



GOBIN CHURCH
A United Methodist Community for All

Saturday, August 22, 2020
Matthew 16:5-12

PONDER

My sister told me yesterday there has been a shortage of yeast recently. Apparently, toilet paper isn't the only thing on the hoarder list of things to accumulate during a pandemic. Unfortunately, these days it seems there is never a shortage of false teachings fed by the yeast of misinformation. Most of us are trying to follow guidelines to stay healthy and to protect the health of others. But just how to do that seems to change from day to day. Even some experts disagree on the how. False yeast rises fast and falls flat when it reaches the heat. May we all find the yeast we need and share it with those who need it, too.

PRAYER

Dear God, I promise to share your love, patience and kindness with others. Build me up with joy, hope and peace so I can share the Good News of your son Jesus with others. Amen

ACTION

Bake some bread, or cookies, or another enjoyable treat and share it with others. Say a prayer of thanks for the blessings God has given you.

Monday, August 17, 2020
2 Kings 5:1-14

PONDER

We meet a young saint in today's Scripture passage. The servant girl has been taken from her family by raiders, and becomes a servant to the wife of the commander-in-chief of the Aram-Damascus army. This child will never see her family again, but she does not show anger or distress over her situation. When she sees Naaman is suffering from leprosy, she knows that the prophet Elisha in her homeland could cure him. From this story, we can learn that God heals and sometimes speaks in soft ways from unexpected sources, such as a child. Things do not have to be as complicated as we make them. Because this girl takes an active role in caring for her captor and in keeping her faith, God is able to use her in reaching the hardened hearts of others. What is more difficult for you — forgiving the deep sins of others or living with anger?

PRAYER

Dear God, help me to share helpful information and not hold back out of spite. Help me separate my opinion of others from my compassion for them. I will try to keep faith in all circumstances. Amen.

ACTION

Donate some children's book to a Little Free Library in your neighborhood, or in the park. Include a note to a child so they know they are loved by God, and that their voice matters.

Tuesday, August 18, 2020

Psalm 87

PONDER

God has staked a claim on all people, the Psalm says. To me, that means we are all loved by God, no matter where we are born. An adult once told me that the Israelites were God's chosen people, and since we weren't Israelites, it didn't matter how hard we tried to please God, we Christians were out of luck. At least, that's how I heard it. What a bummer, I thought. My mother assured me, however, that being a Christian did matter to God. She said the adult who told me that was going through a rough time, and I should pray for him that he got through it, with God's help. Reading today's Psalm, I am reminded that God's children are born in a variety of places and that's just fine with God. But I'm also reminded that feeling separated from God puts one in a lonely place without hope.

PRAY

Dear God, You establish holy mountains wherever people worship you. May we continue always to be counted among your people. And may we welcome our sisters and brothers with the same openness you share with all. Amen.

ACTION

Collect non-food items to donate to the monthly non-food pantry distribution at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.

Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2020

1 Samuel 25: 1-42

PONDER

Some people crumble under pressure. Others rise to the top and show extraordinary grace. Abigail was not a crumbler. Had she been one, her story might have faded into obscurity. But she acted with wisdom and clarity, saving the lives of all involved. With gifts of food, discretion and discernment, she resolved what could have been a bloody crisis through diplomacy. Anxiety might be an automatic response when faced with the destruction of one's household, but anxiety is not particularly productive in times of stress. Can you think of a time when you untangled someone else's problem, or someone untangled yours? How was God at work in that situation?

PRAYER

Thank you, Dear God, for the times you have helped me protect those I love. Thank you for the helpers you have sent to assist me when I struggle and face a difficult challenge. Help me to find and share sanity, balance and Your presence with others. Amen.

ACTION

Donate time, support or funds to an agency that helps families in crisis. Contact an agency to discover how you can help make a difference for others.

Thursday, August 20, 2020

1 Samuel 28: 1-26

PONDER

The story of the Witch of Endor seems like a good campfire tale. It has drama, a grumpy ghost, a desperate king, and a compassionate host. She is the intermediary for bad news, and she's probably bracing herself for the wrath that could come from a man who has lost hope for his future. After all, she did break the law by practicing her vocation. I can think of many "rule breakers" in today's society. Individuals and faith communities who provide sanctuary for immigrants deemed illegal by the government. Athletes who speak up and don't back down when their challenge to racism and bias is portrayed as anti-American. Artists who decorate the streets with murals of unity and hope. How have you spoken up or acted up to let someone facing desperate times know they are loved by God?

PRAYER

Dear God, help me help those needing your help. Help me show kindness and compassion to those who are too anxious to help themselves. Help me be an example of peace in times of distress. Amen.

ACTION

Collect grocery items and donate them to a shelter.

Friday, August 21, 2020

Proverbs 8:32-36

PONDER

Standing with his toes barely touching the water, my grandson forcefully threw rocks into Big Walnut Creek the other day. He was grumpy, needing a nap, but he wasn't ready to give in, not when he was standing at the edge of the water with so many rocks lying around waiting to be tossed. Tiny toads hopped around, staying out of his way. Plunk, plunk. It seemed that his whole focus was on making sure every rock found its way to the water. After a long while I realized he wasn't grumpy anymore. He was happy, just chucking rocks at the water. It was a peaceful place along the creek. When it was time to go, he waved good-bye to the water and the rocks. And we walked back to the car quietly. May we all find happiness with simple actions.

PRAYER

Dear God, Thank you for the wisdom to be quiet, to watch and wait for your peace to settle on us. Thank you for the happiness that comes in small subtle ways. Amen.

ACTION

Find a quiet place to sit and hold a rock in your hand. Notice how it feels — smooth, coarse, warm, heavy? How do you feel holding it? Protective, calm, anxious, happy, ready to throw it? Say a prayer of thanks to God for all the rocks in your

