

A Daily Pulpit Devotional
By Michelle Lucchesi

The following devotionals are edited from the sermon notes taken over the past several years. The date, title, scripture, title and speaker are noted when known. My hope is that you will read the scripture first, as the notes often refer to the scripture and may not make as much sense without having read it. I have also added a one line prayer for each devotional to be used as a contemplative prayer, repeated several times, or for several minutes as meditation. A contemplative prayer can be promoted by taking deep breaths, and repeating the prayer during each exhale. The devotionals are scheduled to be used Monday through Friday. May they be a blessing to you in your personal worship.

The noted speakers are not responsible for the content of this devotional. This writing is the author's perception and understanding of spoken word. While the author has attempted to accurately represent the spoken word, it is clearly an incomplete representation, and may contain misrepresentation. The author is solely responsible for the contents. Feedback is desired and may be sent to mlucchesi@casair.net

2018

Monday, Jan 1

"The Word Became Flesh." Steve Wimmer. Jan 3, 2010

John 1:1-5, 10-18

Incarnation means the Word and Promise of God made flesh. We have seen his glory, not just the first disciples, but all believers, because he who raised from dead lives in us. This is a type of incarnation. Not everyone sees the glory because they do not allow themselves to see it. We see it when we pass by people and see Jesus in each other. We are authorized to carry on the job of Jesus, the job of loving. It is the family business. We are to worship, to love one another, recognizing people as Jesus' incarnation, to love in the world.

Prayer: Let me see you, Lord, in the face of those around me.

Tuesday, Jan 2

"On Being a Patriarch/Matriarch and The Call to Leadership." Paul Loney. Jan 10, 2010

Joshua 1:1-9, 2 Timothy 2:1-3

There are stages of maturing/leadership.

First, we are doing:

1. Darkness and death: When a former leader dies or leaves, you need to lead.
2. Overcome pain: It requires we change and mature.
3. Development: Take the time to train, study, and meditate.
4. Difficulty phase: When there is difficulty, know that God is with you. Don't be fearful; be strong and courageous. Work to overcome insecurities and ineffective abilities.

And we are being:

1. Aging: We have to grow old, but we choose to mature.
2. Set trends and trust those behind you will follow your example.
3. Share with transparency and be open.
4. Set pattern in life value, faith, and learning.

Prayer: Lord, open me to the change. I need to mature.

Wednesday, Jan 3

"Saving the Best for Last." Steve Wimmer. Jan 17, 2010

Psalm 36:5-10, John 2:1-11.

The wine is gone. This is a symbol that celebration is done. Changes in life often bring the end of celebration automatically. Even when it doesn't make sense, faith is doing what Jesus tells us to do, like those who went to get the water. After they obeyed, there was blessing. Blessings happen in our life after our wine has run out and we turn to Jesus. The blessings of the end time are available; they have started. Open eyes and ears to see that the blessings are flowing. Do what Jesus says, love, pray, seek the kingdom.

Prayer: I will obey, Lord. Open my eyes to see the blessing.

Thursday, Jan 4

“Resistance.” Steve Wimmer. Jan 31, 2010

Jeremiah 1:4-10, Luke 4:21-30

Jesus preached in the synagogue and told the Jews that renewal is for not only Jews. This made them angry. They resisted. Resistance is in us from the beginning. But renewal is also from beginning. Even before sin or man God made order out of chaos. Jesus said, “I didn’t come for righteous, but for sinners.” Part of the judgement process is renewal. Those who need renewal (sinners) are the center of the renewal plan. The idea of renewal is great, but when it arrives at my door, it’s hard. It requires change. It requires the world to change, which may not occur in a miraculous moment at the end, but every day in the hearts and actions of humans. Our choice is to be with the kingdom of God or not.

Prayer: Lord, I chose to your kingdom today. Renew me today.

Friday, Jan 5

“New Year’s Day Forever.” Steve Wimmer, Jan 1, 2012

Revelation 21:1-6a

New Year’s is about newness, but we bring our baggage with us-- personal, national and global. How do we enter 2012 with confidence while carrying the past in our present? God promises that history is God’s and he will make all things new for those in Christ. We know which way we are going- to the new place that God prepares. Maybe the “new heaven and new earth” will be the result of our human work on earth, the proliferation of peace, justice, equality and end of oppression and exploitation, impurity etc.

Prayer: Lord, take my past. I am new.

Monday, Jan 8

“A Good Place to Honor God.” Steve Wimmer. Jan 15, 2012

1 Cor 6:12-20

When a person does what they are designed to do, they are free. Because of grace, we are free to be and do what we are designed to be and do. We are designed to be with God. Our body is God’s to glorify him. Our bodies are members of God’s body. The Spirit dwells in us to call us to be and do what we are designed to be and do. Our bodies are important, purchased by God. Honor God by caring for the body – exercise, diet, purity, recognizing true beauty.

Prayer: Lord, I will care for my body as a work of your hand, to honor you.

Tuesday, Jan 9

Unknown Title and Speaker. Uncertain date. 2012

1 John 1:5-8

Light is as old as creation. John uses it to enlighten us on what life in Christ is all about. God is light. We walk into kingdom of light. We are light. He moves into us. God is the source of good things, purity, all light, enlightenment. Light reveals that which is true. You have a choice, to walk in the light or not. Following His example, obeying light, increases light. If we claim to have fellowship with God yet walk in darkness, we lie. This is inconsistent with truthfulness. Truth is a verb: ‘truthing’ it in life is to live truth. Darkness has no existence of its own; it is only lack of light. Light lets us see where we are going, exposes what needs to be done and exposes obstacles in the way. We are designed to have fellowship with one another. But darkness leads us to be alone, emotionally and spiritually. Light brings us back together.

Prayer: This day I chose to live in your light. Let me see truth today.

Wednesday, Jan 10

Unknown Title. Steve Wimmer. Jan 5, 2014

Matthew 2:1-12

In 313 AD, the conversion of Constantine changed the world. It started 'Christendom;' It became the official religion of the Constantine's kingdom. 'Christendom' continued through time, through the founding of U.S. where it has been the assumed, if not official religion. However, 'Christendom' is passing away. It can no longer be assumed that majority of Americans are Christian... The Magi were directed to go a different route. Herod could not stop God's plan. God used Magi, the most unlikely worshippers. God leads in different way as 'Christendom' ends. It gives us a chance to stand out and be different. There are ways we can go a different route; 1- Worship authentically now, no matter what is happening around us. 2- Recognize the journey is one of transformation from first step of faith until death. It is painful and hard to transform to newness of life. 3- Surrender to love of God; Put down resistance. 4- Think of mission field as the place we live.

Prayer: Lord, whatever is happening around me I will praise you and surrender to you.

Thursday, Jan 11

Series: Signposts of Renewal. Steve Wimmer. Jan 12, 2014

1 John 4:1-6

We all need guidance. Discernment is listening to the voice of God, and following the voice on matters of the soul. One useful prayer: 'Speak Lord, your servant is listening.' Discernment of God's voice is not easy because; 1-There are so many voices shouting at us. Be aware of the advertising voices constantly bombarding us. 2- ME-generation attitude 'What's in it for me?' The discernment question is 'How is God leading?' It is not me-centered. 3-We are out of practice. The discipline of discernment requires time and practice to develop the mental muscle of discernment. John states that the Spirit that acknowledges that Jesus came in flesh is from God. This is addressing NeoPlatonism, a type of dualism which divides the spirit from the flesh and says the flesh is not important. John says the fact that Jesus came in flesh shows us that this world is important. If this world is important to God and is being renewed, then what we do here matters. It is not just waiting for heaven. He is speaking within us. Your deepest longings are God's desire planted in you. 1-Read Jesus' words. 2- Practice decision-making in community for group wisdom. 3- Develop habit of listening. 4- Embed it in grace. Forgive yourself if you miss it. Know God continues to lead.

Prayer: Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Friday, Jan 12

Series: Signpost of Renewal. Steve Wimmer. Jan 19, 2014

Mark 1:332-39, Psalm 131

We all need to pray in solitude. Being alone with God opens our hearts to God, helps place boundaries, gives sense of who we are. If we can't set aside time to listen to God and hear what we should be doing, there are plenty of other voices that will tell us. We get so busy that we can't hear the voice of God leading us to be who we are to be. Faith is not believing the 'right' thing about Christ, but is following in his steps. The person who can't be alone cannot be authentic with others. The person who can't be fully with others cannot truly be in solitude (Bonhoeffer). Set aside time. Set aside distraction. Sit in quiet.

Pray. Bring it to God.

Prayer: Lord, I'm listening.

Monday, Jan 15

Series: Signpost of Renewal. "Healing." Steve Wimmer. Jan 26, 2014

John 5:1-9

Is there resistance within us for healing that Jesus wants to do for us? Religion will be about healing or it will be about keeping rules and regulations. Do you want to get well? God's intention to heal is unilateral and universal. But healing requires something of us. Surrendering to God's healing is surrendering to *all* of God's healing. We don't get to pick and choose. He heals attitudes as well as bodies. We start to believe that healing is the other's job (doctor, therapist, pastor, God) and neglect our own part of the process. We know it requires change and change is hard. Healing is what Jesus is about. Unless we get on board we will make religion about rules. Healing is at the center of God's purpose. We need to cooperate. Healing and salvation are the same word in the Bible's Greek.

Prayer: Lord, I surrender to your healing both my attitude and body.

Tuesday, Jan 16

“Powerful Practice: Silence.” Steve Wimmer. Jan 4, 2015

Psalm 131

Silence is a foundational practice of Christian life. The Old Testament and New Testament and the living history of the church give many examples. Over the past two hundred years, new technology has created constant noise. Constant noise is an addiction of our society. Five values of Practice of Silence: 1. In silence we begin to hear our hearts deepest longing – love, freedoms, etc. a homing instinct to find rest in God. 2 – Silence becomes a portal to communion with God. 3- Silence helps us let go of the illusion that we are in control. The world moves on without us or our frenzied activity. 4- Silence helps create space in relationships, a space between people gives time to think before responding instead of responding in reactionary way. 5- Silence heightens our appreciation for sound. Simple guidance for the practice of silence; 1- start where you are. 2- notice opportunity for silence in regular life. 3- intentionally create some time in most days to practice silence. Notice sights, sound and body, breathing and heart and longings. We need a day to let our souls catch up to our bodies.

Prayer: Open my heart to moments of silence.

Wednesday, Jan 17

“Powerful Practice: Prayer.” Steve Wimmer. Jan 11, 2015

John 15:5-8

Jesus invites his followers to ask for what they need. Prayer is many things: confession, communion and petition. Jesus shows that prayer makes a difference. Don't act as if future is written in stone. The Old Testament has many examples of prayer and human action changing God's mind. God is influence by prayers of his people, but a response does have conditions. The conditions of a response to a prayer are that we abide with Him, and allow God's word to abide in us. If His purpose and will abide in us, then our prayer will influence God. In this scripture Jesus is forming disciples and preparing them for a time when Jesus will not be with them. He is also preparing his followers to participate in his ministry, so when he said 'ask' he is talking to those who abide and follow Him, not to consumers who use prayer as a shopping list. Prayer is entering into the will of God and abiding in Him.

Prayer: Lord, I abide in you. Abide in me.

Thursday, Jan 18

“Powerful Practice: Confession.” Steve Wimmer. Jan 18, 2015

James 5:13-16

Confession is painful and hard, but it inoculates us against the worst diseases of the Spirit. James calls for action, and confession is an action. It's difficult to admit faults because we are shamed. Confession makes us vulnerable, but it also brings healing. Whenever we bury our faults, it negatively impacts us: our body, health, relationships and self. Brenea Brown, sociologist and researcher, says we have shame related to money, sex, body and religions. Confession fits into the whole story; it leads to redemption, as the center of Jesus' mission was forgiveness, when Jesus bore the shame of the whole world on himself at the cross. Because there is grace, we can be truthful, because Jesus bore our shame. Confession to one another is possible because we, the church, embody the grace of God. Guidelines for confession to one another: 1. The confession is private, not public. 2. Best done in the moment, without much delay and with an apology. 3. It can be helpful to do formal confessional journal inventory for yourself.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for taking my shame so I can admit my faults and know I am still loved.

Friday, Jan 19

“Powerful Practice: Communion.” Dawn Wimmer. Jan 25, 2015

Roman 5:1-2, 6-8

Don't take communion in an unworthy state. Examine yourself. See your unworthiness. What do you do with your unworthiness? See the conjunctions in the scripture; “and,” “but,” and “yet.” Noticing them will slow you down to hear the answer to how to handle the unworthiness. “And” adds on more. It's an abundance word. There is abundance of love. “But” changes direction. We are not condemned. Jesus changed that direction. “Yet” lifts your head to notice something. We can become aware of something

different. We see that the response to our awareness of unworthiness is God's accepting love. Our response to this love is voluntary submission. It is a willingness to learn and let God teach me how. Prayer: Lord, I am unworthy. Thank you for loving me anyway.

Monday, Jan 22

Series: Hearts Inclined Toward Joy. Steve Wimmer. Jan 3, 2016

Jeremiah 31:7-14

Jeremiah spoke to a group of people who had forgotten that they belonged to God. They had forgot mercy, justice and love. They mistreated each other. He warned them that they were losing their souls, their land and their freedom. Babylonia invaded them in four waves. Jeremiah continued to speak to them when they were in their exile. He spoke of their return to their home. It is a painful journey.

We also are on a journey, one from exile, to return home, that place for which we are created. This journey will be one of pain, toward joy. The world is one of pain: poverty, terrorism, medical, grieving, disappointment. We walk through this pain toward home. Exile also may be of our own choosing, when we hold onto something too much, attachments and addictions. We are hardwired to be afraid, even when we don't need to be. But we don't walk the journey alone. Not only do we have our community, but God himself is leading us. There will be joy, dancing. Jesus leads us out of exile to joy. It is God's desire, longing for His people. Repeatedly scripture says joy is the result, and goal, of life with God. We receive the breath of God. We bear the fruit of love, joy and peace. We are on the journey to joy. The gifts of joy come after the journey, and during the journey. Being on this journey is to acknowledge all the experiences, even pain, sadness and hurt. There is no healing until we open this pain to the fresh air of God's love to heal. God is with us in the journey. We can experience the moments of joy in this life as hints of what is to come. We are free. Joy allows us to recognize that we have freedom to choose our own attitude. Our attitude does not need to be based on circumstances. "They can take my health and life, but they cannot take my attitude" Frankel.

Prayer: Lord, I open myself to your healing and your joy.

Tuesday, Jan 23

Series: Hearts Inclined Toward Joy. "The Object of God's Pleasure." Steve Wimmer. Jan 10, 2016

Unknown Scripture

We know that Jesus is different than others. We see this in his baptism, where he was filled with Holy Spirit and God spoke. This is our problem; we know he was unique, therefore we get insecure, and tell ourselves that we are not good enough, and that we need to work hard to be better. This is shame. The voice of God said to Jesus that God was pleased with him. The big story is that Jesus restores us to that place where we are not ashamed. Sarah Adams tells of being transformed from pain and criticism to boldness by the strange sense of the love of God. Union with God has been restored. We drip Holy Spirit. God's voice speaks pleasure over us because Jesus took that shame and restored us. God is pleased with you. The journey to joy happens when we reclaim the love of God. When we abide in that love, we bear fruit. To do: 1. Radically trust that what Jesus has done is enough to make us his child. 2. Learn to let go of the comparisons. 3. Serve. You have to be yourself; everyone else is taken.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for making me good enough through Jesus's restoration.

Wednesday, Jan 24

Series: Hearts Inclined Toward Joy. "The People over whom God Rejoices." Steve Wimmer. Jan 17, 2016

Isaiah 62:1-5

Joy exists within a community. If the web of relationships has weakened, it effects joy manifested. Israel had a deficiency of joy and community. The problem with the deferral of joy is that people start to wonder if it will ever return. The fruit of the spirit is in community when connections to others are made. Find time to connect. Righteousness is relationships – having right relationships, beautiful and rich. Isaiah envisions a time when God and his people are married, connected, in a web of community, married to network of connections. In Jesus first miracle, the water to wine, the wine represents the return of joy. Jesus brings joy, community, connections, and relationships. What God is doing is bringing people together in a beautiful network. Americans always begin with the individual. The Eastern Church begins

with community. Practice the discipline of Sabbath-keeping; practice connecting with people. Sabbath is for worship, rest and relationships

Prayer: Open my eyes to see others and my heart to connect with them.

Thursday, Jan 25

Series: Hearts Inclined Toward Joy. Steve Wimmer. Jan 24, 2016

Nehemiah 8:1-10

Celebration is to joy what exercise is to fitness. We celebrate because the joy of the Lord is our strength. We don't understand celebration. Celebration's feet of gold is excess. If something is good, we feel we have to have more to celebrate. Celebration is often confused with numbing. Celebration and joy are not mutual exclusive to suffering and pain. When we numb ourselves to pain, we also numb ourselves to joy. Joy is not avoiding pain... 'The beginning of authentic religion is radical amazement' – Ab. Hieschel. We are God's people created to present God's interest in the world. God is a God who is setting people free. If we are alert, there are more resources than we can count. Joy is part of God's character. Jesus celebrates with a banquet with sinners, showing that the Messianic banquet has already begun. Some people decline celebration. Practice – reclaim Sunday morning as celebration- a celebration of holy day with family. Celebration can be as simple as laughter, or just being truly present with someone. We are often a slave of our ups and downs. But if each day we open our eyes and ears to see the spectacular world, we can celebrate.

Prayer: Lord, I celebrate your spectacular world.

Friday, Jan 26

Series: Hearts Inclined Toward Joy. Steve Wimmer. Jan 31, 2016

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Joy is the greatest desire of the human heart. Jeremiah experiences sorrow over and over. He is a weeping prophet. Jeremiah's task is to tell his people that they are resisting God; therefore, God is resisting them. The people worshiped a variety of gods. Humans don't do well when our worship is divided. They also had injustice in community—not caring for widows, orphans and the aliens. Jeremiah addresses these deep concerns that diminish joy. Joy disappears if you seek it directly. Our worship is divided. We worship that which we find most important- idolatry of family, success, religion. These idolatries produce an injustice, so there is a justice crisis because some people have what they need and others don't. To see this requires us to look beyond our own needs. God destroys for the purpose of rebuilding. The process of rebuilding, replanting, and renewal brings joy and justice. Joy is by-product of justice, proper worship, and renewal. Seek first God's justice, and righteousness and all these things will be added to you.

Prayer: Open my eyes to see the idolatry in my life and turn my worship to you alone.

Monday, Jan 29

Series: Meandering through Mark. "As one with real authority." Steve Wimmer. Jan 8, 2017

Mark 2:1-12

Where Jesus is community breaks out. We overlook the power of community from our Western perspective. We think an individual with God is the same as a group of people with God. Community is what we do. The paralyzed man's friends are interceding for him. Jesus saw their faith. They did not speak any statement of faith. He was responding to their action. In Mark we see that faith is trusting confidence in the goodness and power of Jesus. It's not about not having doubts. It's not about having it all figured out. All these people had was trust and faith. He stated their sins are forgiven. He claimed to be God by saying this – only God can forgive sins. It's a big big deal. If we take forgiveness lightly, we create a cheap grace and we can abuse it by perpetrating violence on people and creation and say, "It's all good – God will forgive me." Jesus is claiming authority. What we believe about authority determines our path. We will walk towards that which we believe is the authority. "The heart of the life of faith is radical amazement" – R Herschel. Faith is not having everything lined up and right. It's trust in Jesus whatever we are anxious about. Bring it to God and trust.

Prayer: Lord, I know your grace is not cheap. Let me show this through faith in action.

Tuesday, Jan 30

Series: Meandering through Mark. "A Sobering Moment." Steve Wimmer. Jan 15, 2017

Mark 3:20-30

From the beginning Jesus' message and action was revolutionary. First, 'the Kingdom of Heaven is among us. Turn and repent,' and 'The first will be last' turned values of the day on their head. God's reign pressing on our world demands change. People resisted Jesus by calling him crazy and evil. Jesus says his task is to tie up Satan, not work with him. ... We don't easily admit that we are part of the problem. We discover those things we need to change as God guides us. We experience changes as a threat. When we become closed to the winds of the Spirit of change then we become hard hearted and can reach the point that it is not forgivable. Jesus is working to transform us and make us agents of change and renewal. Renewal and transformation begin with us, our willingness to change and our yielding to God. By God's power we are being changed so that we can make change in our world. Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is refusing to be willing to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and the winds of change it brings. Prayer: Lord, open my heart to the winds of change your Spirit brings.

Wednesday, Jan 31

Series: Meandering through Mark. "Even the Winds and Waves Obey Him." Steve Wimmer. Jan 22, 2017

Mark 4: 35-41

We all go through storms. The disciples brought their concern to Jesus, who was sleeping in the back of the boat during the storm. Lament is to bring your pain and disappointment to God. Lament allows us to be completely honest and avoid passive faith and fallacy of control, recognizing there are things we can't control. Eschatology is the study of what scripture says about last things. Jews thought of the future when Kingdom of God was mentioned. Jesus said it is now present. Present, but not complete. The mission of God is happening now, but is not complete. Jesus calms the sea because God is in control, then challenges their faith: 'Why are you afraid? Don't you have faith?' Faith is the central vital thing that is true about Christians. It is a new orientation toward life. Trust is a new program, a new way of seeing all of life. To be afraid can be to be terrified with awe and marvel. Holding on to the hand of God is better than light in a storm. Wind and waves obey him. Will we? The one command he repeated was love. Will we obey, even in midst of the storm?

Prayer: In the midst of my storm, I know you, Lord, are in control.

Thursday, Feb 1

"Listen!" Steve Wimmer. Feb 14, 2010

Psalms 99, Exodus 34: 29-35, Luke 9: 28-36

The story of the transfiguration follows the preaching about carrying the cross and hardship. We can't have the glorified Jesus without having the suffering Jesus. God speaks, "This is my son, whom I have chosen. Listen to him." Moses and Elijah testified to this. Jesus is the one, listen to him. Moses represents the Law. Elijah represents the prophets. Both point to Jesus. Law allowed limited retribution (eye for an eye). Jesus stopped retribution. (turn the other cheek). There are many other voices but we must know how to listen through all that static to hear Jesus' voice.

Prayer: Lord, I'm listening.

Friday, Feb 2

"Impractical Power." Steve Wimmer. Feb 28, 2016

John 13:1-20

Humans like power. Jesus has power different than political or military power, but a power that is humility and service. Jesus washes feet to show the power in service and humility. If we think of faith as a head trip about being right, we are in control, still in power. This is not the power Jesus modeled. But when faith is about surrender to God we are to let go of control. Before the cross we surrender all control, give up power. When our teacher, Lord and master, serves others, we are to do the same. Watch for the

same type of power--serving and humility. Don't trust the other power. This is what defines Christians and true leaders: those who serve, to stoop and wash feet. People who are surrendered to the servant love of Jesus.

Prayer: Humble me, Lord, teach me to surrender and serve.

Monday, Feb 5

"Blessed are ... the Peacemakers." Steve Wimmer. Feb 20, 2011

Matthew 5:1-11

Peacemakers are doing what their father is doing. Peacemakers do 1. Work for reconciliation in relationships. 2. Bring calm. 3. Reduce violence. 4. Don't lose vision of all people as human, never enemies. 5. Find resources other than fighting or running. 6. Refuse to hate the people who hate them. Peacemakers do not give in all the time or run from conflict. Jesus' peacemaking worked with every group, even those who would not otherwise ever worked together. There cannot be peace if there is not justice. (Psalm 85:10). If Jesus is in you, his peacemaker is in you, surrendering every day, centering on the Word, praying for peace and resolution, working in family and community toward peace.

Prayer: Let me be a tool of peace.

Tuesday, Feb 6

Series: Meandering through Mark. "Just Love." Steve Wimmer. Feb 12, 2017

Mark 7:1-8

Jesus and Pharisees agreed on God's commands and that call for obedience. We don't like the words 'command' and 'obedience' because we have misused them, like when we call for obedience when abuse is happening. In the Pharisees' world, sin was seen like germs that are passed from person to person, so practices developed to keep themselves clean; they guard themselves from sin with ceremonial cleansing. What does a life of obedience look like? The Pharisees saw it as ceremonial cleansing. Jesus disagreed. He saw this ceremony as following tradition of men, not God. Jesus got angry when people mistreat people in the name of God. For example, the religious leaders would hold someone to the 'corban' made in anger. Jesus was referring to a practice in which a person designates money to the temple (corban is a temple sacrifice) as a way to avoid using it to care for parents. This conflicts with the command to honor parents. What did Jesus prioritize? Just love – that is, a love that is just; it acknowledges every person is loved. Jesus sees obedience to God living his life in contact with all people, even sinners, without worry about sin rubbing off on him. He touched people who other Jews were afraid of. Perfect obedience is seen in Jesus' treatment of every person as made in the image of God. Every human created in God's image, therefore dignified. We will place ourselves in the Just Love of God daily by spending time in prayer, scripture and quiet presence of God's love, and then take it to others, yielded to the command of God to treat every person as the image of God. You were created to embody the fullness of God right now.

Prayer: Lord, open my heart to love every person as the image of you.

Wednesday, Feb 7

Series: Meandering through Mark. "Have You Ever Heard Jesus Teach?" Steve Wimmer. Feb 5, 2017

Mark 6:1-6

It is Jesus' homecoming. His hometown was amazed at his authority while teaching. It had power. He taught differently. Most rabbis taught about staying pure. Jesus taught about shining, going out, loving others. People took offense. Why were they offended? Of his commonness? Jealous? Familiarity? We don't know. Jesus' response publically owns that he is a prophet. There were three high leaders: kings, priests and prophets. The primary task of the prophet was to tell God's truth to God's people. The truth is never popular at home. Prophets have a strong relationship with God and are called to tell truth to those around him/her. A prophet telling the truth is not popular in his or her hometown, where convictions, values, bias and prejudice are formed. Jesus' teaching is the news that God's love is for everyone. This can be offensive when we want it for us only. It challenges us to see others' pain and needs. It means we must lift our heart and eyes to our enemies and others who are different. It always comes with a sting, exposes lust, power, greed, exploitation, and injustice. People often build walls and point out flaws of others. We are to open hearts to hear Jesus' teaching, and the sting, without resisting. Let it transform us.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes and my heart to see the truth of my bias and prejudices toward people different than me.

Thursday, Feb 8

“The Day God Rested.” Steve Wimmer. Feb 3, 2013

Isaiah 58:13,14

Sabbath is downtime, rest. If you remember Sabbath, then you will have joy in the Lord (Isaiah). Sabbath is for rest, renewal and worship. Stop the busy-ness to focus on relationships with God with people, with creation. Sabbath was made for man, a gift from God to bring joy. It lifts us above challenges. We have to make it a priority. Take steps in the right direction to make worship center of the day, and focus on relationships. You can't live always in tension without shortening your life. Sabbath is a break from the tension of life.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for Sabbath rest.

Friday, Feb 9

“Adoring Reverence.” Steve Wimmer. Feb 10, 2013

Isaiah 6:1-8

The whole earth is full of his glory. The presence of God will undo us; it will make us aware of our inadequate smallness. It will compel us into the mystery of God, to know our concepts of God are unacceptable. It will frighten us. Our religion is narcissistic; we are engaged in our own beauty, self-centered worship and consumerism. In our narcissistic religion we are observers, and come to be entertained. We will become like that which we worship. We will be changed forever when we encounter God. Isaiah is seared, purified by the red hot stone to his lips, the fire of forgiveness, painful yet cleansing. Isaiah is brought to a place of reverence. Like Moses we create a sacred space and a sacred time, with a rhythm to reverence, like the cycle of weekly Sabbath and annual seasons and festivals. When Isaiah encounters God, his heart and mind are open to the experience of the Holy One. When we encounter God, we move from consumer of religion to a worshiper of God. We move from seers to doers. We move from it being about us to being about God. We move from pride to humility and service.

Prayer: Lord, I come into your presence now. Open my heart.

Monday Feb 12

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer Feb 24 2013

Luke 15:11-32

“When he came to his sense....” To “Come to yourself” is to see yourself without pretension and deception. The Prodigal Son was cut off from home and self, like the Jews. Lent is to help us recognize our own exile, the cost of living in Christ. For 40 days we are asked to remember ways we are severed from home and ourselves, in exile, resulting in lack of joy, laughter, appreciation of beauty. This exile from our spiritual home is living in fear, stress, anxiety, mistreating bodies. It is distorting purity, business, control. It is loss of tradition, and violence. Severed from who we were called to be, we've replaced worship with entertainment, and traded desire for safety. When we are in exile we make desperate moves for love. We have no idea what the beat of own heart really is. We are deadened to the call of heaven. We need to summon the courage to tell the truth; In what ways am I severed from whom I'm called to be? What does it mean to return home?

Prayer: Lord, help me come to my senses and see my exile from my home with you.

Tuesday Feb 13

Series: Singpost of Renewal, “Community” Steve Wimmer, Feb 2 2014

Deut 10:12-22

How do we participate in making connection to serve our community? Our congregation has an opportunity to influence the atmosphere of the ‘bus’ of our community, as we move through time on our journey. It's about the condition of the heart. Welcome the stranger, even if they have different values. God loves them. The greatest test of the condition of my heart is how I treat a stranger. Welcoming a stranger is hard. We are afraid, some people are dangerous. Are we ashamed? Do we wonder “Am I okay? Do we belong?” Often it feels like something about us that is not good enough. Jews were chosen

because they were insignificant, not because they were special. They were chosen to share God's blessing with the whole world. Paul reminds the church that we have victory over obstacles to community. We can overcome estrangement with God, and with each other. We are free. Steps to raise the atmosphere: 1. Remember who you are, befriended by God. Your shame has been crucified with Jesus. 2. Notice the people around; lift up your eyes. 3. Engage naturally and be authentic.
Prayer: Lord, I know every person I see is someone you love. Let me see them as you see them and treat them with your love.

Wednesday Feb 14

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Feb 9 2014

1 Tim 6:11-21

There are ancient warnings about the power of greed. The antidote to greed is generosity, generosity in giving good deeds, money, and love. To be joyful we need simplicity, which is recognizing that we don't need more stuff. We need appreciate what we have, living within our means. So we can be generous. Giving generously in a tithe, or working toward it. Generosity isn't about us. It's about God's generosity to us. Our generosity is our participation with God's generosity. Redemption is the price one pays to buy someone out of slavery. God's generosity is seen in Jesus redemptive act. It is in the Holy Spirit daily guidance. When we give ourselves away generously the resource doesn't run out.
Prayer: Thank you Lord for your generous gifts. Open my heart to give generously.

Thursday Feb 15

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Feb 16 2014

Revelation 12:7-12

Testimony is what we do with words because we are changed; How we speak differently about the world because of our history; What we say because we believe it to be true. The book of Revelation says testimony is powerful enough to overcome evil. Words are powerful. Early Christians died because of their testimony that Christ is Lord, that Caesar is not Lord. Words shape experience; they evoke what is to be. Christians overcome Satan through blood of Christ and the word of testimony. When faced with hardship we speak words of hope and power of Christ. We rise above. A voice in testimony that 'Jesus Is Lord' is the power to overcome in times of challenge. Paul said, "believe and confess 'Jesus is Lord' and you are saved." We have a voice to tell the story about how we are different because Jesus Is Lord. Tell it authentically. Tell the story with positive power and hope "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Prayer: Lord, I confess, I can do all thing through Christ who strengthens me.

Friday Feb 16

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Feb 23 2014

Psalms 50:1-6

Renewal of life includes a resurgence of beauty. In the ancient world the temple was where the realm of heaven and earth touched, therefore its beauty was pointing toward the day when the glory and beauty will cover all the Earth like waters covers the seas. Water doesn't really cover the seas, but it *is* the seas; it is the stuff that the seas are made of. Similarly, the glory and beauty of God will *be* the earth, the stuff that it is made of, the way the water *is* the seas. It started with Jesus death and resurrection. We participate with it. Beauty is a hint and promise of what will come. We often overlook the power of beauty. But it is not passing moment. It is promise of the day to come. We are co-creator of beauty.

Prayer: Open my eyes to see your beauty; open my heart to a co-creator of beauty.

Monday Feb 19

"Powerful Practice: Communal Worship," Jennifer Wilson, Feb 1 2015

Hebrews 10: 21-25

When we use the powerful practices of the faith we are lifting a sail to be guided and powered; silence, prayer, communion, communal worship. We often worship individually, but we are commanded to be communal. Our society is individualistic and teaches us to think in this way, but worship in Jewish community was communal, which means recognizing that we are always community. It is not just about

me, but it is being a 'people.' We become part of the community when we accept Jesus. We are invited by God into this community. Communal worship is a powerful part of this community because it has a language and patterns that we share. For the Jews it included sacrifices. The first sacrifice was the animal for the clothing for Adam and Eve. God made it and gave it to them to sacrifice... Communal worship patterns include stages of worship 1- gathering, 2 sharing word, 3 thanks, 4. sending forth to be church in the larger community. God says, "I'm not pleased with sacrifice if you are treating people poorly." We have to live it out. To be church in the world we need each other.

Prayer: Lord, open my heart to be community.

Tuesday Feb 20

"Powerful Practice: Fasting," Steve Wimmer, Feb 15 2015

Isaiah 58:6-11, Mark 2: 18-22

How do we fit together old and new practices like fasting? It is an old practice, but was often done for wrong reasons, like to look religious, show off or to go through the motions. Fasting is often part of Lent, but Lent is not mentioned in the Scriptures and is sometimes considered a new practice. Will new practice remain faithful to old beliefs? Lent is preparation to Easter, and is consistent with Mark's message to remember the cross. Lent is a container to hold the new stuff of Jesus, new wineskin for new wine. This new container is important for the church. It is a season to draw back from excesses of American life. It can be any variety of forms of fasting. Remember that this world is loved by God. Remember the cost to God for this world. Remember the life of evil runs through all of us. A Lenten fast gives us the space and time for this remembering, and to inspect ourselves. Where are the seed of evil in me? It takes courage to acknowledge what we are, and to start change.

Prayer: Lord, as I draw back from the excesses of life show me the seed of evil in me.

Wednesday Feb 21

Series: Hearts Inclined Toward Joy, "The Beginning and the End of Joy", Steve Wimmer, Feb 7 2016

Phil 4:4-9

Exile is to be far away from that which you love the most. People in pain are in a type of exile. The church of Jesus is on a journey to return to joy, which is what we long for the most. We have been in exile from joy, and love, and justice here on earth. Paul was in exile in jail when he writes the encouragement for joy. Scripture tells us that we can lament, complaining when in pain, suffering and sorrow can be brought to God. It is acceptable and good. Rejoicing is the other side of the coin to lament. God leads the laments, through the cross of Jesus, about the injustice in this world. This affirms that the Lord is near while we are in this unjust place. The resurrection is an affirmation that it is not the end, and in the future there will be a return of joy. Paul says we can rejoice now because the Lord is near. Lament is natural and easy, rejoicing is harder. We need to be commanded to practice the discipline of rejoicing, and know that it is possible because God is near; it is not up to us. Our brains are hardwired to notice things that make us anxious. But the Spirit of God allows us to focus on the lovely things, not the anxious. Thinking about the good is a discipline. Rejoicing is not being happy when things are good or being optimistic, but knowing that God is near in all circumstance.

Prayer: In good and bad you are near, Lord, so I can rejoice.

Thursday Feb 22

"Impractical Passion," Steve Wimmer, Feb 14 2016

John 12:20-36

Some Greeks asked to see Jesus. His response was to say to live one must die. In this strange response he was making a point. The world is so attached to the artificial sources of light that we don't know that the real source of light is available; like the sun in the sky able to give light and heat, but people are stuck inside around lamps and heaters unaware of the sun outside. We hoard resources out of fear of scarcity, which then creates the scarcity we fear. To truly live and grow we must let go of (die to) our reliance on

ourselves and fear. Death and resurrection of Jesus is the victory of Jesus over death. So we can leave those things to which we have been attached, to truly live in the resources of God. Passion is to die, let go. Passion for life is the passion of dying, letting go of fear and self-reliance. Lent is a time to give up artificial attachments and pick up disciplines of light – prayer, worship and service.
Prayer: Lord, in this moment I let go of my fears to fully rely on your resources.

Friday Feb 23

“Impractical Faith”, Steve Wimmer, Feb 21 2016

John 12:36b-50

Step out of darkness into light. What difference does faith make? There is a crisis of faith; the number of nonbelievers is increasing. In the church there is a crisis of trust; believers don't trust the power of God. Instead they worry. The Old Testament has few reference to faith or belief. But the New Testament has it all over the place; faith explodes in the New Testament. The faith makes all the difference. Jesus proclaims that the person who believes in Jesus walks in the light. Believing in God is not to believe in all the right things. We set up an extra challenge for nonbelievers when we require them to believe literal stories of Old Testament and everything else. Jesus speaks of himself, when he says to believers that Jesus is fulfillment of every verse of Old Testament scripture. “If you've seen me you've seen the father,” Jesus said. Unbelief is its own judgement; it is darkness, brokenness and powerlessness. If a person comes to Jesus in strength and knowledge and lacks brokenness, we miss the healing. Faith begins in the point of powerlessness. What is the place of powerlessness? Entrust it to God.

Prayer: God, I confess and entrust to you my powerlessness.

Monday Feb 26

Series; Meandering through Mark, “A Seminal Moment”, Steve Wimmer, Feb 19 2017

Mark 8:27-9:1

A seminal moments is a moment that changes things and everything that follows is different. The issue is life; what does it mean to be alive? Is there life before death? When Simon Peter acknowledged Jesus was the Messiah he had no patience for a suffering Messiah. He wanted a winning Messiah. Jesus told Peter that he was not on the side of God, but humans. Peter didn't understand. We don't either. The cross is an emblem of death and suffering. Jesus says if you want to follow you need to loose, take up a cross, and deny yourself. If you save your life you will lose it. If you willingly loose it you will live. Jesus speaks to wake people up “You think you are alive, but you are not... I want you to wake up and live!” Life requires a death and a resurrection. Let go of anxious control of life and yield to power of righteousness, holiness, and love. The Christian secret is that every day we find ways to yield to the power of life and love, and die to our anxious control. We don't have to live with anxious control to get the love we want, it's already there.

Prayer: Lord, I die to me and my control; I chose your life and power.

Tuesday Feb 27

Series; Meandering through Mark, “A Model of Faith,” Steve Wimmer, Feb 26 2017

Mark 9:14-29

What difference does faith make? Does faith matter? Jesus enters an argument in which a man is angry because no one can heal his son. Their faith isn't strong enough. Jesus is critical of those with little faith. The man says ‘if you can...’ to Jesus. Jesus clearly states ‘all things are possible through faith.’ It is central to people's existence. This essential faith is that we see the light of love that breaks through. To have faith is to see, to trust, to yield to the power and will of love around us. Faith is the opposite of anxiety and fear. When we yield to God's will in trusting obedience, we live by trust instead of fear. The man's reply, ‘I believe, please help my disbelief,’ shows his powerlessness. A small door of faith opens. Jesus walks through that small opening. Faith is not one component of our life. It is a new operating system; it runs under and through everything else in our life. We can, Jesus can, start with a small faith. The man's small faith is a model of faith, a place to start. But Jesus' yielding trust is a fuller model of faith; it is obedience and trust to God's love and will breaking out in this world.

Prayer: Lord I believe, help my unbelief.

Wednesday Feb 28

Series; Meandering through Mark, "Did you do that on purpose?" Ben Krieder, March 5 2017

Mark 11:12-25

When we are fully willing to embrace God's kingship in our lives, then we experience the power of Christ. Sometimes we ask God if he did something on purpose. Jesus curses a tree, it dies and he says 'Have faith in God.' This is a strange response. Did he do that on purpose? What is the connection between the dying tree and faith in God? Does my faith really matter right now? Jesus's says 'yes,' if we hear, remember and believe. Faith is opposite of fear. Faith is to hold onto the conviction that God is good. Our fear keeps us from experiencing fullness of faith. The New Testament leaders were good at showing up for worship, but they did not have fullness. Jesus says 'Embrace God's love.' Don't just talk about it, but embrace it, experience it. It is through faith that we fulfill our intended purpose. Mountains can take many forms of obstacles, but faith overcomes them. In embracing God, we overcome fear and obstacles. Take the leap. Am I ready to embrace God's goodness? It happens every day, repeatedly.

Prayer: Lord I embrace your love. I trust you to grow my faith and overcome my fears.

Thursday March 1

"Stop... and Go!" Steve Wimmer, March 28 2010

Romans 6:1-7

The question is valid "should we go on sinning so grace will abound?" This question misunderstands what it means to be alive. We all need love, power and security. But you are called to life beyond physical life. Center of spiritual life is death to self. When we die to self we raise to live in Christ. It is not death without resurrection. True life is both a death and a resurrection. Death to self is not avoiding pleasure, but is not being bound by the need for love, power and security in unhealthy ways. Resurrection without death is denying pain and darkness, living in Pollyanna happiness, blissfully. People who are crucified and raised look different. They find God's ways to fulfill need for love, power and security. They are less dependent on other's opinions because they know God loves us all. Power won't be manipulation of others, but joining God's power. And security won't be false security like finding security in money, but is a deep security in trusting God's plan.

Prayer: Lord, I die to me and raise with you Christ Jesus, in your love, power and security.

Friday March 2

"Made to Belong" Steve Wimmer, March 13 2011

Matthew 6:5-13

The "Our" in this scripture calls us to community. It acknowledges that we belong to a community that reaches around the world. "Father" Abba is an intimate loving, trusting daddy. Jesus was first to use the intimate daddy/papa word to refer to God. When we know God is Abba it changes everything. When we know loving, trusting, intimate Abba it changes our relationships with everyone around us. We know God is our father we are a community of children of God, a community of grace. It is a false narrative of God to think his is distant, judgmental. In Jesus' words condemnation is not the point, repentance and healing is. "I will not condemn you either, go on and leave your past sinful ways" Jesus said to the woman.

Prayer: You are my loving father, thank you for repentance and healing, thank you for my place in the world-wide community of your family.

Monday March 5

"I am Astonished!" Steve Wimmer, March 4 2012

Galatians 1:6-10

Grace is an offensive message. God offers grace to every sinner. The worst of us get the same grace as the best of us. It is in our nature to compare ourselves to others and find our self-worth in this comparison; that we are better than that other person, to justify ourselves. We all deal with insecurity and self-worth problems and try to justify ourselves. Grace puts us on the same plane. All the self-justifying behavior is worthless. It is not good to compare and no good to find worth in the comparison. Now we live in grace.

We want to cling to all the self-justifying that build our worth and security, but grace says we can let go of them all. When we are free from self-justification we are free to love.

Prayer: Lord, I don't need to justify myself; you love and give grace to all of us.

Tuesday March 6

"Cursed for Us", Steve Wimmer, March 25 2012

Unknown Scripture

In our world we often justify ourselves to earn and prove our worth. We do it in religion by saying 'by these things I'm justified before God.' It also happens in secular ways. For example, conformity has the power to make us feel that we are okay. The problem is if we are going to justify ourselves we've got to get it *all* right. (This is living by the law). But Jesus changes this. he said we are to be like a child and know 'I'm okay because I am loved,' not indoctrinated into the rules that make us okay. Why are you trying to *be* Christian, when you *are* Christian? It's not what you *do*, but who you *are*. We are counted 'okay' because of what Jesus did. We are free to *do*, not to prove anything, but out of praise and gratitude and desire to grow. We need not *do* anything to be accepted by God.

Prayer: I know I am okay because you love me Lord.

Wednesday March 7

"Prodigal", Steve Wimmer, March 24 2013

Luke 15: 11-32

We learn lessons from the story of the Prodigal. Your choices stay with you. You reap what you sow... The grass is not greener on the other side... We know this about God: He has the joy of a Father upon the return of the son... We have to celebrate the found. God rejoices when we turn to him... Joy is not grasped like a thing; It is what we enter into within God's presence... Our repentance is necessary. God's response is joy.

Prayer: Lord, I turn to you, and enter your joy.

Thursday March 8

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, March 31 2013

John 20:1-18

Voice of Jesus speaks to us in the deep places about authenticity, desire and relationships. Authentic spirituality is to be united with the unconditional, unmatched love of God that changes us fundamentally. Desire for justice is a desire for a better world, an unselfish world. We long for this better world for others, for justice and compassion. In relationships, marriage, family and church, we long for forgiveness and care. The voice of Jesus continues to speak. He *is* Risen, ongoing, today; it is not just about the historic event. He *is* risen.

Prayer: Let me hear your voice deep within; let me be authentic in my desire to love what you love.

Friday March 9

"Amazed by Hope," Steve Wimmer, March 27 2016

John 20:1-18

There is a new world because of Easter. When Mary arrived at the tomb she was in a place of death, the hopeless place of grief. She was hopeless when she was possessed by demons, but she was healed and became hopeful. But now after Jesus' death she was hopeless again. Hope was crucified with Jesus. This was the grieving over the loss of hope. The followers of Jesus saw the hope in Jesus' miracles, teaching, life and love, the reign of God. It all ended with his death. To her the empty tomb meant that there had been grave robbers. This was so firmly fixed in her mind that she doesn't recognize Jesus alive. When he speaks her name she recognizes him and the shutters are blown open. She gets it – he is alive, he overcame death. She was again hopeful. The cross is transformed into victory- the place where Jesus absorbed our sin, all of death. It is the means by which the kingdom of God entered our world, bursting forth the renewing power of this world, not just eternity, but this present world. We are infected by hope.

Prayer: Lord, infect me with hope, because your renewing power in this world can truly transform.

Monday March 12

Series: At the Cross, Healing our deep blindness, "Half Right", Steve Wimmer, March 16 2014

Mark 8:27-9:2

What needs to happen to live fully alive, when there is a great communication problem in understanding who Christ is? We have worldly ideas of life. While the Bible gives different ideas of life. Coming to see life differently happens in stages. We need to hear the bad news that we are greedy, to hear the good news that life is available in spite of our greed. God has an unrelenting commitment of life. Crucifixion is victory of life. The way to life is surrender, not grasping and control, but surrender to power of God. When we let go of selfish control we can live in unity in a community not separated by selfish egos. Community comes together to worship, and dispersed in service.

Prayer: God, I choose to live alive in You, in worship and service, setting aside my selfish greed.

Tuesday March 13

Series: At the Cross, Healing our deep blindness, "This is my son, Listen to Him", Steve Wimmer, March 23 2014

Isaiah 50:4-9, Mark 9:2-13

Moses represents the law. Elijah represents the prophets. Jesus is the Messiah. We don't get the world we want. We just wish for the world we want, while in a world with suffering. Jesus is glorified right in the middle of suffering. God says, "Listen to him." Everything about Jesus' life is to be listened to. Where there is suffering, there the Messiah will be. The glory of God is made known in the middle of pain. Some people say the existence of suffering proves no God exist. Christians say because of the suffering of Christ we know that there is a God who stands with us in our suffering.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for being with me in my suffering.

Wednesday March 14

Series: At the Cross, Healing our deep blindness, Steve Wimmer, March 30 2014

Isaiah 52:13-53, Mark 10:13-16

We all have blind spots where we can't see how the Bible applies to our world. We don't see the connections, because we have hidden those things about ourselves with which that we are most unhappy. So we can't see the connection. But God welcomes us even in our blindness. But we resist. Children welcome God's welcome, recognizing that it is good to sit on God's lap, where he wants us. Anyone can join God's welcome. Those overcoming blind spots must be honest about what is in their soul. God grants welcome without any qualification.

Prayer: Lord, open my eye. I want to be held in your lap.

Thursday March 15

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, March 1 2015

Philippians 3: 17-4:1

Gluttony can be over eating, under eating, or over-scrupulous eating. When attachment with food is too great, preoccupation becomes an idol, a matter of worship. We need to put worship of God consistently first, then the rest falls off the pedestal. Be grateful for goodness of food. We need to put our attention on appointments of love, with God and with others. When we place our attention in the right place the unhealthy attachment with food will subside.

Prayer: Lord, I worship you and you alone.

Friday March 16

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, March 8 2015

Genesis 13: 1-13

Greed grows in fear of scarcity. Love of money or possessions is a distorted love. It starts with good gifts, but then the creation becomes the love object, instead of the Creator. Money exhibits some quality of God. It can say to us, "love me," "trust me," "I will give you peace," "worship me." But it disappoints. Working off our appropriate longing for happiness, and fills us with fear of scarcity, that there is not enough. Greed is attaching ourselves to that which we think gives security and happiness. If we see the abundance of God we need not attach to possessions in greed. Trust in God's abundance. Living in abundance is living in trust. There are practices that can help; Return to God in worship and ongoing communion; Practice simplicity, inward detachment; Practice living in community. Practice generosity, sharing, giving; Recognize every item in life is God's.

Prayer: Lord, you give abundantly; I need not fear or be greedy.

Monday March 19

Sloth, Steve Wimmer, March 15 2015

Luke 10: 38-42

Sloth is more than laziness. It is inattention to first things, things of greatest importance. It is not attending to love. Martha was distracted, to be taken off the tract. We are filled with a world of busy-ness and distractions, external, but also internal. To be internally calm we must focus on the important thing. One thing is necessary: listening to God. We need time set aside to seek first the kingdom... The power of renewal contrasts the power of the world... There is no place or event in all of history that the cross and the suffering love of Jesus doesn't touch. We see the face of God in that suffering; in it we see his love that will win. When we remember that the first thing is the love of God and power of renewal, we order our lives differently. We already have this love; we must not allow ourselves to be distracted from it. We can avoid distraction by using prayer and quietness; scripture and meditation; and moment to moment awareness of praise. Even if our emotions don't feel it, it is there. We can know that in times of darkness we are not separated from God.

Prayer: Lord, calm the distractions within me; I let go of them to clearly see your love and renewal.

Tuesday March 20

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, March 22 2015

Matthew 5:21-22

Wrath is anger that comes to action that demeans others. It is not just a feeling. Jesus harshest words are directed toward those who demean other people. The original anger is part of justice, the longing that wrongs will be set right. This is beautiful and useful in this righteous beginning. But then it becomes distorted. Wrath is this distorted anger of desired justice, wanting things my way. It is destructive when anger is misdirected to wrong target or wrong person. It is destructive when we express it the wrong way, in irritability, passive aggressiveness, blowing up, or holding onto it. It can be passed through generations. Can we use the power of anger to fight injustice? Jesus didn't come to make us more religious. He came for redemption, to purchase us back out of slavery, or to make us new again. The wrath of humanity is taken out on Jesus on the cross. We are powerless to redeem anger for justice, but Jesus already did it. So let go of it, pray, imagine a different response. To stop wrath we can pause, notice, yield, stretch our imagination, and respond differently. Growth is the goal, not perfection.

Prayer: Lord, I let go of my anger.

Wednesday March 21

"Envy", Steve Wimmer, March 29 2015

Genesis 37:1-11

Envy starts when people perceive someone else is more preferred position, or has something they want. Envy exists in a win/lose world. If you think you are in the losing group you want the other's place. We perceive self as less than. The work of envy inhibits the ability to hear or see blessings. It moves beyond jealousy and turns a cold shoulder, and wishes ill will on the other. Envy poisons the well. We need conversion of our heart and mind. It pushes people apart. Hosanna - help and salvation has arrived. Jesus addressed his ministry to losers. His love is enough to overcome. We suffer envy because we don't avail ourselves of the banquet love of Christ. I am good enough for God to love me because it is God's nature to love. Sink into the love of God.

Prayer: Lord, thank you that you say I am good enough, I need not envy others.

Thursday March 22

“Impractical Agenda” Steve Wimmer, March 6 2016

John 13:21-35

Jesus agenda is impractical; 15 years of waiting and 40 days in wilderness, 3 years of ministry. Judas disagreed with Jesus’ agenda. He believed Jesus needed to set Israel free from Rome; make an army, and create masses to fight against Rome. So Judas turned away. Jesus shares his agenda; to do will of my father. God and Jesus reflect glory of each other. Jesus on the cross was the obedience of Jesus that glorifies God. Why is the cross necessary? It discloses the sickness of the world’s brokenness. It is the revelation of the love of God. Jesus gives a new command, to love one another. This sets apart his disciples, as those who love one another. So it is a beacon for the world. It is different. It is a mark of Jesus. Christ in me can reach out to Christ in you. To have love for another is to take others seriously. Love of God is poured out on us, so that we can pour out on others. This happens in community when we are open and vulnerable.

Prayer: Lord, I chose to follow your agenda of love.

Friday March 23

“Impractical Praise” Steve Wimmer, March 20 2016

John 12:12-19

Palm branches were politically charged. One hundred and fifty years before Jesus the Roman ruler Antiacus Epiphany oppressed the Jews. Macabees used palm branches in purifying the temple. His brother waved palms as his group reentered Jerusalem to retake the city for the Jews. The palm branch became a symbol for Jewish nationalism, overcoming oppression of Roman Empire. It became a sign of rebellion. In the waving of palms the people called Jesus King of Israel, a rebel. Jesus then rode a donkey as a prophetic action, in reference to Zacheriah, to say he is the King of the whole Earth, not Israel alone. The revolution is that he is king of all people, not just those who look like us, or are like us. This began a church, a community, that accepted people that were not accepted in other communities, that the world considered unworthy; the poor, the slave, females, widows, unwanted child, the sick. Reaching out to those who are different than us is the most Christ-like thing we can do. To commune with God is to love what He loves and hate what he hates – oppression and violence.

Prayer: Open my eyes and heart to love what you love and hate what you hate.

Monday March 26

Series; Meandering through Mark, “The One who went away sad” Steve Wimmer, March 12 2017

Mark 10:17-31

Most everyone is anxious about money. Can we be more generous and light hearted about our money and serving God with it? The man in Mark 10 asks the big question “What must I do to be really alive, now and beyond?” Jesus’ response is “Why do you call me good?” Before God we are all equal. Jesus asks him to give away his wealth. This made him sad. Money is a challenge for Christian life. No one can serve two masters. We risk idolatry when the power of money becomes the source of what we trust based on what it can do for you. Money can increase the mindset of scarcity, fearing that there is not enough. It promotes the power of consumerism, believing getting enough stuff brings us joy. Can we be free in relation to money? For those who think wealth is a blessing of God, it is astonishing that Jesus said it is so difficult for wealthy to enter heaven. But with God all things are possible. God can make us more free, and aligned with God’s will. When we surrender we can use our gifts in cooperation with God. We need to be responsible and generous, then we experience joy of giving. Give for the sake of our soul.

Prayer: Lord, work in my heart as I chose to be generous with the wealth you have given me.

Tuesday March 27

Series; Meandering through Mark, “Profound... yet simple...yet profound.” Garth Anderson, March 19 2017

Mark 12:28-34

This is a profound statement that Jesus made about the greatest command; love. Yet, it is simple. He modified the theme 'Love the Lord God...' by adding 'mind' to 'heart, soul, strength.' The mind can be a big hindrance to loving God, especially when things don't make common sense to us. Agape is a love that requires action. The first part of the answer, loving God, requires the second half, to love other as self. The two answers are one thing; to love God with entire being is to love your neighbor. This love is seen in how we interact with others, considering what helps them be their best, not what can help me. Loving others is the action of loving God, the enemy as well as those in your inner circle. (Lev 19:18 , 1 John 4:20-21.) If you say you love God, you can't be hating brother and sister. But you must minister to them, to attend to the needs of others, outside our comfort zone. We need to be aware of opportunities to interact in love.

Prayer: Lord, help me love others, even when it doesn't make sense.

Wednesday March 28

Series; Meandering through Mark, "Strength of the suffering Servant," Ben Krieder, April 2 2017

Mark 14:32-42

The relationship Jesus had with God was intimate, trusting and loving and obedient. Are there situation we feel condemned, suffering and alone, lacking the intimate, trusting relationship? Different people in the story of Mark 14 are without at least one element – intimacy, trust and love. Jesus shows them all. Using the word 'Abba' Jesus used intimate voice with God. Saying, 'Everything is possible' shows his trust in God. Saying, 'not my will' shows obedience. When he prayed and his followers slept he was alone... We need intimacy, trust and obedience. We may struggle with these, but the kingdom of God is never in trouble. Jesus trusted and obeyed to the very end. His strength came from his intimacy. Where do we get our strength? To obey and trust it cost Jesus. It will cost us, our resistance to God, our priorities, and motivation, self-protection. It's worth it. We give up these things, but we gain intimacy to have strength to trust and obey. Give up fear. Take strength of Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, draw me close.

Thursday March 29

Series; Meandering through Mark, "Who did this?" Steve Wimmer, April 9 2017

Mark 11:1-11, 15:1-15

Looking at the death of Jesus we must ask 'Who did this?' The Sanhedrin planned it. Pilot had it authorized. The mob asked for it, demanded it. More deeply, the disciple did it when they ran. Judas did it when he betrayed. Peter did it when he denied Jesus. But really we all did it, in our deepest fears, insecurities, anxiety. Lent is about shining light in the dark places of our life. Christians are called to do so, like no other place in our society. There is a cost to ignoring the darkness in us. It is there and it will go somewhere. It will be turned toward other people in judgment, division, or prejudice. These are the same attitudes as those who crucified Christ. We must admit it as much as they... God did this. He planned it. Mark 8 speaks of suffering. Mark 10 speaks of ransom. Mark 14 and Isaiah 53 speak of striking the shepherd... We who have the courage to look at darkness in us, and in the world, see that the cross of Jesus is still standing. The mercy is still there. It results in deep humility, knowing all the darkness inside us, but also knowing the mercy of the cross is there, so we don't need to fear it or be ashamed. We cannot look at others as if we are better because we know we have the darkness also, and without the cross we have no hope over it. Hope and power are ours because the cross is still standing in the middle of our rumble and darkness.

Prayer: Give me courage to look at my darkness, and then thank you, Lord, for the mercy of the cross.

Friday March 30

Series; Meandering through Mark, "He goes before you" Steve Wimmer, April 16 2017

Mark 16:1-8

The message of Easter is a defiant message. When the women arrived at the tomb and the angel stated that Jesus is not here, God was defying death. It is not story of a season of change, but a story of God's victory, the victory of love. The angel told the women to tell the disciples and Peter. This is an invitation to grace. The disciples had deserted and denied him. But he was inviting them anyway, and going ahead,

blazing a trail ahead of them. He was not giving up on them. He was going to meet them in Galilee, their regular place of living. Jesus goes into our normal everyday living meets us here, where we are.
Prayer: Lord, thank you for meeting me here where I am, and for defying death with your love.

Monday April 2

“Easter; the story continues” Steve Wimmer, April 23 2017

1 Peter 1:1-19

Life goes on. What difference does the resurrection make? Violence still happens in this world, though he is the Prince of Peace. Though he is the Uniter, we are living amidst divisiveness. He is the great healer, but deep sickness still exists. Peter says the resurrection is the new hope, a beginning of something different, a treasure that cannot spoil or fade which is kept in heaven for you. If we understand this as a heavenly life beyond the grave, and we think we are leaving this place, we start to ignore this place and deny the mission of Jesus who prayed heaven to come to Earth. He did not pray about us leaving Earth to go to heaven. The end game of the New Testament teaching is when the storehouse of heaven is let loose on Earth. We are kept by God’s power until this revealing in the last day. The secret of the Christian life is the power that is protecting us, a power that we have available to us. Too many Christians live as if God can’t handle our problems, ignoring the power of resurrection. The power of resurrection is the power we have to guard us and empower us to act. We must yield to this power. The disciplines we practice are to keep us in the yielding. The battle is still happening, but the decisive battle has been won.
Prayer: I yield to your power to overcome, to thrive in the battles of this world.

Tuesday April 3

“Memorials to Resurrection” Steve Wimmer, April 24 2016

John 21:15-25

New Testament has memorials to the people who show the way of Jesus. Peter is one. Peter was bold leader. He preached the first sermon. He was named ‘The Rock.’ He converted and welcomed the first gentiles. This all came after Peter’s failure. The resurrection changed him. The change in the lives of Jesus’ followers is evidence of his resurrection. Jesus restored Peter; he asked three times ‘Do you love me?’ for the three denials Peter had made. Peter obeyed and followed all the way to the cross. The story of the resurrection is a story of the ongoing power of the followers, acting in the power of the resurrection. They believed that God’s people will be raised from the dead. Jesus resurrection was in anticipation of the raising of his people. The resurrection brings people more into the world to be agents of renewal. Jesus said ‘Don’t be anxious about other people’s faith. You follow me; take care of your own.’ Our practice is our life following Him, who is making all things new. The cross of Jesus is the means by which the world is being renewed and the kingdom of heaven entering our world. Jesus’ restoration matches our failures.

Prayer: Lord, I let the resurrection power renew my heart.

Wednesday April 4

“Made for Forgiveness” Steve Wimmer, April 10 2011

Matthew 6:5-13

Debt is powerful, either financial or moral. We feel the pressure when we are in debt. We often keep score in a moral ledger, noting who we own and who owes us. Jesus came to change up the power of this web of debt, by offering forgiveness as an option. But forgiveness is a miracle. It requires us to see that judgment, the keeping of the moral ledger, is not my job. We must embrace a vision of what it is like to be free of indebtedness. Every line in the ledger requires, is dependent upon, God’s power, so that we can let go. We will fail at times. When we fail, start where we are and keep going. You are forgiven so let go and be free.

Prayer: Lord, I let go of the moral debts I have held onto; I forgive myself and others so I can be free.

Thursday April 5

“Made to Overcome” Steve Wimmer, April 17 2011

Matthew 6:5-13

The Tempter tries to get us to forget; to forget whose we are, forget the time we felt the love of God, and to forget what our business is – to love other. The Tempter has us focus on ourselves, our greed and selfish desires. We won't overcome temptations apart from the power of God. Independent strength, will power, is not the deliverance from temptation. Surrendering to God is the deliverance. Don't try harder to resist temptation. But surrender willingly knowing God's power is necessary to be delivered from temptation.

Prayer: Lord, I surrender to you so that I can stop fighting and be delivered.

Friday April 6

“Made for More” Steve Wimmer , April 24 2011

Matthew 28:1-10

We are tempted to leave Easter Sunday and forget. For early Christians it was life changing. They didn't forget that Jesus' resurrection changed everything. What is different on our world because of resurrection? The center of Jesus' message was “the Kingdom of God is near.” In other words “God is moving.” Kingdom is near means things are happening; healing, renewal, new community, for the Creation and for people. The disciples went forward as if the world had changed, because it had. The resurrection means the Kingdom is here. With Jesus, hope and healing, renewal and justice keeps happening every day.

Prayer: Lord, change my world.

Monday April 9

“One” Steve Wimmer, April 1 2012

John 12:12-16, Galatians 3:26-29

Religions for a long time have been telling people they have to clean up their act to really be a part of God's people. The court of the temple shows this: be the right person and be clean; you got to have it all figured right; you must agree with our doctrine, look right, conduct yourself and act a certain way. No. You are God's people through faith. Jesus destroyed all courts, layers of rules. We are welcomed by God so we can welcome others. We are God's peoples if ; we trust God who chooses, we long for transformation, we long for healing for the whole world.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for welcoming me through faith.

Tuesday April 10

“In the Fullness of Time” Steve Wimmer, April 8 2012

Matthew 28:1-10, Galatians 4: 3-7

Easter can look like an exercise in futility if we look at it from the fatalistic point of view. Religion can act to reinforce the divisions that exist in the world, just a continuation of the same dead-end mentality, like a river of junk flowing down a mountain from generation to generation. This is fatalism. Jesus opened an option that sets us free from fatalism, an option that can overcome the evils, not continue it. Jesus gives a stream of living water that transforms people as it travels through time and history and wanders to us. It is our choice to follow the stream of renewal not the fatalism.

Prayer: I choose living water or renewal, Lord.

Wednesday April 11

“What a Pastor Wants” Steve Wimmer, April 15 2012

Galatians 4: 8-20

In this scripture Paul, the pastor, is clarifying his calling, and sharing with prayer partners what his goals are. Paul's goal is to lead people to be transformed by God to be like Jesus. He says God's grace is sufficient for this transformation when we are walking in spirit of Jesus, which is the power of resurrection and renewal. We will be transformed in love and power. Paul told the people that he was praying honestly for all things that will transform the people. He asked them, and us, to be hungry to grow and be transformed and hungry for the world to be renewed.

Prayer: Lord, transform me.

Thursday April 12

“Children of Promise” Steve Wimmer, April 22 2012

Galatians 4:21-31

Religion has different traditions: traditions of works and traditions of freedom. Traditions of works are about what we can do. It focuses on the law and rules. Traditions of freedom are about what God can do. It can be easier to be a slave to the law than to be free, because then we don't have responsibility of caring for ourselves. Traditions of works often create divisions, which results in intolerance, violence, and war. We choose what traditions we participate in. Problems happen when we focus on all of the things we do for God. When we practice religion that is about what we do for God, we are following traditions that divide. We are children of the promise. It's about that God does. We need to cooperate with what God is doing through the power of resurrection. Religious history is a story of trying to please God, slavery and independence. History of grace is a story of God freedom, dependence and love.

Prayer: Lord, I choose freedom.

Friday April 13

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, April 7 2013

John 20:19-31

Faith is an all-in business. Thomas was all in, everything at stake, entrusting his life, surrendering all to Christ... We don't have the benefit of seeing Jesus' scars to belief... 'Peace be with you,' Jesus spoke same words twice to his fearful followers. Followers were the poor, but as the movement grew the social structure began to change; Slaves and slave-owners were equal in worship; Women lifted as equals; Greeks and Jews were equal. The movement didn't die, because they saw Jesus and knew he resurrected. It was by their testimony that the church lived on. It was grace that awakened this faith in them, as it does in us, even though we don't see his resurrected body. Like their testimony of seeing Jesus, we have sacred moments also, like when we experience unexplainable peace, or are given direction in the voice of the risen Christ in us, attempting to awaken us.

Prayer: Thank you for the early believers, for I am beneficiary of their faith.

Monday April 16

“A New Commandment” Steve Wimmer, April 28 2013

John 13:31-35

We are commanded to love as Jesus loved. This is a high bar. No abstract loving, only love in a setting and with people, who are annoying. This is the last talk Jesus gave his followers, so he shared the most important things. It was not a set of plans for spreading the church, not instructions for leaders, or doctrine – only love. The most important thing is love. Look at Jesus to know what God is like. Not only does Jesus model love, but he makes it possible for us to love. All the power of evil is conquered. Love wins. Fate of the world is love overcoming evil. We each have to ask ourselves, “What does love require of me in this situation?”

Prayer: Lord, What does love require of me today?

Tuesday April 17

Unknown Title and Speaker, April 6 2014

Mark 9:14-24

Faith requires doubt, to allow faith to grow. The Bible is full of doubt. All people have some. Many people think doubt is unforgivable, but it is not. Struggling with faith shows a stronger faith. We go through test to have a testimony. It is not a sign of lack of faith. Doubt is not a weakness, but shows strength enough question. When things change it may bring doubt to a person who once knew for sure. It is okay to question Jesus. Jesus does not rebuke us when we have questions about what we are going through. Jesus says we may doubt him but he doesn't doubt us. Focus on Jesus, not the darkness around us. Letting ourselves question when we don't know the end is being honest. It is a sign that we are taking it serious.

Prayer: Lord, use my doubt.

Wednesday April 18

“Open the doors so I can follow” Steve Wimmer, April 20 2014

Mark 16:1-8

Resurrection ends the darkness of our world, but we have to have the eyes to see it. Realm of heaven and realm of earth are coming together. Jesus brought it together, though bringing the power of forgiveness, the letting go of grievances through healing. It is possible to proclaim it but still be blinded from the difference that the resurrection makes because of disappointing circumstances, or the challenges of life, expectations or grief. Resurrection verifies and declares that Jesus' teachings were true and the power was real. The cross is not defeat but victory. The reign of God was revealed at the cross. Suffering love of Jesus is working among us to make people, communities and nations new. The places that we think are a dead end are now filled with life because Jesus goes before us. The present moment is always filled with new possibilities. We have to have eyes to see it. Give me eyes to see possibilities for forgiveness, healing, and newness in this moment.

Prayer: Lord, give me eyes to see the possibilities of forgiveness, healing and newness in this moment.

Thursday April 19

Series: God's Story, "Creation" Steve Wimmer, April 27 2014

Psalms 8

What are humans that God loves us? Some people may say, 'We are significant because of God's love, nothing else matters.' This answer can be an extreme that minimizes everything else. Other people may say, 'We are nothing, we are just like other animals.' This is an extreme that minimizes all spiritual value. Psalm 8 focuses on the fact that the world is good. This world, as God created it, was very good. We are created in image of God, so humans are crowned with glory and honor. We cannot ignore this. When we are at our worst we are acting as less than human. True humanity is the image of God. Don't diminish humanity. We have a job to do; to care for Creation, delegated by God. A third answer says, "We are significant because we are the image of God, made to care for the earth, God's good creation." This implies that God's world and God's people need to be awake, be present, be attentive of nature and appreciative of humans, to be stewards of the world.

Prayer: Open my eyes to see the ways I am the image of You, Lord and see my job as steward.

Friday April 20

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, April 5 2015

1 Corinthians 15: 1-11

Paul writes a reminder of the good news, the Gospel. We all suffer amnesia at times and need to be reminded of the center of the story, which, for Christians, is Easter, death, burial and resurrection of Christ. There are painful injustices that happen every day. The death of Jesus absorbs the injustice of the world, to make the wrong right. Death and Resurrection is victory. The weapon of his victory is love. Against appearances of all nastiness is the dying whispering protest of evil, because love has won. Greatest power is love. Its transformation is a journey, in individuals but also throughout the history of the world. We embodied the love of God for this world.

Prayer: Lord, I am the embodiment of your love for the world.

Monday April 23

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, April 19 2015

1 John 3:1-7

Stop and observe the manner of God's love for us. The word 'Behold' calls you to stop what you are doing and pay attention. Don't ignore or skim over this. Because of resurrection we are becoming like him as children become like their father. When Jesus returns we will be like him, as we are moving toward the likeness of Him. It's essential to continue to grow. We don't continue on with the same ruts. There is a standard that we are growing towards. The word 'Harmatia' is Greek for missing the mark. 'Anitnominism' means the state of having no standard. Righteousness is being in proper relationship, setting something right. Love has won. God, in Jesus, won the battle; we are mopping up the mission of love. We are resurrection documents, the love evidence of it is emblazoned on us.

Prayer: Grow me in love Lord.

Tuesday April 24

Unknown Title, Paul Loney, April 26 2015

1 John 3:16-24

What is the fragrance of your life? With the gift of the Spirit God moved from the temple to the hearts of people. The Spirit is heard in the still small voice. Sometimes our failures can turn groaning of Spirit into guilt... Surface issues reflect the heart... Shame has power until we share it. Our hearts condemn us, but God is greater than our hearts. Moving the focus from self to God means it doesn't matter what my opinion of myself is, because we know God's opinion. God knows the heart, and wants to live there, but sometimes has to clean house.

Prayer: Spirit live in my heart.

Wednesday April 25

"Amazed by Hope; Doubting Thomas" Valerie Reynolds, April 3 2016

John 20 :19-31

We all have doubt. Sometimes we think it's a sign of weakness or unbelief. When we deal with doubt, and take time to seek out the resolution of doubt, our faith gets stronger. All disciples became hopeless at the death. But the locked door of the upper room was not enough to keep Jesus out. He came in and said 'Peace be with you.' Peace is what these disciples needed to get out of place of hopelessness. Thomas searched and tested out the doubt and resolved it. His test became a testimony. Doubt fills us when God calls us to do the impossible. God places dreams in our hearts. We can have faith and do it, or doubt and kill the dream. God does not call us to do things we can do yourself, but He calls us to do things we will have to depend on him for. Our doubts are turned into faith by acting on that which we are called to do. The God-shaped hole in us is what Ecclesiastes says is the empty feeling of 'There has to be more than this.' He offers us 'Peace be with you.'

Prayer: Let your peace rest on me as I act in faith to do what you call me to do.

Thursday April 26

"Amazed by Hope; Heaven on Earth Breathe Deeply" Steve Wimmer, April 10 2016

John 20:19-23

Easter is so vital, one day is not enough. For the earliest believers the resurrection was the spring in their step, the power of life. Isaiah had announced God renewal of heaven and earth. Revelations pronounces, 'I will make all things new.' The resurrection is that moment. After Jesus' death the disciples gathered in fear. Fear affects us; we fight, flight or freeze. Word of Jesus has power to convey that which it speaks; the words 'peace be with you' give peace. Jesus gives them a job; 'I send you.' The community of Jesus has a job, to contribute to renewal in the world. He breathes on them, 'Receive the Spirit,' the breath of renewal and mission. First task is spiritual formation, to be a person who walks with God. Make time with God priority. Second task is to participate in renewal. We realize the whole of Creation is loved by God. Spirit calls each of us in particular ways to participate in renewal. Third task is forgiveness and justice. We are authorized to forgive and to bring justice.

Prayer: Lord, grow my spirit, help me walk in renewal, and bring forgiveness and justice.

Friday April 27

"Amazed by Hope; Looking in the wrong places" Steve Wimmer, April 17 2016

John 21: 1-14

Scarcity is a mindset that there is not enough. Resurrection is a showering of abundance, showing that there is enough, renews Creation with the power of abundance. Often we don't see the abundance in front of us; it depend on where our eyes are focused. Money, time, love, are all resources and it feels there is never enough. There is real scarcity in the world. But it is also a mindset. Disciples see Jesus for the third time. Disciples are going back to work. In scarcity mindset we focus on the negative, when we don't get enough love, attention, power, knowledge, blessing. The difference between scarcity or abundance is where we are looking. Scarcity mindset creates the scarcity when people panic. When we focus on what we have, we see the abundance. We let go of fear, worries, anxiety, believing that the resurrection has opened the door to renewal and abundance. To practice the mindset of abundance we practice gratitude and service. Gratitude is recognizing what is already there. Service is using the gifts in community.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for your abundant love; I choose to focus on it and know you provide.

Monday April 30

“The First Convert’ Steve Wimmer, May 9 2010

Psalm 67, Acts 16:11-15

Lydia was the first convert in Europe. Her house was the first setting for missionary work, the first church location. As Jesus guided the new church he empowered women. Jesus set free the people at the bottom of the social hierarchy; slaves, women, gentiles, wives. He wanted them to get on with the business of living as an empowered follower of Christ. We are equal in Christ’s eyes and in relationships through Christ.

Prayer: Thank you for your power, and for empowering the weak.

Tuesday May 1

“Prepare Your Minds for Action” Steve Wimmer, May 1 2011

1 Peter 1:1-2, 13-16

The disciples thought the cross was failure, but after the resurrection they realized that the cross is victory. It is the greatest power on earth. The suffering love of God is more powerful than the worst violence, terrorism, war, politics, and our own terrible thoughts. Surrendering to the working out of the character of God in us is the most important thing we do in life. To be holy is first to heal the defect in my character and then to be action oriented in healing the world. The cross and resurrection is a new Passover freedom and new exodus from slavery. Character is crucial; this is where the action begins. Holiness is setting apart pure people. It is the healing of our character over time and becoming more like Christ. Life is different because we can look forward with hope and prepare our mind for action. Put work gloves on to do the work of healing and loving, and not be preoccupied with getting doctrine right.

Prayer: Thank you for freedom to heal and love.

Wednesday May 2

“The Importance of Each One’s Work” Steve Wimmer , May 8 2011

1 Peter 1:17-23

Peter said one difference is that we don’t have to live with the philosophy of hopeless life. Greek philosophy believed life was a wheel where everything happens over and over, that the circle of life was a cycle of emptiness. God redeemed us from this. We can live in hope for change in the future. We are no longer slaves to the cycle of emptiness. The time of fulfillment has begun. Therefore we matter, our life’s matter as part of the fulfillment. Change is possible because of Jesus Resurrection. History is moving toward a purpose. Do we grow as part of it?

Prayer: Thank you for hope, for fulfillment that will occur.

Thursday May 3

“From the Margins” Steve Wimmer, May 7 2017

1 Peter 1:13-2:3

Christians are called to be part of a rebellion, a rebellion of holiness, against darkness of the world. Peter wrote to the church that was persecuted and mocked. They had no leaders in power that sympathized with them. All they had was holiness. They were in the margins of society. Holiness is a character of God; Impenetrable beauty and love with no hatred. In God’s holiness every hint of darkness is illuminated. He exposes everything less than His pure goodness. We cannot see and live in this. His goodness sends us running in fear, for his goodness reveals all. Isaiah received holiness with the burning coal; God transmit it to him. Jesus says holiness will grow in us and to others, among those who are willing. The greatest need of the world is people who are infected by holiness. We are held accountable by God who is perfect and good, to live well, to live out holiness. Jesus was God’s holiness sacrificed for us. Our job is the walk in the power of resurrection to live differently. We are created to house the fullness of God, His holiness. Holiness is a returning to whom we are created to be. It is a lifetime of soul training; reading scripture, prayer, confession, use of our gifts for serving and praise and worship.

Prayer: Make me a worthy house for your holiness.

Friday May 4

“Rejected by the builders” (spoken to youth), Steve Wimmer, May 14 2017

1 Peter 2: 4-12

Do you know who you are? You are aliens and strangers to this world. We live by different values; sexual, violence, worship. You are chosen a royal priesthood, holy nation. The Bible emphasis is on God choosing us, not us choosing Him. Priests represent God to the people and world, and represent the people and world to God. Holy is to be set apart for God’s good purpose. It is not because of how great we are that Peter describes us as he does, but because Jesus is exceptional. Jesus is the foundation, cornerstone, though the world rejected this foundation. He is more interested in setting us right, than us being right. Abiding in God’s love we will bear fruit. A house settles and relies on the cornerstone. Our lives depend on the foundation also. Don’t settle for less than a strong foundation of Christ. Remember you are chosen, a holy nation, royal priesthood. We can live differently by being part of a community of faith. Don’t be afraid to look different. Being found by Jesus makes us look different.

Prayer: Thank you for your strong foundation so I can bear fruit.

Monday May 7

“An Alternative to that.” Steve Wimmer, May 28 2017

1 Peter 3:8-22

What is a church? This is a fundamental question. Church is not a voting block. It is not a guardian of tradition. It is not just a choice in the marketplace of spirituality. Church is the people who set apart in our hearts Jesus Christ as Lord. This is an alternative to the first century practice that says ‘Caesar is Lord.’ Caesar lords over the subjects, uses his power. Jesus says ‘you won’t do that.’ Power among you is being a servant. Jesus’ power is always service. Peter says the power of the church is the practice of service. The church is an alternative to the power of the world. Repay evil with blessing, kindness, and gentleness. This is the alternative to exploitation of power in the world, not just among other believers but also in the world without fear. Our alternative is love that expresses itself in service. The history of earth is a history of misuse of power. Church is an alternative to this.

Prayer: Melt my heart to live a life of loving kindness and gentleness, for this is your power.

Tuesday May 8

“Keep in Step” Steve Wimmer, May 6 2012

Galatians 5:16-26

Conflict of every kind is manifestation of conflict between spirit of life and spirit of death (sinful nature). Living in unity is not easy. The powers aren’t equal; if we live by the Spirit the spirit of our sinful nature will lose the conflict. Our destiny is holiness (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and self-control); it is concern for others. Learning to walk in the macro (big picture) is micro-steps of learning and letting go. Christ being found in us is holiness.

Prayer: Each step of each day help me choose the Spirit’s way.

Wednesday May 9

“The Law of Christ” Steve Wimmer, May 20 2012

Galatians 6:1-6

In Galatians they speak of mentoring done as a survival; it was urgent. We have lost that urgency. To restore someone is to put them back in touch with the source of healing. Shalom is the presence of God in community. This is the power released with Jesus’ resurrection. We must make it a priority to mentor children and young believers, and each other. We each need to be mentored, and to be a mentor.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for the gift of mentors and the gift of mentoring.

Thursday May 10

“The Law of Reaping and Sowing” Steve Wimmer, May 27 2012

Acts 2:1-4, 14-21, Galatians 6:7-10

Pentecost is the continuation of the story of Easter, when the Spirit empowered ordinary people to do supernatural things. It is God constantly reminding us we are loved. The Spirit living in us is a gift, giving us the power to live holy lives. Without the Spirit we might as well be dead. To sow to the sinful nature is

living as if it is all about yourself. Sowing to the Spirit means to nurture life that is open to Spirit's leading. Find a way to surrender throughout the day. Live a life of love, cooperating with the Spirit.
Prayer: Spirit lead me.

Friday May 11

"That They May Be One" Ben Kreider, May 12 2013

John 17:20-26

Prayer is often for our desires. What is Jesus' desire? Unity; to "be one" in love. Our unity as believers is caused by and reflection of the unity of the trinity. It's easy to love people who are the same as us, who believe as we do. It's harder to love those who are different, or those who have hurt us. Glory means splendor. Loving people we used to hate is the power of God's glory; it is the splendor of God. Put on Christ like putting on clothes, new clothes. This leads to action. We love through the power of Christ in us. Loving those we used to hate is the action of Christ in us, and God's splendor.

Prayer: Melt me hard heart; bring unity.

Monday May 14

"Free for All" or "Perfect obedience, perfect freedom" Steve Wimmer, May 5, 2013

John 14: 23-29

Jesus speaks to deepest needs of people; longing for freedom, peace and joy. He connects these things to obedience. Jesus calls for our intention to be obedience: "If you love me you'll obey my teachings". It is a circle; Loving God leads to being empowered to obey, which leads to longing and seeking God's love, and experiencing God's love, which then increases love for God and our desire and empowerment to obey. This is what it is to be human; to long for love, joy and peace. We search for it in selfish evils or through obedience of good.

Prayer: Lord, empower me to obey your teaching, for they are good.

Tuesday May 15

Series: God's Story, "Tragedy" Ben Kreider, May 4 2014

Acts 26:9-18

Throughout scripture God is calling people back to Him. Is anything holding you back from trusting God with your greatest longing? Paul's mission was to "open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those sanctified by faith in me" It's God's grace. Recall a time when your plans turned out completely different than expected. Do you still believe God was working in that situation? How? We might not know all the details of how it will happen and that's okay because God knows. Keep a look out for God. Challenge self to continue, and seek out people who are stronger. What is one step you believe God is inviting you to take after today? When and how do you plan on taking that step? We can live awake to God.

Prayer: Today. Lord, I will take one step back to you.

Wednesday May 16

Series: God's Story, "Israel" Steve Wimmer, May 11 2014

Genesis 12:1-3, Hosea 11, Psalm 92:1-2

In the Old Testament God gathered his people, with the understanding that the world is broken. God called them to be a blessing to others in the process of setting the world right He called them to worship Yahweh only, to live out freedom with responsibility, and to be holy, set aside for a purpose. Their purpose was to tell the truth. We are called the same way; to be a blessing in a broken world, and to live in responsible freedom (This is not what some people mean when they say 'I want to be free' when they are really saying 'I want my way.')

We are called to worship the one and only God, bringing our deepest desire to God, and to be holy, set apart, reflecting the image of God in the world. The last word is God's. Israel is unfaithful. We are unfaithful. But God never lets go.

Prayer: Thank you for your faithfulness, even in my unfaithfulness.

Thursday May 17

Series: God's Story, "Jesus" Steve Wimmer, May 18 2014

Colossians 2:8-15

If our image of Jesus is not sufficient it will not be sufficient to handle our lives. We have things that limit our image of Jesus. We have inadequate understanding of Christ when we think Jesus was only a great moral teacher; it is true but not enough. We have inadequate understanding when we believe Jesus' goal was to replace one religion with another. He was not to replace, but to fulfill. We have inadequate understanding when we think Jesus came so that we can go to heaven. This is very selfish. His mission was to reclaim the earth ("on Earth as it is in Heaven").

Through death Jesus takes in the broken power of the world. Through the transformation of the cross the power that comes out is love.

Prayer: Heal my inadequate understanding.

Friday May 18

Series: God's Story, "The Church" Steve Wimmer, May 25 2014

Ephesians 2:14-22

We need to remember who we are. The church suffers from amnesia. Four key changes happened when Constantine converted (312 AD). First, the church became aligned with power. Second, construction of large church buildings began, starting the thinking of 'church' as a building. Thirdly, church became a place. Fourth, church began to split into sects, dominations, and divisions. These developments limit us and are not consistent with Biblical teaching about church, which are local groups of people empowered by Holy Spirit to live for God's dream of the world in community. Remember the destination of completing God's purpose for the world: that all relationships be healed, for which all creation is groaning.

Prayer: Lord, give me your vision of world in community, healed and full.

Monday May 21

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, May 3 2015

1 John 4:7-21

How does faith impact experience of fear? Future fears, fear of changes, fear of failure.

We have resource to deal with fear. Those who belong to God's will live in love. Scripture says there is no fear in love. Perfect love drives out fear. We can say, "I have these wings that can take me to safety, away from the fear." Fear turns on the system that makes us fight, flight or freeze. But we have other resources. It is love that gives courage to respond differently in the face of fear. The world needs people who have the courage to love in the face of fear. We can prepare for periods of fear with the soul practices of solitude, prayer, and fellowship. We can reduce fear by knowing that God is going to be with us after a decision, even if it's the wrong one, or a poor one.

Prayer: Thank you for being with me, I do not need to fear.

Tuesday May 22

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, May 10 2015

1 John 5:1-5

To confess that Jesus is the Christ is to say the Christ is Jesus, which requires a breakdown of the dualism between the spiritual and the physical. It is to say that the Christ was human- physical. That holiness was embodied in a physical being. Our language reveals the dualism we still believe, when we say "go to church." No; we are the church. Or "Devote this time to God" No; all time is God's. Because love has conquered every inch of the world, it belongs to God. There is not division between spiritual and physical. We are on a mission to tell this to the world until God renews all things. When we love the father we love his children, all people, in this world. This overcomes the dualism, and acknowledges that God says, "It is mine - everything." There is no separation. Under the kingship of Jesus, all is God's. Our prayer, fellowship, worship, and quiet time, is not a separation from the world, but an empowerment of it.

Prayer: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, the earth is full of your glory; everything belongs to you.

Wednesday May 23

Unknown Title and Speaker, Unknown date 2015

What is it that God is doing right now? Old program of fear, anger, shame and selfishness are looking for a shortcut, to get a quick fix to whatever ails us. Efficiency is quick and easy. It is good in some situations, but it is not good in places where we first need love and relationships. To fix relationships we don't need efficiency and quick fix, but love and patience. We want quick fix for emotional, physical and spiritual problems. Joseph saw that God sent him to Egypt when brothers sold him for the purpose of preparing for saving the family from the famine. It was only after decades of preparation that God used Joseph for reconciliation. Healing happens in God's time. God is always operating by love, sometimes secretly and slowly. The speed of love is not a quick fix. God's healing is taking place at the speed of love. Most of the time God takes decades to make a saint, through daily prayer, community, transformation, service and devotion. Love is more important than efficiency or a quick fix.
Prayer: Lord, let me live at the speed of love.

Thursday May 24

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, May 24 2015

Acts 2:1-4, Romans 8:22-27

There would be no church if not for the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. But what is it that the Spirit does? The Spirit gives courage to fight the battles. It brings people together in unity. The Spirit gives courage to make changes in ourselves. We are told that creation is groaning, as if in pain of childbearing, knowing the pain will bring new life. The groan is a groan of hope, knowing life is coming. The Spirit is part of that new life and hope. The gift of the Spirit was known to be promised for the end of time. It started at Pentecost. The Spirit creates courage and hope. The Spirit puts wind at our back. Our task is to yield to the power of the Spirit and hear the groan of hope in coming new life.

Prayer: Spirit enter me, let me hear the groan of the coming new life.

Friday May 25

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, May 31 2015

1 Samuel 2:1-10

Hannah's prayer is a voice of joy, but it changes to a warning to the arrogant. Her prayer described the Great Reversal: that someday the weak will replace the powerful. This is a golden thread throughout scripture. God stands with the weak, and against those who oppress the weak. God brings justice. Those who oppose God's justice will be broken by it. God works in every inch of Earth, through just love, to set right the wrong. To be faithful in just love is to believe that in the end it will be done. Consider the oppressed weakest people you know, and make decisions that are best for them. The heart that rejoices is the heart that trusts in the just love of God.

Prayer: Thank you Lord, for your just love; let me walk in it each decision I make.

Monday May 28

"Even Greater Works" Noel Snyder, May 1 2016

John 14:6-14

Jesus' statement 'Thou who believe in me will do even greater things than these' is challenging and scary. How can we do this? We often think we can solve problems without God. But we are not the Messiah. Pastors are not Messiahs or Saviors. That job has already been fulfilled. We often doubt our ability or become overconfident. Here are three ideas to help accept this promise. First, when we become children of God, trusting and obeying, knowing that Jesus is the son and is in the father, we enter into a unique relationship which enables believers. He invites us into this relationship, to enter into the life of God, receiving authority and confidence. Secondly, as representatives for God in this world we can ask for anything, specifically, those things consistent with God's desires as taught by Jesus and His Word. Our prayers tend to be too small and too personal. Holy Spirit will guide us. The primary prayer is to gain perspective to see the world, and the courage to do the good work of God. Lastly, it is not up to us as individuals. It is the church as a whole. After Jesus' death and resurrection the church became his body. It is not bound by time and space. Therefore, it does greater things and represents God's purpose in the world.

Prayer: Holy Spirit guide me.

Tuesday May 29

“The Advocate” Steve Wimmer, May 8 2016

John 14:15-21

Good news of Jesus is that we don't have to live a life turned in on ourselves, all about getting what we want, but we can live looking outward, for others. Hope is more than hope for heaven; the resurrection is heaven and earth coming together, into the world. Coming together into caring communities, caring for the poor and the sick, this is the welcoming of the will of God on Earth. The Spirit is friend and advocate. The Spirit of truth that stands beside to support and encourage, advocates on behalf of God within you. The world cannot accept him. Those who continually say ‘No’ to the Spirit of truth cannot see the Spirit. Those so intent on getting their own way, don't see others and don't see the Spirit. Jesus promises his presence to believers, ‘I will not leave, because I live, you will live.’ Life in the Spirit is to love what God loves, hate what God hates, to desire what God desires.

Prayer: Spirit of truth speak to my mind and heart.

Wednesday May 30

“The Reign of Peace” Steve Wimmer, May 13 2016

John 14:22-27

Disciples wanted Jesus to show himself King. They believed in Messiah, but they were occupied by Roman. They believed Jesus would kick the Romans out. They were disappointed that Jesus was telling them he would leave... We deny the resurrection when we live in ways that do not live out God's renewal in this world... Dualism, is separating earthly and heavenly, and leads to ignoring things on earth, like caring for needy. Is there hope for hope in our world? Jesus taught that the disciples will continue with his work, caring, loving, and forgiving. He promises a Spirit that will remind them of Jesus' teachings; love one another, love your neighbor, forgive others and Jesus gives peace. The disciples were surprised that Jesus' resurrection which began the end times; according to Jewish belief the end times is the resurrection. The early church gained hope for this world. All things are becoming new. All of creation will be holy again. How can we participate with God in this world?

Prayer: Lord, I have hope for this world because you say it will be renewed.

Thursday May 31

“Identity Theft” Steve Wimmer, May 22 2016

Numbers 13

Moses was speaking to people in transition moving to the promise land, similar to our young people now moving into a new place in life. Their spies saw good stuff in the land, but they feared the strong people. During times of transition you can know that there will be giants- finances, decisions, relationship etc. You can do many things now to prepare for future; learn to use a budget, start tithing now, trust that you don't have to have it all figured out; set community as priority and stay connected to family. One giant is identity theft. What happens when you feel pressure to blend in, fit in, get applause, to be successful by doing what other think you should? Don't lose yourself. Joshua and Caleb knew they need not be afraid because God was with them. We know God is with us. Courage comes from knowing God's presence in an authentic community, honest, real and true. The presence of your community (family, friends and church) in your life grants courage. Be bold, be strong for the Lord is with you. Know your identity in God. Keep your identity. Follow call of God in your life, and don't let other's steal this identity from you.

Prayer: Thank you for courage to face the giants to come as your child in community.

Friday June 1

“In our Weakness...Five Smooth Stones” Steve Wimmer, June 2010

Samuel 17: 41-50

We all face Goliath, a giant that paralyzes us with fear. Some are self-made like credit card debt, substance abuse, or unhealthy escapes. Some giants are ones no one created they are just part of life: bad economy, health problems, or grief. The problem is not the existence of Goliath; it is how we freeze up.

David didn't freeze up because he had faith, as show in his statement, "The Lord that delivers me from lion and bear will deliver me from Goliath." His faith came from hearing the story on Sabbath and at home, time spent in prayer alone, and the experience of deliverance in life. He used his resources. His eyes were not on the giant but on the Lord. Keep your eyes on God, see the resources available and act.
Prayer: Thank you for delivering me in the past, and in the future.

Monday June 4

"Don't Make me Raise my Voice" Steve Wimmer, June 27 2010

Psalm 77

The Psalmist brings his deepest doubts to God. "Are you really merciful? Are you faithful? Are you loving?" He then changes to say "I remember..." The wisdom of the Psalmist tells us we can bring pain and doubt to God, even if it's not logical. Dump the doubt on God and in time it will clear. This is lament. How long do we live with lament? As long as it takes. Faith is for every day, even days of pain. Be patient in healing.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for tears and sorrow, for you work through them.

Tuesday June 5

"Cliff Dwellers" Jim Luehm, June 12 2011

Acts 2:1-4, 14-21

Salvation with a large 'S' is to put full trust in God. Salvation with a small 's' is to be saved from a situation in need. Acts 2 shows corporate recognition of Holy Spirit, and individual reception of Holy Spirit. Little 's' salvation moments are little. God's purpose in saving us out of situations is to draw us closer to him, not to get us out the jam. Sometimes he says 'no' to our prayers for greater good, to draw others to him. Salvation from a situation of need draws us closer to him, makes us aware of his presence and eventually leads us to Salvation, trust in God. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Prayer: Thank you God saving us and Saving us.

Wednesday June 6

"The Lord Will Provide" Steve Wimmer, June 26 2011

Genesis 22:1-14

Isaac represents God's hope and ability to create where there is no hope or creators. If Abraham would have refused to trust God he probably would have clung to the gift, become anxious and distracted. When we cling to the gift (kids, job, careers, prestige, home, etc.) we have left the Givers of the gift. It is possible to trust God and enjoy gifts without clinging to the gift and becoming anxious. We need to practice daily trusting. Go to the source of the blessing in quietness through scripture and prayers. Do you trust the Lord, or are you anxious about the gifts?

Prayer: I trust you Lord, I let go of the gifts.

Thursday June 7

"In Our Weakness(God is made strong)... When God is calling" Steve Wimmer, June 3 2012

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Have we mistaken information with transformation? Are we obsessed with being right instead of being holy? Listen and allow open discussion. The longing to hear God speak is evidence that he is speaking, in the longing. We are called to sacred adventure instead of security.

Prayer: Lord, I long for your voice, your transformation, your holiness. Change me

Friday June 8

"In our Weakness... Becoming like all the Nations" Steve Wimmer, June 10 2012

1 Samuel 8:4-20

We are the church, the people of God. This means we are to reflect the beauty of God, to be on life long journey. Israel rejected the job, now we have it. They got tired. We get tired. We get selfish and narrow. Our job is to help with the transformation in the world, but we get tired. God is forming people in the world not to look like everyone else. The work of God is irrepensible. God's character will be written on our hearts. We aren't generic. Each gets a gift. Spirit grants for purpose of transformation of us and the world.

Prayer: Open my eyes to see how my gifts are to help transform the world.

Monday June 11

Series: Wilderness. "Wilderness Vulnerable" Steve Wimmer, June 26 2017

Exodus 16:1-9

In the wilderness Israel is three days to three weeks from extinction. That's vulnerable. Life takes us all into wilderness, times of change. We may long for the past, even if it was terrible, it was secure. But God takes us into wilderness. The sense of God's presences may be missing. But God is still there. God uses wilderness to form us, to learn to worship God, not the feeling of God's presence. Wilderness is the loss of things that make us secure. God instructs the people and provides for that day, one day at a time. The gift of the wilderness is learning that there is enough resources for this day. God provides for the whole community. Like the Israelites collecting manna, if we don't attend to the community for this day and selfishly collect for ourselves for tomorrow it rots and we deny the community today. The wilderness doesn't make us vulnerable, but reveals that we have always been vulnerable, a day from starvation, or one insult from hurt. We become aware of our vulnerability. We are naked before God, so God can provide daily. God is vulnerable too, his heart can be broken. To be vulnerable is to be naked, to be needy, to be human.

Prayer: God, I am naked before you, humble me to fully worship you.

Tuesday June 12

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, June 16 2013

Judged 16:15-22

Blindness of Samson began years earlier when he started using his God given gifts for self-serving purposes. This is pride. It is not pride to be aware of one's own giftedness. It is not pride to be ambitious. Pride is a misunderstanding of our gifts, separating it from God, in arrogance, focusing on the gift or position of authority as means to happiness. Over time it's not enough. Samson forgot that the gift was not in him, but God. He separated from God. Idolatrous pride leads us to cling to one person and position. Learning to let go of this idolatrous pride happens as God restores us which often happens in darkness. Somethings can only happen in darkness, the sad place, the dark place; as God works on us he needs us to be in that dark place. We all share in this darkness. We need to learn from it, not look for quick fixes. Practice letting go of the need for a quick fix. Remember it is centered on God. What you are longing for is God.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the giftedness you give; let me not cling to it, but center on the gift giver.

Wednesday June 13

Series: Wilderness, "The Lord our God, our Healer" Steve Wimmer, June 18 2017

Exodus 15:22-27

Many of us are in a season of wilderness, transitions, grieving, between what we were and what we will be. Wilderness season are uncomfortable but it is a time of transformation. Moses and Israelites traveled three days with no water. Then found bitter water. They murmured against Moses, not lamenting, not holding leaders accountable, not healthy sharing, but group complaining and grumbling, mob thinking in anger, contagious negative thinking. They had lost capacity to think for themselves. God responded with mercy and grace. Moses called out to God, who provided healing with medicinal bark. God instructs 'Keep my commands I will protect you from disease and illness of the Egyptians.' A healthy community is like the immune system, protects and keeps us healthy. God longs to make us whole and strong. This is done through community connections and connection with God. Jealousy poisons the well of a community. If your communal life is sick, we will be sick and won't be able get along with people are different than you. The Lord promises to protect from these communal illnesses if we keep God's

commands of love, because he longs to heal us. Community is not a group of like-minded people. It is diversity, in love and peace, not absence of differences.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for your healing community where I can connect.

Thursday June 14

Series: God's Story, "New Creation" Steve Wimmer, June 1 2014

Romans 8:18-27

The whole creation groans in frustration. Creation is not yet what God intends it to be. All of humanity is groaning also. The groaning explains much of what happens, but is not the intent of God. The groaning will lead to great joy, as a groan of childbirth brings the joy of a child. God is groaning in and through his church. Have you felt the groan? Groan of the Spirit who is granted to all believers, the groan of more, to be more loving, more holy. Sometimes the groan leads to action. Holy Spirit groans in us telling us to stand up and be the body of Christ. It speaks of the day when all things are set right, and God speaks "Behold I make all things new." It call us to trust that what Jesus did was enough to bring us back to God, and calls us to treat others as community, living out the grace that is to come in the here and now.

Surrender to the groan.

Prayer: Lord, I surrender to your Spirit's groan.

Friday June 15

"Living Water" Steve Wimmer, June 8 2014

John 7:37-39

Jesus speaks to people who are thirsty in many ways; physically, politically, economically, spiritually, relationally. Thirst is longing. Jesus offers rivers of living water for the healing of the nations. Not selfish indulgence, but to be refreshed, to be able to go out and refresh others. We don't often know, but when we are drinking from God's Spirit we automatically refresh others; we become a source of living waters for others. The Holy Spirit is with us the whole time, even if we don't realize it. If you are unsure, if you doubt if the spirit is with you, just ask God for it. Without the Spirit there is no church. Power of the Spirit brings healing, wholeness, and peace. The Spirit is the present tense of God's presence.

Prayer: I thirst for you Spirit's healing and wholeness, Lord.

Monday June 18

Series: Hidden Heroes, "Jethro" Steve Wimmer, June 29 2014

Exodus 18:13-27

When people over-function and do more than they should, slackers are trained. Moses has to make changes in his functioning as a leader to promote others taking responsibility... After the conversion of the Roman Emperor and Christianity became official, the priestly caste was created and elevated. They were separated them from laity, leading to laity reliance on priests. When a community of faith functions as God desires all members use their gifts. He gives gifts to all for the benefit the whole. We each have authority to join our life to God's love for this world. We can get creative on how to use own gifts to love our neighbors. We can all say, "I am authorized to love other and don't need anyone's permission."

Prayer: Thank you for the gifts you give and for authorizing me to use them.

Tuesday June 19

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, June 7 2015

1 Samuel 8:1-11, 19-22

It can be tempting to be like the world around us. While being a follower of Christ does not guarantee an easy life, the world doesn't offer anything to compare. Being a follower is harder, not easier than the world. When Israel rejected God as King, there was serious consequences; slavery, exile, taxation, military drafting. Even though Israel rejected God, God does not give up. God continues to seek us, love us and call us. Renewal is still promised, redemption still occurs. God's love is irrepressible. When Jesus came he announced that even though humans reject God, God is still working. The reign of God is still

happening. Whatever we set up as king in our life will reign over us and enslave us. It is a narrow life to be concerned only with yourself and your loved ones. Yield to the reign of God
Prayer: God I yield to your reign in my life.

Wednesday June 20

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, June 14 2015

1 Samuel 15: 34-16:13

People with great resources can do a lot. But can God use out small resources? Our society is star struck, and it creeps into the church. We think that the famous people are the important and great ones... Choosing king of Israel was a big thing because it was choosing the lineage of Jesus. Along with the house of Jesse, we are told, "God does not look on outward appearances like people. But God looks on the heart." Jesse was not significant other than being father of David. We know "The Spirit of God came on David in power." He relied on the Spirit to do all good. God can use people in whom His Spirit dwells, even with little resources. Don't under estimate what God can do with a long obedience in the same direction. Superstar mentality has no place in the church. It's God's normal way of working to choose the least to accomplish His way.

Prayer: God, you can do great things with a commoner like me if I let your Spirit dwell in me.

Thursday June 21

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, June 21 2015

Psalms 130

There are two things that make real change in people: love and suffering. A genuine experience of love is transformative. For some people suffering opens the heart. When we have suffering we must remember that the character of God is forgiveness and redemption. Sometimes we must wait. What do you do? Waiting in hope, knowing forgiveness and redemption are coming, knowing it will come because it is promised, we are not passive, but working, doing what needs to be done. Waiting in hope is different than waiting in anxiety and fear. One thing waiting in hope means is that we step aside from busy-ness and listen to God, be fully present with God. Remember we are called by God, empowered by God and sent by God. Remember God is here and God is coming to set right that which is wrong. Be active in this coming. Act on the promises of God.

Prayer: Lord, I wait in hope, empowered by your promise.

Friday June 22

"Physiology of communion" Mauri Luetkemeier, June 28 2015

John 6:28-40, 1 John 1:7, 1 Corth 11:23-6,

Bread is the body of Christ. Bread gives energy for all activity. Jesus provides all the energy we need to act, to do his commands. Wine is the blood. Blood does many things. Provides oxygen and nutrients transports healing agents, takes away waste – toxins left over from processing of proteins and other wastes. Blood is sewer system. Jesus blood is the way to illuminate our waste – sin. Otherwise we are poisoned from within by sin, the way our body would be poisoned by toxins if blood didn't take the waste away. There is no end to Jesus' power and energy for us and healing and cleansing.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for healing and cleansing me.

Monday June 25

"iPaul, Opening the Door of Intention" Steve Wimmer, June 12 2016

Acts 7:54-8:3

Steven is taken away and killed. Saul approved. This started the first great persecution of Christians. They acted as we do when tragedy strikes; 'Where is the sovereign God?' A lament is the expression of grief out loud, brought to God, telling of the frustration and pain. We realize that God is lamenting with us. Sometimes we don't know how to pray. God laments for us with sighs and groaning. Where do we find God? Right here, where we are, groaning in our lament and working in power to bring goodness we can't

see yet. We get to decide what we will do in response to tragedy. We can lament, which helps bring beauty into it.

Prayer: Lord, I bring my pain to you knowing you are here with me crying.

Tuesday June 26

“iPaul, The door of intervention” Steve Wimmer, June 19 2016

Acts 9: 1-22

What happens when a person resists God in the name of God? Both Saul and Ananias resisted God while they thought they were serving God. We can resist God in the name of God over-using certainty, like when we think we know everything (like Saul). Or we can be over-certain using religion as security to protect us from discomfort (like Ananias). Jesus intervenes against our resistance. There is a danger of thinking that these people are unredeemable and we protect ourselves against them. To be Christian is to be on an ongoing journey transformation. Conversion is not a onetime event, but a journey of change as God leads us to grow. Ananias had been a believer but his transformation continued as God responded to his resistance. Paul’s transformation from certainty to belief was ongoing change. Say Yes to the one who calls you on a journey of transformation.

Prayer: Lord, I say yes to my journey of transformation; don’t let certainty misguide me.

Wednesday June 27

“iPaul, The door of the inconceivable” Steve Wimmer, June 26 2016

Philippians 3: 2-11

Through Jesus non-Jews were being accepted by God, into God’s family. Gentiles were accepted. Jews were teaching that the Gentiles needed to be circumcised. Paul said ‘No, you don’t need this on your resume.’ Paul had more than anyone on his résumé and knew it was of no use. Experts on shame, like Brene Brown, say we are shamed by things, like our bodies and comparisons we make of our lives against other’s lives. We cope with shame by developing resumes, building ourselves up. Paul recognizes that everything on the résumé is rubbish, garbage. He can throw away his résumé because what he was trying to accomplish through his resume has already been given; acceptance by God, welcome into God’s family. Ronan Williams says Jesus is the answer to the question “Can we trust the power of God?” The power of Christ’s resurrection is the power of God’s trustworthy love. We can know him in this power and in his suffering which is God’s vulnerability to the world. It sets us free to be vulnerable, true, no resume. It sets us free to be who we are.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for accepting me as I am; I let go of the résumé of who I must be.

Thursday June 28

“A gifted community” Steve Wimmer, June 4 2017

1 Peter 4 1-11

A mindset of scarcity is fearful and anxious. It focuses on what we don’t have enough of. It leads to competitive mindset and increasing anxiety. A mindset of abundance notices resources, including people. When connected together to use resources, a group of people become a community using resources for a common purpose. New Testament speaks of church as a group of people connected together utilizing gifts for a common purpose. It is more satisfying to use your gifts to be part of a community than to wait for someone to give to you. We then have exponential blessings.

Prayer: Change my mind Lord, to see the resources and blessings you have provided.

Friday June 29

Series: Wilderness. “Wilderness Journey of the children of Israel” Steve Wimmer, June 11 2017

Exodus 14:10-14

We need to be familiar with the wilderness. It plays an important role in scripture stories. It is a place where God forms and transforms people. People who take God seriously will be lead into wilderness at some point. Wilderness is a place of death. It is where we cry out to God. It is the time between what was familiar and something new. Be wary of anyone, or any religion, who says we can be of God and not have wilderness times. It is a time of potential change and transformation. It takes time. Do not be afraid. Be still and let God work. The world works to keep status quo. God of Israel changes things. He stands and

acts on behalf of the powerless ones. 'Be still' does not mean 'Do nothing.' It is anticipating in patience for God's big action, while we do our little part. We take one step at a time. When Israelites stepped through the Red Sea it started their trip in the wilderness, where they would be transformed into the people God means for them to be. Be willing to be changed, to become more fully who we are. We learn to not be afraid. Know 99.1% of the job is God's.

Prayer: Transform me Lord, I am willing to trust you and change.

Monday July 2

"When Mourning Turned to Dancing" Steve Wimmer, July 4 2010

Psalm 30

When we praise God for what he is doing in this world we feed hope and healing in this world. We take our stand on hope. Psalm invites us to lift our voice in praise every time we see the hand of God doing his work. Praise puts our stand on hope, looking to the future.

Prayer: I praise you God Almighty, for all you've done in the past, are doing in the present and will do in the future.

Tuesday July 3

"And I was Not Aware" Steve Wimmer, July 17 2010

Genesis 28: 10-19a

Jacob was in exile when he saw a stairway and saw God. We are in exile when anxiety is our God, the center of our world. Jacob sees that heaven and earth are connected. God is both transcendent and immanent. The Transcendent God is the God who oversees all history and all places, including my history, as part of a bigger history. The Immanent God is the God who is with us, present in our life. Focusing on only the immanence of God we can become very self-centered, looking for personal blessing and peace for ourselves. Focusing only on transcendent God we can become distant with our good works separated from the roots of love.

Prayer: Thank you God for being both with me and throughout all of world and all history.

Wednesday July 4

"Openings" Steve Wimmer, July 3 2011

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

We often seek guidance from God about his will for our life. We get anxious if we think it might be outside the will of God. When we are anxious we lose our creativity and courage to try different things. If I think God has only one will for my life I will be nervous. Instead of being anxious about getting it right we can work with God in cooperation. The character of God matters. If God is a chess player controlling us we must listen and be anxious. But if God is like Jesus, it's more a matter of God giving us some freedom. We are friend of God. We are not mechanical servant, but cooperating friend.

Prayer: Lord, I chose to work with you, in the freedom you give me.

Thursday July 5

Unknown Title, Mike Stadelmayer, July 24 2011

Your testimony is important. God wants to use your story to help other people. If we stop telling our story we deny God's use of us. We may feel too busy living life. You don't argue anyone into the Kingdom of God. We live a life, show the love, and tell the story. Have a story of hope and share it with someone.

Prayer: Lord, use my story to help someone else.

Friday July 6

"In our Weakness... Bringing the ark home" Paul Loney, July 15 2012

2 Sam 6:1-5, 12b-19

Bringing the ark home was exuberant celebration. It resulted in unashamed humiliation, but was also fulfilled prophecy and was the will of God. Like David, we have encumbrances of living in an imperfect world. Like David, we sometimes live for our own emotional highs, and we face temptation. We have temptations of the imperfect world, our own sinful flesh and the devil. When we live for our own

emotional highs we may fall into lust, which leads to sin, which leads to death. Celebration focusing on God's good blessing brings joy. When we focus on our emotional high and fall to selfish temptation it is a stress that steals joy.

Prayer: Lord, I celebrate your goodness, keep me in the face of temptation.

Monday July 9

"In our Weakness... when to run, where to go" or "Run to the Throne" Ben Kreider, July 29 2012

2 Sam 11:1-15

Temptation is part of our human experience. It's universal. So it's not a question of 'if,' but of 'when'. Temptation itself is not a sin. Desires are natural but when they are broken or distorted they become evil. From the distorted desire we are drawn toward temptation luring out our attention. Then we have a choice. When we give into temptation it has consequence 'death'. Desire leads to choice, which leads to action, which leads to consequences. The secret to resisting temptation is recognizing that we are made to serve, not be served. It's not about us. We aren't the center. Turn your eyes to Jesus and others, and pray to God. It's not about trying harder. Every choice is either life giving or life taking. Temptation is likely to come after a victory, preceding a victory, or in times of hunger, weakness, or boredom when eyes aren't focused on anything. We cannot live in fear; when our eyes are fixed on the fear it enslaves us. Instead, focus on God, using prayer and scripture, living a life of love. Know God won.

Prayer: Lord, it is not about me.

Tuesday July 10

Series: Hidden Heroes, "Rahab" Maresha Mead, July 6 2014

Joshua 2:1-21

Rahab teaches us the importance of hospitality; there are positive consequences. Faith is rewarded. She plays the trickster, using deception, but it is excusable when it furthers God's will. She was obedient to specific instruction, which saved and resulted in God's mercy. Faith and work must occur together. As a result of her faithfulness Rahab is taken into the Israelites. God accepts everyone who chooses to follow. Rahab was outsider and the first convert to Israel even though she is woman, Gentile and prostitute. Rahab married and had a son Boaz and becomes part of the line of Jesus. God is inclusive. God will not turn away.

Prayer: Thank you God for including me in your family.

Wednesday July 11

Series: Hidden Heroes, "Elijah and prophets of Baal" Randall Mead, July 27 2014

1 Kings 18:20-40

Elijah had to make it memorable, so he taunted the Baal prophets. They prayed for more than five hours. Elijah had a short prayer and God responded. Modern lesson is that popularity has nothing to do with truth. Just because something is popular doesn't make it true. Emotions are not an indicator of truth. Just because something feels good doesn't mean it is true, or that it's God. True religion has to be in harmony with God.

Prayer: Keep me in your truth; keep me in your Word.

Thursday July 12

"David and Goliath" Carron Odokera, July 5 2015

1 Samuel 17:4-11, 20-23. 32-49

Our approach to a job can be either working in our weakness or working in God's strength. Saul was a great leader. He operated out of his own weakness. Fear resulted because there was more than he would handle in his own strength. He had forgotten his past victories. He was paralyzed. We can work out of our strength, but when the opponent is greater than our strength we are then in weakness. But working in

God's strength we don't rely on our strength and let it be overwhelmed. God's strength cannot be overwhelmed. Remembering past victories God has given leads us to trust in God and know that God is taking care of it. Under God's prompting we take action. It is not in our own strength that the battle is won, but by the Lord's strength. Remember what God has done. Prepare ourselves according to God's call. Act. When we do things in God's strength it can be scary that we don't know how He'll work it out, but exciting to see how.

Prayer: Lord, I know you will work it out, you have the strength.

Friday July 13

Unknown Title, Maresha Mead, July 12 2015

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19

David's return the ark to Jerusalem was both piety and political. His wife complains of his undignified behavior. David's response to Michal is "I won't worry about what other people think. Only God matters." We need to behave in such a way in which we are only concerned with what God thinks of us. Sometimes the condition of heart doesn't matter, but only that you *do* things the way God instructs. What are the ways I can dance before the Lord to express joy in ways that might look strange or undignified?

Prayer: Lord, let me care less about what other people think of me, only you matter.

Monday July 16

"Dreaming of a Temple," Paul Loney, July 19 2015

2 Samuel 7:1-14a

David had desire. God puts desire in the heart of those who delight in the Lord. When we live out that desire it is joy and reason to live. David's desire to build the temple was the right idea, but not the right time. Lord had not asked for the house that David wanted to build. God stated he didn't need a house. But he promises greatness in the king and nation, and *that* is the House for God. The Lord's pronouncement that the king will be great and the house for God, is a double reference. First, that his son that will build a house for God, but also refers to the legacy through Jesus, and eternity. There is no end to what can be done if you don't care who gets the credit. Your vision may be realized through someone else. It's bigger than me. The future is bright. He doesn't need a sanctuary, but lives in our hearts. So build a place in your heart. Each person is to do what the Spirit calls them to work within the community and play their part.

Prayer: Lord, build your house in me.

Tuesday July 17

"David and Bathsheba" Garth Anderson, July 26 2015

2 Samuel 11:1-15

Temptation itself is not a sin, but an opportunity to choose to do what is right. When we dwell on the temptation we feed it. David became prideful in his position of King; he loses his humility and loyalty. He loses his honor and replaces it with selfish pride. But God still loves him, even with lapse of judgement. We will be tempted. We can ask "Will this be beneficial for me?" and "Will this enslave me?" We let small sin become bigger when we pull others into it. God will provide a way out. God's grace is greater than our sin. He offers forgiveness and helps us make it through consequences. God forgives others around us too. We are not to shun others who have sinned, but to restore.

Prayer: Lord, let me forgive others as you forgive.

Wednesday July 18

"iPaul, Door of Influence" Maresha Mead, July 3 2016

Acts 9:26-31

Barnabus, son of encourager, supports and encourages people. After Stephen's death Saul increases his persecution on the Christians and the church scatters. Barnabus' influence brings Paul into the community when the church was fearful of him and didn't believe in his conversion. The scattered church in Antioch converted Greeks. Barnabus encouraged them and then brings Paul to the Greeks in Antioch recognizing Paul's talent and gifts in evangelism. (Paul's Jewish name was Saul. Paul was his Roman name and was more appropriate for calling to Greeks.) Paul breaks open doors to non-Jews. Barnabus was the quiet influence behind Paul. We need to recognize that to be an influence isn't about power or fame. Billy

Graham and Mother Theresa, and every great person, had a 'Barnabus' influencer, someone not famous but vitally important. Know our sphere of influence, people we are close to, time we spend with people, often quiet and subtle. We must be a Barnabus, though we usually are not a Paul.

Prayer: Let me be a quiet influence on those around me.

Thursday July 19

"iPaul, Door of Inclusion" Steve Wimmer, July 10 2016

Acts 13: 1-3, 14:24-28, Romans 1:16-17

It is incredible and unimaginable that the door of faith opened to Gentiles. Some people were ashamed, perhaps by Jesus crucifixion, perhaps for the fact that church included Jews and Gentiles. Wesley was concerned that the church would get too respectable and no longer welcome the disrespectable. Jesus tells us that the poor, hungry, mourning are the blessed ones. We can't do anything to earn God's love. This is Paul's message of faith: Inclusion. Through resurrection all people are included in family of God. This is challenging. This message of inclusion is the power of God. In our time when people are divided we need to know and to act on this inclusion. Justification of faith is what happened when God does what we can't do bring us to God. It means acknowledging inclusion of God's love. We need to connect with people who are different. We need diversity. We need to welcome everyone. Find a way to connect to those who are different than you.

Prayer: Open my eyes and heart to the inclusion you give in your family.

Friday July 20

"iPaul, Door of Identification" Steve Wimmer, July 17 2016

Galatians 2:15-21

What does it take to be good, authentically good, righteous? It's important to be an authentically good person. Jews received the Law as a gift. They were boundaries for living. But there is a difference between our actions and our inner values. The law is external guide, but cannot change or address the internal reality. Jesus addressed the inside. It is the essence of the prayer, "Christ live in me." We become authentically good through our identification with Jesus; "I am crucified with Christ." I regard the old me dead. I am changed inside. This addresses the limits of the law. The real me emerges when we identify with Christ. The secret of being better people is not working harder, but surrendering to the identification with Christ. The power of Christ shines through us just as sun shines through stained glass, to reveal its full beauty. The change makes us people of action to do the right things.

Prayer: Shine through me Lord, let me be your goodness.

Monday July 23

"iPaul, The door of investment" Paul Loney, July 24 2016

Acts 16:1-5 , 2 Tim 1:1-7

Community happens when a group of people decide to transition together. We are average, but God can use us. Faith is living differently. The 'now' hangs like a hammock between what is 'over' and what is 'next.' It's the moment we have to live... Investment is giving to achieve something else. Investment could be time, talent and resources. Paul invested in Timothy. Timothy was a disciple of mixed ethnicity; he had his limits. Whatever talent you have you must use it; no matter what your disability. God says you're perfect in his eyes because God made you. Investment requires sacrifice, time and energy with people to invest in them. Who do we need to invest in? Who needs to be loved? Who do we come in contact with? Mentoring and spiritual discipling is God's plan to catch the spiritual life.

Prayer: Who do I need to invest in Lord?

Tuesday July 24

"iPaul, Door of Impact" Paul Loney, July 31 2016

Acts 16:11-24

Paul and Silas were traveling in Eastern Europe. God give directions. When God gives direction we have to be moving forward to be able to be steered. If you want direction, get in motion. Establish a work ethic. Be a good steward of little. Little things add up to a big picture we can't see. Listen and hear with intention. God trusts us to respond to nudging in our heart. Conversion is the method to make disciples.

The Lord opens the heart. Paul followed protocol and cultural expectations and God opened the heart. Lydia was a God worshiper and responded to Paul's message, and on obedience was baptized. Then she was hospitable. Hers was first home church in Europe, the first community with cross-cultural mixing. The church had been a segment of Judaism. Now it is more. There are three necessities for impact in our world: Obedience - 'just do it,' Faithfulness - 'keep doing it,' Trust.

Prayer: Lord, I will move trusting you are guiding.

Wednesday July 25

Series: Wilderness, "Motion Management; Transitioning Well." Paul Loney, July 9 2017

Proverbs 3:1-10

Wilderness leads to changes. It leads to a place where it may not be easy. As long as we are on Earth, we will have conflict. Both church is family require either to be born into or married into, and both require pain. God says, "I'm not interested in getting you from point a to point b, I'm interested in getting to your heart." Proverbs 3 has three ideas for going through the wilderness. First, vision is foundation. What we believe determines behavior. Our vision determines belief. We must have a vision of God. We get this from the Word of God. Here we see that God is entirely different. Secondly, change is always experienced as loss, losing familiarity, even if it is losing bad things. It can be a loss of control, or loss of equilibrium. Lastly, ambulation is necessary. Our response to the wilderness is to move under our own power. You have to choose to keep moving. It's okay to remember the past as we move into the future. This present moment is a hammock between what is over and what is next. We can help others in the future when we have gone through. Swap anxiety for anticipation; 'How is God going to fix this mess?' Trade worry for His Word.

Prayer: Lord, you can do all things, I just have to keep moving forward and let you fix the mess.

Thursday July 26

"Imitators of God" Steve Wimmer, August 23 2009

We are called to community. When we are left alone we have only our own resources. God calls people together throughout the Bible. God wants *community* of faith, not just individuals. We come out of individualistic culture, as modeled by Roman thinking. We have individual responsibility in the community, but God knows it is through community that individuals are complete.

Prayer: Open my eyes to see the resources in my community, and reach out.

Friday July 27

"His Spirit and my Personality Part 1" Ben Kreider, August 7 2011

Galatians 5:22-25

There's more to faith than just showing up at church or a prayer time. God wants to make us victorious here in this life. We can do the right things and still be bitter and angry. God wants to give the 'more' by giving the Spirit of his son in our heart. We have Holy Spirit therefore fruit results. I need to plant the seed, God makes it grow and fruit; Love, Joy Peace. Love is agape, Godly love expects nothing in return. Joy is love's deep, trusting cheerfulness. We can lose our joy when we get too 'religious.' Peace is love's confidence, when we surrender. We are not looking for perfection but growth.

Prayer: Lord, I open my heart to your Spirit; grow me.

Monday July 30

Unknown Title, Jeff --, Aug 7 2011 (Camp Meeting)

Adversity can be used by God. He may use it as an obstacle to move us toward where he wants us to be. He may use it to build character so we become the person God wants us to be when we arrive at where he wants us to be. And he may use it to protect us from greater harm.

Prayer: Lord, use the adversity in my life to move and mold me.

Tuesday July 31

"In our Weakness... Responding Well" Ben Kreider, August 5 2012

2 Sam 11:26-12:13

There are consequences to behavior. Even though David had negative consequence for his sin he didn't forget God. There are positive consequences for this. No matter where we are we must remember we are God's and God is faithful. There are positive consequences when we are humble and acknowledge our sin and respond well to confrontation. When going through bad news, keep worshipping. Responding well to confrontation means taking ownership of weaknesses and mistakes. It means recognizing God's will, healing and loving us through it. Confrontation happens in trusting relationships. God uses imperfect people to connect us and direct us back to him.

Prayer: I humble myself before you Lord, and acknowledge my sin.

Wednesday August 1

Unknown Title Ben Kreider, August 11 2013

Jeremiah 17: 7-8, John 15: 5-9, Luke 6: 44-46, Isaiah 30:15

Trusting in God and remaining in God results in fruit. Words are fruit because what you say is the overflow of the heart. Character is shown in action. Examination is when Jesus examines our 'branches' for fruit. When we invite Jesus to examine us we are taking the first step in repentance. In repentance and rest is salvation and quietness. Begin the day asking God to exam you, and Spirit to wash. We can't define or describe the work of the Spirit, but we can know it through experiencing it. Examination can come through listening to someone who has wisdom. It's hard but helpful to hear Godly wisdom. Selfishness is easy. What goes into our mind is what goes out; put in loving wisdom through scripture, and fruit of the Spirit will come out. Refreshment comes after examination. Healing comes after surrender. We can't fill our own fountains, but God wants to fill it.

Prayer: Examine me Lord, wash me, fill me.

Thursday August 2

Unknown Title, Ben Kreider, August 25 2013

Galatian 5:13-14, Matthew 22: 34-40

It might be the wrong question to ask "What is your will for my life?" It focuses on our life. Maybe the right question is simply "What is your will?" It focusses on God. Freedom begins with God's call and continues in the relationship. Learning to trust allows freedom in experiencing love. If I know what God is doing then I can see what I need to do. Who am I called to love? I have the power to love my neighbor. No matter what I am doing, who do I have a chance to serve and love? To love God is to love one another. We are growing toward this. In the family we can "wash each other's feet," serve one another. When my heart breaks for someone that's how I know who God has called me to serve. God takes care of the landscape, the logistics. "How can I love like you?" "Who are you calling me to serve?" It is family, community and church. Christ set us free for freedom, not acting out of obligation, but free to love. Action step: Write down things you know to be true about God. Write out top ten desires- what I want. Do these make me closer to God?

Prayer: God you made me free to love, show me how to love my family better.

Friday Aug 3

Series: Hidden Heroes, "Simeon and Anna" Maurie Luetkemeier, August 24 2014

Luke 2:22-29

Simeon and Anna had insight into the Christ child because God gave it to them. Insight is the image of God within us. When we combined this image with daily dose of God through scripture and prayer we can be transformed to see the opportunities God puts in front of us.

Prayer: I am so blessed to have your image within me, thank you Lord God Almighty.

Monday Aug 6

"Words from the Heart" Maurie Luetkemeier, Aug 16 2015

1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-25, 3:2-15

This story in Kings can be seen in three acts.

Act 1. David dies. He gives famous last words. Be strong, be mature, follow God's way. Remember God's directions so God can follow the promise he made me; to keep the throne in the family. Act 2.

Adonijah tries to rebel and take over the kingship. Act 3 Solomon marries daughter of Egyptian king and

guarantees peace with Egypt. He asked the Lord for wisdom and sound judgement. Wisdom is a feed-forward-system; the ability to anticipate and set up controls beforehand to prevent negative events. Words reveal the nature of our hearts. Be sure what is in your heart is consistent with God's desire; God is pleased when we ask for wisdom.

Prayer: God open my heart to receive your wisdom.

Tuesday Aug 7

Unknown Title, Ben Kreider, Aug 30 2015

Matthew 4:18-20, Luke 4:18-19, John 20:24-29, Luke 12: 29-34

A discipline is one who believes in the redeeming power of Jesus Christ and risks everything to follow Him. It means being present to the moment without distraction, being aware of Good News and helping to be good news for people around us, to be a word of hope for them. Trusting God sometimes means trusting those around us. Believe God won't leave you in a place that you can't handle. Risking everything is recognizing we need to let go and know God has it under control. What good news is God calling you to share? What doubts and fear we can give to God? Is God calling you to take a risk with your life?

Prayer: Lord, you are in control, I can let go. Thank you.

Wednesday Aug 8

"iPaul, Door of Insight" Steve Wimmer, Aug 7 2016

Acts 16:25-40

Paul and Silas were in jail. They sang. An earthquake opened the doors and the jailer was saved. He thought he had failed. He thought there was no way out, no options. He asked "What must I do to be saved?" What does the word 'saved' mean? A deliverance from the challenges we encounter in life. To be delivered from problems, to be free from the problem... We think faith is adding one more things. But really faith means reorienting everything in life, seeing it all differently. To see something different, to increase awareness, is to gain insight. Living in faith gives at least three gifts of insight: 1. A sense of perspective, awareness and appreciation for life. 2. Awareness of our communion with living God, not as servant but friend. 3. Awareness of guidance that is available.

Prayer: Let me see life differently Lord, give me insight.

Thursday Aug 9

"In the Meantime." Steve Wimmer, Aug 28 2016

Exodus 19: 1-6

Transitions happen 'in the meantime,' time between two times. The problem with the meantime is that you don't know what comes next. It is change. The Lord speaks to Moses while they are going through change. He reminds them that He brings the people to himself. God draws us to himself. Then he invites them into a covenant relationship, a relationship based on a promise. He tells Israel if they keep the covenant, keep up their end of the agreement, they will be a kingdom of priest. Priests represent the people in the presence of God, and God in the presence of the people. Israel was a priest for the world; they represented God to the world, and represented the world to God... We are always living in the meantime, always in transition. God does not promise certainty or control, but that he walks through the uncertainty with us so we can trust God even though we don't have control. God called us to mission and action, loving the world. We need to lift our eyes off ourselves and onto others.

Prayer: Lord, lift my eye off myself so I can respond to your invitation to love.

Friday Aug 10

Series: Wilderness, "To Tell the Truth" Steve Wimmer, Aug 6 2017

Exodus 23:1-9

One of the highest callings is to tell the truth in every situation. This means to be a just people, fair, promoting justice to poor, foreigners and enemies. There can't be justice without truth. Truth is hard, when we must be truthful about ourselves, our irresponsibility, our faults, and weaknesses. We often want to protect ourselves and not reveal truth. When we are anxious it is easy to listen to critical words without

questions, and clump together with the like-minded people, and not challenge truth as presented. If we don't practice truth telling we become part of the chaos. Truth telling is the great antidote to chaos. Rumor and suspicions grow when there is not an ongoing truth telling rapport. It takes courage to tell truth against the popular belief. Truth can be a lonely voice. The Spirit of God converts us to greater truthfulness granting us the mind of Christ. When we commit to truth telling we start to see our perspective and respect other perspective.

Prayer: Lord, let me speak truth about myself, my mistakes, and my faults to you and those around me, knowing you love me anyway.

Monday Aug 13

“Work in the Wilderness” Frederick G. Sampson, III Aug 13 2017

Isaiah 40:3-5

When we spend time in wilderness we pray to get out instead of doing the work we need to while there. We get tied in knots and we get distorted and twisted in ways that we are not designed to have. We have generational sicknesses, twisted ways passed through generations that are unholy, but we accept as normal. But we can break this pattern. We don't have to let sin keep us tied in knots. The wilderness is something inside of us, not around us. We block blessing when our heads and hearts are full of prideful arrogance. We need to be humble. We block blessing when we fear and don't claim the power of God. We need to resist the devil. We block blessings when we let negative feelings control us. We need to come close to God. We block blessings with feelings of guilt. We need to wash our hands and purify our hearts of past mistakes and don't have divided motivations. We block blessings when we use old misguided ways and views. We need to let go of the past and follow the new way. We have work to do to get out of the wilderness. Put down arrogance. Leave the fighting, mistakes, and guilt when approaching God. Anything we use to harm each other needs to be left behind. If we prepare to the way while in wilderness, God will guide our path through the wilderness. Whatever entangles our spirit locks God out. God can untie these knots, as we move toward God.

Prayer: God untie my knots, show me the way.

Tuesday Aug 14

Series: Wilderness, “All Mixed Up” Steve Wimmer, Aug 20 2017

Exodus 32:1-6

Moses was on the mountain for forty days. The people became impatient. They approached Aaron who made a golden calf at their request. This is a god of the nations around them. It is idolatry. Idolatry can be subtle. No one sets out to pollute their religion. They embrace the belief of the surrounding people and fold it into the church practices. Idolatry has to do with what we worship. Worship has to do with what we value. Everyone values something, gives supreme value to something. These values slowly seep deeper into us. Americans value success, power and consumerism. When we idolize success we forget the value of the unsuccessful people. When we idolize power we forget the value of the powerless. When we idolize consumerism we forget value of our own giftedness. Belief gets twisted and we get off course. If worship gets polluted the people of God get all mixed up. We must remember the story of the living God, the faithful creator, so loving that he gave us freewill, and provides, protects, and leads. We must remember God's faithfulness every time we worship. We must remember Jesus' suffering as God's victory in love. Who we worship molds us and makes us who we are. Right worship sustains us to keep hearts turned to God while doing what we are called to do, to work in our world with integrity.

Prayer: I worship you Lord, Creator and Redeemer; reveal any idols in my heart, that which I hold value too highly.

Wednesday Aug 15

“The Full Armor of God” Steve Wimmer, Sept 6 2009

Ephesians 6

Living as community is not easy. Putting on the armor is more than command to individuals; it is a command to the church as a community. Evil powers are both demonic powers and earthly institutions that advance evil practices... Unity is not based on agreement, but on power of the Holy Spirit to give us the ability to mature and love. The power of the Cross is victory over death, but also victory over evil here

on Earth, it is also creating a new world here based on unity and forgiveness. Divisiveness in any area of life is an evil principality. Take One Step toward community, unity and forgiveness.

Prayer: Lord, show me where I am divisive, that I may use your power to change it.

Thursday Aug 16

“Letting Go” Steve Wimmer, Sept 13 2009

If we let go we will accomplish much more than trying harder and harder. Letting go ultimately is death, dying to anxious ways. It does not mean being passive It is not one time event; but the letting go is ongoing. It is ‘the way.’ Kingdom of God is not only heaven, but it is here and now. It is God’s work on earth. Living by the Spirit is like letting ourselves be lifted by a new power, the way a sail lets the wind lift it. What we do is cooperate with the power greater than us. Letting go, we surrender to this power.

Prayer: Lord, I let go to the power of your Spirit.

Friday Aug 17

“Letting go... of being right” Steve Wimmer, Sept 20 2009

Living as “I am right, you are wrong” is damaging to the community. It damages each of us. We lose many things; our curiosity, our ability to brainstorm, our flexibility and our teachability. We take the mystery of life and God and simplify it to, “I have it figured out, and I am right.” This is a form of idolatry, valuing my rightness more than everything else. We should think of life as a journey, and Christianity as a Way, not a case of being right.

Prayer: Lord, I let go of the need to be right, let me enjoy the mystery.

Monday Aug 20

“Church is a Verb: Lean Forward” Steve Wimmer, Sept 19 2010

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Israel was called to hear, to listen. Maybe listening should be our priority. The command to hear is the center of Hebrews teaching... Renewal often starts when we look back, look at tradition, and listen to ancient words of scripture. Our life is part of the story from creation to the end of the age. We are not just trapped between our birth and our death. Ancient words of Scripture give us perspective and hope and wisdom. When we hear the ancient words we see we are part of the big story. We are to pass it along to our children... Scripture doesn’t often shout, it whispers. You must lean forward to listen.

Prayer: Lord, I’m listening.

Tuesday Aug 21

“How to Improve Your Memory” Steve Wimmer , Sept 4 2011

Exodus 12:1-14

We have a hard time appreciating God’s command to ‘remember’ because we are a young nation and are focused on the future. But God set traditions in place to remember the past and remember his works of salvation forever. God set aside days to remember every significant event. If we forget to tell our stories our faith is as good as dead. We will forget our ability to discern God’s movement in us. Our life isn’t about our 70 years; we are part of an ancient story that does back to creation. We remember the story of redemption of the world and our little life makes sense as part of that story. Remembering gives us courage to move forward during darkness. Activities that help remember include things like Sunday school and church events, Bible stories that tell the great acts of God (Creation, Passover, Jesus’ life, death, resurrection and second coming).

Prayer: Lord, thank you for making me a little part of the big story of Creation.

Wednesday Aug 22

“The Push Back” Paul Loney, Sept 18 2011

Exodus 16:2-15

When we perceive a problem it is human nature to exaggerate our perception, and then ignore the real problem. This is faithlessness. We perceive change as a problem. We will push back to any change. Even good change is perceived as loss. Stress builds and tension tempts us to act out of our default setting, and push back with negative behaviors. Another option is to follow instructions, trust God to do his part and

do the work he tells us to do. God has demonstrated that he provides what we need. He knows what we need.

Prayer: Lord, I trust that you will do your part, show me my part.

Thursday Aug 23

“Again? Really?” Steve Wimmer, Sept 25 2011

Exodus 17:1-7

We are anxious and worrying people like the Israelites. We worry about everything no matter how many times God teaches us he will provide. We wonder if God is good because we confuse the situation around us with action of God. We know we need to be less anxious. Focus on not being anxious just makes it worse. Instead we need to focus on God’s goodness.

Prayer: Thank you, God for your goodness

Friday Aug 24

“In our Weakness... An uncommon request” Steve Wimmer, August 19 2012

1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14

Deep below the chaos, our life has a current. Discernment is the practice of hearing God, going deeper, becoming aware of the current of life and God’s leadership. “Oh Lord give me discerning heart” Solomon prayed. Discernment is difficulty. It is knowing the difference between being called and being driven. We can recognize being driven when the motivation is a voice of condemnation or judgement. Being called is not perfectionism, when a religious voice of an accuser tells you to be something you aren’t. It is not ego, which is not satisfied and wants to be loved by everyone. If we listen to these voices we will be anxious and driven. Discernment is not trying to figure out every detail anxiously or arrogantly. It is not an excuse to not make decisions. We can decide with awareness of God’s voice about deep, long term issues. It means becoming fully present to the love of God, either alone or in community. It’s about becoming true to who you are. Deep beneath the cross currents of my life there is a call to be fully who we are.

Discernment is listening to this.

Prayer: Oh Lord, give me a discerning heart.

Monday Aug 27

“In our weakness... a dwelling place” Ben Kreider, Aug 26 2012

1 Kings 8:22-30

Solomon recognized there is no god like our God. He cannot be contained. The temple could not contain him. The people prayed “please hear our prayer and forgive.” God promises that His eyes and heart will always be there. Jesus promises to be with us. We don’t have to go to a temple, but we meet the Spirit in us, God himself living in us. Our lives and heart are the very place God wants to dwell. Our lives cannot contain him. What would happen if I really let the spirit dwell in me? Now the world has a place to go to receive God’s spirit. We are his temple. Let the temple be filled with his glory.

Prayer: Lord, let my heart, your temple, be filled with your glory.

Tuesday Aug 28

“In our Weakness... no separate Rooms” Steve Wimmer, Sept 2 2012

2 Thess 3:6-13

What God is doing in our daily work. Often our work seems to be separated from what God is doing. Maybe this is because we separate the sacred or spiritual and the secular. Often people deify work or demonize it; either they worship it or belief that life starts when work ends. Paul says there is not separate. He does what he’d be doing if he thought Jesus were coming tomorrow. God redeemed all of us, including our work. Our daily work is where God works though us, so that we can contribute to the goodness of the whole, as an act of love for our neighbors who it benefit. Because our work matters, the conditions of work matters. We must be aware of horrific work condition that some people are in.

Prayer: May my work contribute to the goodness you bring to the whole earth Lord God Almighty.

Wednesday Aug 29

Series: Face Time, the art of Radical Hospitality, “The Dilbert Principle” Steve Wimmer , Sept 16 2012

Mark 8: 31-38

We need to see people as God sees them. We are a mess. It makes hospitality difficult and we get uptight and tie ourselves into knots as we try to meet our needs for happiness. The word 'Nethesh' means soul, the deep part of who we really are. We must lose the superficial and gain the soul. Our life does not need to be center on things we get uptight about. But it can center on the love of God. When we are uptight about those things we do we cannot be open to hospitality of God or others. Then we are bound up, not free.

Prayer: Lord, let me soul see others soul as you do.

Thursday Aug 30

Face Time "Living in an Adult World" Steve Wimmer , Sept 23 2012

Unknown scripture

Unlike what the world thinks, to be great is to serve one another. Worldly culture is rude and likes power and thinks it makes them great. Real power is service that welcomes the most vulnerable member of community. This is the nature of God. Servant power does not mean being doormat or letting people do bad things. It is not an excuse for the people who behave poorly. Remember God gave us everything. Recognize the hospitality calling in us when we are frustrated or interacting with people different than ourselves, and serve them.

Prayer: Give me a heart and hands for service

Friday Aug 31

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Sept 1 2013

John 6:66-71

We need to keep our eyes on our mission. Jesus has emphasized bringing together the realm of spiritual and the realm of the physical, when people want to keep them separated. The spirit realm makes a difference in physical realm. This is incarnation, heaven invading earth. When the disciples were anxious Jesus assured them. The same church that becomes a burden for some becomes a source of freedom for others. Jesus offers a choice, "Do you want to go too?" Being part of Jesus community is challenging, but also gives freedom. Peter put his eye on the ball "Where would we go, Jesus, you bring the word of eternal life." Word of Jesus is the ball to keep our eye on. Its fruit is to love the world. Anxiety interferes with creating thinking, focus and problem solving. We are to direct our attention to the word of our Lord, our mission of transformation and growth, take light of love to the world.

Prayer: Lord, my eyes are on you and my mission to love others.

Monday Sept 3

Series: Family Ties and Knots, Steve Wimmer, Sept 8 2013

Matthew 5: 1-11

Everyone knows that the world, and our lives, would be better if we could get along. Family is the most basic influential unit. Why is it so hard? Family problems are ancient problems. We need a larger vision for our families. When we don't know how to deal with problems, but instead avoid conflict, and let problems grow, things get worse. Peacemakers don't avoid conflict, but use gifts for the good of whole. This is Shalom. We need to serve Shalom in our community and our family. Jesus' words tell us that Shalom is what God does. The center of God's Shalom is that God took upon himself all non-Shalom in person of Jesus. God is the Shalom-maker. We are to join him in Shalom making. The first step is to embrace my place, to take my responsibility. Practice the prayer for Shalom in the home and consider the ways I contribute to lack of Shalom in my home in attitudes and actions.

Prayer: Lord, show me how I can be a Shalom maker in my home, and how I have lacked Shalom in the past.

Tuesday Sept 4

Series: Family Ties and Knots, Steve Wimmer, Sept 15 2013

Genesis 25:27-34, Luke 6:27-31

We need a new kind of vision to be the people we need to be to cope with life. To follow the command to love our enemies we must take responsibility for the only person we can affect directly – ourselves. In the space between conflict initiation and our reaction, we have time to stop and consider how we want to react, to be the person we want to be. We need to take a deep breath. Consider the stimulus and our response and know that Jesus' power is greater than all the conflict. It will one day cover the world and dissolve all conflict. He is in the peacemaker and is with us to make peace daily. Grace is with us also, because we are not perfect, but we need to keep growing. We need to pray for family of origin and current family. Be aware of spaces between stimulus and response, take a breath and respond more thoughtfully. Prayer: Lord, when I feel conflict growing I will breath and think, and let your power of love take charge.

Wednesday Sept 5

Series: Family Ties and Knots, Steve Wimmer, Sept 29 2013

Genesis 2: 18, 21-25

At creation humans had a vocation, a way to participation God's creation. They had permission to enjoy all food of creation. They had one prohibition; the one tree banned. This tree is the freedom to choose; otherwise they would have been robots with no choice. They are naked and unashamed, hiding nothing, sharing all. This is the design of God. The tree symbolizes the attitude of being right, when we have all knowledge and stop wondering. When they chose to disobey they break the union, resulting in broken unity, broken sharing, and covering in shame; "There is something wrong with the world, something wrong with me." We are no longer at home, in union. Brokenness and shame are at the heart of relational problems. When we expect our spouse to fill our brokenness we will be disappointed. God has reconciled and redeemed the relationship. Our job is to live out that redemption in marriage relationship as priority, living out reconciliation and overcoming.

Prayer: Lord I can hide nothing from you, I confess my brokenness and shame to you, and my loved ones.

Thursday Sept 6

Series: Thrive, Steve Wimmer, Sept 7 2014

John 15:1-8

Some plants are simple and need a little work to thrive. Human are more complex and need more work to thrive. We must remain in Jesus, pruning branches that don't bear fruit. We are warned to bear fruit or be pruned. God give hope by telling us that when you bear fruit God will answer prayers. To bear fruit of faith require us to remain in the love of God, live in love of God in Jesus Christ. This is what it means to abide. We are often tempted to attach to other vines, but they are not giving nutrients. Simple practices that help: gather in worship, connect with others, pray.

Prayer: Lord prune me so I may abide more fully and bear fruit.

Friday Sept 7

Series: Thrive "A Unity Church" Steve Wimmer, Sept 21 2014

Ephesians 4:11-16

This world is divided in many ways. Many topics divide people. Paul is not saying we need to be united against a common foe. Unity is not everyone agreeing on everything. Unity is not niceties. Sin divides us; it us look down and criticize others. Church unity brings together the people and groups of people that society and sin divides. Church is called to this vocation; to mature unity because of what has already been accomplished, the victory of Christ. Christ power is the source of the unity. The task of leader is to equip people to carry on the work of Christ; heal, reconcile, serve, and forgive. God did not create a divided world. God did not create us to be divided from one another. We are created to be equals, respected, loving our differences. Unity isn't about agreement, it's about the power to take our transformation seriously and open our hearts to the Spirit. It takes courage to connect with people different then ourselves.

Prayer: When I see differences, Lord I rely on you to fill my heart with love for that person.

Monday Sept 10

Series: Thrive, "A Gospel Church" Steve Wimmer, Sept 28 2014

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

The Church of God has three basic themes, healing and holiness, unity, and the Gospel, good news. We live in a fatalistic world that produces the same outcome again and again. Change does not happen spontaneously. We need to hear Paul's call to newness. Faith, love and hope produce changes. When God raised Jesus he overcame the fatalistic mechanisms of the world. We are not slaves of that world. The possibility of the present moment rings out with newness. This is the Gospel. This is the Good News. In our heart we sometimes believe we are caught in that fatalistic mechanism. We forget we are called to share the newness of renewal. Don't believe the lie that you can't change. Work toward change because we know a new day is coming.

Prayer: Lord, fill me with your newness, change me.

Tuesday Sept 11

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Sept 13 2015

Genesis 15: 1-6, Psalm 25:1

We are embedded with programs from childhood and society. Some of them are faulty. In this scripture Abram is afraid. This tells us that he is running an old program. According to the program of their days he was a failure because they had no children. This fear leaves Abram out of control and powerless. The world, especially the United States, has strong program that says 'There are winners and losers in the world. Which are you?' This leads to an attitude of justification; can we justify our lives on the last day? Abram believed the Lord when he promised. It was credited to him as righteousness. This belief is a miracle, shifting from 'How can I get control?' to "Who will I trust?" This is faith. Jesus announces that the winners are the poor in Spirit, those who mourn, and those who are weak. These are people whose control has failed and they have changed; they now trust God. Who do I trust? The change is in us, from my control to trusting God.

Prayer: Lord, I give up my need to be in control; I trust you.

Wednesday Sept 12

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Sept 20 2015

Genesis 21: 8-14

The old program says 'When you have something you love dearly it is your job to hold onto it and be sure nobody takes it away.' 'Protect this thing.' 'When you find something that gives you joy you better cling to it.' Practical Atheism are people who confess faith, but don't practice it in the moment. They act as if they don't believe. They worry about tomorrow and losing what they have now. But joy cannot be grasped, it is granted. New Program says 'Continue to trust the one who gave you the joy,' and 'keep your heart open in this moment to the giver of joy.' New program lives in the present. It remembers the past mistakes and providences, and it looks to future with hope. Are there enough resources in the moment to provide for you *now*. In this moment I have all I need. Faith exists in the present moment. In this moment Jesus is Lord and providing.

Prayer: In this moment I have all I need; I trust that you, the Giver, will provide.

Thursday Sept 13

Esau and Jacob, Steve Wimmer, Sept 27 2015

Genesis 25:27-34

There is a problem with despising our birthright. We each have a birthright. The birthright is the Image of God given to all humans. We have despised it in our old program. What is valuable about humans? The old program says status, position, power beauty, and productivity give value. What do you value in yourself? The old program says attractiveness, approval, achieving, popular, beauty, do good work, and children's success give value. When we treat other as less than human we are despising our Image of God, and dehumanizes ourselves and others. When we treat all humans as the Image of God we claim that birthright in them and ourselves. Paul said, 'In Christ, God was reconciled the world to himself.' We can say 'My name is ___ I am made in the Image of God. I am reconciled to God and represent the interest of God in creation'. We see humans differently; they are of God.

Prayer: In each person I see today Lord, I will see your image; even in the mirror.

Friday Sept 14

“The Good Old Days”, Steve Wimmer, Sept 18 2016

Acts 2:42-47

Luke describes what happens when a network of people come together in the power of love, sharing openly. This is an abundant community, which is the result of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. They have abundant community because they come together and share gifts and resources. We think of this as the good ‘ole days. We are highly aware of the difference between the early church and now days. We are highly aware of the distortion and corruption in the church. We live in a world where people are very isolated and with focus on individuality. This abundant community happened because the people were available and willing to the Holy Spirit. What happens when we consider our relationship with God not as a private thing, but as a community; it may take courage to take a step toward other people in community, but Holy Spirit gives courage. It takes courage to allow the gifts of a church community into the larger community. How can we be part of the renewal of community in our world? Challenge of three; throughout the week connect with three people in our community. We are better when we connect.

Prayer: Lord, I will connect with people today.

Monday Sept 17

‘Letting go... of Religion’ Steve Wimmer, Oct 4 2009

Religion isn’t about getting it right. Let go of that religion. It’s about living love, encountering God who said “I AM who I AM.” Don’t worry about getting it right. God is whatever He is; we can’t get it right.

Prayer: God, you are who you are, beyond my comprehension. I cannot get you right.

Tuesday Sept 18

“Letting go... of failure” Steve Wimmer, Oct 11 2009

1 John 1:5-10

Fear of failure is universal. The heroes of faith failed just like the rest of us. Overcoming fear of failure doesn’t come by being more serious and proving that we are okay; this is trying to justify ourselves. Overcoming fear of failure happens when we recognize that we have already been justified, not by succeeding, or by fitting in, or being perfect, or trying to be ‘okay.’ You *are* okay, justified, through Christ. He says ‘You are my child, with whom I am well pleased.’ We are better people when we dwell in the freedom of Christ. We confess our sin and get out of the way. Genuine-ness is living from the inside.

Prayer: Lord, I know I don’t need to fear failure, because I am okay either way because I am your child. Thank you.

Wednesday Sept 19

“Letting Go... of Anxious Concern” Steve Wimmer, Oct 25 2009

Worry is universal but it is not helpful. It can be dangerous when we start to do things others should be doing themselves. It can push them away and make us sick. Alternatively, we can let go, pray, and rejoice, then peace will guard your heart. In a frightened anxious world, a crucified Christ brings in the kingdom of peace, and has victory over the anxious world. The gift of the Holy Spirit is peace.

Prayer: Lord, I let go of this worry, and welcome your peace.

Thursday Sept 20

“Failure to Thrive” Steve Wimmer, Oct 17 2010

Matthew 8:18-22

Why do some people live life as an adventure with courage and creativity while some don’t? What in us resists the call? When we go out on our own adventures not following Gods path they are misadventures. We can take off on our own and have a misadventure sexually when we live as if our sexuality is not sacred. We can have a misadventure when we ‘rule’ over nature instead of reigning in love and caring for nature. When we exploit beauty the mystery is taken over by mastery. Spiritual misadventures happen when we stunt our spiritual growth and our spirituality is not focused on renewal. An adventure in love takes courage, risk because we can’t see the end, but we can follow the call with courage when we know God is with us.

Prayer: Thank you for the courage to follow your adventure.

Friday Sept 21

“Addiction and Grace: Lord Have Mercy” Steve Wimmer, Oct 16 2011

Lue 18:9-14

Addiction is self-centered enslavement. Our goal is to become free, free to love. Five characteristics of addiction: tolerance, withdrawal, self-deception, loss of will power and disruption of attention. Our attention is turned away from God, energy is given to the object of addiction. Self-deception is when we are unaware of our own issues, minimizing the power they have over us and we are not aware that there is a path to transformation. Grace is a well-spring of perfect love and power of transformation. It moves us away from addiction and toward the destination of our honing instinct. It is a daily gift that makes us free, coming to us in love, and is the key to freedom. We cannot control Grace.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for grace that give me freedom over enslavements in my life.

Monday Sept 24

“Addiction and Grace: Try, Try Again” Steve Wimmer, Oct 23 2011

Will power doesn't work. Willfulness is a commitment to make change again in the same way, but harder. It is an expression of our independence from God. Willfulness never sets us free. Overcoming through willful independence doesn't free us to love, but leads us to be addicted to something else, like our own righteousness. We have many things that tap our energy so we can't love. The solution is grace. We are called to love. We will only be happy when we love. We get it by grace. “I will” vs “Lord please equip me and empower me by your grace.” Grace is God reunited in us, empowering us, for the purpose of love. Pray, surrender your will, and let go. Letting go of attachments is painful and it will fight back. In community be on the journey to transformation of freedom.

Prayer: Lord, equip me and empower me by your grace.

Tuesday Sept 25

“Addiction and Grace: Hello, Mr. Wesley” Steve Wimmer , Oct 30 2011

1 Thessalonians 1:2-7, 5:19-24

When Wesley had his experience he had a change. Grace experienced through the Spirit of God freed him from the addiction to reputation, to be free to love. What's new in the New Testament is not just Christ's atonement, but the Spirit and its power. The Way to freedom is not to try harder but to surrender to the power of the Spirit. Prayerfully express your intention. Simply surrender. Walk by power that raised Jesus, which is the Spirit.

Prayer: I surrender to the power of your Spirit, to love.

Wednesday Sept 26

Face Time “The Third Way” Steve Wimmer, Oct 7 2012

Mark 10:1-12

Within marriage we are called to practice hospitality with each other, to welcome each other. Hospitality within marriage is ongoing work. There are obstacles. Unrealistic expectations about relationships can be an obstacle. Our tendency to try to control our environment can be an obstacle. The hardness of our heart because we are part of a fallen world is an obstacle. We are hospitable when we resist our selfish tendency, learn to forgive and accept that we have to cooperate with God's power to reconcile. Look at the whole relationship and act on behalf of the whole relationship “What is helpful for the whole relationship?” Take responsibility for myself and my changes. I can't change you. Get help when we need it.

Prayer: Lord, I lay down my selfish views and my hard heart, show me what's helpful for this relationship.

Thursday Sept 27

FaceTime “Welcoming God” Steve Wimmer, Oct 14 2012

Mark 10:13-16

We are the gatekeepers of our life. We decide what to let into our lives, peoples and values. Every day we choose what to let in and they slowly build up to make us who we are. As a church we are also a gatekeeper. What we let in determines if we are building up the kingdom. We must welcome God's kingdom like a child to be part of it. It is a process of renewal in the world. Kids welcome the reign of God. They welcome love, naturally entrusting themselves to love. A baby does not have to try to be loved by their parents. They just trust it, nothing is required. So it is with God. We are to let it happen, trust in that love.

Prayer: Lord, I trust your love as a child; I welcome your kingdom in my life.

Friday Sept 28

Face Time "An Audacious Request" Steve Wimmer, Oct 21 2012

Mark 10: 35-45

If you want to be great, then serve. This message is different that the worlds ideas of greatness. The world thinks great leadership happens in control, power and influence. We know greatness comes in serving and welcoming. Hospitality is one way we serve as leaders. We, as a church, infect the community with hospitality, welcoming. It requires movement inward every day to the grace of God were we are welcomed, and movement outward to the neighborhood where we welcome.

Prayer: Open my eyes Lord, to the opportunity today to welcome those around me.

Monday Oct 1

Face Time "Healing the Deep Blindness" Steve Wimmer, Oct 28 2012

Mark 10:46-52

Blindness encompasses all of us, not physical blindness, but spiritual blindness. It plagues us, diminishes us and those around us. It is the belief that we are separated from those around us, especially those who are different. However, everything is connected, in our universe, in our ecosystem, in our relationship with the world. But we are blind to this, therefore we disconnect ourselves. Jesus's sacrifice is the deep healing of this disconnect. Everything is leveled and we are allowed to connect with all. "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked. He sees the image of God in all people. We are connected to all who are made in the image of God. We are already connected. We just have to live it out. We need to see it.

Prayer: Heal my blindness oh God; let me see my connections with all around me.

Tuesday Oct 2

Series: Family Ties and Knots, Steve Wimmer, Oct 6 2013

Deuteronomy 6:20-25, Malachi 4:5-6

Relationship between parent and children is so important that it is part of the great day of the Lord, and the healing of the earth. Parents need to be leader and mentors of their home, giving wisdom to lead children and teaching what is right. Parents need to equip and empower children so that they grow up into leaders themselves. Parents need to be connectors, to be deliberate about keeping the relationship connection because it won't happen spontaneously. Parents need to be careful to not lose themselves, but to keep their own interests and hobbies, so that they can parent not from anxiety but from their own full person. Healing these relationships is part of healing the world.

Prayer: Lord, let me be part of the healing of the world within my home.

Wednesday Oct 3

"Defining Moments – Life of Centurion" Steve Wimmer, Oct 20 2013

Luke 7:1-10, Hebrews 4: 12-16

How do we connect the great power of God with the needs that make us anxious? Through faithful prayer. The centurion opened his emotional armor when he recognized Jesus' power. This opening of the emotional armor is faith. Faith is awakened by the one in whom we trust. Over time faith grows because we see the power of God acting in life. Word of God exposes us, but because Jesus is our high priest, we can approach God with confidence to find mercy and grace for times of need. Faithful prayer is honest, exposed and tender, with no pretense before God. Recognizing God's authority we can have confidence in our prayer and we have confidence in God's power.

Prayer: I bring my need to you God, honest and exposed, confident in your power.

Thursday Oct 4

“A Surprise Visit” Steve Wimmer, Oct 27 2013

Luke 7:11-17

In this scripture the woman’s life had narrowed until there is no options, both husband and son died, she has no support. Death can be a mindset, when you don’t see any options. Immanence is the character of God in which there is no place where God is not. God with us all the time. Transcendence is the character of God in which God is greater and higher beyond us. When Jesus resuscitated the dead son they said “God has visited us today.” This is transcendence. We need to remember both. Jesus’ death was a narrowing of option for his followers who were at the end of hope. But Jesus blew it out with resurrection. When God visits things change. When you are at the end of the rope and hope, remember God is with us, but he sometimes also visits us. Wait for God’s visit, it will change things.

Prayer: God, thank you for your ongoing presences; I wait on your visit.

Friday Oct 5

Series: Thrive “A ‘What the Bible Teaches’ Church” Steve Wimmer, Oct 5 2014

II Tim 3:10-17

The Bible is many things to many people. We all come to it with expectations. Some people see it as an answer book, but some are very confusing. We might be coming with wrong expectations. Some people think it is a quick and easy read. They will be disappointed; it is not quick or easy. Some people think of it as the last word and set it up as a debate. When really it sets up a conversation; it is the first word in a conversation. Some people think of it as a rule book. While it has some rules, it is more. Some people think of it as a self-help book. This is a selfish approach the Bible, as if it about me. Spurgeon said, “We defend the authority of scripture the same was we defend the authority of a lion, we let it out.” When Paul tells Timothy that scripture is good for teaching he is referring to Old Testament; that was scripture for them. The Bible is a story and the news that God delegates parts of his mission to us. The story is not finished. We are part of it. We live the words.

Prayer: God, let me approach your written Word with right expectations, and live them out in my life.

Monday Oct 8

Series: Thrive, “A Born Again Church,” Steve Wimmer, Oct 12 2014

John 3:1-10

Nicodemus is serious about his religion. He came to Jesus with a small vision of God and life. We come to Jesus with a vision of life with God that is too small; It is too small to want life eternal, beyond the grave, or to want our needs to be met better, the way we define them, or to want something extraordinary to happen. These are all too small. Jesus wants to give a larger vision. You can’t see the kingdom of God unless you are born again, born of flesh and spirit. When born again, Nicodemus will see that power is gained through service, empowering others. He will see that the Glory of God dwells in the center of life. He will see even enemies are made in the image of God. He will see that healing miracles aren’t a side show, but signs of Gods’ reign in this world. He will recognize the cross of Jesus is the love of God and the resurrection of Jesus is the promise of future. Born again is not an event, or a political group of people. Born Again is the New Birth, a gift of newness that happens continually, renewal day by day. When a group of people are forgiven and renewed it leads to seeing the world differently, seeing the spirit as well as the flesh.

Prayer: Give me vision God to see differently your Spirit working in the world.

Tuesday Oct 9

Series: Thrive, “A Holiness Church” Steve Wimmer, Oct 19 2014

1 Tess 5:16-24

To be Holy is to be set apart by God, to reflect the character of God in the world. God’s call to holiness is God’s response to the deep brokenness of the world. Sanctification is God’s work to make us holy...Peace as the fullness of life is very different than peace as absence of war. Freedom is easily lost to excess or

abuse of self and others. Holiness includes being joyful, praying continually, being blameless in every part of our body, and living in the goodness of God. The church needs to be an alternative community empowered by God's Spirit. The Old Testament teachers that end times would include gift of Spirit; this started at Pentecost. The Spirit of God is the fire that makes people holy. Holiness is a destination that we will reach because God is faithful. Good happens when people who are infected with goodness affect and infect others with goodness. God's Spirit wears a church the way a hand wears a glove.

Prayer: Spirit, fill me and make me holy, as you are holy.

Wednesday Oct 10

Series: Thrive "Discipleship at it's Best" David Sebastian, Oct 26 2014

Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8, 2:17-19, 37-39

Discipleship at its best has power that prompts us to tell, invest in a life and invite others. Discipleship has a vision to see the will of God being done on earth, to let people know that God loves them, to see it and make it known. Discipleship has a holy presence, a spirit, in us and around us, to guide us and convict us. The Spirit speaks to all of us, but we often quench it. When we follow the prompting of the Spirit we make a difference in the world.

Prayer: Spirit, use me.

Thursday Oct 11

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Oct 4 2015

Genesis 28:10-22

Power of expectation. Dreams are good and necessary. Vision is good. But when it becomes hardened and chiseled in stone it becomes an unhealthy expectation. If we say, "If this happens then I will be happy," we become disappointed when it doesn't happen. This leads to willful selfish contriving to make it happen. Expectation is rooted in human activity, what we do. Hope is rooted in God's activity, what God does. Don't look in other places. Look here where we are. Discern what God is doing here. The time of God is now. The place of God is here. Heaven and Earth are overlapping. Kingdom of Heaven means here and now, where God is. Expectation hardens our dreams, so it looks like a certain thing, than we press to make it happen. Hope is recognizing that God is here and now and we can let it happen. We don't have to live in frustrated expectations, but we can live in hope, discerning the dreams and the paths to them. The vision of living hopefully is a vision of trust.

Prayer: Lord, let me see your heaven here on earth and work with and for your kingdom.

Friday Oct 12

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Oct 11 2015

Genesis 32:23-32

Jacob wrestles with God all night. The old program believed that once we live with God things should get easier. Like Mother Theresa's long struggle with darkness and doubt, Jacob struggled all night long. The Christian life involves a struggle. We wrestle with God. It can't be otherwise, because the old program is so strong. The new program is our selfishness grappling with the love of God. Jacob walked with a limp because of his struggle with God, but also got a blessing. In the wounding he is blessed. It is part of a journey of transformation. The transformation happens with a struggle, it leave us limping, but blessed. Love is over it all; because of God's love Jacob was not overcome. Love is the cross of Jesus; in this wrestling God is wounded too. This is good news because it tells us that if you struggle you are not crazy. It tells us that we are wounded to be blessed and we are blessed to be a blessing.

Prayer: Thank you for the struggle Lord; let me be a blessing.

Monday Oct 15

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Oct 18 2015

Genesis 27: 17b-36

Imagine a world where we are aware of God's profound love for us. This is a new program. The old program says there is a world with a pecking order. But dreams given by God give a different view. Joseph's brothers were stuck in old view. What happens when dreams given by God run up against old status quo? Resistance to change, it is the old program. God is doing something creative and

transformative even if we can't see it. Jesus said in parable of mustard seed that the beauty is in there and will transform. The new program says God is working right here, right now to transform relationships. We don't have to stay stuck. We must focus on change in ourselves. Begin to image the change. Have courage to dream. Have courage to act differently and know God is unsticking you. It doesn't matter who started it. Have courage to act and speak. This requires courage.

Prayer: Melt my resistance; unstick me, Lord.

Tuesday Oct 16

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Oct 25 2015

Genesis 39:6b-23

The new program allows us to be the true us. God at the center allows us to be authentic. Integrity is being the same through and through. Forces of our world sometimes work hard against those of integrity. Old program is tyranny of the impulse, selfish desire of wanting it right now. Following bad impulses strengthens the neurological connections and increases the probability of following them again in the future. Eventually it becomes part of our character. Resisting this impulse is possible because God is with us, and we know that we are the bearers of God's dreams. The resisting of impulse builds strength. Life of Joseph and his integrity points to the life of Jesus and his integrity. Do we long for integrity? There is time of transition; we are living there, in the time between old ugly program and the new beautiful program. We may not be there yet, integrity, through and through, but are transitioning. The true me requires the letting go of the tyranny of the impulse. In the moment we have a bad impulse we need to breath, walk, call a friend and yield to God.

Prayer: Lord, I surrender to your power; I let go of the impulse.

Wednesday Oct 17

"A Community of Abundance; Not Used Up" Steve Wimmer, Oct 2 2016

1 Kings 17:8-16

People long for community, to do life together, to be connected. The Old Testament reminds people to care for widows and fatherless. This was their social welfare system. The community is the welfare system. The widow of Zaraheth spoke and lived in state of scarcity. As long as we focus on the problems and needs there are never enough resources. The word of the Lord interrupts the needs. She lifts her eyes from her problems and looks at the resources. With eyes on resources she acts as God asked her to and a miracle happens. The resources are not used up. This creates a community of three, sharing gifts, connected and empowered. It is universal that when we keep our eyes on problem we never have enough. Our mindset is transformed when we see any resource as a gift entrusted to us.

Prayer: Lift my eyes to see all the resources, Lord.

Thursday Oct 18

"Not a bad seat in the house" Steve Wimmer, Oct 9 2016

Mark 10: 35-45

James and John asked for the power seats right and left of Messiah. Community breaks down because they believe there are only two seats of power and other disciples are angry. They see power in decision making, control of money and resources. When we compete for limited power then community breaks down. When we think of power as serving others not ruling over them, it all changes. Serving is God's idea of power. Power used to dominate others is distorted power. True power is the capacity to be true to what you are called to and serve. You have all the power you need because it is not a limited resource. We must look at each other and our community with new eyes. How can we share gifts? Power is expressed as service.

Prayer: Show me where to share my gifts.

Friday Oct 19

Thinking like McGuyver, Steve Wimmer, Oct 16 2016

Joel 2:28-29, Mark 1:16-18

Our greatest resources are people caring. The mindset of scarcity effects caring. Caring happens naturally in community as mentoring. But something has happened to decreased this. One problem is our

consumerism. Citizens become consumer when we look to buy resources to meet our needs. We can entertain ourselves but we turn to professional entertainers. We can care for one another but we turn to professionals. There is a reverse correlation from 1950 to 2000 between community involvement and mental illness seeking professional help. There is more loneliness, depression, less connection with neighbors, town groups and church. Joel scolds Israel for having priests instead of being a community of priest, where everyone is connected to God. The greatest resource is people connected to people. Where there is community everyone shares. The first step is to believe that God has poured out his Spirit on us all. The second is to turn to people and connect. Thirdly, believe we are gifted for the task. There is a place for each person.

Prayer: Thank you for your Spirit poured out on us all.

Monday Oct 22

“The Rising Tide (That lifts all Boats)” Steve Wimmer, Oct 23 2016

Mark 2:23-28

We feel a scarcity of time. Jews were gives the Sabbath. Sabbath is no longer observed. It is up against productivity, a value. It is up against value of convenience. It is up against the value of recreation. Sabbath was created for the good of humans. How do we practice Sabbath now? Mark it as a special day where the priorities are worship, people, and relationships. Say “We won’t bow to the demands of productivity or convenience.” We must create time for those things that are important but not urgent. Set Sabbath priority on worship and relationships.

Prayer: Lord I won’t bow to the demands of convenience; I will set Sunday aside for worship and relationships.

Tuesday Oct 23

“The church in the shadow of THE CHURCH.” Steve Wimmer, Oct 30 2016

Ephesians 1:15-23

Church is the body of Christ. The church is the fullness of Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the household of peace, the fullness of light. The church is a collection of ordinary people. Paul prays for the church, to have wisdom and revelation to know God better. The word ‘Yada’ is used here and means to know intimately. To know God intimately. To know God is to know the hope, to have a conviction that a better day is coming. Sometimes hope is what motivates us; when the current situation is not what we need or want. There is a day coming when the church will be all it can be. It requires the power of God, the power that raised Christ, to be a church of unity and peace. The power of God makes all human kingdoms look small. The power of the world works to keep status quo, to keep things the same. But the power of Christ is greater and makes change. It transforms us into that which we are to be. It breaks the chains of the world that want to keep us in the same, enslaved bondage of pain. This power is in the belief that we are the body and fullness of Christ. This creates a mindset of abundance. Jesus asks ‘What do you have?’ What we are today is just a hint of who we will be.

Prayer: Transform me by your power.

Wednesday Oct 24

“Letting go... of control” Steve Wimmer, Nov 1 2009

John 12: 20-26

Letting go of control does not mean surrendering control to others, individual or group. In order for the seed to be fruitful the seed has to die. Control is a fallacy, we influence but don’t control. We didn’t ask to be born. We have embarked on the ship of life. We didn’t choose our economy or time frame. These are all part of the uncontrollable- ness of life. We realize all these things that are out of control and try to gain control by figuring out a way to control other people, become a control freak, manipulator, work-aholic. But the goodness of life is not found to gaining control but in surrender of the self to love of God. Letting go of our need to be in control is part of what the scripture calls being dead to self. We become less needy of pleasing others or controlling others. We love and hate what God loves and hates.

Prayer: Lord, I don’t need it done my way, I’ll do it your way.

Thursday Oct 25

“Are you ready?” Nancy McClintic, Nov 8 2009

Malachi 3:9-10

Are you willing? Are you ready? I may not be ready but I'm willing and that's what counts. Giving our finances helps us to trust God, to live in faith not fear. It allows God to pour out the blessing.

Prayer: God I am willing to give.

Friday Oct 26

“Today's sermon” Steve Wimmer, Nov 22 2009

Psalm 107:1-2, Mark 8:1-10

‘Thank you’ is simple but powerful prayer. Wherever there is gratitude there is already an abundance.

American's have it backwards, thinking that increased gratitude comes with an increase of abundance.

Many people living in poor countries show a joy that many people from wealthy nations do not have. Do we steal simple joy when we give material abundance?

Gratitude and abundance are correlated with gratitude leading and abundance mindset following.

Prayer: Thank you Lord, for...

Monday Oct 29

“Addiction and Grace: Idolatry and Addiction” Matt Stack, Nov 6 2011

2 Kings 22 and 23

The Bible is a text of the heart; Heart of God reaching out to humankind, and the heart of human desire and nature. To God idolatry is adultery. This is what it means when scripture says God is a jealous God.

Josiah made God's word priority and feared God's jealousy. He destroyed the idols and renewed the

Passover. Each of the idols that he destroyed represented something from the cultures around them: Baal

was a local god and represents selfishness, Asherah was a god of sex and represents sexual misconduct,

Molech was king, and represents worldly competence. Our heart is the temple God wants to live in.

Prayer: God Almighty, reveal my idols so I may worship you alone.

Tuesday Oct 30

“Make a place – for passion” Steve Wimmer, Nov 27 2011

Psalm 80:1-7

When we pray with passion we know that it is matched by God's passion. Our passion for change and transformation is matched by God's. We need to nurture a holy discontent with the way things are in this

world. Things only change if we are unhappy; discontent with injustice and poverty, etc. leads us to act.

Passion for renewal is passion for change, healing, setting things right.

Prayer: Lord, stir my passion and holy discontent so I may be part of the solution.

Wednesday Oct 31

“Addiction and Grace: Free from... Free for...” Steve Wimmer, Nov 13 2011

Mark 12: 28-34

Greatest command is to love. It is good to know this, but greater to do it. Love is devotion to God and expressive love for neighbor. Love moves beyond those who are the same as you. But we are not as free

to love as we want to be. Our freedom for love is tethered. Unhealthy attachments, like those to money and technology, rob us of our energy and drain us of our freedom to love. The Kingdom of God is God's

initiative, God's power, God's will, to equip the work of love. It is God's business to make us free, free to love.

Prayer: Lord free me to love.

Thursday Nov 1

“The City of Peace” Steve Wimmer, Nov 28 2010

Isaiah 2:1-5, Romans 13:11-14

Isaiah's vision of heaven and Earth coming together is a vision of hope and peace for our world. It is not a denial of the ugly world, but a vision of a day when world will worship God, with peace and no war.

Convinced of God's power he speaks. People who embrace hope live differently. They start living toward

that day now. If we think Isaiah's vision is only a hope of peace for heaven, not also Earth, it gets us off the hook for living peace and hope in the here and now. We live differently when we have hope for peace on Earth, we live toward that goal. We do horrific things when we forget that God can create extraordinary goodness out of what we offer him.

Prayer: Give me the vision of, and action towards, peace on this Earth, today and everyday.

Friday Nov 2

"Addiction and Grace: going home" Steve Wimmer, Nov 20 2011

Matthew 13:44

The man sold everything to get the Kingdom of Heaven. He let go of everything to have the Kingdom of Heaven. What must happen for us to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? While things of this world, like bank accounts, relationships, and material possessions, are necessary for living in this world, we must let go of our emotional attachment to them. Sometimes this means letting go of them physically also. But we must go further; we must let go of the addiction to have the treasures of the Kingdom, like joy and a community of joy, that can take the place of God. There is that spot in our hearts, a unique place made for communion with God, only God can fill. That is home. Even the treasures of the Kingdom can become addictions that deny God that place. But God's grace allows us to start new daily as we journey towards that place.

Prayer: Lord, I surrender those things that have taken your place.

Monday Nov 5

"The Finished Product" or "Dream and Turn" Steve Wimmer, Dec 6 2009

Philippians 1: 3-11

Picture the day that your healing will be complete. It's about what God does in His Grace. In the beginning was Israel, in the middle was the first coming of Christ, in the end is the second coming. But still we must cooperate with Grace. Growth is normal when you are connected to Grace. God will complete the work in the future, but we have today, this moment to cooperate. Prayer: Open our eyes to see the moment to turn and cooperate with Grace.

Tuesday Nov 6

Face Time "A Study in Contrasts" Steve Wimmer, Nov 11 2012

Mark 12:38-44

Leaders are called to be transparent to God's character. We should be able to see the character of God through the behavior of the leaders. When we think we need to be popular and powerful we have stepped over the line into obscuring the character of God. The widow was generous and good, transparent to the character of God. What we do in secret shows our character. The work of the church is not to find a position of power, but to transform. The greatest difference is made by people who are being transformed and transparent to the character of God, surrendering to God's work in them every day.

Prayer: Let your character of goodness shine through me even in the secret moments.

Wednesday Nov 7

Face time "Around the Table" Steve Wimmer, Nov 25 2012

1 Cor 11:17-26

The body of Christ is the great equalizer. We all are the same before Christ. Welcoming those who are different or unknown is difficult, but necessary part of embracing unity. Healing between God and mankind, and healing between one another occurs in Christ. Without a vision the people perish. We must of a vision of this unity.

Prayer: Give me vision to see this unity and courage to embrace it.

Thursday Nov 8

"Open the Floodgates" Steve Wimmer, Nov 3 2013

Luke 7:36-50

What is it that makes some people flow with gratitude and others not? They know they are the recipient of grace. Therefore are very grateful. Those who don't know they are the recipients of grace don't have gratefulness. We judge our worthiness against others in our world. But the true measure is Jesus, and we can't measure up, so we know it must be grace, giving us what we don't deserve. When we recognize grace, how can we not pass it along to others? Give grace to others, not judging, but giving grace and being grateful.

Prayer: Thank you, thank you, thank you Lord for giving even when I'm unworthy.

Friday Nov 9

"Clothed and in His Right Mind" Steve Wimmer, Nov 17 2013

Luke 8:26-39

Jesus cast out the demons and it scared the people, because they realized they can't control Jesus. God is a God of freedom. He is free to do whatever he wants. God cannot be put in a box. We set up systems to control God; He will heal if...(our rules) etc. We think we got it all figured out. The Love of God is reckless, wild, unpredictable and free. It is the power of God that makes us free, free to join the reign of God. Our heart longs for this love, if we haven't numbed it with entertainment or ignored it with busyness. We can feel the call in creative ways and step out, not fearing others opinions, but recognizing recklessness of God's love set us free to go for it.

Prayer: Let me feel the long for your love, step out in it and be free.

Monday Nov 12

Series: Thrive: "We are a Kingdom of God Church." Steve Wimmer, Nov 2 2014

Deut 6:4-12, Matthew 6:25-34

The themes in the Church of God include healing/wholeness, unity, good news, Bible, holiness and disciple making. The center message is "Seek God Kingdom and righteousness and all these things will be added." Don't worry, instead seek God's kingdom. Kingdom of God is a verb: what happens when God is reigning. Seek first the reign of God. Live a life that is centered in presence of God. Live in the community of God with peace and reconciliation. The time of Kingdom of God is now, not something after death or some future point. Seek the Kingdom of God whatever you are doing *now*. Seeking the kingdom of God means not worrying, but using prayer and silence to stop worrying. We are called to be a community of unity across differences. We are called to go out to our world, be the church. See the world differently, through Christ's eyes, centered on God. Prayerfully live in love and unity looking for ways to do God's will.

Prayer: Show me your kingdom; I chose to live in love.

Tuesday Nov 13

"Freedom's Voice." Steve Wimmer, Nov 9 2014

Joshua 24:1-3, 14-27

Many people desire more freedom from bad habits. The voice of God is always the voice of freedom. Freedom requires awareness; we must be aware of slavery in the world; sex trafficking, poverty, political and religious extremism. These are slavery from the outside. Slavery from within includes negative attitudes. When we work for that which gives joy, it can become idolatry, and then start controlling behavior and enslaving the person. When we are free we have choices. God always gives the choice to follow him or not. He gives us freedom to choose freedom or slavery. There are challenges to freedom. We can't take back the past. Consequence are real, they matter. The challenge of freedom is to maintain a life in the will of God each day. We aren't free until we let go of things to which we are clinging.

Prayer: I choose freedom; I let go of my enslavements.

Wednesday Nov14

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Nov 16 2014

Judges 4:1-7

Debra led the army into battle. She illustrates courage. She was alert and aware of her times, realities, and her generation. She was not in denial, but aware of needs. She knew the source of her courage and had been practicing God's presence in prayer. She knew that courage needs action; there is a time for action, and she knew to take action at the right time. She understood that the battle belongs to the Lord. Great leaders speak of courage when acknowledging hard times. Hard times require courage, not denial or arrogance. The time to learn to pray is during good times, so when trouble comes we know how.

Prayer: Teach me to pray and to know the battle belongs to you.

Thursday Nov 15

"The Sought-after Ones" Steve Wimmer, Nov 23 2014

Ezekiel 34:11-24

Ezekiel saw calamity in Israel. He saw idolatry with people worshiping false gods. He saw broken relationships. A relationship broken with God leads to broken relationship with the weakest members of society. These weakest people are living in exile in their own homeland, both those who are physically homeless, and those who are spiritually homeless... God's judgment comes when we are self-sufficient and arrogant, instead of depending on God's mercy. In times of darkness God will breakthrough when we are broken, because our hearts are prepared through brokenness. If your heart is open to God you will experience God's suffering for the world like Ezekiel did.

Prayer: Break my heart Lord, so I can see you in the world.

Friday Nov 16

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Nov 30 2014

1 Corth 1 :1-9

We must know how to wait in hope. We wait for Christ's return. We wait hopefully. Hope is not just optimism, seeing something in present circumstances making optimistic prediction of the future, positive regard of present condition. Hope is not personal confidence, built by experience and training. Hope is not wishing for the best. Hope is a deep trust in God who is faithful. Don't be afraid. Christmas would be forgotten if not for Easter. He was just one of thousands of good people killed by evil, until the resurrection. God creates life when there is nothing to be hopeful about. God is faithful so we can hope. Waiting hopefully means we prepare for the coming event. We have courage to imagine what will be when Christ will come, perfect love, joy and peace, fully what we were created to be. We live toward that day, living toward that person we will be. The change we long for in the world lives out in our life. In what way do you need to cooperate with God in this transformation?

Prayer: In what way do I need to cooperate with you in fully living out hope, Lord.

Monday Nov 18

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Nov 8 2015

Ephesians 1:1-10

Jesus is the uncovering of a mystery, the mystery of God's will. Jesus clears the fog to show us God's will. When he declared that heaven is happening on Earth and this is the will of God. We know that the realm of heaven happens on earth when love happens, this was made known by Jesus. When time reaches fulfillment all things in heaven and earth will be brought together under one reign. Then all of earth will be heaven. We are the church when we serve in world beyond the walls of the church building; when we care for poor, care for the sick, sit with people in dark hours, when we love people. Where is God? Right here, when we love each other. While prayer, scripture reading are important, we are the church when we love and care, live in justice, integrity and serve people beyond ourselves.

Prayer: Let me be the church.

Tuesday Nov 19

"To be an abundant community" Steve Wimmer, Nov 15 2015

Ephesians 4:1-13

When the connections that enrich people are missing there is a 'community desert.' Community is oneness that is unity and peace. Paul lived in a life with much stratification, by slave, gender, economics, and class. In a society where they were not supposed to interact, Jesus' church brought these people together. They had been lacking community. Jesus was creating community by bringing these layers together as one. In this passage Paul uses the words 'one,' 'unity' and 'peace' nine times. The lower classes were being lifted up, worthy to interact with 'higher' class. Women and men, poor and wealthy, slave and master. Community is based on each other's gifts and talents. If we don't work together we won't make it. We lack community because we are living in a narrative of consumerism, which says we can buy what we need, with a mindset that says experts provide essential things that community life should be providing. Like care. The gifts that go unused in the community will atrophy. We all have gifts for benefit of the group/community. Leadership gifts are given for purpose for equipping everyone for service. We must have courage to connect. Be willing to name and share gifts.
Prayer: Lord, I know I am gifted, and worthy to use these gifts in community.

Wednesday Nov 20

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Nov 22 2015

Ephesians 6:5-9

What does it mean to be the church outside the walls of the church building? At work? Slavery was rampant in Roman world; 40% of the population on the Italian peninsula was slaves. We live a world where we separate church and world, sacred and secular. This separation was abolished with Christ's death. Christ says "that's mine" to everything. Work is part of God's good creation. There is no space or time what is not the Lord's. We are told to work "as unto the Lord." What happens if we do our work as to the Lord?

Prayer: I give my work to you, Lord.

Thursday Nov 22

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Nov 29 2015

Psalms 25:1-10

Advent is a time of nurturing the longing for a world set right. Is there help available for our individual decision in the confusing world? We are called to pray. Can we hear the sound of help on its way? David finds a solid place to stand: the goodness of God's just and good faithfulness. Don't watch or stand on the world, circumstances, the leaders or the news. These are changing. But God is unchanging. We must respond to hate and evil in the way of Jesus, in love. Don't respond in hate. 'We will not be defined by hatred.' We are called to be mentors to show others how to respond in love.

Prayer: Lord, I will not be defined by hate, show me how to love.

Friday Nov 23

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Nov 6 2016

Psalms 72

Prayer for the new leader in Psalm 72 is a prayer for justice and righteousness. We can pray the same prayer now for our leaders and political divides. We must ask ourselves when going to vote, "who embodies the best justice and righteousness?" We vote in the shadow of the cross. Politics of the cross always starts with humility and forgiveness. No political act is more powerful than a community of humility, love and forgiveness. This happens in spite of any leadership.

Prayer: Lord, let me approach all leaders, politics and divides in humility and forgiveness.

Monday Nov 26

'The Constant' Steve Wimmer, Nov 13 2016

Psalms 100:1-5

Psalms 100 is a call to worship written 2500 years ago. It commands us to be joyful. We don't always feel joyful. We are tired of all the evil. Our lives have both tragedy and joy, but we don't have to be imprisoned by events or emotions of our life. We can shout for joy even when we don't feel it. We can shout for joy because God is a constant. He is good, and we are His. We are not just a small spot in history. We are part of a great expansive story of God's love. We remember there will be a day that evil

will be overcome and Jesus will rule in love. We enter worship together, both those who feel joyful and those who don't. We practice gratitude and praise because it impacts us deeply. We know the Lord is good and his love endures forever. We rewire our brain by meditating on the good.

Prayer: You are good; you are good; you are good. Thank you Lord.

Tuesday Nov 27

"All the Wrong Reasons" Steve Wimmer, Nov 20 2016

John 6: 25-35

The people came to Jesus for the wrong reasons, to be fed bread again, this was a selfish desire or need. We all come to God for the wrong reasons at times. We can come to God for personal needs, 'bread', but at some point we need to drop our agenda, and come to God because we want to experience of God. Sometimes we can't distinguish between the Giver and the gift, and we want more of our needs met. Sometimes God takes away the gifts so we can focus on the Giver. When we understand that Jesus *is* the bread, our focus shifts from the gift to the Giver. We awaken to God's agenda. We see the world as God sees it. To believe in Jesus is to abide, to live in him, as we live in a home. When we are at home in Jesus we start to show his fruit. We start to experience a whole new way of being present in the world. The bread of life nourishes us even when we don't see it or feel it.

Prayer: Bread of Life nourish me; let me see as you see.

Wednesday Nov 28

"Resurrection... living outside the box" Steve Wimmer, April 11 2010

Acts 5: 27-32

When we are motivated by fear and self-preservation are not living up to resurrection people. This is true of individuals or groups. This survival mentality drains our color and creativity. If we focus on the renewing transformation offered by the resurrection we need on fear. Are we intoxicated with renewal or are we awash with fear?

Prayer: I will not fear for you are renewing me.

Thursday Nov 29

"Make a place – for promise" Steve Wimmer, Dec 11 2011

Psalms 126

In this Psalm of Ascent the author is remembering when they had joy. They pray for restoration. Restoration begins with the restoring of dreams. We dream because the dream belongs to God. We believe in the God of Promise. We mistake promise for optimism. Promise says 'my eyes are open to everything, but I still believe in God's care.' It doesn't depend on circumstances. Promise is all about God's power, not us. Fulfillment of God's promise to the Israelites came through the resurrection of Jesus, in a power that only God could do. In the future, the 2nd coming will complete that promise, only in God's power. Do you believe God creates possibilities where there is no possibility? Can God create light in darkness? Do you believe that those who saw in tears will reap in laughter and songs of joy? These are the promises to be fulfilled by a God of Promise and Restoration. When we pray the Psalms that are different than our current place it moves us to a new place.

Prayer: You are a God of Promise, You are a God of Restoration, Thank you.

Friday Nov 30

'Once and For All' Steve Wimmer, Dec 20 2009

Hebrew 10:5-10

Christ's advent, his coming, is not to serve or create a stale religion. It's purpose was to remove everything between us and God, to fill us and rescue us. Jesus breaks down every barrier so we can be intimate with God and call him 'PaPa.' Your union with God is forever, final, once and for all, and it is for all, everyone.

Prayer: Fill me and rescue me PaPa God.

Monday Dec 3

Simpler Kind of Christmas “Making room for some housecleaning” Steve Wimmer, Dec 9 2012

Malachi 3:1-4

Jews were living as though they forgot they were the people of God, in 500 bc. To say God is coming is a reminder that God is different than us. He is transcendent, pure, beyond us. He is holy. Advent preparation means we know we are not God. It shows us, in the light, the bad stuff about ourselves. Part of the problem of the world is me, to look at ourselves and see am I unfaithful and unjust. But God will make us true again; when he comes he will refine and clean us. You can't get to Christmas without going through the repentance of Malachi and John the Baptist. The God who comes with fire and soap, comes in love. You can't be in a vocation of healing the world if we are not in healing ourselves. We need change in our core. First stage of growth is repentance. See it, be aware, then change it, act.

Prayer: Lord I am unfaithful, I admit it, I give it to you.

Tuesday Dec 4

“A Dangerous Baby” Steve Wimmer, Dec 19 2010

Isaiah 7:10-16, Matthew 1:18-25

When God shows you, things are turned upside down. God created the appearance of impropriety: an unplanned pregnancy, magi visiting the house of a poor family, and drunken gluten Jesus, as some accused him. Sometimes when you're doing what God leads there is an appearance of impropriety, and people don't understand. Jesus is not about our comfort, or about showing off to others, but is about our transformation and healing. God doesn't get on our agenda, but places us on his agenda. You cannot love God and not love your neighbor or care for enemy. He loves us as we are but too much to let us stay that way.

Prayer: Put me on your agenda God.

Wednesday Dec 5

Series: Simpler Kind of Christmas “A Thing of Beauty” Steve Wimmer, Dec 2 2012

Jeremiah 33:14-16

We long of justice and righteousness. Justice (mitzpoth) says the evil will receive what it deserves, but also that everyone has access to what is needed, opportunity to life, health and happy. This is full justice. Righteousness (setica) is relational, when relations are right, both with God and with each other. This creates a rich, deep communion. The promise of Jeremiah has not fully come yet. Advent is a time of ‘not yet,’ a time of hunger and thirst and longing. But we become impatient and create substitute. We make it about me and injustices against me, and feed our anger. We don't see that the reign has already begun. To live under his reign means we seek the lordship of Jesus who is king, we repent, and we take action toward justice and righteousness. The reign calls for action; we don't need a stick figure Mona Lisa, we need the real deal, real justice and righteousness.

Prayer: Lord, let me live in your reign and promise of justice and righteousness.

Thursday Dec 6

“What Grace Teachers” Steve Wimmer, Dec 25 2011

Luke 2:8-20, Titus 2:11-14

With the birth of Jesus grace appeared. It teaches us to say no to selfish godlessness. A life without grace teaches us to justify ourselves (you must proof your worth) and to obey your passion (give into entanglements and slavery). Grace teaches us to live godly lives; that we don't need to justify ourselves. Grace teaches that Jesus justifies us in this grace and we are free, not slaves to our passions.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for your grace, so we are free.

Friday Dec 7

Unknown title, Paul Loney, Dec 23 2012

Shalom means peace. It is not primarily absents of violence, which existed then and exists now. Shalom peace has layers. Layer one is peace with God (Romans 5:1); justification through faith leads to peace with God. Layer two is peace within you (Phil 4:6); we can replace angst with prayer and thanksgiving.

Layer three is peace with others (Col3:15); when we are with others we can really be present. We can let it be, allow Shalom to be present. It's about being called to peace, to be yourself, your non-anxious self.
Prayer: Let your Shalom rest on me.

Monday Dec 10

"Faith for a New Day" Steve Wimmer, Dec 30 2012

Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord called Abram and Sarai to leave and go. It was not logical to leave home and family, but it had a promise, so they left. It's about God's calling. They were called to step out of comfort, and follow a vision. What we are called to in our community is no less amazing. We are called to keep moving forward, never tread water. We are called to not give in to comfort, nothing great is ever done inside the comfort zone. Will we leave? Will we go? God said "I am with you always."

Prayer: Thank you for always being with me, let me hear your call.

Tuesday Dec 11

"Be Aware" Steve Wimmer, Dec 1 2013

Isaiah 2:1-5

The hour has come for you to wake up. The night is nearly over, the day is almost here. We may sleep through God's new day if we are invested in getting what we want. Advent is a time to remember what's really important, that Christ came to bring renewal, and that Christ will be returning to complete that renewal. How do we live in this world as hopeful people? We believe the tipping point has come; Christ's first coming, the babe is King. Love conquered hatred. The goodness of God overcomes evil. God's purpose came in Jesus. Don't sleep through it. Be present in the moment. Practice the presence of God. Right now is where God always is. The groaning in my heart is the desire for God to complete his work.
Prayer: Thank you God for starting your work of love; my heart groans to complete the work of love and vanquish evil.

Wednesday Dec 12

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Dec 15 2013

Luke 1:46-55, James 5:7-10

We are like Indigo Mantoya (Princess Bride) who says, "I hate waiting." Advent is waiting; for Jesus' to return and make things right. Waiting is a spiritual discipline. On that day there will be no hunger or pain, but knowledge of the Lord will cover the whole world as water covers the seas. All evil, sickness and death will be gone. Fullness of life will be. We wait because God is moving at the speed of love toward his purpose for the end of time. Let us not measure time by the past, but by what will happen in the future. We are moving toward the future that God is pulling us towards, God's purpose. God is tugging us toward that day at the speed of love. Advent is a stopping and looking for signs of this day. Our longing is put in us by the Spirit of God. Hear it, abide in the longing. Live at the speed of love.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to live at the speed of love.

Thursday Dec 13

"Longing for a New Day," Steve Wimmer, Dec 22 2013

Matthew 1:18-25, Romans 1:1-7

Paul was leaning toward the newness of the end times when he wrote these words to the Romans, the New Heaven and New Earth. Newness can get old when it lasts a long time. Sense of renewal can fray. In the first Advent (Christ's coming) the soul felt its worth. In the second Advent oppression shall cease. It is the second law of thermodynamics that things that are organized become disorganized. Renewal fades away. What do we do? Remember that the center is Jesus Christ, something God has been doing for centuries. God will one day finish the job. Where we see ugly trash, God is at work to renew. Remember that the experience of renewal is not in the past experience, but it is ahead of us. We've only had glimpse of the beauty to come. Freedom is on its way, renewal is in front of us. God isn't done yet. The whole world is to be renewed.

Prayer: Move me forward into your renewal, Lord.

Friday Dec 14

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Dec 7 2014

2 Peter 3:8-15a

If the world is condemned should you invest in it? Is there hope for this world? Superficial reading of Peter and recent events in our world seem to say there is no hope. But this is the world created and proclaimed as very good. This is the world that God has been working in for centuries. Peter uses apocalyptic, graphic metaphoric language to describe the judgement and transformation God will create in the world, on the day of the Lord. Fire is metaphor for refinement for purity; new life grows out of the purity, when all the evil is burned up and righteousness dwells. God's intention from creation will be fulfilled. Injustice is burned up, oppression is burned up when righteousness dwells, and we walk in the presence of God. God removes the heart of stone and beauty is everywhere. When we have hope we live and act differently. Relationships change when there is hope. Generosity increases. On the day Christ returns he will declare 'I make all things new.'

Prayer: Lord, let me walk in your newness.

Monday Dec 17

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Dec14 2014

John 1:6-8, 19-28

John was interrogated by the clergy. He clearly stated he was not the Messiah, Elijah or the prophets. John's job was to prepare the way for the Lord. John's life lines up with reality. We often don't line up with reality. We all have ego trouble. We sometimes have a false ego; we spend time proving we are somebody, or showing false humility and wanting pity. John understands his place in the world, who he is, and is in harmony with true self. The source of his authenticity is Jesus, to whom he points. When we dwell in Jesus' love it creates genuineness. We don't have to prove ourselves or show false humility. If you knew you were loved, forgiven and complete, would you be free to be who you are? You are called to be you, not a messiah or prophet, just you.

Prayer: Show me any falseness in my, Lord, so I may give it up and be the me you made.

Tuesday Dec18

Unknown Title, Steve Wimmer, Dec 6 2015

Philippians 1:3-11

The call to love is a difficult calling. It happens in the gift of community. Scott Peck discusses stages of community; 1. Pseudo community – honey moon experience common ground. 2. Chaos – discover difference and what agitates others. 3. Emptiness – the courage to empty yourself of the need to make other the same as us. When we reach this point is when we can truly love. Love is sometimes tough, or gentle, or talking or listening. This good work that was begun in us will be complete one day. You are headed in the right direction. We share the grace of God. The work of Love started on the day when Jesus came and there will be day when he comes again when he finishes what he started. He will destroy all enemies of love. We are living toward that day when love wins. Church is an embassy of the Kingdom of God in the world, where the values, rules, culture of the kingdom reign, where Shalom is to be practiced empowered by the Spirit.

Prayer: Let me empty myself of the need to make others the same as me, so I may love.

Wednesday Dec 19

Mary's Praise. Steve Wimmer, Dec 20 2015

Luke 1:39-56

We rarely hear praise like Mary's. She praises as though the blessing already happened, the victory God will win through Jesus. Mary's praise was dangerous and revolutionary. Prayer is to participate in a revolution against the powers of this world; A revolution of love. Jesus' life was love. Mary watched it all. She was the first to know of resurrection that starts the revolution of love and will be fulfilled in the second coming. Mary is our mentor because she praises as though it already happened.

Prayer: I praise you Lord God Almighty for the victory of love to come.

Thursday Dec 20

“An Emmanuel People” Ben Kreider, Dec 27 2015

Titus 2:11-14

Not everyone recognized Jesus or sees his glory. But those who believe see his glory. We see him and his glory, but does the world see His glory in us? Christ living in you gives the assurance for finding joy and showing glory. A life marked with God’s presence frees us from slavery of wickedness. It moves us to live right, purifies and burns us with desire to do good. God says, ‘Let me pour into you.’ There are gifts that mark us as God’s, including love of self and others, and our ability to let go of anger and guilt, and to forgive. God doesn’t want to get us into heaven but get heaven into us.

Prayer: Pour heaven into me Lord.

Friday Dec 21

“Living in the Tension.” Steve Wimmer, Dec 4 2016

Isaiah 11:1-10

We are learning to live in tension, between our time and the time that is to come. Isaiah prepares us for this tension. Pain and suffering don’t stop during Advent. Christians see Isaiah’s words fulfilled in Christ, but yet they are not fully true, the description of a time of peace, when knowledge of God will cover the Earth as water covers seas. This has not yet occurred. Therefore, we are living in a time of Advent, waiting for it to happen. Jesus’ life is book ended by a stable and a cross. At the stable there was a promise of peace on Earth. The cross is where God reconciles with the Earth, allowing the beginning of the peace. It is the end of Jesus’ story that fulfills the promises made during his birth ‘peace on earth, good will to all.’ There will be a day when peace comes to all humans and heaven and earth come together. Being Christian is to be living in the tension, anticipating the fulfillment of the peace and living according to this promise in the now. Living in peace now requires practicing the presence of God daily so that we can find peace even in moments of tension.

Prayer: Be present with me now, that I may have peace in tension.

Monday Dec 24

“Journey Toward Joy.” Steve Wimmer, Dec 11 2016

Isaiah 35:1-10

Isaiah speaks to Judah in exile in Babylon 500 miles from home. He promises beauty and splendor to them. This is a promise of future beauty in a time of discouragement. During advent we reflect on being in exile. To be in exile means to not be at home. The world is in exile from full true joy. Here, in this world, joy is fleeting. We want to grasp joy but when we do it disappears. We cannot control or manipulate it. We have a sense that we are created for those moments of joy, but they are fleeting because we are exiled from true joy. Isaiah’s promise includes a time when they can go home. We are now journeying together toward joy. When we have a full vision that we are on a journey it helps us have realistic expectations so we can enjoy the moments of joy, not squeezing or grasping too hard, but recognize that moments of joy are the voice of the future speaking to us. It is a glimpse of a future time when the joy we long for will be complete. Attend to those moments, and be grateful.

Prayer: Thank you for moments of joy and for the future joy to come when we return home.

Tuesday Dec 25

“But Wait... There’s More” Steve Wimmer, Dec 18 2016

Isaiah 7:10-16

Wherever you are your circumstances require courage. The backstory of Christ’s birth starts 700 years earlier, when Ahaz was king of Judah. Isaiah the prophet had the job of speaking the truth. He told Ahaz to stand firm in faith, do not join the alliance against Assyria. Isaiah speaks of a sign to be given in a birth of a son. This was fulfilled in Ahaz’s wife with the birth of Hezekiah. Isaiah said stand firm in courage or you won’t stand at all. It takes courage to be stand firm when under pressure, or to make change, or to stretch outside of our comfort, or to be your true self. If we are going to live the life as adventure it requires courage. Matthew points to Isaiah saying there’s more to that promise given to Ahaz. In Matthew’s use of the text the name Immanuel, which means ‘God with us,’ has a new understanding. The sign given to Ahaz, a reminder of God’s presence in the birth of his son, became a sign to the world in Jesus, the presence of God incarnated in his son. This was a new way to understand the Immanuel. Jesus

was God with us in person but also, the birth of Jesus is an ongoing sign that God is with us, so we can live in courage. We can claim that courage to face life struggles, to stand firm in faith because it is the only way we will stand.

Prayer: Thank you Lord, we need not fear for you are with us.

Wednesday Dec 26

“Begin with the end in mind” Steve Wimmer, Nov 29 2009

Christmas demands us to anticipate the renewed kingdom because this is what Jesus preached. The Old Testament prophets also preached of a coming kingdom, they were dreamers. Jesus says the future for which people dream has now started. We live in a world that bleaches the dreams out of people. We get busy and don't have time to dream. Dreaming of the kingdom changes how we see our relationships and we start living towards the dream. Live toward the dream; feed the poor, serve justice to the oppressed. For the New Testament people the time of forgiveness of sins was a future time when things are fulfilled. So when Jesus said 'sins are forgiven' the listeners knew he was saying that the future time is here.

Prayer: Bring your kingdom into my life.

Thursday Dec 27

“The Prodigal” Steve Wimmer, March 14 2010

The younger son tries to be free and ends up with no resources. The older brother is jealous. The father shows grace to both the repentant rebel and the bitter obedient one. They were accepted because of the father's grace. To be part of a community of believers means understanding that the only reason we are in the community is by God's grace. We are alive and we are forgiven and we are loved.

Prayer: Thank you Lord to accepting me.

Friday Dec 28

“When Exclamation Points Aren't Enough” or “Red Hot Mercy” Steve Wimmer, June 7 2009

Isaiah 6

Isaiah tells a story in which burning leads to cleansing. This is a story of worship. Worship is when we enter the red hot mercy of God, see our guilt, accept the mercy and go forward and say 'send me.' We must speak and live the truth, the truth of our guilt, and the truth of God's mercy.

Prayer: Lord, you see my guilt; thank you for your mercy.

Monday Dec 31

“A Vision of Greatness” Steve Wimmer (last sermon as Senior Minister at Alma Church of God)

Aug 27 2017

Exodus 33:12-17

Change is difficult. If you wonder if a vital part is being lost you are not the first. Moses went through change as a leader. At first, God promised to be with Moses alone. This made Moses anxious and insecure. He wanted God to be with the people to distinguish them from other nations. Moses knew God's presence is vital. Because of Moses' prayer God agrees to be with the people. Years later Joshua says to the people, 'Be strong because the Lord is with you.' Jesus said God's Kingdom is with us. When the gift of the Spirit is given to the Church the body becomes the temple of God. So God continues to be with us, present with us as the Spirit in our bodies, the temple of God. So with change, the vital is not lost, because God is with us. Practice the presence of God daily.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for your constant presence through all the changes of life.