

## **Welcome and Announcements**

*We can't forget our offerings*

*Last Wednesday night service – Next week service at 7 on Maundy Thursday and 7 on Good Friday*

### **The Service:**

P: In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen**

P: You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice.

C: **And you shall serve him and hold fast to him**

P: Be faithful unto death

C: **And I will give you the crown of life**

P: For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

C: **Therefore we give glory to God who raised him up and gave us the promise of salvation. Amen**

## **Confession and Absolution**

P: Jesus said, "Whoever is of God hears the words of God"

C: **Gracious God, we confess our slowness to hear Jesus' words calling us to choose a life of love and service. We often hear the roaring of our own willfulness and ignore the urging of Jesus to follow him. We set our own path, seek our own advantage, cling to the things we have made for ourselves and turn away from the guiding of the Spirit. Forgive us, Lord. Open our ears to hear Jesus' call, our eyes to see the needs he sends us to fill, our mouths to speak the good word to those who need to hear it and our hearts to receive the Spirit's leading. Fire us by your Spirit to be about the life choices you have called us to make. Let us overflow with the doing that proclaims your very presence with us.**

P: I have the honor and privilege, by the grace of God, of announcing to you the entire forgiveness of your sins. In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven and free – free to share the steadfast love of God with all.

## **Old Testament Reading: Psalm 119:1-8**

Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD. <sup>2</sup>Happy are those who keep his decrees, who seek him with their whole heart, <sup>3</sup>who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways. <sup>4</sup>You

have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. <sup>5</sup> O that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! <sup>6</sup> Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. <sup>7</sup> I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous ordinances. <sup>8</sup> I will observe your statutes; do not utterly forsake me.

### **Epistle Reading: Ephesians 4:1-6**

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

### **The Gospel according to the book of Matthew 26:36-46. Glory to you a Lord**

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." <sup>37</sup> He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. <sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." <sup>39</sup> 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." <sup>40</sup> 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? <sup>41</sup> Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; <sup>[a]</sup> the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." <sup>42</sup> Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." <sup>43</sup> Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. <sup>44</sup> So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. <sup>45</sup> 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. <sup>46</sup> Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

### **The Gospel of our Lord. Praise to you O, Christ**

#### **Children's Message: (*rfour.org*)**

Hello kids

*[Hold up an extension cord]* Can you tell me what this is? (an extension cord!)

And what does it do? (it helps bring power/electricity to a place where there is not power/electricity)

Do you mean you might use it for a lamp that's too far away from an electric outlet? (Sure, like a lamp)

And what happens if the extension cord isn't long enough? (Then you get a longer extension cord...or you move the lamp)

But what if you can't move the lamp and you don't have a longer extension cord...can you just unplug the extension cord you already have from the wall and bring it over to the lamp? Wouldn't that fix the problem? (NO! Because the extension cord has to be *plugged in* to be able to send the power)

Oh...I see...so THAT'S why none of my lamps at home work...

Well, it just so happens, that in today's scripture story, Jesus tells a story that's very similar to the idea of an extension cord.

But instead of extension cords, he's talking about people, and instead of plugging those people into an electric outlet (which would be dangerous!), he's talking about how the people are supposed to be plugged into God.

So in his story, Jesus says that people who *are* plugged into God are able to share God's love, light, and power with the people around them – especially with people who are not doing so well.

Jesus then says there are other people who are *supposed* to be plugged into God but are *not* plugged in – like the extension cords at my house.

Many of the ways that Jesus taught the disciples about plugging into God's power are told in the Bible stories – which means we can read those stories and learn to do the same things that Jesus taught the disciples to do.

And, when we learn to do the same things that the disciples learned to do, we are learning how to be extension cords for God.

As we learn how to plug into God's power, light, and love – then we are also learning how to be God's sheep who share God's love, light, and power with those who aren't yet close enough to God to be able to plug into God's power, light, and love on their own.

What Jesus was teaching his disciples was that they were *meant* to be extension cords of God

And, the same is true for us.

You, me – all of us – are meant to know and then extend to others God’s love, light, and power – just like Jesus did.

And that is the Good News for today. Let’s pray...

This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

**Dear God,**  
Dear God,

**Thank you for Jesus...**  
Thank you for Jesus...

**...who teaches us...**  
...who teaches us...

**...how to receive...**  
...how to receive...

**...your love, light, and power.**  
...your love, light, and power.

**...so that we can extend...**  
...so that we can extend...

**...your love, light, and power to others.**  
...your love, light, and power to others.

**Thank you and amen.**

### **Message:**

Cross road. They are there for all of us. We may move along from day to day easily, walking in the sunshine, enjoying the view, feeling at peace. And then it comes. A crossroad. A choice point. There we stand, frozen in the spot. Which way now? Right? Left? Straight? What waits down each of those choices? Which way does our heart call us to go? Which makes sense? Which is God’s way?

The answers aren’t easy. A crossroad can bring daunting spiritual pain. And it can bring us to our knees. It can even bring destruction. Tonight, we have an expert on the crossroad of obedience. This week we will listen to the words of John – he was there in the Garden when Jesus faced that crossroad – when he confronted his part in God’s plan of salvation. Let us hear the voice of the disciple John – the “disciples that Jesus loved”

I am almost embarrassed to be here. Yes, I was in the Garden with Jesus, but I certainly didn't understand what was going on and I certainly was no help to him here. He went away from us to pray. He asked me to pray with him – I could he was struggling, bet after the meal, after the cups of wine we drank with the Passover meal, after the walk to the Garden in the dark, I just couldn't keep my eyes open. I admit it – I fell asleep.

I didn't realize the terror that Jesus was facing – not then. It was not unusual for us to go off as a group and join Jesus in prayer. It happened often, Jesus was busy at prayer many times as we traveled with him. I just didn't know what was going on that night there in the Garden.

I certainly understand now. I wish I could go back to the garden and do it over. I wish I could join Jesus in his prayer, in his struggle. I know that it would be different now. Jesus was facing the most difficult crossroad in his life. He was staring at the reality of the suffering that he would have to endure, facing the cross and most terribly, facing it alone.

We knew that Jesus was tempted in his life to step away from God's plan for him, God's plan for us. Satan harassed him like he had done in the wilderness with a way out, a way to avoid the suffering. "Just bow down and worship me," Satan said. "And I will give all this to you." He was offering a shortcut that avoided the cross, but Jesus sent him away and clung to the path that God had set for him.

I am so inspired that Jesus chose to obey, in spite of the terror that faced him. I am also convicted – perhaps even like the rest of you. I have faced a crossroad like Jesus' many times in my life. Oh, not with the weight of the world on my shoulders of course, but with my own heart in conflict over which way to go. I faced that crossroad every time I came to the place where I heard the voice in me say: "Look, you know what will happen if you choose to obey God's claim on your life, you will be hurt, you will be excluded, you will be scorned, you will be persecuted. Every time I stood at the crossroad, I remembered Jesus in the garden and asked him to stay awake with me and watch with me and pray for me.

In those years after Jesus ascended, all of us who followed him were faced with the choice to follow or deny him. If we denied him we could escape the threats, the persecution, even the death that faced us. We were outcast, rejected by many of our brothers, and threatened often with suffering or death. I asked God's help to remain faithful and encouraged others to do the same in my book called Revelation. I wrote "do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life".  
(Revelation 2:10)

Although you may think you aren't persecuted or face the same kind of crossroad you do. You face the crossroad of obedience every time you confront a choice that asks will you follow your own way, the way of the world, the way that others push you to, the way you think will be easiest or most pleasant for you. Or will you follow the way Jesus would lead you – the way of obedience.

Those kinds of choices happen every day and that is why you need the power and presence of God's Spirit every day. That's what Jesus was doing there in the Garden and on the cross. He was bringing forgiveness and new life to you there. By God's power and the sacrifice of Jesus you begin each day new and forgiven, new and able to make the choice of obedience.

Here's another think I wrote in my Gospel, Jesus said "Abide in me, and I in you" (John 15:4). You can make the right choices. The same Jesus who struggled there in the Garden, the one who went to the cross, the one who rose is there in our hearts, with us at our crossroad and in our choices.

John shared with us words of encouragement. We can remember with John and rejoice with you for what Jesus has done and what he will do in us and through us. Amen.

## Prayers

P: Let us bring our prayers and petitions to God who hears and answers the pleas of our hearts. We pray for your world and our own nation. Lord, send your Spirit into our nation and into this sinful and sick world. Be with those who live in places of violence and persecution. Strengthen and save the oppressed, the persecuted, the victims of injustice, the victims of wars and the victims of this horrible virus and all who cry to you for help. Give faithful leaders to our nation and throughout the world. Make us all agents of healing in this hurting world as we continue to keep our distance and strive to put an end to the illness in our world. In your mercy, **Hear us Lord.**

We pray for your congregation and your whole church. Send faithful pastors and leaders so that they might act as your shepherds among your people. Inspire your followers to evidence your loving gifts in their lives. In your mercy, **Hear us Lord.**

Lord, give us hearts that overflow with the grace and love you have shown to us in Jesus Christ. Put your Word in our hearts so that we might demonstrate the new life that you have bought for us. Guide our hands as we serve, our voices as we praise, our feet as we follow and our hearts as we constantly turn to you. Make us able to choose the good you would have us do. In your mercy, **Hear us Lord.**

We pray for the sick, the suffering, the grieving and the lonely. We lift up those throughout the world who are fighting to beat the illnesses. We lift up all of those amazing and life-giving health care workers who continue to work to keep us well and healing. We thank for those in the other service areas who continue to put themselves in the public in order to keep us all fed and functioning. And most of all Lord we lift up those in our congregation who are not only separated from each other, but those that are dealing with health issues on top of everything else going on in this world. We also lift up those that we name now in our hearts. We commit them all to your loving care. Heal, help and comfort them all according to your will. In your mercy, **Hear us Lord.**

These and all other petitions and request we bring before you in the name of Jesus. Let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us.

### **Lord's Prayer**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen

### **Hymn of the Day: Abide in Me**

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour;  
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?  
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

### **Blessing:**

May our Lord Jesus, who leads us, God the Father who loves us and sent his Son for us, and the Holy Spirit who inspires and enables us to live in service, be with us, bless us and send us. In the name of the Father, and the +Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen







# Bible Pathway Adventures

WORD SEARCH

## GETHSEMANE

A M Y M L Q Y A M C K Z D E G B V M D S  
X P C D C C J E L T M L A N T E R N S B  
M V H K P H A U S M J K S T W I M J X C  
A K F A E F G R D H Z H G E B Y O N K H  
O U A F R G I E B A U J L N B W U R Q I  
V I O D H I J M T I S A L V W A N T S E  
V D L Q O D S R E H D R J E F Z T W M F  
J Q W P O C M E T J S D U G L H O T Q P  
P D O R R S S P E R R E Z S Y D F C Y R  
D A J S O E O B M S M V M I R T O A B I  
I G S A W Z S J P Z I P Y A E H L M E E  
S J C S V Y L S T H B R F O N H I B T S  
C P F B O O A F A U J A T W Y E V U R T  
I K Q R G V P G T H L Y N Q B G E A A S  
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PASSOVER  
PRAYER  
ASLEEP  
BETRAYAL  
KISS  
MOUNT OF OLIVES

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CHIEF PRIESTS  
CRUCIFIXION  
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SWORD  
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