



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

January 21-27, 2019

Sermon by Guest Preacher Dr. Gennifer Brooks

Notes from sermon on 1/20:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

How have you seen Paul's "Body of Christ" metaphor lived out at Reveille?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

The Old Testament "year of jubilee" to which Jesus refers in his first sermon—what some have called his "mission statement"—was a time set aside every fifty years to forgive financial debt and redistribute the land among the people.

1. Why do you think God envisioned a year of jubilee?
2. What might that look like in our world today?
3. How is God calling us to share our resources today?

Monday, January 21: Read Luke 4:14-21

All of our scripture readings this week involve collective souls coming together to praise God and take care of one another as if they were one voice, one body. Rich care for the poor and forgive debts. Church congregants are called to see themselves as members of one body. The people of Israel come together to celebrate the law and bring portions of the feast back to the homebound. Even the heavens come together and tell the glory of God. Our lectionary readings, taken from all corners of the Bible, come together to reinforce the singular desire of God that all of creation be valued for its individual gifts as well as its unity and interdependence.

Today's gospel reading, the theme verse for our guest preacher Dr. Gennifer Brooks this Sunday, tells of the very beginning of Jesus's ministry, in which he declared "fulfilled" the prophesy of Isaiah in which "good news" was proclaimed to the poor, the captive, the blind, and the oppressed as a year of "Jubilee," or forgiveness of debts, was proclaimed. Are we including these segments of the population in our definition of our church's "body"? Is Christ's work through us resulting in a "Jubilee" for all in need?

Tuesday, January 22: Read I Corinthians 12:12-18

Today's familiar passage proclaiming the church as "one body" has been used in countless church council meetings, staff retreats, and Sunday school lessons to reaffirm our dependence on one another and God's will that we all live in unity with one another. Are we extending our understanding of our "body" to all of God's children, however? Are there any parts of our "body" that we are treating as foreign or unimportant? What if they follow a different denomination? Live in a poorer neighborhood? Look, dress, smell, eat, work, and think differently than us? How is it affecting our overall health as the catholic ("whole") church when we break apart from the body or view a different member as alien or unimportant?

Wednesday, January 23: Read I Corinthians 12:19-31

"If one member suffers, all suffer with it. If one member is honored, all rejoice together with it." What would the world look like if we were only truly acting as one body and lived out this verse in its entirety? Would we have the inequality of wealth we have today? Would we tolerate poverty, injustice, humiliation? Would we be able to turn a blind eye to suffering? Living out this verse will be truly living in the Kingdom of God. As members of the Kingdom, we reach out to those in pain and are willing to just be with them, sharing their burden. We feel joy, not envy, when another is promoted, blessed, or praised. We experience sorrow, not schadenfreude, when someone falls from grace in the eyes of society. How can we offer the invitation of love, empathy, and inclusion to others within our congregation, community, and world today?

Thursday, January 24: Read Nehemiah 8:1-10

Today's Old Testament reading chronicles the period after the Babylonian Exile when the people of Judah returned to Jerusalem, rediscovered the law, and worshipped God and praised the Law together as one collective body for the first time in over a generation. God and obedience to God's law gave them their identity, their pride, and their sense of solidarity. What most gives us a sense of solidarity today? The sports team we follow? Our children's school? Our neighborhood? Our political party? Or do we feel a sense of loyalty, protectiveness, and respect for all who seek God? Are we, like the people of Judah, also willing to bring the feast to those who are not yet able to make it?

Friday, January 25: Read Psalm 19

Today's exquisite psalm declares all of creation as telling the glory of God- no one and nothing is not considered God's handiwork. In this portrayal of the Kingdom of God, all voices come together in praise and thanksgiving for its Creator. Within this Kingdom, the psalmist asks for God to purify his heart and words. We are not yet perfect, nor can we expect everyone else to be. Today, let us recognize our place in God's kingdom as imperfect yet grace-filled children of God who are being molded into the people God created us to be. Let us also recognize God's grace and work alive in others, and see our journey as inextricably linked to theirs. Our growth can be their growth. Their pain, our pain. Together, we can be used by God to build God's kingdom where no one is excluded, unvalued, underutilized, or alone.

Saturday, January 26: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Psalm 19:14

**"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer."**

Sunday, January 27: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *God of our Restoration, whenever we come home to you, we realize how far we have strayed and how much we have forgotten of your law and your love. We have not loved you with our whole hearts or loved our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us, heal us, and restore us to our relationship with you; through Jesus Christ, in whom we trust. Amen.*