THE ORDER OF SERVICE

I. Bell tap or organ voluntary as a signal for silence
II. Singing
III. The Apostles’ Creed
IV. Prayer, closing with the Lord’s Prayer in concert
V. Singing
VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
VII. Responsive reading of the lesson text by school
VIII. The Decalogue

THE LESSON

I. Organ interlude while the classes are being arranged
II. Class study of the lesson
III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
IV. Closing bell — silence

THE CLOSING

I. Singing
II. Review and application of the lesson
III. Secretary’s report
IV. The Church School Creed
V. Singing
VI. Benediction

THE APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my A.M.E. Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus’ name.

A.M.E. Discipline

EDITORIAL STAFF

Rev. Dr. Roderick Belin, Publisher
Ben Howard, Editor
Cindy Klick, Lessons
Jason Brown, Lessons
Evan Jones, Lessons
A.L. Stanfield, Copy Editor
M.E. Russell, Layout Design
**Devotion: Constant Like the Waves**

One of our church's annual mission trip destinations is a Methodist school campus in Belize, where our youth and adult leaders help with building improvements and maintenance. At the end of each work week, our mission teams enjoy a few days of sabbath time at a modest beach resort community.

The chaperones stay in a cabana that gives them a view of the students’ rooms on one side and the vast and breathtaking ocean on the other. I’ve often fallen asleep laying in the hammock on the porch or in bed listening to the steady rhythm of the waves lapping up on the shore. It’s a peaceful, soothing sound that provides me with both relaxation and comfort. Even weeks later at home, when I close my eyes, I can almost hear the ocean again. An Old Testament psalm of David describes God’s constant presence in the same way. Read and meditate on the focal Scripture below.

The next time you find sabbath in the quiet rhythms of nature, or experience waves of suffering resulting from either human choices or accidental circumstances, whisper a prayer of thanks. God’s love remains with you through it all, as steady and reliable as the ocean waves.

**Add your thoughts about this devotion here:**

---

**Focal Scripture Verse**

“Give to the Lord the glory due his name! Bow down to the Lord in holy splendor! The Lord’s voice is over the waters; the glorious God thunders; the Lord is over the mighty waters. The Lord’s voice is strong; the Lord’s voice is majestic.” — Psalm 29:2-4
Unit 1  SUFFERING Comes to All

We’ve all experienced suffering—sometimes as a consequence of our personal choices and other times for what feels like no reason. In this unit, we will learn about how God’s people in the Old and New Testaments experienced suffering.

LESSON 1

Adam and Eve lived in a paradise and had everything they needed. But they chose to ignore God’s rules, changing their lives and the lives of their descendants forever.

LESSON 2

Even our best friends let us down sometimes, simply because they’re human. Jesus learned this when his closest friends couldn’t stay awake to pray for him when he needed it the most.

LESSON 3

Imagine packing for a short vacation on your way to a new home. Along the way the journey turns into a nightmare that lasts for decades. It happened to the Israelites, complete with bad food and poisonous pests.

LESSON 4

Satan tempted Jesus with comfort, power, and control during his time fasting in the desert. Temptations lure us to act independently from God.

LESSON 5

The people of Judah followed leaders who forgot about God. They were blinded by sin, selfish deeds, and prohibited religious practices. As a result, they suffered thirty-seven years of exile and imprisonment.
Expulsion From the Garden

New Life

The garden of Eden described in Genesis was a paradise. Throughout the Bible, the garden is a shorthand for paradise and what it means to live with God. Growing a garden takes time, but let’s focus today on a miniature garden that will bear quick results.

- Why is the idea of a garden so appealing?
- Why do you think the Bible describes paradise as a garden?
- What would it feel like to be banished from paradise?

**GENESIS 3:8-24 (NRSV)**

8 They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”

10 He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

11 He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”

12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.”

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent tricked me, and I ate.”

14 The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers: he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”
To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pangs in childbirth; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

And to the man he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them.

Then the Lord God said, “See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken.

He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

KEY VERSES: The Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to farm the fertile land from which he was taken. He drove out the human. To the east of the garden of Eden, he stationed winged creatures wielding flaming swords to guard the way to the tree of life. — Genesis 3:23-24 (CEB)

THE SNAKE SAID WHAT?

Have someone read the Bible verses aloud. As they are read, say “pause” whenever you hear something in the passage that would be unexpected if it happened today. Also, say “pause” if you have a question.

Have someone volunteer as a scribe who will, on a markerboard or large sheet of paper, record the word or phrase mentioned whenever the reading is paused.
Looking at everything listed on the chart, what stands out most to you from this story?

Why do you think it was important to include this detail?

POSITIVE/NEGATIVE
Often, we tell the story of Adam and Eve as a way to explain what people did wrong, but it also can teach us positive things about how God cares for us and how we should respond to God.

What are three positive lessons you can learn from this story? (for example, “God is . . .” or “We should . . .”)
1. _____________________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________________

What are three negative lessons you can learn? (for example, “God is not . . .” or “We should not . . .”)
1. _____________________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________________

FIRST MEMORY
Draw a picture showing your first memory of doing something wrong or getting into trouble.

SOUND OF SILENCE
Close your eyes and reflect on what Adam and Eve may have felt when they left the garden and how it changed their lives.
LESSON 2 MARCH 8, 2020

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE

So Vivid
When we have deeply emotional experiences, they often become etched in our memory. Sometimes we can remember smells and details that we wouldn’t remember otherwise.

● In the space below, draw a vivid memory from your life. What does it feel like? taste like? smell like? sound like? look like?

__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________

MATTHEW 26:36-46 (NRSV)
36 Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”
37 He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated.
38 Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.”
39 And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.”
40 Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour?
41 Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
42 Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.”
43 Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.
44 So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words.
45 Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.
46 Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”
KEY VERSES: When he took Peter and Zebedee’s two sons, he began to feel sad and anxious. Then he said to them, “I am very sad. It’s as I’m dying. Stay here and keep alert with me.” — Matthew 26:37-38 (CEB)

ROCK OF GETHSEMANE
Have someone in the class read the Bible verses aloud. As you listen, write below words that express the ways in which Jesus was suffering.

1. _______________________
2. _______________________
3. _______________________
4. _______________________
5. _______________________
6. _______________________
7. _______________________

BE A FRIEND
Form three small groups and chose one of these apostles to write about: Peter, James, or John.

Apostle: ___________________________

• Reread today’s Bible verses and make notes about what your apostle did in the garden.

__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________

• How could this apostle have behaved differently in Jesus’ time of need?

__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________

8
How would you want a friend to respond in a similar situation?

Write a paragraph from the perspective of your apostle about how he would act differently.

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

What emotions do you recognize from Jesus’ prayer (v. 39) in the garden?

How can you pray for the others today?

FAST FRIENDS

Who are two or three friends you will pray for this week?

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________

Fasting helps us to be conscious of our actions and reminds us to focus on God. Fasting does not just have to mean abstaining from eating. It can also apply to other activities as well.

What is something you will fast from this week: ________________

During the time you normally would be doing this activity, remember to pray for the friends you listed.
LESSON 3

THE ISRAELITES IN THE WILDERNESS

Best and Worst
Think about the best and worst meals you’ve ever eaten. Create two menus below—one based on the best meals and one based on the worst.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MENU 1</th>
<th>MENU 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

● What makes a meal good? bad?

NUMBERS 21:4-9 (NRSV)

4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way.

5 The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.”

6 Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died.

7 The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.
8 And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.”
9 So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

**KEY VERSE:** So the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people and they bit the people. Many of the Israelites died. — Numbers 21:6 (CEB)

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**

Pick one of the Bible verses at random.

- How does your particular verse fit into the larger story? Is it pleasant or unpleasant? Remember that even though we suffer through failures, disappointments, and pain, God ultimately provides healing.

**BREAD AND WATER**

- When have you been frustrated by the food your family provides for you? Have you ever expressed this frustration? What was their response?

- What do you think about the way God punished the Israelites? Did it surprise you?

**SNAKE ON A STICK**

- Has anyone encountered a poisonous snake? When and where?
Sketch designs for a bronze snake on a pole below.

GIVING IT UP FOR LENT
Many Christians often give up something during Lent, such as fasting from a specific food or activity, and use that time to focus on God instead.

What are you willing to give up during the upcoming week in order to spend more time with God?

__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
Jesus in the Wilderness

Go Away, Satan
Spend a few minutes reflecting on and answering the questions below.
1. What do you think would be your most challenging temptation?
2. What is the temptation you gave in to? What were the consequences?
3. Have you ever used Scripture to keep from giving into temptation?
4. How do you think Jesus responded to temptation?

MATTHEW 4:1-11 (NRSV)

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
2 He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.
3 The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”
4 But he answered, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”
5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple,
6 saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’”
7 Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”
8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor;
9 and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”
10 Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’”
11 Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

KEY VERSES: Jesus responded, “Go away, Satan, because it’s written, You will worship the Lord your God and serve only him.” The devil left him, and angels came and took care of him. — Matthew 4:10-11 (CEB)
DON’T TEMPT ME

● What’s the difference between testing and temptation?

● What does this story tell us about Jesus’ experiences as a human?

THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT

● Spend five minutes writing about times you’ve been tempted and times you’ve given into temptation. Why was the temptation so strong?

SUFFER, SUFFER NOT

With your class, discuss and make notes for the following questions about Jesus’ temptation story.

1. What do you think you would have done in this same circumstance?

2. Why do you think you would have responded in such a way?

3. What does it mean to you that Jesus responded the way he did?

QUICK AND FAST

We live in a fast-paced world that runs on instant news, fast food, and quick results. When you fast from food, technology, or other everyday things, time seems to slow down. Use this gift of time to focus on your relationship with God, your prayer life, and reevaluating your priorities.
LESSON 5 MARCH 29, 2020

THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH ARE EXILED

We Need a Better King
Spend a few minutes brainstorming personality traits that make for a good leader. Write your ideas in the space below.

2 KINGS 25:8-21 (NRSV)

8 In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month—which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.

9 He burned the house of the Lord, the king’s house, and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down.

10 All the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls around Jerusalem.

11 Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried into exile the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had defected to the king of Babylon—all the rest of the population.

12 But the captain of the guard left some of the poorest people of the land to be vinedressers and tillers of the soil.

13 The bronze pillars that were in the house of the Lord, as well as the stands and the bronze sea that were in the house of the Lord, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried the bronze to Babylon.

14 They took away the pots, the shovels, the snuffers, the dishes for incense, and all the bronze vessels used in the temple service,
as well as the firepans and the basins. What was made of gold the captain of the guard took away for the gold, and what was made of silver, for the silver.

As for the two pillars, the one sea, and the stands, which Solomon had made for the house of the Lord, the bronze of all these vessels was beyond weighing.

The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and on it was a bronze capital; the height of the capital was three cubits; latticework and pomegranates, all of bronze, were on the capital all around. The second pillar had the same, with the latticework.

The captain of the guard took the chief priest Seraiah, the second priest Zephaniah, and the three guardians of the threshold;

from the city he took an officer who had been in command of the soldiers, and five men of the king’s council who were found in the city; the secretary who was the commander of the army who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the city.

Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.

The king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah went into exile out of its land.

KEY VERSE: The king of Babylon struck them down, killing them in Riblah in the land of Hamath. — 2 Kings 25:21 (CEB)

INTO EXILE

● What do you think caused this decline?

● What caused God’s people to lose what they were promised?

WHAT LED TO THIS?

● Make notes about sins of omission (things we should do but don't, either on purpose or not), sins of pride, and examples of idolatry (allowing other things to come before God) in 2 Kings 23–25.
1. Why did the Israelites disregard God and worship idols instead?

2. What makes sin so attractive, both to the Israelites and to us?

3. Why do some people call pride the root of other sins?

4. What are idols in our culture that prevent us from putting God first?

PAIN AND PRESENCE

With your class, brainstorm answers to the following questions.

● What thoughts and feelings do you think the people of Judah experienced as they were exiled from their homeland?

● What do you think would have helped these people in their suffering as they were forced to leave their homeland for an unknown country?

SLOW DOWN, STOP

Typically, when we talk about fasting, we talk about food. However, you can fast from activities also. Every day this week I will fast ten minutes from this activity:

Sunday: ____________________
Monday: ____________________
Tuesday: ____________________
Wednesday: ____________________
Thursday: ____________________
Friday: ____________________
Saturday: ____________________

Wednesday: ____________________
Devotion: God’s Generous Grace

In the earliest chapters of the Bible, we learn how God shaped the water and the land and crafted life itself. We read in the Book of Genesis that God called all of Creation “good.” Finally, God put a cherry on top of Creation by bringing forth humankind and called it “very good.”

Sadly, this very good thing was marred—but not destroyed—by the choices of human beings. At the heart of these choices was a lack of trust in the God who created us. Adam and Eve trusted the serpent instead of God, and a choice was made when the serpent tempted Adam and Eve and whispered, “You will not die.”

Adam and Eve’s choice has echoed through the years, and their sin has been repeated by every generation since. This choice not only damaged our relationship with God and others but also damaged our connection to God’s creation. Even today, in our hesitation to trust God, we allow jealousy, anger, and greed to color our interactions with others, and we see ourselves as not good enough.

Still, no matter how extensive sin’s damaging effects have been, they are overwhelmed by God’s generous grace. Salvation extends to every part of our lives and every part of our world. We can view ourselves as precious children of God and others as bearers of the image of God. Our sin is cancelled and our relationship with God is reconciled. We are cleansed. We are healed. We are restored.

Add your thoughts about this devotion here:

_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________

Focal Scripture Verse

“God saw everything he had made: it was supremely good.”
—Genesis 1:31
LESSON 6

Hearing Jesus’ final words on the cross stirs deep emotion. Also, it’s important to understand the meaning in the symbolism of the temple curtain being torn in two and God inviting us into God’s presence.

LESSON 7

On the third day after his crucifixion, Jesus rose from the dead and conquered death. This miraculous moment both surprised his disciples and opened the door for us to join him in eternal life.

LESSON 8

The story of salvation did not begin with Jesus. Rather, Jesus was the culmination of God’s promise of redemption and the restoration of all that was lost. The temple was also a symbol of this promise.

LESSON 9

The words of John the Baptist point us toward Jesus and help us understand who he truly is. John the Baptist not only prepared the way for the Messiah but also prepares us for baptism through the Holy Spirit.
**The Hinge of History**

**Most Memorable**
On a typical day most people are awake for around 16 to 17 hours. That’s a good span of time, and we can pack a lot of activity into a normal day. That’s even more true on exceptionally memorable days.

- Use the space below to describe the events of your most memorable day.

---

**MARK 15:22-39 (NRSV)**

22 Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull).
23 And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it.
24 And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.
25 It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him.
26 The inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.”
27 And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left.
28 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “And he was counted among the lawless.”
29 Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!”
30 In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself.
31 Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.
32 When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.
33 At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
35 When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “Listen, he is calling for Elijah.”
36 And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.”

37 Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

39 Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

**KEY VERSES:** But Jesus let out a loud cry and died. The curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. — Mark 15:37-38 (CEB)

**TRACE THE TIME**

Draw a clock face in the circle and fill it with the events laid out in today’s Bible verses.

**PICK A PERSPECTIVE**

Choose one of the observers in the Bible verses and rewrite the story from his or her perspective using the space below.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
WHAT DOES SALVATION MEAN?
How would you define or explain salvation in ten words or less?
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________

Fill in the following blanks about salvation:
● Through God’s generous salvation, I have freedom from ____________.
● Through God’s generous salvation, I have freedom to ____________.
● Because of God’s generous salvation, I will pray for ____________, ____________, and ____________.

GENEROUS GENESIS
Read over your answers in the previous activity and, in the space below, write a brief prayer of thanksgiving and intercession based on those answers.

_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
LESSON 7  APRIL 12, 2020

THE RESOUNDING RESURRECTION

Believe It or Not

● How deep is the deepest part of the ocean?

● How many McDonald’s restaurants are in the world?

● How tall is the Statue of Liberty?

● How many miles of highway are in the United States?

● What is the average distance from the earth to the moon?

The world can be an intriguing, surprising place! Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is one of the most surprising things that has ever happened.

MATTHEW 28:1-10 (NRSV)

1 After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

2 And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

4 For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.

5 But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.

6 He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.”

8 So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

9 Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him.

10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my
KEY VERSES: But the angel said to the women, “Don’t be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He isn’t here, because he’s been raised from the dead, just as he said. Come, see the place where they laid him.” — Matthew 28:5-6 (CEB)

RESURRECTION REACTION

● In the Bible verses, underline or highlight the ways in which different people responded to Jesus’ resurrection.

ENGAGING THE EMPTY TOMB

● How do you think you would have responded to Jesus’ death?

_______________________________________________________

● What emotions might you have felt? ________________________

● How do you respond now to the news of the Resurrection?

_______________________________________________________

● What emotions do you feel? _______________________________

SHARE THE STORY SKIT

Form groups of two or three. Have each group pick a target audience (ie. students, teachers, strangers, government leaders, etc.) and then use the following questions to create a three-minute skit to explain the Resurrection story to them.

Audience: _______________________________________________

● Where would you begin the story of the Resurrection?

_______________________________________________________

● What details would you include?

_______________________________________________________

● How would you explain what the Resurrection means?

_______________________________________________________

GENEROUS HOPE

Write the name (or multiple names) of someone you can give the gift of hope to this week. ________________________________
God Keeps His Promises

God Calling

Spend a few minutes responding to the following questions.

1. What is the primary way you communicate with your family? your friends?

2. What is the primary way you communicate with God?

3. How does God communicate with you? What examples can you think of from your life? from Scripture?

HAGGAI 2:1-9 (NRSV)

In the second year of King Darius, 1 in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai, saying:

2 Speak now to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, and say,

3 Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Is it not in your sight as nothing?

4 Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the Lord; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says the Lord; work, for I am with you, says the Lord of hosts,

5 according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My spirit abides among you; do not fear.

6 For thus says the Lord of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land;

7 and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the Lord of hosts.

8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts.

9 The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the Lord of hosts.

KEY VERSE: This house will be more glorious than its predecessor, says the Lord of heavenly forces. I will provide prosperity in this place, says the Lord of heavenly forces. — Haggai 2:9 (CEB)
In the Bible verses, circle every time that God makes a promise. Then answer the following questions.

1. What happened in the Bible verses? What questions do you have about the story? ________________________________________

2. What does God want the people to do? ______________________

3. Why haven’t the Israelites already done what God wants them to do? ____________________________________________

4. What does God promise the people? _____________________

**POETIC PROCESSING**

A *haiku* is a Japanese style of poetry that has five syllables in the first and last lines and seven syllables in the second line. The poem does not have to rhyme.

Write a haiku that will help you remember who God is and your relationship to God.

5 SYLLABLES

7 SYLLABLES

5 SYLLABLES

**BUILDING YOUR LIFE**

Draw a big circle in the space below, then a medium circle inside of it, and a small circle at the center. (1) In the outer circle, write activities you do every day; (2) In the middle circle, write your most frequent thoughts; (3) In the center circle, state your priority in life.
Are you happy with how your “temple” is constructed? Why or why not?

How could you construct your life to be more focused on God?

GENEROUS LOVE
Write below a brief reminder of your responsibilities for serving your church or community in the coming week.
HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

**Personal Playlist**
Build a personal playlist by choosing a song for each particular moment or mood.

1. Triumphant moment song: _______________________________
2. Moment of fun song: ___________________________________
3. Sad moment song: _____________________________________
4. Difficult moment song: _________________________________
5. Music for entering a room: ______________________________
6. Song that defines your faith: _____________________________
7. Song for praising God: _________________________________
8. Song for quiet reflection: ______________________________

**MARK 1:1-8 (NRSV)**

1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;
3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’”
4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
5 And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.
6 Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.
7 He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.
8 I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”
KEY VERSES: He announced, “One stronger than I am is coming after me. I’m not even worthy to bend over and loosen the strap of his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” — Mark 1:7-8 (CEB)

PRELUDE TO THE MESSIAH

Work with your class to develop a skit depicting this passage and using the space below to make notes. Plan to present your skit.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

STRANGER THINGS

With your class, talk about the following questions and make notes about interesting points in your conversation.

1. If someone like John the Baptist appeared today—unkept, living isolated from civilization, talking about the coming of God—what would we say about the person?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. What does our imagined response tell us about our lives and our faith?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. How can we be open to hearing the prophetic message of God from unexpected people and places?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT
The evidence of God's Spirit is all around us. Paul describes the fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. Draw a line connecting each person(s) with the fruit of the Spirit you observe in her or his life. Add other people if you wish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEOPLE IN MY LIFE</th>
<th>FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Role Model</td>
<td>Patience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
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<td>Goodness</td>
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<td>Faithfulness</td>
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<td>Gentleness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-control</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

GENEROUS FRUIT
● Where do you see the fruit of the Spirit in your life?
  a. ___________________________________________________
  b. ___________________________________________________
  c. ___________________________________________________

● How can you use the fruit of the Spirit in your life to show generosity to others?
  ____________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________
Many of us were baptized as children or infants and don’t remember our baptisms. That’s why the service of Reaffirmation of Baptism has always been special to me. We baptize babies because God’s grace extends to everyone, even if they are not able to acknowledge it. We call this prevenient grace. As a result, it’s important to remember that our baptism connects us with Jesus in real and meaningful ways.

In this service, we read a version of the baptismal liturgy and water is placed on our foreheads as a reminder of our baptism. My spiritual journey has been marked by several specific moments when I was able to reaffirm my baptismal covenant—at camp, during Lent, and at the baptism of my own child. Each experience allowed me to reconnect with God and experience the grace I received at my baptism, since I was too young to remember it. The reaffirmation service includes these powerful words:

*Today we come to the waters,*
*to renew our commitments*
*in each other’s presence*
*to Christ who has raised us,*
*the Spirit who has birthed us,*
*and the Creator who is making all things new.*

Allow these words to wash over you and remind you that we receive the gift of grace through living water. God loves you, redeems you, and sustains you. Through these words we know we receive a gift of God.

**Add your thoughts about this devotion here:**

_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________

**Focal Scripture Verse**

“All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” — Galatians 3:27

What do a thief, a murderer, and a doubter have in common? God responded to all of them with grace and forgiveness. In this unit, God, who makes all things new, loves humanity and shows limitless compassion and grace.

LESSON 10
The theme of life-giving water is found throughout Scripture. In this lesson, you will explore the use of this symbol in Revelation and how it leads us to a deeper truth about God’s sustaining grace.

LESSON 11
After Cain murders his brother, God sends him into exile. Still, God extends grace and forgiveness, protecting Cain from those who would hurt him. Even when we do wrong, God continues to love and care for us.

LESSON 12
During their time in the wilderness, the people of Israel were filled with anxiety, fear, and doubt. We often experience these same feelings. This lesson reminds us that God always provides us with what we need.

LESSON 13
The thief on the cross beside Jesus needed to know that God would never let him down, even in the face of death. Jesus’ assurance of grace towards the thief is the same grace Jesus extends to us.

LESSON 14
God is still doing new things in the church today. God’s grace allows us to embrace and participate in this new life.
**The River of Life-Giving Water**

**The Future**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5 Years—2025</th>
<th>10 Years—2030</th>
<th>50 Years—2070</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write your age in this year here:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation: What will we be using to get around?</td>
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<td>Fashion: What will we be wearing?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Society: What events will shape our society?</td>
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<td>Sports: What games will we be playing?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology: What devices/systems will we use to connect with one another?</td>
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**REVELATION 22:1-5 (NRSV)**

1. Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb
2. through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.
3. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him;
4. they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.
5. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

**KEY VERSE:** They won't need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine on them, and they will rule forever and always. — Revelation 22:5 (CEB)
LECTIO DIVINA

Have someone read the Bible verses aloud.

1. Listen as the Bible verses are read.

2. As you listen to the Scripture, underline words or phrases that catch your attention.

3. Now read the Bible verses silently. Circle five key words that you think best summarize the passage.

HAVE I HEARD THIS BEFORE?

With your class, talk about the following questions and make notes about interesting points in your conversation.

1. Throughout the Book of Revelation the author alludes to a number of different Scriptures, including Jeremiah 3:17, Psalm 119:105, Luke 8:16-18, Isaiah 2:5, and John 8:12.

2. Read some of these verses and note in the space below the similarities you see between these verses and today’s Bible verses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verses:</th>
<th>Similarities:</th>
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CITY OF JEWELS

Talk about the following questions with your class.

1. How do you think the idea of the New Jerusalem applies to your life?

2. What would it mean to you to be made new in the same way as the city described in Revelation?
LIVING WATER TODAY
Explore one or more of the following websites:

- www.thelastwell.org/
- www.charitywater.org
- www.water.cc

- What did you learn about the global water crisis?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

- What are some ways you can help, either personally or as a community?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
God’s Grace Toward Adam, Eve, and Cain

Offering Grace

What is something someone has done or could do that would cause you to stop speaking to him or her?

Read aloud the following statement:

“I know you have ________________, but I still believe you are a child of God and that you are worthy of grace.”

How did it feel saying these words aloud?

What does it mean to offer grace to someone even when what the person did was wrong?

Genesis 3:21 (NRSV)

21 And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them.

4:10-16

10 And the Lord said, “What have you done? Listen; your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground!

11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.

12 When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength; you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.”

13 Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is greater than I can bear!

14 Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me.”

15 Then the Lord said to him, “Not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance.” And the Lord put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him.

16 Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.
KEY VERSE: The Lord God made the man and his wife leather clothes and dressed them. — Genesis 3:21 (CEB)

BROTHERLY LOVE?
With your class, talk about the following questions:
1. What happens in these verses?
2. What is the central conflict between the brothers?
3. Where is grace and/or forgiveness found in this story?

MET WITH GRACE
Use the space below to journal about a time in your life when you messed up and someone extended forgiveness to you or gave you a second chance. (You will not share this story publicly.)

A LITTLE MORE
Pair up with someone in the class. Have one person play the role of God and describe what he or she is thinking about in this situation. The other person will take Cain’s perspective.

● Which role are you playing? ______________________________
● As you talk, consider the following questions:
  a. Does God need/have to forgive Cain?
  b. Does Cain deserve grace? Do we ever deserve grace?
  c. Why shouldn’t God protect Cain?
What do you want to say to God/Cain? Write below your feelings, thoughts, and expectations?

_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________

MY BROTHER’S KEEPER
Is there someone you know who is in need of care?

Someone you’re close to: ________________________________
Someone you know a little: ____________________________
Someone you are not close to: __________________________

What is something you can do this week to care for each person you named above?

1. I will _________________________________________
2. I will _________________________________________
3. I will _________________________________________
LESSON 12 MAY 17, 2020

God Provides Food in the Wilderness

Going Without

● In the space below, list five items that are most essential to your survival.

1. ____________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________

With your class, think and talk about what it would be like to live for a day without these five items.

● What sort of day would it be? _____________________________

● How would it feel to be without something you need or be unable to provide for yourself? _______________________________________

EXODUS 16:2-15 (NRSV)

2 The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

3 The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

4 Then the Lord said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.

5 On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.”

6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

7 and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your complaining against the Lord. For what are we, that you complain against us?”
And Moses said, “When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the Lord has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the Lord.”

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, ‘Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining.’”

And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

The Lord spoke to Moses and said,

“I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.’”

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp.

When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground.

When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.”

KEY VERSE: “I’ve heard the complaints of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat. And in the morning you will have your fill of bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.’” — Exodus 16:12 (CEB)

ANXIETY STORY TIME

Use the space below to write a short story about a moment in your life when you felt the most worried or anxious.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Write a short prayer asking for God’s grace and comfort during moments of anxiety or stress.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
TASTE THE BREAD
Gather at least five different types or kinds of bread (such as sourdough, rolls, crackers, etc.) and present each type on a different plate. Have the class try them. Use the space below to make notes about the different kinds of bread you taste in regards to texture, taste, scent, and overall appeal. Also, describe what you liked/disliked about each type of bread.

Consider the following: Why do you think bread is so important in the Bible? What are some ways that bread sustains life? How can bread be a symbol of God’s grace in our lives?

BREAD FOR EVERYONE
There are several ways your class can work together to help provide food for others:

● Baking bread and delivering it to homebound members of your congregation
● Leading a church-wide food drive for a local food bank
● Volunteering to serve a meal to the local homeless population
● Other ideas: __________________________________________

Research these ideas and create a plan of action for an idea of your choosing.

PLAN OF ACTION:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
LESSON 13
MAY 24, 2020

GRACE TO THE DYING THIEF

Steal a Wink

RULES OF THE GAME

1. One person is tapped on the shoulder. This person is “it.”

2. Teens must make eye contact with one another.

3. The person who is “it” begins winking at people while trying to avoid detection by others.

4. If you receive a wink from “it,” you must say aloud, “I am out.” You can wait a few seconds in order to make it more difficult to identify “it.”

5. If you think you know who “it” is, you must raise your hand and identify the person. If you are correct, you win. If you are wrong, you are out.

6. The game continues until “it” is identified or there are only two people left playing the game.

Have you ever been caught doing something you knew you weren’t supposed to do? What happened?

LUKE 23:32-33, 39-43 (NRSV)

32 Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him.

33 When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.

39-43

39 One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

40 But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?

41 And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.”
Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

KEY VERSES: Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus replied, “I assure you that today you will be with me in paradise.” — Luke 23:42-43 (CEB)

FEEL THE PAIN

Have everyone in your class stand up and spread apart, holding your arms out to your sides without touching anyone. Now try holding both arms straight out in front of you and remain silent for one minute.

● What did you think of this experience?

● How did your arms being tired affect the way you heard the Bible lesson?

● How might this experience cast a light on the attitude of the thief on the cross?

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

● Spend a few minutes reflecting on actions you would like to confess or areas of your life in which you believe you fall short of God’s ideal. Write them below.

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

● What does forgiveness mean to you?

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

COVERED BY GOD

● What does the word redeemed mean?

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________
“God help me live as a redeemed child of God, bringing the kingdom of God to earth in all that I say and do.”

Use a black marker to black out the confessions you made in the “Confession and Forgiveness” section.

● What did it feel like to have your sins “covered” up?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

● How might this inspire a fresh start to a new way of living?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

LOVING THE THIEF
Write a short prayer about our need for forgiveness and our need to support and forgive others.
The Holy Spirit Inspires Jesus’ Followers

Guess the Language

1. “Car là où deux ou trois sont assemblés en mon nom, je suis au milieu d’eux.”
2. “Porque donde dos o tres se reúnen en mi nombre, allí estoy yo en medio de ellos.”
3. “Ubi enim sunt duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo, ibi sum in medio eorum.”
4. “Poiché dovunque due o tre son raunati nel nome mio, quivi son io in mezzo a loro.” Guess the language:

Was this activity difficult for you? Why or why not?

_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________

ACTS 2:1-21 (NRSV)

1. When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.
2. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.
3. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.
4. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.
5. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.
And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?

And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?

Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,

Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.”

All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”

But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.

Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning.

No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

“In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.

Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

KEY VERSE: And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. — Acts 2:21 (CEB)

A NEW THING

What are three things you are excited to see your church doing?

1. _____________________________________________________

2. _____________________________________________________

46
What are three things you would like to do as part of your church community?

1. _____________________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________________

Spend a few minutes answering the following questions: What does it mean to you to know that God is still active and alive within our lives? How does knowing encourage you?

_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________

BLACKOUT POETRY
Blackout poetry is a creative exercise where words are removed from an already written text in order to create a poem from the words that remain visible. Today, we are going to create a blackout poem using our Bible verses in order to make a “new thing.” Take five minutes and create a blackout poem. Examples can be found online using the words ‘blackout poetry’ to search.

When Pentecost Day arrived, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind filled the entire house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be individual flames of fire alighting on each one of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak. There were pious Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered. They were mystified because everyone heard them speaking in their native languages. They were surprised and amazed, saying, “Look, aren’t all the people who are speaking Galileans, every one of them? How then can each of us hear them speaking in our native language? Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; as well as residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the regions of Libya bordering Cyrene; and visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring
the mighty works of God in our own languages!” They were all surprised and bewildered. Some asked each other, “What does this mean?” Others jeered at them, saying, “They’re full of new wine!” Peter stood with the other eleven apostles. He raised his voice and declared, “Judeans and everyone living in Jerusalem! Know this! Listen carefully to my words! These people aren’t drunk, as you suspect; after all, it’s only nine o’clock in the morning! Rather, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young will see visions. Your elders will dream dreams. Even upon my servants, men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will cause wonders to occur in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and a cloud of smoke. The sun will be changed into darkness, and the moon will be changed into blood, before the great and spectacular day of the Lord comes. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

NEW IDEAS
Write a brief prayer thanking God for new ideas and asking for creativity in carrying out your dreams for the church.