



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

February 12-18, 2018

ASH WEDNESDAY AND FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester:

“Covenant: A Global Guarantee”

Notes from sermon on 2/11:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Question (before sermon):

What simple kindness each day this week has shown you a glimpse of God’s everlasting steadfast love?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. What is the difference between God’s understanding of a covenant and the human understanding of a contract.
2. How difficult is it for you to believe that God always keeps God’s covenants?
3. Why does God make covenants with humankind anyway?

Monday, February 12: Read Genesis 9:8-17

This week we prepare for two worship services, Ash Wednesday and the first Sunday of Lent, by drawing on lectionary readings from both. What is our attitude in preparing for this season? Do we approach it with trepidation, a sense of dread, or a sense of condemnation? Do we approach it as New Year’s Resolutions, Take Two? Or could we approach it with gratitude for what God has done for us and excitement for what God will do through us and in us... including convicting us of our shortcomings so we turn our lives around (repent), be healed, and not feel condemned? This is the joy of Lent, and freedom that comes with facing sometimes difficult truths about ourselves and our world.

But first, the good news. Before we get to the ashes, we start this week with sunshine and rainbows...literally. We start with God’s promise to Noah and all of Creation to never destroy us again. This is one of many covenants God makes with humanity in the Bible, and God never, ever breaks a single one. How we wish we could say the same about man. Have we kept our end of the covenant to not destroy the earth or each other? As co-stewards of God’s creation, have we allowed all living beings to live fully into and under this promise?

Tuesday, February 13: Read 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Our broken world begins with our broken relationship with God. Simply trying to “do better” through our own efforts will not lead to the healing of the world. Only God can do that, and our job is to allow God to do it through us. *“We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled with God,”* Paul says in today’s scripture. How can we do that? Well, that’s the great news. God has already done this for us, through Christ. *“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”* (vs. 21). We learn from today’s reading that there are two main things we must do in response to this news. First, accept the gift God has given us – our salvation through Christ- for *“now is the acceptable time”!* Second, become servants to God, facing the brokenness and pain and hardships of the world with *“purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech and the power of God.”* Let us take time examining this scripture today. Where is the breakdown in our relationship with God right now? Do we have a hard time believing that we are loved and saved through Christ? Is any part of our life impure? Are we impatient or unkind? Unloving? Untruthful? Lacking faith in Christ’s power or ability to make us righteous? God is right here, ready to be reconciled with all of us...right now.

Wednesday, February 14: ASH WEDNESDAY: Read Psalm 51:1-17

Every single verse of this exquisite psalm deserves meditation, study, and prayer. The insight of the psalmist into our human nature is simply staggering; the eloquence of his confession so universal and all-encompassing. This is more than cry for forgiveness- it is a heartfelt plea for God’s purification, transformation, discipline, joy, and sanctification so that the psalmist can effectively lead others to God. We could not ask for a better template for our Ash Wednesday prayers. Today, let us confess this psalm aloud, pausing to add personal confessions and petitions; offering specific vows for our own Lenten covenant with God.

Thursday, February 15: Read Mark 1:9-15

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” These are Christ’s first words, as recorded in the gospel according to Mark, after being baptized and beginning his ministry on earth. Repentance and good news go hand in hand, for confessing our sins leads not to ridicule and condemnation, but forgiveness and salvation. Through the gift of Christ, who without sin or blemish bore all of our sins on the cross, we can be reconciled with God, living out the covenant that God so faithfully and perfectly fulfilled with the gift of his Son. How can we simultaneously live in joy and repentance this Lenten season? How can we live both sacrificially for Christ and in the abundance Christ sacrificed for to give us?

Friday, February 16: Read Psalm 25:1-10

Lent is a journey to the cross. We have much to learn. Today, we echo the words of the psalmist in asking God to help us grow, help us transform, and help us live more in accordance to God’s will. *“Lead me in your truth, and teach me”* we ask, for *“all the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.”* Let us all strive to be keepers of the covenant, asking God to show us where we are falling short, and receiving God’s grace and mercy when we fall down. Let us ask God to teach us how to start down the path to be agents of healing all of God’s creation so that we can fulfill our end of God’s covenant for us, and for all future generations.

Saturday, February 17: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION:

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence; take not your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners till return to you.”

Sunday, February 18: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of

Common Confession: *Merciful God, we confess that without you, we are not whole. Forgive our foolish ways, reform our prideful selves, make us listen to the way of peace, remove from us the disbelief to which we cling. You are the One who liberates with a word and nourishes us with your own bruised body. Give us thankful hearts as we come to the waters of life with trust and hope. Amen.*