

DEVOTIONAL

New DISCIPLINES
for a *New Year*

January - February
2023



Memory Passage for New Disciplines for a New Year Sermon Series

Numbers 6: 24-26

24 The Lord bless you and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.



First Presbyterian Church of Ambler
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A place where lives are changed by Christ
and we live out our faith together.



New Disciplines for a New Year Devotional

Prayer Practice Imaginative Prayer

As you read a passage of Scripture, imagine yourself on the scene. What do you see? Hear? Smell? What action is taking place around you? What is Jesus saying to you? Invite the Holy Spirit to bring these words of life alive to you. John 21:15-19 is a great place to start.

Saturday, January 7, 2023

Read John 21:15-19 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon. Take a few moments to close your eyes and imagine this scene. Imagine you are Peter. How did you feel when you saw it was Jesus on the beach? What are your emotions as you lock eyes with Jesus, and he asks you three times if you love him? How do the words about what is to come strike your heart?

Sunday, January 8, 2023

Join us as we worship God in traditional style at 9 am or the contemporary South Ridge service at 10:30. Both services are live-streamed. You can find our services online at FPCAmbler.org, YouTube, and Facebook.

***Would you like to learn more about
becoming a member of FPCAmbler?
Stick around for Launch Point
and lunch after the South Ridge service.***

This week's devotional offering comes to us from Leslie Wise.

Monday, January 9, 2023

Read: John 21:9-12

Reflect: In John 21:12, Jesus invited the disciples to breakfast. A charcoal fire had been lit. Fish and bread were prepared. When he manifested himself to the disciples, Jesus didn't meet them in some mysterious location. He kept it easy. This was a time of fellowship over a simple breakfast by the sea. He took care of their physical needs with the warmth of a fire and food. Some of the disciples were probably exhausted and wet from dragging in a full net of fish. They may have been frightened or skeptical meeting with the risen Lord. Jesus appeared to the disciples as a friend, still desiring their company. He knows the burdens we carry and can provide times of refreshing. Look at others around you. Consider the burdens they may be bearing. Could the weight of another be made lighter by invitation for coffee.

Prayer: Father, thank you that Your yoke is easy, Your burden is light. Help be mindful of those whose heads are bowed down with heaviness. Give us courage and grace to bear one another's burdens.

Tuesday, January 10

Read: John 21:15

Reflect: “So, when they had finished breakfast...” The opening word “so” in this phrase implies something is about to occur. It was right after breakfast that Jesus begins to ask Simon Peter pointed questions. Do you love me? Three times asked and three times Peter confessed his love for Jesus. Imagine the heavy shame and regret Peter must have carried after denying the Lord three times in the garden before His crucifixion. Jesus was not asking these questions to be vindictive or petty. He was in the process of restoration. Peter was given the opportunity to reaffirm his faith and love for Jesus three times. A debt was being cancelled, allowing Peter the freedom from his past actions. He was restored and set free to begin his new calling. He could “go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.” Look for ways to restore those that have sinned against you. It was “for freedom that Christ set us free.’

Prayer: Thank you God that You promise to make all things new. We go astray in so many ways. We fail even those we love in profound ways. You promise to heal the brokenhearted and bind up their wounds. Use the ragged edges of our sorrows and regrets for Your glory.

Wednesday, January 11

Read: Philippians 1:6, John 21:18, 19

Reflect: If you're like me, any New Year's resolutions made under a party hat are already in the dumpster. We fervently hope the New Year will bring an end to our bad habits and actions. It is a prayer that a "new me" will appear the minute the ball drops in Times Square. Simon Peter was given the blessing of a new name and new calling, but Jesus didn't sugar coat how his life would end. Jesus said to him, "Follow me". Peter had a choice. Did he yearn to return to the sea where he was familiar with the rhythms of a fisherman's life? Peter chose to follow Jesus. He went on to be a rock of the Christian faith and a shepherd to new believers. Following Jesus is not an easy path. Like the Israelites, we often want to return to Egypt. There are many distractions along the way that can take us off course. It takes uncommon discipline to "set our face like flint" and walk the Highway of Holiness to newness.

Prayer: You are the sculptor that shapes us. Your chiseling is sometimes painful. But out of your work a new creation emerges. Help us to trust your hand as you shape us in your image. Thank you that you will complete the work you began in us. (Consider viewing Michelangelo's unfinished sculpture, Atlas Slave.)

Thursday, January 12

Read: 1 Peter 2:9,10

Reflect: When growing up, I not too happy with my first name. The name Leslie is of Scottish/British origin and is both a girl's and boy's name. Why wasn't I given a more contemporary name like Suzy or Tina? Our given names can be fraught with the burden of reputation or the stain of sin. Even my maiden name bears the scars of past feuds and deep estrangements. Names can define us ethnically, racially or sexually and bring expectations which can be difficult to fulfil. Our God gave Simon Peter a new name and a new identity. We have a spiritual lineage not defined by our family line or origins. I am thankful that I am no longer in bondage to what my earthly name may imply. I will always be Leslie, but I am the daughter of the King and "all glorious within." Many cultures endow their children with spiritual and given names at birth. Could you think of a spiritual name God would be pleased to bestow upon you? Take hold of the promise that you are a new creation in Christ.

Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, that You are the Name above all names. We are a royal priesthood. Help us to proclaim Your excellencies that called us out of darkness into your marvelous light.

Friday, January 13

Read: Sing or pray the hymn *When I Survey the Wonderful Cross*.

Reflect: While reading this passage, I was moved by the deep affection Jesus bestows upon Peter. There were no punishments, verbal recriminations or “how could you” spoken in the face of His betrayal. I was reminded of the words from the hymn *When I Survey the Wonderful Cross*. “...See, from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow, and love flow mingled down, did e’er such love and sorrow meet...” Jesus grieves over our sins and frailties. He restores us to wholeness with love and understanding that are unique to us as individuals. This was a love story like none other. Sing the words of this hymn today and remember the tender mercies of our God.

Prayer: Thank you Jesus that you are mindful of our human estate. How often we are like cast down sheep with four legs in the air trying to right ourselves. You set us on level ground with a firm foundation. Your rod and staff comfort us. Lead us beside still waters for your Name’s sake.

Saturday, January 14, 2022

Read Matthew 4:1-11 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

Sunday, January 15, 2022

Come, let us worship together!

Worship in person at 9 am (traditional) or 10:30 (contemporary)

Services are live-streamed, recorded, and available on Facebook, YouTube, and FPCAmbler.org

Prayer Practice

Do you have a favorite hymn? Sing or read it as a prayer to God. Perhaps listen to a recording, taking in both the beauty of the music and the depth of the words. Let your heart take in the beauty and respond with worship.

This week's devotional offerings were written by Bill Brams

Monday, January 16, 2023

Read: Matthew 4: 1-2 *"Then Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights he was hungry."*

Reflect: Events involving the number forty have happened before. Moses and the Israelite were in the desert forty years. Elijah also fasted for forty day and forty nights.

It is astonishing that our Lord was actually led to be tempted! What about the devil. The devil is not physically described so all we get is the tempter's words. The devil was successful with Adam and Eve, but the divine Jesus did not succumb. We are all relegated to a sinful nature because of Adam's disobedience but are all saved by Jesus' resistance to temptation.

Prayer: Lord, I am often tempted and succumb. Please hear my prayer and give me the strength to resist and overcome my sins. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior and Redeemer.

Tuesday, January 17, 2023

Read: Matthew 4: 3-4 *“The tempter came to him and said, ‘if you are the son of God, tell these stones to become bread. It is written, Man does not live by bread alone, but on the mouth of God.’”*

Reflect: The tempter seems to be acknowledging Jesus as divine. Jesus is challenged to perform a miracle. Jesus’ response indicates he relies on the spirit of God for sustenance rather than to counter the challenge with a miracle. By saying “it is written” Jesus acknowledges the Scriptures as the primary source for His response.

Prayer: My dear Lord Jesus, bless me with the ability to rely on the Holy Spirit to sustain my faith and to focus on furthering your kingdom on this earth. Continue to feed me with the truth of your teachings. Lead me to the Bible as my source of wisdom for life.

Wednesday, January 18, 2023,

Read: Matthew 4: 5-7. *“Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. If you are the Son of God he said, ‘throw yourself down.’ For it is written:*

*‘He will command his angels
Concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their
hands.
so that you will not strike your foot
against a stone.’*

Jesus answered him, ‘It is also written: Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Reflect: The temple after being rebuilt is thought to have been 15 stories high. The tempter offers no easy challenges to our Lord. The tempter suggests through Scripture that Jesus should take a “leap of faith.” Jesus counters with his faith in God through the Scriptures.

Prayer: Gracious God, continue to lead us closer to your son Jesus through the scriptures and as a community of believers. We are blessed to be part of a community that anchors us and allows us to live out and grow our faith together. These blessings have thankfully been given to us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thursday, January 19, 2023,

Read: Matthew 4: 9-10 *“Again the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ‘All this I will give you if you bow down and worship me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”*

Reflect: What a temptation. The whole world is yours in return for a simple bow. Satan is not asking for total and timeless obedience but rather one moment. Notice again that Jesus’ source of resistance is to reference the Scripture in his response.... “for it is written”.

Prayer: Gracious God, the world you have given us is magnificent. Help us to be stewards of this special gift. Help me every day to appreciate the wonder and beauty of your world. Help me recognize in my brief time on this earth, I am also a steward of this gift and must do my part each day to honor this gift so it can be sustained for others that will follow me.

Friday, January 20, 2023,

Read: Matthew 4: 11 *“Then the devil left him and angels came and attended him.”*

Reflect: It is interesting in these verses that Jesus not only honors God but also the Word of God. Jesus references the Scriptures with each temptation. Jesus is offered everything with the three temptations and asks for nothing in return for his resistance. Victorious, the angels appear to him and he is nourished his asking.

Prayer: Gracious God, we expect so much and ask for so much though we are not deserving. Please God, strengthen my faith to lead me to further your kingdom. Help me remember you are there for me and will sustain me. I ask this in the name of your Son and our Savior Jesus Christ.

Saturday, January 21, 2023

Read Mark 5:21-43 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon. After reading the passage, can you close your eyes and put yourself in each scene?

Sunday, January 22, 2023

Our traditional service meets at 9 am and our contemporary at 10:30.

All are welcome to join us in worship!

We also livestream on Facebook and services are always available on YouTube and FPCAmbler.org,

Prayer Practice

Have you written prayers to God? Take a few minutes to take pen to paper and write a prayer of thanks and praise to our triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This week's devotions were written by Suzy Moore

Monday, January 23, 2023

Read: Mark 5:21-24, 35-43

Reflect: This week we consider the discipline of living in the moment and responding to situations as they arise. I have a hobby - the acting form of Improvisation, known as Improv. A few basic principles include living in the moment, listening to each other, and accepting one another's thoughts and ideas, thereby, growing together an idea, scene, or situation. In our Scripture story, our synagogue official, Jairus, did not simply wallow in his fear and despair over his daughter's near-death condition. He reached out to what he had heard about Jesus and sought His ability to heal. It was his earnest belief that Jesus could make his daughter well that prevailed.

Pray: Dear Lord, when we are faced with difficult worrisome times, we are blessed and relieved that we need only reach out to you and believe your promises to us and trust you will lead us and be with us through the times.

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Read: Mark 5: 25-34

Reflect: As we continue to consider the discipline of living in the moment and responding to situations as they arise, we turn to more lessons from Improv. Other principles include being who we are by making statements instead of asking questions and finding opportunities in unexpected events. In our story, the woman who had endured more than a decade of medical affliction sought the healing power of Jesus. She did not ask any questions of Jesus and when he asked who had touched him, she fell at his feet and explained her story. She did this trembling, as she felt she had made a mistake by touching him without asking. In the spur of the moment, she simply seized the opportunity to touch his garments. This is all it took for Jesus to heal her. He explained to her that her faith had made her well.

Pray: Dear Lord, thank you for your healing presence in our lives. May we know that as we experience challenging turns in our health, we always may turn towards you and reach out in faith that you will make us well in your own time and your own way.

Wednesday, January 25, 2023

Read: Mark 5: 21-34

Reflect: What should we do when we feel there is no solution, nowhere to turn, and no one to lead the way? In our stories, each actor faced major challenging events - the death of a daughter and a prolonged medical condition. Jairus was constrained by limitations of his social position, yet took steps to seek out Jesus, about whom he had heard amazing things...and believed. Our woman had endured all the medical treatments of the day, only to grow worse, yet sought Jesus because of what she had heard about him. In faith, they responded to their situations by reaching out to Jesus. It took only a request to Jesus or touch of his garments to receive exactly what they needed.

Pray: Dear Lord, we too have faced times, situations, and conditions in which we have not been successful with any of the suggestions, methods, treatments of the day - diets, financial plans, new ways to live, eat, love, manage our time - and have felt helpless, confused, and tired. Thank you for your unending, ever present, and unconditional acceptance and love for each one of us. May we rest knowing you are always with us.

Thursday, January 26, 2023

Read: Mark 5:34

Reflect: Air pods. Tiny, cordless earphones. I have had several pairs as they are easily lost. Right before Christmas, I was walking outside, listening to *The Little Drummer Boy* through my air pods. I suddenly realized the sound was only coming through on one side. I kept walking, thought it strange, knew it was not right – but was so content on the walk that I thought it would somehow be okay--- maybe one of the air pods had fallen into my scarf... NO - I stopped. FIND THE AIR POD, it must be close by, and look NOW. Fortunately, in backtracking, I found the air pod on the path. This saved the day! I was very glad that I stopped and took steps to find a way to reconnect. What a sweet gift to have received while listening to *The Little Drummer Boy*...

Pray: Dear Lord, thank you for allowing us opportunities to reconnect to you as soon as we realize something is amiss. May we choose the path to live in the moment, pay attention to what is going on, and SIMPLY STOP - and turn to you in prayer when things are not right - even in the simplest of moments and situations. May we always remember that it is our faith that makes us well and that you will guide us, be with us, and heal us.

Friday, January 27, 2023

Read: Mark 5:21-43; Philippians 3:15-21, Philippians 4: 1-9

Reflect: Frank Laumbach, while serving as a missionary to a tribe in Polynesia in 1872, decided to keep a daily diary of his attempts to keep God in his mind every moment of the day. It was an incredibly difficult missionary station as he did not speak the language. His diary documents his attempts, both successes, and failures. In sum, he found: “This concentration upon God is *strenuous*, but everything else has ceased to be so. I think more clearly, and I forget less frequently. Things which I did with a strain before, I now do easily and with no effort whatever. I worry about nothing and lose no sleep. I walk on air a good part of the time. Even the mirror reveals a new light in my eyes and face. I no longer feel in a hurry about anything. Everything goes right. Each minute I meet calmly as though it were not important. Nothing can go wrong except one thing. That is that *God may slip from my mind* if I do not keep on my guard. If He is there, the universe is with me. My task is simple and clear.”

Pray: Dear Lord, thank you for sharing with us the wisdom and guidance of your angels and ambassadors who have been faithful and devoted to following you. May we listen and learn how to live our lives each moment in your light through instruction, example, and support of other Christians who have gone before us and who walk with us this very day.

Saturday, January 28, 2023

Read Numbers 6:24-26 and Matthew 5:3-12 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

What do we learn about serving others?

Sunday, January 29, 2023

Worship with us today at 9 am (traditional service) or 10:30 (contemporary service.)

Services are live streamed and can be accessed on Facebook, YouTube, or FPCAmbler.org.

Prayer Practice

Lectio Divina

Introduced by Pope Gregory and Saint Benedict in the 6th Century, Lectio Divina is a way of meditating on and praying through a small piece of Scripture.

1. **READ** a brief passage of Scripture – “take a bite”
2. **REFLECT** and meditate on the word or phrase that caught your heart – “chew”
3. **RESPOND** in prayer to what God called to your attention – “savor”
4. **REST** in God, contemplating his word to you – “digest”

Monday, January 30, 2023

Read: Numbers 6:24-26

Reflect: This was the priestly blessing God gave to Moses to bless the Israelites. Don't let its familiarity rob you of its beauty. It is also our memory passage for this sermon series. How is that going for you? Close your eyes. Imagine the face of God fixed on you with love. Because we are forgiven and clothed in Christ himself, God does not look at us with disappointment or anger, but with extravagant grace and great delight. Receive the blessing. And pass it on.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for blessing me and keeping me; for shining your face on me and being gracious to me; for giving me your peace. Help me to share the blessing with others, especially those who feel unseen, unheard, and unloved.

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

Read: Matthew 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Reflect: To be poor in spirit is to live in humble recognition of our need for God. To be poor in spirit is to understand that all our gifts come from God and were given for his purposes. Our value is in being made in the image of God, loved by him, redeemed by him by way of the cross. As we recognize our poverty, we open our hands to let go of our trophies, boasts, and fears and receive the Lord's invitation to enter into the kingdom of heaven where all come by God's grace alone. Do you hear the knocking?

Prayer: Our God and King, thank you for blessing me with your kingdom. Your kingdom is built of justice, mercy, and love. Help me to live worthy of my holy calling as a citizen of heaven, working for justice, extending mercy, loving lavishly.

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Read: Matthew 5:4 *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

Reflect: C.S. Lewis wrote in *Mere Christianity*, “It is when we notice the dirt that God is most present in us; it is the very sign of His presence.” Mourning is part of the dirt in this life. How do we bless those who mourn? Not with platitudes or false assurances. Not with words, but with our quiet presence and even our tears as together we patiently sit in the presence of the God of all comfort.

Prayer: I admit that I run from the place of mourning. I want to use spiritual-sounding words, or busyness to take the pain away. Help me to have the courage, sacrificial love, and patience to sit with those who mourn, blessing them with presence, praying and believing for them when they cannot pray and believe for themselves. Thank you for being our Comforter.

Thursday, February 2, 2023

Read: Mark 5:7 *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

Reflect: Being merciful sounds lofty and lovely, doesn't it? But I find that life daily gives us lots of little opportunities to show mercy and they are usually small and easily overlooked. Can I extend mercy when my sense of justice is offended by the person with too many items in the queue at the checkout, when the person driving the car ahead is going below the speed limit when my contribution is ignored or worse, attributed to someone else? Can I extend mercy toward my spouse, co-worker, nor eighbor, for any of those small irritations that disrupt our sense of fairness? Can I see Jesus in those seemingly insignificant circumstances and lean into the Holy Spirit to extend mercy?

Prayer: Lord God, I am so much like the servant who was forgiven a huge debt, then condemned the one who owed a pittance. Forgive my unyielding, critical spirit and replace it with generous grace and mercy, I pray. God, I can do this only in the power of your Holy Spirit.

Friday, February 3, 2023

Read: Mark 5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

Reflect: There is a place and time for holy rabble-rousers, and we need discernment to know when that is. But more often we are called to be peacemakers. Some heart checking is needed here. Am I in a posture of humility and love or of a desire to be “right”? Am I protecting someone vulnerable, on the margins, or protecting my own image? Am I living in and out of the Kingdom of God or the temporary world of ego, status, and political ideology?

Prayer: Lord, help us to bless others by being peacemakers. May we transcend the temporal and petty and live in the eternal space where Jesus reigns. May we be more concerned with what love looks like in any given situation than in being “right” and may this bring blessing to our brothers and sisters and glory to your name.

Saturday, February 4, 2023

Read Mark 1:16-21 in preparation for tomorrow’s sermon.
How might God be speaking to you?

Sunday, February 5, 2023

First Presbyterian Church of Ambler welcomes you to join us for worship!

9 am Traditional

10:20 am Contemporary

Livestreaming on Facebook, YouTube, and [FPCAmbler.org](https://www.fpcambler.org)

Prayer Practice

What’s in a name? The Bible gives us many names of God, each revealing a different facet of his being. Take some time to go through the alphabet, thinking of all the names and attributes of God you can for each letter. For example, God is Abba Father, Awesome and Awe-inspiring, Almighty, Alpha and Omega, the master Artist...And that’s just ‘A’! If you came up with artwork for each letter, what would it look like? Let this lead you to worship.

Monday, February 6, 2023

Read: Mark 1:16-18

Reflect: Brothers Simon and Andrew and the sons of Zebedee, James and John were doing their daily work as fishermen when Jesus walked by and called to them. All four immediately dropped what they were doing and followed him. All four left their livelihood, James and John left their father, and they joined the itinerant teacher without knowing any more about him. What do you think it might have been about these men that caused Jesus to call them? And what do you think it might have been about Jesus that compelled them to go? What is it about Jesus that causes YOU to follow?

Prayer: Dear Lord, show me where I am holding back and help me to follow you in every aspect of my life---this life you have given me. Thank you for calling me, even me.

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

Read: Mark 1:16-17

Reflect: The two sets of brothers left their line of work to travel with Jesus, but not all followers of the Christ left their paid employment. Take Zacchaeus, for example. After his encounter with Jesus, he pledged to make right what he had wronged and do his work with integrity, but he did not change his line of work. Jesus did not ask him to! We are called to be Jesus' disciples, apprentices, followers, but not necessarily to leave our current roles. Wherever God has us can be our mission field. We can be Christ followers who volunteer, share with people in our retirement communities, teach school, build roads, work retail. God calls us to love him whole-heartedly and love others as ourselves. We can do that in many different roles.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, whatever I do, may I do it as unto you. Please use me to be your ambassador of love in my home, neighborhood, and workplace. Help me to love as you love and do your Kingdom work wherever you have me.

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Read: Matthew 20:21 and Matthew 27:55-56

Reflect: The mother of James and John came to Jesus and asked him to seat her sons on Jesus' right and left hands when he came into his kingdom. These "sons of thunder" were behind her request and hadn't yet understood the upside-down kingdom in which Jesus reigns. "What audacity," we might think. But being with Jesus has a way of changing our priorities. James and John were martyred for their faith and their mother was among the women watching Jesus' crucifixion. How has walking with Jesus changed you?

Prayer: Lord, I want to say, "YES!" to whatever you have for me. That may mean rising to the top of my profession or it may mean making hard decisions that do not move me forward in the world's economy. But I believe that saying yes to you leads me to an adventure of love that will last forever.

Thursday, February 9, 2023

Read: Revelation 3:20

Reflect: Jesus stands at the door and knocks. Have you opened the door? What does Jesus promise when we invite him in? That he will come in and have dinner with us. Hang out. Be with us. Oh, yes, please! Do you not hear the knocking? All who seek will find. Look for Jesus and you will find him. Humble yourself before him. Maybe even get on your knees and ask him to come into your life, your heart, your head, and be your Comforter, Counselor, Redeemer, and Lord.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, please come into my heart and my life show me how you want me to live. You are the living Word and your Word lights my path. May I be patient to wait for your Light and guidance and boldly move forward when you show me the way.

Friday, February 10, 2023

Read: 1 Peter 5-6

Reflect: Humble yourself before the Lord and he will lift you up. This is incredibly counter-culture! Can you imagine a book touting humility to be exalted? And yet, we know that God's kingdom is refreshingly, remarkably, astonishingly different than the kingdom of this world. The most lowly among us may occupy the highest place in heaven. The greatest in God's kingdom are those who serve and we are all called to serve. God created good works for us (Eph. 2:10) that bring restoration, healing, and love to this world. Say "YES" to all God has for you.

Prayer: Dear Lord, forgive me for getting caught up in the world's economy. May I truly seek first YOUR kingdom and YOUR righteousness, doing all you call me to do. Saying "YES" to all you call me to be.

Saturday, February 11, 2023

Read Luke 5:12-16 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

*Lord God, may your Holy Spirit be my teacher as I read your words.
May my heart be humble and teachable.*

Sunday, February 12, 2023

Come let us worship the author of love and life!

Services at 9 (traditional and 10:30 (contemporary) am.

Join us in word, song, and prayer.

Join us virtually on Facebook, YouTube, and FPCAmbler.org.

Monday, February 13, 2023

Read: Luke 5:12

Reflect: The man asking Jesus for healing didn't have a "touch of leprosy," but rather was *covered* with lesions. Leprosy made him an outcast, a pariah, unclean and separated from society and from temple worship. In this passage, he **saw** Jesus. He **humbled himself**, bowing down with his face to the ground, and knowing he had nothing to offer to help himself, **begged** to heal him. We are challenged to see Jesus in the midst of our trials, to humble ourselves before him, admitting our desperate need of him, and relying on him to do what only he can do. Healed, he was "made clean" and restored to community in the temple and the village.

Pray: Dear Jesus, we don't have just a touch of sinfulness, but rather sinful is our nature. There is nothing we can do to make ourselves clean. In your great mercy you love us with an everlasting love and make us clean. You are Emmanuel, God with us. Help us to see you in all our trials, to call out to you, and to receive what only you can provide.

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

Read: I Corinthians 13

Reflect: Interestingly, Saint Valentine is considered the patron saint of lovers, epileptics, and beekeepers. Contrast the commercial messages of Valentine's Day with the definition of love in the Bible. In addition to the love described in the familiar 1 Corinthians 13, we learn that there is no greater love than laying down our very lives, that we love because God first loved us, and that God IS love. How can we share this true love with neighbors, friends, and co-workers on this Valentine's Day?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for loving us so much that you gave your life for us. Thank you for sparking love in us and showing us what true love really is. Help us to live in sacrificial love, to share your divine love with those you put in our path.

Wednesday, February 15, 2023

Read: Luke 5:13-15

Reflect: Jesus ordered the former leper to tell no one about his healing but to report to the priest and make an offering as a testimony to the religious folks. We don't know if the man couldn't help but share his story or if it was the temple workers who spread the news, but we do know that as people heard they came to listen to Jesus. We too have testimonies to share. Stories of help and healing in our own lives. Pray for opportunities to share stories of God's work in our lives with others, for their great good and God's great glory.

Prayer: Lord, God, you hear my prayers and sometimes you respond in ways that are amazing. Help us to know when and how to share our own stories of you at work with those we meet. Faith comes from hearing the Good News. Thank you for letting us hear and help us to pass it on.

Thursday, February 16, 2023

Read: Luke 5:12-13.

Reflect: The man with leprosy implored Jesus, “Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.” And Jesus did choose. The man was immediately cured. What are we to think when we pray earnest prayers, good prayers, and do not receive what we ask for? Perhaps God is answering in a way we don’t expect. Perhaps his timing is different than ours. Or there is a lesson or even a gift for us in the situation. This side of heaven we may not know why God chooses NOT to answer some prayers, at least that we can tell. This is when we lean into what we do know about God and do not to lose heart. We remind ourselves of his promises to us. We surrender our agenda to his. And we continue to pray.

Prayer: We join the Psalmist in praying, “But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving faithfulness.” (Psalm 69:13.) Lord, you tell us to pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17.) Sometimes, the trials we face seem so hard that we don’t even know what to pray and we are thankful for the intercession of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:26.) We know that while someday all will be made new and you will wipe away all tears, there is pain and brokenness in present day. Thank you that you never leave us and are with us even in the darkest days and hear us when our prayers seem unanswered.

Friday, February 17, 2023

Read: Luke 5:16 *But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.*

Reflect: People pressed their neediness onto Jesus, swarming him, listening, and wanting his healing touch. Amid the crush, Jesus would find deserted, quiet places to pray. Making time and finding space to pray was a priority. Life's busyness can sometimes make us feel we don't have time to pray and yet, prayer can reframe our issues, reorder our priorities, reassure us of God's presence, provide us direction, and unburden our souls. Martin Luther said, "I have so much to do today that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer."

Prayer: Lord, how wonderful that you invite us to pray, and you hear all our prayers. We can come to you with questions and laments, thanksgiving and praise, curiosity and wonder. Help us keep our eyes open to see you at work and to trust your answers and your timing.

Saturday, February 18, 2023

Read Matthew 17:1-9 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

Imagine yourself on the mountain with Jesus, Peter, James, and John. What would you think? How would you feel?

Sunday, February 19, 2023

We invite you to worship with us!

Traditional service is at 9 am

Contemporary at 10:30 am

Both are live-streamed on Facebook, YouTube, and [FPCAmbler.org](https://www.fpcambler.org).

Prayer Practice

Take a walk around your neighborhood. Be intentional about praying for each household and for your community. Ask God to use you as his agent of love right in your own environs.

Monday, February 20, 2023

Read: Matthew 17:1

Reflect: Have you ever been invited to a very exclusive event? Or asked to spend time with someone at the top of your admiration list? Or chosen to be part of an inner circle? We are invited by the King of all kings, the Creator of the universe, the Savior of the world to come to him and receive rest, to drink and dine with him, and even to live in him and receive him in your own heart. Peter, James, and John had no idea what they would encounter when they accepted Jesus' invitation, and their lives were forever changed. Jesus invites us to come and follow him. Say "yes" and step into his Kingdom in which there is meaning, purpose, and satisfaction for your soul.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for your invitation to come to you and your promise of rest, fellowship, and abundant life. Show me what holds me back and help me to accept your invitation with my whole life, living as your disciple, following your amazing ways of love.

Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Read: Matthew 17:4 *Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”*

Reflect: Jesus’ appearance changed in front of them and there stood the religious super stars of their time. Peter gets excited and inserts himself, blurting out something about building dwellings. I can relate to getting caught up in a situation and saying something decidedly not helpful. Can you? Awkward. Inadvertently inappropriate. But eager! What would a more appropriate response have been? Ah, Peter. Man of passionate extremes. Often missing the mark, with great enthusiasm! I am encouraged that Jesus chose him, aren’t you?

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for so many examples of your love for awkward people. That you choose people who are not smooth to do Kingdom work. Thank you for your stance toward sinners. Thank you that you are the God of Moses and Elijah, of Peter, of us today and those to come.

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

Read: Matthew 17:4 *Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you one for Moses, and one for Elijah."*

Reflect: Peter's excited but not-so-helpful offer to build dwellings got me thinking about what words would actually be wise when God dazzles us in some way. Probably no words at all but rather awe and wonder. Like Mary who pondered in her heart. And then young Samuel who said, "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening." And more from Mary, "Let it be to me according to your word." Words of praise, thanksgiving, and surrender to God's plans are words of wisdom.

Prayer: Lord, help me to take the time to listen for your voice, to ponder your Words, to sit in the quiet needed to reflect. When I speak, may my words be honoring to you. Speak, Lord, and help me to listen. Let it be to me according to your will, for your will is good.

Thursday, February 23, 2023

Read: Matthew 17:5 *While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"*

Reflect: Peter was in the middle of his offer to build shelters when God interrupted him. How great it is when our foolishness is interrupted by God! And what did God have to say? That Jesus is his Son, the Beloved. That he is well pleased with him. And that we are to listen to him.

Prayer: Lord, when we are being foolish, may your Holy Spirit interrupt us. Yes, Lord, holy Interruption! Thank you for sending your Son, the Beloved, the exact representation of God, so we can know you. With Jesus, you are well pleased. Thank you for clothing us with Christ so that you are well pleased with us, as well. We long to hear you say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Help us to pause, stop all foolish talk, and listen to Jesus.

Friday, February 24, 2023

Read: Matthew 17:6-7

Reflect: The brightness and words of the Lord caused the disciples to fall on the ground in fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” He came to them. He touched them. He exhorted them to get up and to let go of their fears. Even now, Jesus comes to us. In fact, he will never leave us. He is with us in all the storms of life on this earth. He touches our hearts, our lips, and reassures us that he is for us. He tells us to “Get up.” There is work for us to do. Our lives have purpose. Because he is with us and for us, we have no need for fear. Though we will have trials, we can join Julian of Norwich in saying, “All will be well.”

Prayer: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and believing that this means turning to you in awe, wonder, and worship, we seek to be wise. Thank you that in Jesus, our fears are relieved. You come to us, touch us, cover us. We are safe in your arms.



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A place where lives are changed by Christ
and we live out our faith together.

