from the hymn "*Let All Mortal Flesh keep Silence*. "Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand; ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand." Take time to be silent today and consider humbly what God has done for us. Sometimes silence is the only speech in face the of such love.

Prayer: Silent Night, Holy Night. God, we pray for this peace in our lives this evening. With the angels let us sing: "Alleluia to our King: Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!"

Friday, December 24, 2022

Christmas Eve offering of Suzy Moore

Read: Luke 2:1-24 Jesus's Birth



Reflect:

Do you hear it? Do you see that brilliant night sky?

Do you hear the gentle purring of a newborn kitten?

Do you say an extra 'amen' at Thanksgiving dinner,
all set and ready to eat?

Do you feel all that is good, all that is peaceful, all that is hopeful,
all that is filled with love and joy?

This is Jesus.

He is born to remind us and to bring us all the way home.

He is the Way. The Way is the Father's own Son,
the baby we welcome.

Listen. Do you hear the voice?

Wait, take a quiet moment...I hear the voice, let me share what I hear

... Praise God on High, Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.

He is well pleased with us - with us! - and wants us to know this,
wants to share his very son with us ... may we listen...may we learn.

Pray: Dear Lord, you have done it, just for us. You share your Son
and bring to life all that is good - peace, love, joy and hope. A simple
setting on straw in a stable, a simple beginning for the most
profound. May we live your message and spread it wide and far.
In Jesus name we pray.

December 25, 2022

Christmas Day

Read: Hebrews 4:1-4

**Join us for one service at 10 am in person or on YouTube,
Facebook, or [FPCAmbler.org](https://www.fpcambler.org)**



Merry Christmas to all!

Prayer Practice

Focus on the names of God
and allow them to move your heart to worship.

This time of year especially,
we think of God as Wonderful, Counselor,
Almighty, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
Slowly consider each adjective as you pray.

Monday, December 26, 2022

Read: Hebrews 1:1

Reflect: The writer of Hebrews tells us that God created all the worlds through Jesus. This mirrors our memory passage in which John says all things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. Have you seen images beamed to us from the James Webb telescope? How vast and beautiful are the created worlds and yet, this same Jesus knows you intimately and loves you immeasurably.

Prayer: Dear Jesus through whom all things were made. Thank you for all the beauty you created. For majestic mountains, clear blue seas, and intricacies of the smallest of cells. Thank you that I am fully known and fully loved by the Creator of all. Amen.

Tuesday, December 27, 2022

Read: Hebrews 4:3

Reflect: Jesus is “the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being.” Reflect on the life of Jesus. What can we know about who God is? Jesus embodies sacrificial love, valuing relationships, humility, and mercy. What other characteristics do we see in Jesus?

Prayer: What a marvelous God you are! While we were yet sinners, you sent Jesus to save us. You advocate for the poor and lowly, those on the margins, who are grieving, and whose lifestyles are less than exemplary. Our names are written on your hands and heart. We are in awe of you and thank you for being who you are and making us your own.

Wednesday, December 28, 2022

Read: Hebrews 1:3

Reflect: When Jesus made purification for sins, he sat down at the Father's right hand, his work complete. On the cross he said, "It is finished," and so it is. Our sins are forgiven, we are purified, and God the Father loves us *as he loves his own Son*. Do you believe this?

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for your work of purification, the sacrifice that covers our sinful nature. Your love for us is a lot to take in. Help us to believe the truths of Scripture, that you love us with an everlasting love, hold us close to your heart, and joyfully sing over us. May we overflow with your love and share it with others.

Thursday, December 29, 2022

Read: Hebrews 1:2

Reflect: God has spoken to us through his Son. Reflect on the words and actions of Jesus, God's own son. What does God say to us through him?

Prayer: Lord God, may we meditate on the living Word, letting his words transform us, soften us, strengthen us, and bring us to worship. May we take in all he has spoken and live as disciples, filled with love, serving him as King, sharing his limitless grace and mercy.

Friday, December 30, 2022

Read: Hebrews 1:3

Reflect: Jesus sat down. In this week between Christmas and New Year, have you sat down? Have you rested in the knowledge of God's great love? Have you stepped off the treadmill and away to a quiet place to pray? Those moments with God are gifts that refresh the soul.

All throughout Advent we waited...we remembered our ancestors waiting for the Messiah...we waited for Christmas...and we wait still for that glorious day when Jesus to comes again. Even now, today, He comes to each of us now as we invite him in. We are invited into the Kingdom of God.

Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for the gift of Jesus and for inviting us into your throne of grace. Open our eyes to your Kingdom and may we live as your Kingdom people, full of faith, hope, and love.

Saturday, December 31, 2022

Read Hebrews 2:10-18 and Matthew 2:13-23 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

Sunday, January 1, 2022

What better way to begin the new year
than by worshipping together!

Join us for one service at 10 am.

We will also livestream on Facebook, YouTube, and [FPCAmbler.org](https://www.FPCAmbler.org)

***Happy New Year from all of us
at First Presbyterian Church of Ambler!***

Prayer Practice

Ask God to give you a Scripture to focus on for this new year. It might be a passage, a verse that provides guidance or encouragement, a command to live by, or a whisper of God's love in a single word or phrase. Write it down. Commit it to your heart and mind and lean into it in prayer this year.

Monday, January 2, 2022

Read: Hebrews 2:10-13

Reflect: Jesus warned us that “in this world we will have trouble,” and immediately reassures his listeners, “But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33 In the Hebrews passage, we read that Jesus suffered. Even as a baby Jesus had to flee those who sought to harm him. Suffering, this side of heaven, is an experience known to all. What does it mean to take heart because Jesus has overcome the world? Jesus, Man of sorrows, understands our suffering and stands with us in it. God, whose strength is made perfect in weakness, will help us to endure. The Holy Spirit prays for us with groans beyond words. And someday, our Lord will wipe away every tear. He has overcome the world, promising his presence and his love forevermore.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you that you are with us in our trials. Please use them to grow us in faith, wisdom, and compassion. May we comfort others with the comfort we receive from you.

Tuesday, January 3, 2022

Read: Hebrews 2:14-15

Reflect: It is normal to be afraid of the unknown and none of us here have yet personally experienced death. What we DO know can give us courage. We know that Jesus came to conquer final death, that he has prepared a place for us in heaven, and that he will be with us always. We need not be held in slavery by the fear of death, but rather are invited to rest in the arms of the One who loves us best.

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for experiencing death, even the shame of death on a cross, so that we may have life forever with you. Help us to live free of fear. And when we grieve the loss of loved ones, we thank you that we do not grieve as those who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13) and that you, the Comforter, help us through.

Wednesday, January 4, 2022

Read: Matt 2:19-23

Reflect: God used dreams to communicate important messages to Joseph and Joseph listened and acted according to those messages. His listening and obeying kept young Jesus safe and fulfilled ancient prophecy. Have you ever been nudged by the Holy Spirit to do something you would never have thought of on your own? Sometimes God speaks to us through his Word, through the words of others from whom we seek counsel, in our hearts as we quietly listen. God will never ask you to do something contrary to his being but will often surprise us! Are we ready to listen and obey?

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the adventure of walking in step with your Spirit, in surrender to your will. You make our lives meaningful as you invite us to participate in your restorative work.

Thursday, January 5, 2022

Read: Is. 43:18-19 *Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*

Reflect: You may have had a hard day...year...decade. We can take heart. God is doing a new thing! He makes a way in the wilderness of this world and provides streams of living water in dry places. Even as this world is characterized by conflict and crumbling, we are invited into the Kingdom of God in which we have the fruit of the Spirit to share with others: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Prayer: Lord, we thank you for the fruit of the Holy Spirit. As we turn our hearts to you, we receive the gift of your Spirit and are empowered to share your love, mercy, and grace with others. May we live faithfully for your glory and the good of your people.

Friday, January 6, 2023

Read: Lamentations 3:23 God's mercies are new every morning; Great is your faithfulness!

Reflect: Six days into the new year...have you broken your resolutions? Forgotten your guiding verse? Failed to love God wholeheartedly or your neighbor as yourself? Take heart! Our God is slow to anger and quick to forgive. And his mercies are fresh and new every morning. Every morning a fresh start. Happy New Day! Praise the Lord!

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, that you are making all things new. Thank you for making me a new creation, filled with your Holy Spirit. And thank you that when I stray from the path of love you have for me, you forgive and lead me back. Your mercies are new every morning and I need them every day.



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and we live out our faith together.

