

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

“Love.....is What You’ve Gotta Have”

December 20-25

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Luke 2:1-7

Yesterday we looked at the last true gift of Christmas and learned that gift is both found in Jesus and is also something we all need. Our world is often times difficult to survive in. We feel defeated by the circumstances we face every day and disillusioned with the way people act and react to this world. The truth is we need love and we need a Savior. The good news is we have both in Jesus Christ. Through the gift of Christ we can overcome the difficulties of this world and live in peace, joy, hope, and love.

This week we are going to look at the concept of the Messiah in the book of Isaiah. Isaiah, probably better than any other Old Testament writer, describes for us what life with this Messiah can and will be like. As you read through these passages think about what the gift of a Savior and his love means to you.

Monday -READ Isaiah 64:1-9

In today’s reading you will hear one of the most beautiful descriptions concerning the power of the Messiah. Listen to how Isaiah describes the Messiah as one who comes to overthrow all that is evil and clean all those who are unclean. Listen to how the prophet describes the power of the Messiah. As you read this passage reflect on the last couple of verses. Is your life like clay in the hands of the Messiah? Are you allowing the Savior to mold you and make you?

Pray Wesleyan Covenant Prayer on the back of this Study Guide

Tuesday -READ Isaiah 40:1-11

Today we will be reading a passage I am sure you have heard before. In fact, it is a passage

most often read at funerals. It reminds us of our frailty and weakness and the strength and power of the Savior. Listen to how the prophet describes the Savior as both all-powerful and compassionate. Reflect on the image of the shepherd feeding his flock and gently leading his sheep. This is the type of compassionate love Christ offers you.....are you accepting it?

Pray Wesleyan Covenant Prayer on the back of this Study Guide

Wednesday -READ Isaiah 61:1-4

Today we will read about what the Messiah hopes to inspire in us. As you read this passage think about whether or not you have allowed the Savior to inspire you to reach out to those in need.

Pray Wesleyan Covenant Prayer on the back of this Study Guide

Thursday -READ Isaiah 61:8-11

Today you will read about the sense of joy that comes to those who recognize the Messiah. Listen closely to verse 10 and ask yourself if this describes your life. Do you find joy in the Savior?

Pray Wesleyan Covenant Prayer on the back of this Study Guide

Friday -READ Isaiah 9:2-7

Sunday we spoke about the gift we have received in the Savior, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. This week we have spent our time reading Isaiah's descriptions of the Messiah. In each of our readings we have heard how the Messiah will turn our lives and our world upside down. Today we will conclude our reading of Isaiah with what is quite possibly the most beautiful description of the Messiah in the entire Bible. As you read this passage I invite you to think about what the Savior has done in your life.

Pray Wesleyan Covenant Prayer on the back of this Study Guide

Saturday -READ Matthew 2:13-23

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