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

"Windows into God's Love" - March 7-12

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." **Matthew 17:1-9**

Yesterday we spent our time together in worship thinking about the people of faith, specifically in this church, who have come before us and our responsibility to continue building the community they worked so hard to create. A church is meant to be a living breathing thing which grows and changes and is constantly looking for new ways to connect the message of Christ with the community it lives in. Those who came before us did their part….the only question that remains is will we do ours?

This week we are going to spend our time thinking about how we are connected to all people of faith through our responsibility to live out God's love for the world. God's love saves us and makes us whole….but it was never intended to live in isolation inside us. It is meant to inspire us to come together around it and build the kingdom. What role will we play here at FUMC to build God's Kingdom? What do we need to do differently to carry the gospel to this community today? Are we willing to turn our focus away from our own needs and become "windows into God's love?"

Monday – Read Genesis 12:1-9

This is Yahweh's promise to Abram to give him land and many descendants. Notice in verse two that God says I will do these things for you so that you will be a blessing. We see this sentiment again in verse three, "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." This is God's promise but it also points to God's purpose. How do you understand the word blessing? What would it mean for God to tell you that you will be blessed to be a blessing? What do we do with God's gift of life entrusted to us to share with others?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Tuesday – Read Isaiah 42:5-9

These words are spoken by the prophet Isaiah but the words he speaks are from God. God is extending ministry to the world not only through Abraham but through the people of Israel. They are to be a light to the nations—to be a blessing, to bring well-being, justice, healing, freedom, and God's love throughout the earth. In what way is this call to Israel the same or different than God's call on our lives as Christians? Are we part of this larger story?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Wednesday– Read Matthew 4:18-22

This is the story of Jesus calling the first disciples. It seems to be a very simple and straightforward part of the narrative. Jesus tells them to "come, follow me" without elaborate persuasion or lengthy explanation. Notice the disciples' responses in verses 20 and 22. They leave "at once" and "immediately" to go with Jesus. Like the disciples, this is often where our faith journeys begin. Pause and reflect on a time that you were aware of Jesus' invitation to you. Now recall what comes next in the gospels—the disciples spend time learning from and observing Jesus. Jesus asks them questions and invites them to participate in ministry to the people. What does this movement from a simple invitation of "follow" to the invitation to take up our cross suggest about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Thursday– Read Matthew 5:13-16

Using the examples of salt and light, Jesus teaches that to be one of his followers, a disciple means being a part of the community sent to the world. As with table salt and food, the disciples are for the purpose of enlivening and enriching others. Again, light isn't for the sake of light itself, but it illuminates other things, it allows us to see and be seen. How are you called to be salt and light? Jesus is telling us that faith is not primarily personal or private. This is a reminder of the promise in Genesis—to bless others—and call in Isaiah—to be a light to the nations. Make a list of how you can be salt and light in your workplace, school, home, and wider community. How can we do this as a congregation?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Friday– Read Matthew 28:16-20

The invitation to discipleship, baptism, and Jesus' teachings are for all the world—and Jesus sends the disciples out to share this news with all nations. Can you find yourself in this story, in this commission of Jesus' followers? This is not something that was asked of a small group of people two thousand years ago but is the task, the honor, and the responsibility of all who

become disciples and all who follow Jesus' way. Think about your own life: we have received the invitation to faith by others who answered God's call. We too are called to continue the ministry of inviting all the world into this relationship with Jesus.

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Saturday - Read Matthew 14:12-25, "The Last Supper"

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