

(RE)LEARNING

*HOW TO READ
THE BIBLE*



JESUS
WANTS TO
SAVE
CHRISTIANS

Grace United Methodist Church

February 14, 2021

OUR WELCOMING STATEMENT

God's love is for all and God's grace is present in all creation. God's spirit draws us into community. We are filled with genuine care and love for one another.

Honoring the diversity of our faith journeys, our welcome is extended to all – people of all races, sexes, ethnic backgrounds, generations, physical and mental abilities, economic conditions, sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. No matter who you are, no matter where you are in your life, you are welcome here.

We are all invited to bless this church with our love, our presence, and our participation.

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND GREETING ONE ANOTHER

Call to Worship

Creative. Familiar. Strange. Mysterious.

The presence of Christ takes on a multitude of forms.

How abundant is the imagination of God!

Never static. Never stale.

Love is made known to us in ever-changing ways.

Scandalous and surprising,

God's grace hopes to catch our attention.

This loving presence moves through creation.

No form or figure is without its touch.

Blessed is every body. Each a dwelling place of God.

OPENING PRAYER

God-Among-Us, in and through these bodies of ours, your presence moves.

In our touch and in our tears. In the ways we depend on each other for life.

In every practice of care, God take on flesh among us and within us. That you could be so close as our own breath, our own bodies, our own being can be difficult for us to believe. Help us in our unbelief. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 9:2-9

Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and brought them to the top of a very high mountain where they were alone. He was transformed in front of them, and his clothes were amazingly bright, brighter than if they had been bleached white. Elijah and Moses appeared and were talking with Jesus. Peter re-acted to all of this by saying to Jesus, "Rabbi, it's good that we're here. Let's make three shrines—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He said this be-cause he didn't know how to respond, for the three of them were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice spoke from the cloud, "This is my Son, whom I dearly love. Listen to him!" Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, he or-dered them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after the Human One had risen from the dead.

HYMN

UMH 519

"Lift Every Voice and Sing"

SERMON

Rev. Dr. Lanette Plambeck

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT

Holy One, in a weary-making world, you do not ask of us perfection. You do not bear judgment against our messiness, our trauma, or our unresolved pain. Your love is a companion to our vulnerabilities, a friend to the parts of us struggling or ashamed. With thanks for your compassionate presence along paths of healing, we bring all we have and all we are. All this we pray through Christ who taught us to pray saying, **Our God (Father, Mother, Creator) who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

OFFERING

If you haven't made your pledge for 2021 yet, you can do so at:

<https://gracedesmoines.org/2021-stewardship-campaign/>

CLOSING HYMN

UMH 534

"Be Still, My Soul"

Member Updates

Grant McCollum has returned home after a hospitalization and stay at a rehab facility. If you would like to send him a welcome home message, his address is 2400 30th Street #238, Des Moines, IA 50310.

If you would like to share an update in our weekly email or the worship bulletin, please let the church office know

Please continue to keep your Grace friends and family in your prayers. Think about the persons that you often sat by in the sanctuary or the people you'd share a cup of coffee with. Could you send them a letter this weekend or even make a call to check in on one another? If you need help finding a phone number or address, please contact the church office.

Guide to Prayer and Study: February 15-20

Monday, February 15

Read - 1 John 4:16-21

Notice - Why would John say, “Perfect love drives out fear”? 1 John 4:20 said, “Those who say, ‘I love God’ and hate their brothers or sisters are liars.” Do you agree that it is often fear that leads us to hate other people? Why would hating others block any genuine love for God? Can you think of practical ways to let God’s perfect love move you in the direction of acting in love toward “others,” even if you think they deserve fear and distrust rather than love? “‘God is love’...touches on everything, from the individual-psychological to the radically communal Love and God go together; hate and God do not (4:20); fear and God do not (4:18).” * Have you ever experienced a situation in which as you learned to love another person your fear of that person decreased and even disappeared? In what ways has following Christ made you and your relationships more loving?

Pray - Jesus, you embodied God’s love for me. Now you call me to embody your love as I deal with other people, even people I may not like, may even fear. Grow your love in my heart. Amen.

* Jaime Clark-Soles note on 1 John 4:16-20 in *The CEB Women’s Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016, p. 1562

Tuesday, February 16

Read - Micah 6:6-8, Romans 6:1-4

Notice - The prophet Micah lived at a time where practicing ceremonial religion and “conspicuous consumption” were side-by-side. On God’s behalf, Micah urged a change of course. Pious rituals are no substitute for justice. In what ways do your culture and community fall short of doing justice, embracing faithful love and walking humbly with God? Scholar Gary Smith wrote, “Micah’s delineation of God’s requirements is noteworthy insofar as it includes no negative statements about what is forbidden to the Israelites. It presents a positive case of what God thinks is best for humankind.” * To some who said, “Let’s continue sinning so that grace can multiply,” Paul replied that we only truly accept God’s grace as we “die” to our old way of living. Our baptism, he said, is the acted-out symbol in which we show that we’re serious about that. What are your ongoing areas of struggle? In what ways have you seen Christ’s gift of new life break the ruling power of sin in your life?

Pray - Jesus, I want your love and goodness to fill me all the time. But I’m not there yet, and when I’m tempted to fake it, that can get ugly. Keep me growing in expressing your love authentically. Amen.

* Gary V. Smith, *The NIV Application Commentary: Hosea, Amos, Micah*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001, p. 555.

Wednesday, February 17

Read - 1 Peter 1:22-2:3

Notice - Peter's searching words show us what happens deep inside when Christians grow: we love deeply, sincerely, from our heart. Hypocrisy, deceit, envy or unkind speech are signals that we need a closer walk with Jesus, learning to love as Jesus loves. Peter told their readers (and us) that hypocrisy, deceit, envy and unkind speech are qualities to "get rid of." How has God made your life better by replacing those negative qualities with "the pure milk of the word"? In what areas of life do you want God to fill you more fully and nourish your spiritual growth more completely during this Lenten season?

Pray - God, give me the gift of honesty with myself, so that I can recognize where I need to change. Show me the places where you call me to grow in your amazing grace. Amen.

Thursday, February 18

Read - Colossians 3:12-14, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Notice - Paul was emphatically practical in the letters to Ephesus and Corinth. Paul would have grown up reciting the Shema, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your being, and all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5). Jesus said that was the greatest commandment, and added, "You must love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). The next question for Paul, and for followers of Christ's ever since, was, "What does it look like to love my neighbor?" These were Paul's answers. It looks like being humble—not thinking of yourself more highly than others. It looks like being gentle—take a deep breath if you feel angry, speak carefully. It looks like being patient—while waiting, focus on God instead of yourself. Love requires compassion (suffering with others), kindness (honor and consideration), and forgiveness to all God's children. As you read this list of loving actions, how do you feel? Great? Guilty? Condemned? If you're not perfectly living this list, remember: none of us are. Start with contemplating how you can be more loving this week. Instead of trying to grow in all areas at once, choose one characteristic Paul lists and focus on living into a new way of loving. And loving attitudes and actions are both individual and public, local and general. Think more broadly than just yourself. What can your family, your community, your church, your city, your state, your nation do to be more loving to people you've never met? How can you join in God's work to extend divine love to all people?

Pray - Jesus, I want to love all my neighbors, everywhere. Help me start close to home and guide me as I expand my vision to be more and more like your vast, world-changing vision. Amen.

Friday, February 19

Read - Isaiah 58:5-8, Matthew 20:24-28

Notice - Isaiah 58 spoke to Israelites who did many “religious” things, including fasting, but only from self-serving motives. (The prophet Micah made the same point in Micah 6:6-8 which we read on Tuesday.) Why, they asked, didn’t God honor their feasts and fasts? The prophet said they didn’t need showy, external fasts. They needed to “fast” from mistreating other people. Isaiah 58:3-4 noted sadly that the pious “fasters” kept abusing their workers and fighting each other. How do verses 6-7 speak to your heart and your life today? What is one step you can take this Lenten season to make your spiritual practices truly life-changing, as the prophet called Israel to do?

Pray - Jesus, in a world obsessed with seeking power and honor (a world a lot like mine), you relentlessly focused on serving others. Please walk with me as I seek to live a life that embodies your servant spirit. Amen.

Saturday, February 20

Read - Matthew 9:35-38, Luke 19:1-10

Notice - Jesus did many admirable, valuable things during his ministry on earth. He healed the sick, broke down barriers of prejudice and exclusion, taught people how to live better lives, and challenged religious hypocrisy. Jesus said he “came to seek and save the lost.” Scholar William Barclay wrote, “In the New Testament 'lost' does not mean damned or doomed. It just means in the wrong place....A [person] is lost when [they have] wandered away from God; and [they are] found when once again [they] take [their] rightful place...” * In what ways has God “found” you, and given you your rightful place in God’s family? When have you been able to help God find someone else?

Pray - Jesus, thank you for coming “to seek and save the lost,” including me. Guide me to the ways I can join you in doing that great, world-changing work. Amen.

* William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of Luke (Revised Edition)*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, page 257.

From now until March 1, the Iowa United Methodist Foundation is accepting scholarship applications for the 2021-2022 school year. Our webpage includes links to apply, as well as information about each scholarship and its requirements. We offer more than just Methodist scholarships, so please forward this information to the high school senior in your life! <https://iumf.org/scholarships/>



Grace currently has a membership to Amplify, a media ministry of the United Methodist Publishing House. You can look at free options at <https://amplifymedia.com/>, even without the Grace "code" for our membership. If you would like to look at other content, please email bob.dean@iaumc.net for information on how to access all the materials with Grace's code.



We have regularly scheduled live-streams on Facebook and YouTube. You can also always catch our videos at gracedesmoines.org. Our new schedule of live stream events is:

Sunday - Worship at 10:15 am on the GraceDesMoines Facebook and YouTube pages

Tuesday - Guide to Prayer and Study at 9 am

Thursday - Spiritual Practices at 9 am



We invite you to join us for worship online on Ash Wednesday, February 17, at 6 pm. The service will be available to watch at <https://www.facebook.com/DesMoinesGrace>, at gracedesmoines.org, or on the Grace YouTube channel, which can be found at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYLKjH_kRLrAbIO29IAuIVQI.

If you receive our Chimes newsletter, you should be receiving a mailing containing one or more temporary tattoos to be used in place of ashes on Ash Wednesday. You will also receive a paper chain devotional for use throughout Lent.

We are also offering another Lent devotion that we are excited to share with you. "The Poetry of Lent" will be available on our website at www.gracedesmoines.org for you to use. If you would like a printed copy, please contact the church office, and we will mail you a booklet containing the complete study.

And, finally, beginning on Ash Wednesday, the sanctuary will be open and available for prayer and meditation. All through Lent, the sanctuary will be available each Wednesday from 11 am to 1 pm and from 5 pm to 6 pm. Masks and social distancing are required in the church. When you enter from the south parking lot doors, you will need to sign in. As you leave the sanctuary, we ask that you sanitize your seat; cleaning supplies will be provided.

WORSHIP LEADER: Rev. Nate Nims;

RESOURCES USED IN THIS SERVICE:

Opening Prayer from enfleshed (www.enfleshed.com.)

All music used under OneLicense A-727197

Guide to Prayer and Study modified from cor.org

† In hymns, prayers, and liturgies, use language that makes worship meaningful, enriching, and inclusive.



Grace United Methodist Church
3700 Cottage Grove
Des Moines, IA 50311
gracedesmoines.org
phone: 515.255.2131
email: info@gracedesmoines.org

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter at GraceDesMoines

In-person services are suspended for the time being, Please join us online for worship.
Watch the livestream of the 10:15 am service on the GraceDesMoines Facebook page
or on our YouTube channel..