

January 2021

Sumner Center UMC Newsletter

Sunday Worship



Weekly Worship Services are offered each Sunday via Sumner Centers Facebook page or if you do not have access to the internet contact Pastor Bridget and a weekly DVD of worship will be mailed to your home. During this time of a pandemic we are trying new and innovative ways to come together in the name of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Bridget Sheely

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Pastors Notes... Praise God for Whom all Blessings flow! Friends we have made it through 2020 and now we look to a New Year filled with hope, joy, love and peace.

As I look forward, I can not help but think to myself how thankful I am for the God given strength we have all been gifted. Strength that has carried us, enlightened us, moved us to "Love Thy neighbor" in ways we never thought we had the will, time or power to do. Friends, through our fears, tears, uncertainty, quiet celebrations, and points of exhaustion God has carried us through to New inspiration, clearer vision, anticipation of re-connecting with family, friends, and community with our physical presence.

God is good!

Our New day is approaching. But first we must acknowledge what the road ahead may look like. As we transition back to gathering, we must take this movement with patience, precaution and understanding. There will be a time when our sanctuaries will be full again but in the interim, we will need to continue to unite together in spirit and apart in body. Through these next few winter months, Sumner Center and Racine will go back to online worship as it will be too cold for parking lot gathering.

Starting January 3rd our weekly worship will again be offered online via Facebook, and email. If you do not have access to the internet please contact me, Pastor Bridget, at the above options and I will mail you a weekly DVD of worship hour.

I know how much we all miss each other, and I know there will come a time soon when it will be safe for us to be together again. God bless you all for your perseverance and dedication to our Lord and Savior over this past year. Your commitment to your faith has been a beautiful reminder of the true meaning of discipleship.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!





The Way to Start your Day...

Go outside and face the East and greet the Sun with a blessing, chant or song that you made yourself and keep for early mornings. Do not fret if you do not know how to make a song it is very simple. First, don't try to think what words to use until you're standing there alone. When you feel the Sun, you'll feel the blessing, chant or song too. Just open your heart and release it. You see, a morning needs to be greeted. A new day needs to be honored. It is our responsibility to welcome the Sun and create a good day for it. We must also make a good world for it to live in one day at a time. So, as you rise out of bed tomorrow remember to look to the East and offer your blessing. And if you are very lucky there may be a time when the sky thanks you back with colors of beauty and magic. **Now that's the way to start a day!**

Calendar of Events

(subject to change and/or be added to as the need arises)

January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 	2
3 Online Worship	4	5	6 	7 Food Shelf Open 6-7pm ----- Office Hours	8	9 
10 Online Worship	11	12	13	14 Food Shelf Open 6-7pm ----- Office Hours	15	16 
17 Online Worship	18 	19	20 	21 Food Shelf Open 6-7pm ----- Office Hours	22	23
24 Online Worship	25	26	27	28 Food Shelf Open 6-7pm ----- Office Hours	29	30
31 Online Worship						

Tips on Reading the Bible Daily

Plan Length: 365 days

Estimated Completion Date: Wednesday, July 14, 2021

Look at this! We are halfway through!

Sixth month of daily biblical connection. If you would like to start now no worries, it is never too late to begin connecting with the Word.

1. Start reading the Bible today -- there is no wait.

2. Set aside a specific time each day. Set Mornings are great, but feel free to use any



better time, and there's no reason to

your schedule and then stick to it. time that works consistently for you.

3. Read the Bible for the sake of learning, not simply to accomplish your next reading. Say a short prayer to God before you begin, asking the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and understanding, then be refreshed by the words you read!

Day 154 - 2 Chronicles 10-12; John 13:18-38

Day 171 - Nehemiah 12-13; Acts 4:23-37

Day 155 - 2 Chronicles 13-16; John 14

Day 172 - Esther 1-3; Acts 5:1-16

Day 156 - 2 Chronicles 17-19; John 15

Day 173 - Esther 4-6; Acts 5:17-42

Day 157 - 2 Chronicles 20-22; John 16:1-15

Day 174 - Esther 7-10; Acts 6

Day 158 - 2 Chronicles 23-25; John 16:16-33

Day 175 - Job 1-3; Acts 7:1-19

Day 159 - 2 Chronicles 26-28; John 17

Day 176 - Job 4-6; Acts 7:20-43

Day 160 - 2 Chronicles 29-31; John 18:1-23

Day 177 - Job 7-9; Acts 7:44-60

Day 161 - 2 Chronicles 32-33; John 18:24-40

Day 178 - Job 10-12; Acts 8:1-25

Day 162 - 2 Chronicles 34-36; John 19:1-22

Day 179 - Job 13-15; Acts 8:26-40

Day 163 - Ezra 1-2; John 19:23-42

Day 180 - Job 16-18; Acts 9:1-22

Day 164 - Ezra 3-5; John 20

Day 181 - Job 19-20; Acts 9:23-43

Day 165 - Ezra 6-8; John 21

Day 182 - Job 21-22; Acts 10:1-23

Day 166 - Ezra 9-10; Acts 1

Day 183 - Job 23-25; Acts 10:24-48

Day 167 - Nehemiah 1-3; Acts 2:1-13

Day 184 - Job 26-28;

Day 168 - Nehemiah 4-6; Acts 2:14-47

Day 169 - Nehemiah 7-8; Acts 3

Day 170 - Nehemiah 9-11; Acts 4:1-22

Fundraising Event!

The greatest among you shall be your servant. Mt. 23:11

**Racine UMC & Sumner Center UMC are collaborating to –
raise funds with the intention of purchasing gift cards
in the spirit of Gratitude
for our Frontline County workers.**

Mower County Sheriff's Department

Fillmore County Sheriff's Department

Grand Meadow Police Department

Spring Valley First Responders &

Spring Valley Area Ambulance

Grand Meadow First Responders

Grand Meadow Area Ambulance

Stewartville First Responders

Wykoff First Responders

Plus, if our fund-raising efforts are a huge success, we will continue to share our gratitude as far as we are able!

Our Mission is to sell yard signs displaying John Wesley's 3 simple rules:

Arrangement will be made to have a Sign delivered to you or ready for you to pick up at your convenience.

\$15.00 suggested Donation



Payments may be made to:

**Sumner Center UMC
or
Racine UMC**

CONTACT INFORMATION

Send a Direct Message by Facebook Messenger to Racine's Facebook page or Sumner Center's group page

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100% of all donations will go for the purchase of \$10.00 gift cards for our local hero's!

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LIVING THE CELEBRATION
COMPANY'S COMING WORSHIP SERIES

Week 6
January 3, 2021

Read Ephesians 1:3-14
New International Version

Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he[a] predestined us for adoption to sonship[b] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace 8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, 9 he[c] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

11 In him we were also chosen, [d] having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

12 in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

Notice the repetition of the phrases “in Christ,” “in him,” “through Jesus [Christ],” and “on Christ.”

What do we learn about Christ from this passage?

Notice that we have been “blessed” (v. 3).

What do we learn about humanity from this passage?

[We are chosen (v. 4) to be holy and blameless in love; we have been destined for adoption (v. 5); God’s grace has been freely bestowed on us (v. 6); we have been redeemed and received forgiveness (v. 7); we will know more fully the mysteries of God (v. 9); we have obtained an inheritance (v. 11); we have hope in Christ (v. 12); we are marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit (v. 13).]

Write down or print these phrases as a reminder of who you are. Refer to them at least daily over the coming week (or even throughout the year!).

Prayer: God of all wisdom and truth, our minds cannot grasp the enormity of your love. As we begin this new calendar year, help us to live into the calling you have given us. Enable us to embrace the hope that comes through Jesus Christ that others might know your love. Amen.

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New Worship Series begins
January 10, 2021

Read Mark 1:4-11
New International Version

4 And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. 6 John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with[a] water, but he will baptize you with[b] the Holy Spirit.”

The Baptism and Testing of Jesus

9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

What do you remember about your baptism?

Who was there? Where were you? Do you

remember why you were baptized? [It could be that

your parents made the decision for you; fear; responding to God’s call; or something else.]

What does it mean to you that you are one of the

baptized? [In baptism, we are claimed by God. We are part of the baptized community of believers.]

What does it mean to you that you are part of the

baptized community? [We are part of the family of God that has pledged to support us and show us the

way to life.] **How is our baptism a symbolic way of**

tearing apart from our old ways and an invitation

into a new way of being? [We are baptized into a

new reality where we are defined by the covenant of God.] **How is baptism a beginning landmark in our**

journey of discipleship? [We are claimed by God, become part of the church family, and now live in

freedom to trust in God's grace.] **How might you become more conscious of your identity as one of the baptized?** [Your shower or bath could be a visual reminder of your baptism, or the worship committee of the church can make sure the baptismal font is prominent in worship.]

Prayer: God who encounters us right where we are, we give you thanks for claiming us as your own. We are thankful that we belong to a family that stretches across geographic borders and even across time. Empower us to live as the baptized in all we do and all we say to everyone we meet this week. Amen.

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Week 2
January 17, 2021

Read John 1:43-51.
New International Version

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

44 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

46 "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.

"Come and see," said Philip.

47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

49 Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."

50 Jesus said, "You believe[h] because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." 51 He then added, "Very truly I tell you,[i] you[j] will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on'[k] the Son of Man."

In this passage, Nathanael had to reassess an assumption (that the Messiah would come from a town of importance. Nazareth was tiny and unimportant).

What would Nathanael miss if he held on to his assumptions? [Jesus!] Name a time in your life when you had to reassess an assumption. Read the Communion liturgy from The United Methodist Hymnal or online. (Focus on the invitation and the confession and pardon.) **How might these reminders help us to examine where we have done harm or failed to do good?**

While it is natural to think that those who are like us do good, it is much harder to consider that those who are different from us are good or are capable of doing good. This passage and the Communion liturgy invite us to self-examination. We are confronted with the question, "Can anything good come from us?"

How does God's grace give us assurance beyond right or wrong opinions? [No matter how limited our experiences or how incorrect our opinions, we beloved children of God.]

Why are difficult conversations so anxiety producing? [We fear emotional outbursts, loss of relationships, and doing harm.] While some might see difficult conversations as futile ("I know what I believe. You know what you believe. We're not going to convince each other, so what's the point?"), **what good might result from having these conversations?** [We grow in our perspectives of what others believe. We deepen the reasons for our beliefs. We might persuade others to amend their perspectives, and they might persuade us to amend our perspectives. Ultimately, we might grow closer to God as we see more and see God in others.]

Prayer: Gracious God, we confess our imperfections and times when we have failed to live and act as one of the baptized. May we see ourselves defined by your grace and not by our faults. Help us to see how you are transforming us into your image and that we might see how you are at work in others, even those who count us as enemies. Amen.

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Week 3
January 24, 2021

Read Mark 1:14-20

New International Version

Jesus Announces the Good News

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" Jesus Calls His First Disciples

16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 18 At once they left their nets and followed him. 19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

What does it mean to follow Jesus? How are disciples called to be followers? What role does surrender play in the life of a disciple? What role does self-denial play in discipleship? Do you make a distinction between being a Christian and being a disciple? [Unfortunately, many see themselves as Christians, but are hesitant to see themselves as disciples.] **Why might a person be reluctant to claim the label disciple, but not Christian?** [To many, being a disciple seems loftier, more holy, more like Jesus than they are willing to give themselves credit for.] **What holds you back from being more of a follower of Jesus?** (Time, schedule, stage of life, fear of losing control, etc.) Look back to the study from the last two weeks. **How does baptism become the launching point of our discipleship journey? How is the Lord’s Supper the nourishing meal of the discipleship journey? What might this say about the need to partake in the Lord’s Supper consistently?** [We can take Communion weekly (or even daily). While baptism is a non-repeatable act, we can and are encouraged to participate in “Remembering Your Baptism” services.]

Prayer: God of death and Resurrection, you continue to call us to self-denial and to live in the light of the Resurrection. Give us the eyes to see where you are calling us to dream new dreams, surrender our goals for yours, and bless others instead of thinking only of being blessed. Empower us to follow you wherever you call us. Amen.

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Week 4
January 31, 2021

Read Mark 1:21-28
New International Version

Jesus Drives Out an Impure Spirit
21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching,

because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, 24 “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” 25 “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” 26 The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. 27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

What might be surprising about verse 23? Hint: Where was the man with an unclean spirit? [The man with the unclean spirit was in the synagogue! Right among them—the religious people.] **Why is it significant that the demon mentions his knowledge of Jesus?** [It was not the religious people who clearly name Jesus’ identity and power, but rather a man with an unclean spirit.] Like those in the synagogue where an unclean spirit was found, we too can be surprised when evil encounters us in ways that are shockingly close to home. **Why is it easier to think about evil being “out there” and a problem for “them” instead of acknowledging the evil that is among us (individually and collectively)? How is authority a theme in this passage?** [Notice it is repeated in verses 22 and 27.] How do we allow Jesus to exercise authority over our lives? [Jesus has the authority to disrupt our plans, dreams, and strategies.] **How is allowing Jesus to exercise authority over us connected with the ability to stand against evil?** [It is only through Jesus’ authority that we learn God’s power over all forces. We cannot do so on our own.] **How might Jesus respond if you asked him, “What would you have us do, Jesus of Nazareth?”**

Prayer: God of power and might, all the earth and all that is within it is yours. Give us the eyes to see the forces that are at work against you in the world around us. Give us the power to resist and stand against the rulers, powers, and principalities of this world and the power to love those who might seem unlovable to us. Amen.