



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

February 4-10, 2019

Sermon by Rev. Kelley Lane

“Why Church? Resurrection Now”

Notes from sermon on 2/3:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

Why does church exist?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. Do you believe in Christ's resurrection or is this a tenet of the faith with which you wrestle?
2. Where have you witnessed resurrection in your life or the lives of others?
3. Where have you witnessed Christ at work in our world?

Monday, February 4: Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

This week we will address one of the most difficult and important questions unique to our Christian faith when asking, “Why Church?” We will ask, “Why is the resurrection important for me?” We often only address this question in eschatological terms, meaning we focus on what the resurrection means in the afterlife and “end times.” True, the significance of Christ's resurrection on our afterlife and our assurance of God's ultimate victory over evil cannot be overemphasized. However, this week we will prepare for Rev. Kelley Lane's sermon, “Why Church? *Resurrection Now*” by exploring how, thanks to Christ's defeat of death on the cross, death can lead to new life here and now.

Just as Paul urges the church of Corinth to fully receive the gifts of the resurrection, we are urged today to receive the gifts that can come with the life that we now know we can have after a “death” of any kind. Whether it is the passing of a loved one, an end of a cherished phase of our life, the termination of a job, or the doors closing on a ministry, we can be reassured that the birth of something new is right around the corner, with the risen Christ's loving power and presence enabling a renewed life to begin.

Tuesday, February 5: Read Luke 5:1-11

What parts of our lives are not yielding fruit and need to be cut off so we can change into something new? In today's gospel, a few lowly fishermen were returning to shore after a long, unfruitful night when Jesus invited them to walk away from their unremarkable career of catching fish (poorly, it seems) and begin catching people. Peter, James, and John go on to accomplish more than almost any human beings in history, simply by starting with this simple act: "When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him." What parts of our lives might God be calling us to leave behind? What parts of our lives might God actually be transforming and renewing in the aftermath of a loss? How can we embrace the promises of the resurrection and have faith that death can be a beautiful beginning rather than just a tragic end?

Wednesday, February 6: Read Isaiah 6:1-13

Sometimes we can't see new life emerge...at least not right away. All we can see is desolation, pain, sorrow, and stillness. Like the prophet in Isaiah, we cry, "How long, Lord?" What happened to us may be unfair. The causes may never be explained. The loss is real, and tragic. Even in the midst of the dysfunction and senseless loss of our broken world, however, we can still hold on to God's promises as spoken through the prophets and realized in the resurrection. We can have faith in the "holy seed in [the] stump." How can we look for the "holy seeds" God has planted in ashes of our world and our lives? Can we see it in the moment our teenager allows us into her room to talk after a painful breakup? In the rekindled friendship after the loss of a spouse? In the deepening family ties when faced with a difficult diagnosis? As heirs of the resurrection, what can we see germinating just beneath the surface where the rest of the world only sees ash?

Thursday, February 7: Read Psalm 138:1-6

When have you ever been saved from something? Perhaps it was something as dramatic as a near-death experience, or something as temporal as being rescued from a terrible blind date by a friend with great timing. Either way, try to remember how you felt immediately following the event. Remember the rush of gratitude, peace, and perhaps even elation. As children of the resurrection, we can have that feeling every day. We can wake up every morning knowing that the worst is over- death has been defeated, our sins forgiven and forgotten, and our eternal happiness assured. We can begin to notice more of the millions of smaller deliverances God gives us every day and rejoice in the new life granted to us each and every morning. Like today's psalmist, we can continually sing, "I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart" for we recognize God's grace and deliverance alive and at work every day.

Friday, February 8: Read Psalm 138:7-8

The final two verses of this week's psalm promise three of the things we all crave most: deliverance, love, and purpose. We want to know that we can have these despite our weakness, sin, mistakes, and human mortality. Let us all praise our God and Savior today for giving us the blessed assurance that the death of our broken lives and broken world has been defeated, and in its place we find everything we need, right in the hands of our loving Creator through the grace brought to us through Christ.

Saturday, February 9: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Psalm 138:7

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies;
you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me."

Sunday, February 10: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of

Common Confession: *God of the universe and Creator of all that is, we admit we rely too often upon our own abilities and gifts while failing to trust you and put our confidence in your power and might. Though our lips are not clean and our hearts are not pure, you call us. Forgive us, we pray, when we wander away from you, lost and at risk. Forgive us when our lives do not reflect your glory and the purposes you intend. Help us to comprehend your ways in the world. Touch us with your grace, renew our spirits, and give us courage, that we might serve you, our true Sovereign. Amen.*