

8 HABITS of EVANGELISM

devotional

April 23 - June 17, 2022



First Presbyterian Church of Ambler
4 South Ridge Avenue • Ambler, PA 19002
215.646.3030 fpcambler.org

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



Saturday, April 23

Read: Deuteronomy 10: 17-19 and Matthew 25:31-46 in preparation of Sunday's service.

Pray: for those preparing for the Sunday services, that their labors will be blessed.

Sunday, April 24

Attend a service of your choosing. Today is the second Sunday of Easter. How has the risen Christ walked with you last week?

Welcome to all worshippers, in church and virtual!

Participate in the service as you attend church with your church family or watch at home via live stream.

Facebook @ FPCAmbler.

YouTube channel: FPC Ambler

*This week's devotionals were written by Leslie Wise.
Are you called to contribute?
Reach out to Debi@FPCAmbler.org for more information.*

Monday, April 25th

Read: Deuteronomy 10:17

Reflect: In this verse, God proclaims that He is the God of gods, the Lord of Lords, the great, the mighty. Yet, our awesome God does not show partiality nor take a bribe. It is not possible to bribe your way into His graces or expect special treatment due to wealth or status. Every day one reads or hears about the enormous amount of bribery that takes place in our world. A greased palm may open doors that would otherwise stay shut. I'm thankful that God does not behave like a high-ranking official who would accept a payoff for special treatment. There is no partiality with God, and we can rely on that promise.

Prayer: Help us to serve others without expecting something in return. Thank you that we can't influence your affections. Your lovingkindness does not cease and there is no partiality in your love toward us.

Tuesday, April 26

Read: Deuteronomy 10:18

Reflect: God has much to say in the Bible about the care of orphans and widows. Orphans and widows were vulnerable and possibly destitute in Biblical times. They were often left to fend for themselves or depended on family members for their care. Orphans and widows were at the bottom of the social order. Look deeply into your own church family. Do you notice a pecking order, “in” crowd or ingrained clique? These might not be purposeful at first but can become so comfortable that they become part of church culture. Be aware how this may be impacting your social contacts and church groups you attend.

Prayer: Help us to step out of our social comfort zones to fellowship with others we may not know well. We pray that our church does not become an exclusive club but rather a refuge for souls. Give us courage to enlarge our circles to include strangers that we may even see every day! Help us to discern the heart before social standing or position.

Wednesday, April 27

Read: Deuteronomy 10: 19

Reflect: Before God brought us out of Egypt, we were all aliens in a strange land. Take this time to pray for those who are fleeing countries due to war, persecution, or famine. Pray that the countries, organizations, and individuals receiving strangers will treat them with dignity and provide them with the care Christ commands. God commands us to show love to the alien, the immigrant or refugee and not to show partiality due to race, religion or nationality. Help us to remember what we experienced when we were aliens without the comfort of Christ.

Prayer: Thank you that you are the God of all comfort. We pray for the nations experiencing untold grief, famine, upheaval, and the trauma of war. Help us to teach our children to look for and care for the aliens in their midst, to grow a heart of compassion for the weak and solitary.

Thursday, April 28

Read: Matthew 25: 35-40

Reflect: How do we inherit the kingdom of God? We can offer a drink to the thirsty, clothing to those in need, an invitation to a stranger, visit the sick and imprisoned. These may be small actions but are life giving to those in need. Jesus had great compassion for the weak and the outcast. He didn't consider himself above ministering to those who whom others deemed unworthy. He took a great risk and by doing so turned the prescribed social order upside down. Look for ways to serve those in need and you will do "unto Him."

Prayer: Lord, there are many "upside down" examples in Your Word. The first shall be last, the last first; the poor are esteemed, the alien cared for. You took a great risk to love those others deemed unlovely at great personal cost. It's uncomfortable for us to be upside down for any length of time. Allow us view others from Your perspective and to shift our focus to You.

Friday, April 29

Read: Matthew 25: 40--46

Reflect: We read about The Judgment in these verses and wonder what it will be like on that day. Will we be with the sheep or the goats? What can we do to make sure we're on the "right side"? I always imagine a scroll will be brought forth listing my faults and sins in great detail. With my tail between my legs, I'll shuffle off with the goats. Jesus is very emphatic in these verses about not shutting our eyes to the needs of humanity. Serving others is not always pleasant, the rewards may not be immediate. But just offering that glass of water to someone who asks, can bring the kingdom of God right down to our earth, into our hands, into the glass, right into the thirsty heart of another.

Prayer: When did we see you hungry, thirsty or naked? We saw You there on the cross. You bore hunger, thirst, nakedness, and humiliation for our salvation. How can we not bear the same for others? Help us not to turn away from the needy or the unlovely, but move toward them in love.

Saturday, April 30

Read Psalm 23, Psalm 34:8, and Isaiah 42:3 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

Pray for the pastor who will be preaching and for all who will attend, virtually or in person.

Sunday, May 1, 2022

Attend the service of your choosing. Prepare your heart to join our brothers and sisters from every tongue and tribe in worshiping our God.

Participate in the service as you attend church with your church family or watch at home via live stream.

Facebook @ FPCAmbler.

YouTube channel: FPC Ambler

Monday, May 2

Read: Isaiah 42:3 *A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;*

Reflect: There are those beautiful times when we experience God's love in ways that feed our soul. Our faith seems unshakeable and God's presence so near. And yet, we all have seasons in which the Light grows dim. How comforting to know that during times when we cannot hear the voice of God, he still hears our prayers; that when we wander off the path, our Shepherd finds us; that when our faith wavers the Faithful One still whispers I AM. A smoldering wick he will not snuff out. A bruised reed he will not break. And "he who began a good work will bring it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil 1:6)."

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for the tenderness you have for your children; that you will never leave us or forsake us, and that when we wander like a lost sheep, you pursue us and woo us back to you. We ask you to fan the flames of our faith and our love.

Tuesday, May 3

Read: Psalm 34:8 *Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.*

Reflect: I hold a berry in my hand. I feel the juicy weight of it and its vibrant color beckons. But I won't know how good it is until I take a bite. Take shelter under the soft strong wings of the Mighty God. Allow yourself to bask in the warmth of his love. Rest in the knowledge that God causes all things to work together for the good of those he calls (Romans 8:28) and that his plans for you are good (Jeremiah 29:11.) Take comfort knowing that it is in weakness that God's strength is made perfect (2 Cor 12:9). Take refuge in the God who knows you and loves you and you will taste and see that he is good!

Prayer: LORD, you are my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer. You are my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold (Ps 91:2.) I thank you for the shelter you provide, for your kindness, and for your never-ending love.

Wednesday, May 4

Read: Psalm 23:1 *The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

Reflect: When LORD is in all caps as it is in this verse, it refers to YHWH, the Jewish name given to God that was believed to be too holy to speak so was written without vowels. It means self-Existent or Eternal. This Eternal God is also our Shepherd who gives us food, rest, and refreshment. He protects us and disciplines us. In him we know unconditional love, mercy and forgiveness, and freedom from fear and final death. Sometimes we are the lost sheep he pursues and sometimes we are the 99 who stay safely in his pastureland. Always he is with us, in us, and for us.

Prayer: Thank you, triune God, for being our good Shepherd. You call us by name. May we follow you in grateful obedience and give you thanks and praise. You are our Shepherd, and we lack no good thing. We love you, LORD.

Thursday, May 5

Read: Ps 23: 2-3 *He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.*

Reflect: Is your head filled with noise? With worries and lists, questions, and quandaries? Take these moments to linger with our good Shepherd. Take a slow, deep breath, and as you exhale, let all the tension go. Close your eyes and picture quiet waters. Listen to the gentle flow of refreshing streams. See lush green pastures and feel sunshine warm your body. Our God offers pauses for spiritual refreshment, and he guides us along the right paths for his name's sake, giving us a purpose beyond ourselves that gives life meaning. Let the current of the Master's living waters take you where you are meant to be.

Prayer: Lord, God, you give our lives meaning and purpose. You guide and direct us and give us rest. Forgive us when we look for value in our culture's treadmill of tasks and accomplishments and help us to reflect and refresh as we spend time in stillness with you.

Friday, May 6

Read: Psalm 23: 4 *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff---they comfort me.*

Reflect: We live this life in the shadow, the dark valley, of death. But we need not fear because we know that Jesus is with us, within us, and will never leave us. Never. No matter what. We know, too, that he redeems everything, using what some may intend for evil and turning it around to use for good. Nothing wasted. God sends his Holy Spirit to guide us, to keep us on the right path and draw us back when we stray. His rod reminds us that he disciplines those he loves (Hebrews 12:6). It is when we are in the darkest valley that we often seek his Light. We need not fear. Our Shepherd is with us.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, our refuge, rock, and shepherd. When we walk through the dark valleys, help us turn to you and see your light. We remember your reassuring words, "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matt 28:20).

Saturday, May 7

Read: I Corinthians 9:19-23 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon. What lessons are there for you today?

Sunday, May 8 - Mothers' Day

God is our Father, and also the One who gave birth to all of creation. Join with your brothers and sisters in the faith as we worship together. Worship in person at 9:00 or 10:30 am or on Facebook, YouTube, or on our website.

Monday, May 8

Read: I Corinthians 9:19

Reflect: Paul states that he is free from all men. How much time do we spend trying to make an impression on those we meet? How do I look? What am I wearing? Worrying about how we might be perceived by others hampers our outreach and keeps our vision small. Freedom from the court of human opinion allows us to serve without fear. Instead of concentrating on ourselves, we can develop discerning hearts in how to best serve the people before us. Think about precious it is to us when someone sees our heart and the joy it produces.

Pray: Father, please help to deliver us from the fear of man. Allow us to serve in the strength you give us without the constant worry about how we appear to others.

Tuesday, May 9

Read: I Corinthians 9: 20-22

Reflect: As a young adult, I was very shy around others. My grandmother, who had the gift of gab, gave me some sage advice. Ask people about themselves. Listen quietly and learn who they are. I took my grandmother's advice and conversation bloomed more easily. Our world is so much smaller now. Centuries ago, we may have stayed in a small geographical area. Today we rub shoulders with people from all over the world. Paul became all things to all men to 'save some.' He accommodated himself to others and was able to change his approach as needed. He was not a one size fits all apostle. Listening well to others is the first step in being able to "save some".

Prayer: Help us to walk in another's shoes without judgment. Allow our ears to be listening ones and our eyes to be open to those we walk beside.

Wednesday, May, 10

Read: I Corinthians 9: 23

Reflect: Paul does all things for the sake of the gospel. Not some things, but *all*. How much do we realize that the small things we do in life may have far more impact than the grander, showy gestures? It was mentioned to me once that most people don't want a small life and are disappointed when they perceive that they do. We often ask, where is my big, important life? It has helped me to understand that if our lives are positioned to follow Christ, all things become meaningful. Consider one small boy, five loaves of bread, two fish, a widow's mite and a mustard seed. From such small things, great things were accomplished and are remembered forever in the Gospels.

Prayer: Help us not to "despise the day of small things". Zechariah 4: 10. Help us to realize one small action for the sake of the gospel may have lasting effects through eternity.

Thursday: May 12

Read: I Corinthians 9: 19 and 2 Corinthians 4:5

Reflect: The word slavery does not conjure up pleasant images. It involves the subjugation of others, most likely in ways that are cruel and abhorrent. Slaves may be captive, forced to labor for others without thought to their well-being or safety. Paul was entitled to many civil rights as a Roman citizen. He could enjoy many freedoms, yet he put himself in the category of slave to further the gospel. Paul laid down a more privileged life in order to become a bondservant. As a result of doing so, he suffered imprisonment, hunger, thirst and stoning. What rights do we need to lay down “that we may win more”?

Prayer: Help us, God, to think about our comforts and privileges. We have so many. Help us realize these are heaven sent gifts to be used in the service of others.

Friday, May 13

Read: 2 Corinthians 4: 16, 17

Reflect: Last Sunday was Mother's Day. Jesus had a mother. Her name was Mary. She conceived, gave birth, raised her son and watched Him die an unimaginable death. Mary could have pleaded with her son not to carry forth his mission, begged Him not go that route. She had to lay down her hopes and dreams for her Son before God. Paul could have lived a freer life under Roman law and taken part in the glories of his position as an influential Pharisee. Instead, he took on the mantle of a slave. Mary is now united now with her Son in the most glorious way. Paul is healed from his affliction and the trials he endured for the gospel. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:17, "For momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison." Our afflictions don't seem light right now but maybe, just maybe, they can be a stony gateway into the waiting hearts of our broken world.

Prayer: God, give us strength in our frailties and weakness. You know the things we carry. Help us not to lose heart knowing "our inner man is being renewed day by day."

Saturday, May 14

Read: Acts 3:1-10; 4:18-31; 12:1-19 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon. Ask God to speak to you as you read and pray for understanding.

Sunday, May 15

Join us for worship! Worship in person at 9:00 or 10:30 am or on Facebook, YouTube, or on our website. All are welcome.

Monday, May 16

Read: Acts 3:3-5

Reflect: This story of healing follows Pentecost and “everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. (v.43).” The apostles themselves were likely filled with awe! In this story, Peter and John looked at the lame man and the man gave them his attention. How often have we walked right past a person with an outstretched arm? Peter and John saw him and connected with him as a person. The lame man expected something from Peter and John, and they delivered, but not at all in the way he expected. That changed everything for him. No longer at the gate of the temple, he entered *in*. So often God meets our needs and answers our prayers in ways we would never expect. The man asked for money and instead received healing, and this caused people to be “filled with wonder and amazement (v.10).”

Prayer: Lord, help me to walk by faith, in step with and surrendering to your Holy Spirit. Use me as your instrument of healing and hope. Help me to see people as the image bearers they are, and may you use me in ways that cause people to be filled with praise for you.

Tuesday, May 17

Read: Acts 3:11-12

Reflect: Led by the Holy Spirit, Peter saw that healing of the lame man led to an opportunity to share the good news about Jesus with them. He encouraged the people to repent, turn to God and be forgiven so they might be refreshed. God allowed them to heal the lame man which, in turn, enabled them to offer the life-giving Gospel to many.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to opportunities to share your good news with others. May I be bold to offer hope that sets people free as led and empowered by your Holy Spirit. Equip me to do so with humility, gentleness, faith, and love.

Wednesday, May 18

Read: Acts 4:20 *As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.*

Reflect: Though forbidden not to speak the name of Jesus, Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him?” Though the physical danger was great, they did not hold back. Note that they spoke of what they have seen and heard. What have YOU seen and heard of Jesus? How has Jesus given you comfort, peace, help, or healing? Sharing from your own experience can be a fruitful way to share what is truly Good News. Be sure to live in such a way that people see God’s light in you and give him glory (Matthew 5:16).

Prayer: Lord God, thank you for all that you have done in my life. Help me to live my life in such a way that others want to know the God I serve. May I use the gifts you give me to bring glory to your name.

Thursday, May 19

Read: Acts 12: 1-3

Reflect: How tempting it is to seek the approval of others. This yearning for approval can lead us to all kinds of behaviors that are not in keeping with our two great calls: To love the Lord, our God, with all our being and to love our neighbor as ourselves. In Christ we are covered with the righteousness of Jesus himself. We are dearly loved by God who carries us close to his heart and dances over us with joy. Imagine being free of the need of approval of others and instead living lives of gratitude for the sacrificial love of God. Does that change your agenda? Attitude? Motivation?

Prayer: Oh God, living in flesh here on earth we are so tempted to seek approval of other fallen people. Help us instead to seek first YOUR Kingdom, to love you whole-heartedly, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. In the words of St Augustine, help us to seek not so much to be loved as to love.

Friday, May 20

Read: Acts 12:5, 13-15

Reflect: The church was earnestly praying for Peter, but when he showed up at their door they were in shock. Rhoda ran to tell the others and didn't even open the door for him! This isn't surprising, is it? God's answer to their prayers was certainly more dramatic than they expected. How often do we pray, but fail to keep our eyes open for God's answer? God's response may not be as astonishing as the church experienced at that time but is often not at all what we expected. Can we pray with our eyes open, watching to see God at work?

Prayer: Almighty God, thank you that you hear our prayers. Help us to pray in faith and to keep our eyes open to see you respond. May we give you thanks and praise as we see you at work.

Saturday, May 21

Read Isaiah 1:12-20

Today is Armed Forces Day. Take the time to thank those who are and have served our country in all the military branches.

Sunday, May 22

Attend the service of your choosing. You might try to mix things up a little! Consider changing services this week.

Welcome live streamers.

Prepare your heart to join our brothers and sisters from every tongue and tribe in worshipping our God.

Participate in the service as you attend church with your church family or watch at home via live stream.

Facebook @ FPCAmbler.

YouTube channel: FPC Ambler

This week's devotional offerings come to us from Leslie Wise.

Monday, May 23

Read: Isaiah 1:12-17

Reflect: In these verses God seems tired, weary with His people. Their festivals and feasts have become burdensome to Him. His people were feasting and merry making without a care beyond their own satisfaction. These religious festivals lost their meaning before God. His courts were trampled with inequity. God gives us with eight action verbs that provide a way to return to Him. They are wash, remove, cease, learn, seek, reprove, defend and plead. As you read these verses, consider the required actions. Is there a place in your life where an action needs to be taken to return to God?

Prayer: Help us to discern the sins that tire us and cause us to lose hope. Thank you, Jesus. We know Your mercies are new every morning as is the courage to begin again.

Tuesday, May 24

Read: Matthew 22:9

Reflect: Ever since I was a young child, I had this uncomfortable sense that I was different from other people. It was as if I had my nose pressed against the window watching with longing the joyous festivities and activities of others. I could never find a way to enter in. When hosting a feast, take the time to look around, search for that face pressed against the window. Think about becoming a gatherer, an inviter, a welcomer or an includer of people. Jesus was clear about who to invite to the feast. “Go therefore, into the main highways and as many as you find there invite to the feasts.” People you find on the main highways may be far different from those you normally associate with. But how blessed it is to journey and learn of those who walk a different path.

Prayer: Help us to see those who are often invisible to others. We pray that we would be able to include the lonely in our lives and activities.

Wednesday: May 25

Read: Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Reflect: There was a popular song in the sixties called ‘Teach Your Children Well” by Crosby, Stills and Nash. Learning to do good implies it is something that can be taught and does not always come naturally to us. Sometimes we develop it by the consequences of bad actions or behavior. We can teach our children from an early age the blessings of doing good for others. Show them ways of justice, to have humility before others and to consider others more important than themselves. Seek out the lonely in school or neighborhood. The choice to do good may be unpopular and takes courage. Just a simple smile may lighten the load of another.

Pray: Help us to teach our children well, just not with just words but by example.

Thursday: May 27

Read: Matthew 7: 3-5

Reflect: We see ruthlessness in action every day. Our once beautiful earth seems to dwell under a stained blanket of it. Think of Cain. What was once a loving first family ended up with the murder of his own brother, Abel. From there, ruthlessness seemed to continue unchecked. How can one reprove the ruthless? We need to see the potential for it in ourselves. It is not only reserved for others. Have we been calloused, unforgiving, cruel, vindictive, mean or merciless in our thoughts or actions toward others? I found at least thirty synonyms for ruthlessness and confess I saw myself in most of them. We are in a position to reprove from a position of humility and mercy. It is from there that reproof might be beneficial and well considered.

Pray: Jesus, you ask us to take the plank out of own eyes before taking the speck out of our brother's. Give us grace to consider that the planks in our eyes may be keeping us in judgement of others.

Friday, May 28

Read: Isaiah 1:18-20

Reflect: The burden seems great, the judgement severe. The terms seem impossible to live up to. But God does not leave us without recourse. He desires our redemption and return to Him. In these verses, there is a gracious invitation that also comes with a warning. God knows our sins are scarlet and our track record before Him is poor. If we consent and obey, we will eat the fruit of the land. If not, we will be devoured by the sword. I can only imagine a sliver of my sins before God. Even the smallest cell of my body is subject to the Fall. There will always be a part of me that prefers to refuse and rebel. Ultimately, I will fail in the “eight verbs”. But relief comes in the cross. Jesus bore my scarlet and crimson sins. He consented and obeyed for my sake. The expectation of perfection before God is now loosened. We can live out the “eight verbs” in freedom

Prayer: This is Memorial Day weekend. God, we give thanks for those who had the courage to defend our country, laying down their lives to fight evil for our freedoms. We pray their families will receive the care and compassion they deserve. We are ever grateful for their service.

Saturday, May 28

Read: Matthew 7:24-29; Psalm 119:1-2 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

Reflect: On these passages. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

Pray: for the pastor who will be preaching tomorrow as he continues to prepare and for all who will participate in the worship.

Sunday, May 29

Attend the service of your choosing. Prepare your heart to join our brothers and sisters from every tongue and tribe in worshiping our God.

Participate in the service as you attend church with your church family or watch at home via live stream.

Facebook @ FPCAmbler.

YouTube channel: FPC Ambler

Monday, May 30

Read: Psalm 119:1-2

Reflect: How does walking in the law of the LORD, following his decrees, and seeking him with your whole heart make you “happy”? Can you think of some examples in your own life? And when we fall, because let’s be honest...We can rest in the knowledge that we are forgiven and covered with the righteousness of Jesus himself. Thanks be to God!

Prayer: LORD, please cultivate a love for your Word and your Way within us. Jesus, help us to follow you in all we do. When we mess up, please forgive us. Again. And again.

Tuesday, May 31

Read: Matthew 7:7-11

Reflect: Jesus taught with authority and admonished his listeners to hear and live out his words. His words are challenging, yet so worth following, not only to keep our “house” from crashing down, but also because God is GOOD! Jesus tells us that those who seek will find, those who ask will receive, and when someone knocks, the door will be opened. God gives good gifts to those who ask. He is always good, and his way is the way of life.

Prayer: Lord, you are good! We thank you that your words are trustworthy and true. How generously you give good gifts to us, your people. Thank you especially for the abundant life you give us as we walk with Jesus.

Wednesday, June 1

Read: Mark 7:21-23

Reflect: Jesus told the crowd that “only the one who does the will of my Father” will enter the kingdom of heaven. What is the will of the Father? That we love God with all our being and love our neighbor as ourselves. And what does that look like? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8.) To set that intention for your life is to sign up for the revolution of kingdom love. Are you ready?

Prayer: Lord, we thank you for your challenging words. Help us to love you more perfectly and to be agents of your love toward all we meet. What an honor that is! Forgive us when we fall short and may we, in turn, forgive imperfect others.

Thursday, June 2

Read: Mark 7:24 *Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.*

Reflect: This comes at the end of a long teaching session in which Jesus tells listeners “Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.” Can we extend the same grace toward others that Jesus extends to us? Can you be expansive in your love for those whose politics are different than yours? For those whose ideas of morality don’t align? Even for those who have wronged you? If you don’t find yourself able, tell God you are willing. Or perhaps willing to be willing. Ask him to see others through his eyes.

Prayer: Jesus, help me to love the way you love. Forgive me for judging those who don’t see life as I do. I ask you to take the log out of my own eye and see the specks in the eyes of others through your lens of grace.

Friday, June 3

Read: Matthew 7:24-29

Reflect: These words are so familiar to us that we need to stop to think about how they would have fallen on the original ears. Imagine the listeners of the day. Jesus “spoke as one who had authority.” Even now, we hear so many voices speak with authority: teachers, politicians, public health leaders, and even meteorologists! Jesus spoke with the ultimate authority and let his listeners know that if they hear his words and live by them, they will be wise. Conversely, if they hear, but do not live by them, they are foolish. What challenging words for his listeners! Challenging words for us today.

Prayer: Lord, bless us with discernment as we hear so many voices. Help us to both listen to and act on your words. This will set us apart as we live in humility, gratitude, radical forgiveness and a generosity that is incomprehensible to many. We need your help, wisdom, and strength.

Saturday, June 4

Read: Luke 19:1-10 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon. Try to place yourself right inside this familiar story.

Sunday, June 5

Attend the service of your choosing. Prepare your heart to join our brothers and sisters from every tongue and tribe in worshiping our Father in Heaven.

Participate in the service as you attend church with your church family or watch at home via live stream.

Facebook @ FPCAmbler.

YouTube channel: FPC Ambler

This week's devotional offerings are the gift of Debra Lee.

Monday, June 6

Read: Luke 19:1-10

Reflect: As children, many of us learned the story of the small Jewish man Zacchaeus who climbed the sycamore tree to see Jesus. Zacchaeus was so eager to see Jesus that he was willing to give up decorum for a glimpse. Jesus saw Zacchaeus and honored him by coming to his house. This story's deeper meaning shows us the transforming power of Christ, how being in His presence brings repentance and purifies our hearts. It shows how He came for the rich and poor alike, and that no one is beyond God's redeeming power of grace.

Prayer: Lord, we are thankful for the transforming power of your Holy Spirit, that the way you love is often surprising, and that you reward all who seek you with your presence.

Tuesday, June 7

Read: Luke 19:1-10

Reflect: As the Chief Tax Collector in Jericho, Zacchaeus was despised for extorting money beyond taxes collected for Rome to accumulate large amounts of wealth for himself. The crowd was offended when Jesus' chose to visit and dine at Zacchaeus' house. As a result of Jesus seeing and calling him down from the tree, Zacchaeus had a striking conversion and repentance, with a promise of restitution four times over to those he had extorted. An authentic encounter with Jesus changes our priorities, values, and outward behaviors. How does knowing Jesus impact the way you live your life?

Prayer: Jesus, may our relationship be deep and meaningful and may you continue your work in me and through me. Examine my heart and show me where I need to repent. May I honor you in all I think and say and do.

Wednesday, June 8

Read: Luke 19:1-10

Reflect: Like Zacchaeus, we long to see Jesus. But like the crowd, we also have prejudices and are judgmental. Do we ever find ourselves with prejudice toward those with wealth and positions of power? Can we soften our hearts by seeing that Jesus came to save *all* people, and that we are *all* in great need of God's redeeming grace for furthering His kingdom? In the light and redeeming power of Christ, can we see our need to change, yield to His will, and do whatever it takes to follow Jesus?

Prayer: God, we thank you that while you do have deep concern and care for the poor and vulnerable, your love extends to people of all demographics. We all need your grace, mercy, and forgiveness. Please expose the prejudices of my heart and help me to love like you do.

Thursday, June 9

Read: Luke 19:1-10

Reflect: Jesus must come to every house whether it's the sinful tax collector, or the judgmental crowd. Jesus sees our true nature. He has among his elect the great and wealthy, as well as the poor and marginalized. The chief of sinners can become the chief of saints. When Jesus calls, let us gladly run, welcome him into our house, and delight in His amazing grace.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, How I long to see you. May I hear your call, and with joy and a pure heart, reply, "Come in, dear Lord." Bestow upon me the amazing grace to see how your guiding hand leads the rich and poor alike to follow you into repentance to further your kingdom and assures our salvation into eternity. Amen.

Friday, June 10

Read: Luke 19:1-10

For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.

Reflect: Does this verse make you want to leap for joy? Our God is a pursuing God who sent his Son Jesus to seek and save the lost. The Bible is full of accounts of God choosing prostitutes and tax collectors, the youngest and the small. He blows apart any boundary lines we draw. He calls his own by name and calls them from the lowest gutters and the highest towers.

Prayer: Jesus, we are so thankful that you came to seek and save the lost. We confess that apart from you, we are lost. We also confess our tendency to think of some as *too* lost to be found and saved by you. Forgive us, Lord. By your grace, "I once was lost, but now am found." What a Savior you are!

Saturday June 11

Read: Mark 6:30-44 Use your imagination to picture the feeding of the five thousand.

Sunday, June 12

There is one outside service at 10:00 AM. How does a service outside feel different from those held in the church? We are hosting a block party for our community right after the service. ***Pray we will love our neighbors well.***

This week's devotional offerings are the gift of Leslie Wise.

Monday, June 13

Read: Mark 6: 30-33

Reflect: Jesus was having a wrap up moment with the disciples. They were reporting to him all they had done and taught that day. Jesus perceived the disciples were weary and hungry with the efforts they put forth. He invited them to go away to a solitary place to recharge and relax. Learning to know when we need to retreat is a precious example given to us by Jesus. Often, we don't recognize that need until we are burned out physically and emotionally. The demands of life can press in on us like the multitudes surging toward the shore. Our culture does not promote rest. But Jesus knows our frames and taught that rest is a vital component to our well-being.

Prayer: Jesus You care for us in body, mind and spirit. Help us to honor you by finding rest when we need it. Guide us to those still waters and times of refreshing.

Tuesday, June 14th

Read: Mark 6: 39, 40

Reflect: These verses paint a beautiful picture of Jesus feeding the five thousand. They were arrayed on green grass in orderly groups. Try to imagine the day. Think about the colors, smells, animals, clothes, languages, and the surge of so many people arriving at one place. The Bible isn't some dry and dusty tome but rather is alive with color and beauty. The Bible truly is "living and active." Hebrews 4: 12. Plan a trip to an art museum and view artists depictions from the Bible. Artists from ancient times to today have brought those pages to life. Consider how you would illustrate these verses.

Prayer: Bring Your Word alive to us today with all our senses. Thank you that we can appreciate Your Word in so many ways.

Wednesday, June 15

Read: Mark 6:35-42

Reflect: In verse 35, the area surrounding the large crowd was described by the disciples as desolate, the hour was late. Food was in short supply for the hungry people. Yet, in verses 39 to 44, the countryside has gone from desolation to green grass, from hunger to abundance. People were gathered in orderly groups and miraculously being fed. What was once a barren, hopeless landscape has been transformed to a scene of provision and color under Jesus' blessing. Our lives may seem fallow at times, dry and colorless. I am often waiting in an arid desert tent but have faith that Jesus will cause green growth again, that the wilderness will bloom under His hand.

Prayer: We are waiting, Lord, for those times of refreshment. Satisfy us with good things and restore our yearning souls with Your provision.

Thursday, June 16

Read: Luke 6:38

Reflect: Five thousand men had been satisfied with bread and fish, not to mention women and children. There were even leftovers to be distributed. They not only ate but were satisfied. Jesus taught them many things but cared for the multitudes physically. This is an example of God's loving generosity to us. Luke describes it this way: "Give and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure-pressed down, shaken together and running over. For by your standard of measure, it shall be measured to you in return". Scrooge learned this lesson in the Christmas Carol. He was changed from a miserable, tight-fisted miser to a truly joyful man reveling in his generosity. Let this be said of us.

Prayer: Help us to be joyful givers and to rejoice in the blessings of generosity. Help us discern the ways we greedily keep blessings to ourselves and repent.

Friday June 17

Read: Psalm 34: 8

Reflect: Naan, pita, foccacia, challah, bammy, injera, pandesal and lavash. These are just a few names given to bread made in different countries. Bread seems to have gotten a bad rap in our culture lately due to its high carb content. Yet, bread is a universal staple in cuisines around the world. Jesus knew that bread was essential to everyday life in His time. He didn't despise what was provided. Sometimes I feel guilty relishing my whole grain toast in the morning, agonizing over the glycemic index. I realized, though, that five humble loaves of bread were forever immortalized in the Gospel miracle. Now as I spread butter over my toast, I can truly say, "Taste and see that the Lord is good"!

Prayer: Jesus You are the bread of Life. Feed us where we are hungry and longing. Help us not to disdain any food out of our abundance.