

GROW. PRAY. STUDY.
First United Methodist Church- Weekly Study Guide
“equipping people in becoming deeply committed Christians ”

Restoration
God's ReCreation - A Summer Journey Through the Psalms
(June 14-19)

We all go through periods in life when we feel empty and overwhelmed by the chaos of life. We wake up and suddenly realize our life doesn't look anything like we thought, or even hoped it would. We need to make changes. And so we begin the process of change....and it looks a lot like a renovation. We are certainly building this new person, a better version of the old, but still, it is build according to what we want and desire. The problem is we are renovating our lives when what they have always needed is restoration.

Did you know when God created you God created you in a perfect relationship with Him? What this tells us is that as we stray from this “original version” things don't look like they should. We need to be “restored” to that perfect relationship with the one who created us.

This week, we will focus on the topic of restoration, especially framed by Psalm 23. Each day read Psalm 23. Then, take a look at the selected psalms to see what they have to say that might apply to our lives today.

Monday– Read Psalm 23. “The Shepherd’s Rod Defends Us”

Now read Psalm 121. This Psalm is easily prayed together with Psalm 23. You can pray this psalm as a source of courage and confidence. Abandon yourself to trust God’s present and future plans for you and those you love. Seek the peace of God. Realize that God watches over your coming and going. Thank God for protection.

Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

Tuesday– Read Psalm 23. “The Shepherd’s Staff Guides Us”

Now read Psalm 46. The word from God is “be still, stop.” We need to create the space to interact with God. We “stop” to know and listen to God. In what ways are you aware of God’s presence in your daily life? Be observant today or during the week about where you see God and how you attend to God. We experience God and turn our minds toward the divine in many ways. We can attend to God directly, through the world around us or through others. What ways of being attentive to God are most natural for you? Thank God for guidance and direction.

Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

Wednesday– Read Psalm 23.

Now read Psalm 86. Do you struggle to know what things in life should matter the most? Set aside time in prayer to seek God’s wisdom and guidance. God has a way, a path, for you to travel, and God desires to help you walk it. Awareness does not come instantly. You may need to spend time in reflection on these questions for a while. As you learn more about yourself and begin to recognize the character of God, you will be able to discern God’s truth and walk in the Lord’s way. What are your needs now? In what ways have you asked God for help? Think of a time in your life when God came to your aid. How was God’s help manifested? Remember and give thanks.

Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

Thursday– Read Psalm 23. “The Shepherd’s Table Feeds Us”

Read Psalm 146. When was the last time you had a need met unexpectedly or in a surprising way? Thank God for making what seem like impossible situations possible in your life. Are you inclined to dismiss God’s provisions as coincidence? Believe in God’s work among us, and pray specifically for God’s solutions to what seem to be impossible situations about which you are aware. Since the beginning of time, God has been in the business of miracles. How would you define miracle? Have you or someone you have known ever experienced God’s miraculous provision?

Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

Friday– Read Psalm 23. “The Shepherd’s Anointing Sustains Us”

Read Psalm 136. What does the word soul mean to you? Is your soul satisfied? Can you imagine a mother hen gathering her chicks under her wings? In the presence of danger, the mother hen calls her chicks to her and spreads her wings, carefully sheltering the little ones from view. Wouldn’t it be nice to imagine ourselves in such shelter; a safe place from which we can peer out at life. Imagine a place that could be such a sanctuary for you, somewhere you can feel safe from danger and safe to be yourself. Remember this feeling of shelter when times are challenging. Share your prayers with God from this safe place, knowing that God is our dwelling place.

Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

Saturday Read Psalm 89:1-3, 19-21; Isaiah 43:1-5

Today you will be reading the passage we will use in worship tomorrow. Pray that God will open your heart and prepare you for a powerful worship experience as we come together tomorrow as the body of Christ.

I invite you to pray the following prayer: Dear God, As I read this passage today help me do so with an open heart, sincerely listening for your voice in my life. Use this passage to prepare me for worship tomorrow. As I read it help me to set aside my own agenda and my own desires so that I may come to worship tomorrow prepared to be molded by you as I continue my journey to becoming a deeply committed disciple of yours. In Christ’s name I pray, AMEN

Here at FUMC we believe part of becoming a Deeply Committed Christians is praying daily. If you find yourself struggling with what to say, we suggest you try praying Wesley's Covenant Prayer.

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. AMEN

These reflections are inspired by the work of Ann Hagmann in Abiding Hope: Encouragement in the Shadow of Death.