

TCPC Adult Forum Lenten Sunday School Series
BUILDING THE BELOVED COMMUNITY - Walking the Path of Gospel Truth

MARCH 10: BEGINNING TO WALK THE PATH OF GOSPEL TRUTH

Looking at the Presbyterian Church USA's and Presbytery of the James' response to events in Charlottesville in 2017, participants are asked to begin to think about the ways we define terms like racism and white supremacy. How can we begin to reconsider the deep divisions that still haunt our state and nation? What does the Bible have to say about these issues and how can we find strength to confess our shortcomings? How can we take hold of God's vision for humanity and live it out more fully in our churches and communities? Scripture: Galatians 2:11-21

MARCH 17: WHAT DOES SALVATION HAVE TO DO WITH RACISM?

Using Jesus' mission statement in Luke 4:16-21, participants are encouraged to consider the meaning of salvation. How is Jesus' very earthly understanding of his mission different than some traditional understandings of what salvation looks like? Who are the oppressed and the captives of today and how are we called to continue Jesus' mission? What does this continued mission have to do with race? Scripture: Luke 4:16-21

MARCH 24: BREAKING DOWN THE DIVIDING WALL

Looking at one of the more famous statements in scripture about salvation by grace alone we see how quickly the text turns to say why we were saved. "You have been saved by grace, through faith! This doesn't happen on your own initiative; it's God's gift. It isn't on the basis of works, so no one is able to boast. This is the explanation: God has made us what we are. God has created us in King Jesus for the good works that he prepared, ahead of time, as the road we must travel" (Eph. 2:8-10 Kingdom New Testament). The text then moves to show how these good works are to be done as part of a new human family. The text claims that Jesus work on the cross has broken down the dividing walls between us. If we recognize that in Jesus our socially constructed barriers have already been torn down, what do we need to do to be the united body of Christ in the world? Scripture: Ephesians 2:8-16

MARCH 31: DWELLING PLACE OF GOD

What is the Biblical vision for our life together as children of God? How can we begin to imagine the churches, communities and world that God seeks to bring to life through Jesus Christ? Inspired by the vision of the church as the dwelling place for God through the Holy Spirit, this lesson offers hopeful pictures of Christians building community across racial, ethnic, etc. barriers. Scripture: Ephesians 2:11-21 (emphasis on 19-22); Revelation 21:1-5, 22:22-24

APRIL 7: THE SPIRIT SAYS WELCOME

Participants are encouraged to be open to the risky and uncomfortable call of the Holy Spirit to cross over cultural, ethnic, racial boundaries to develop new relationships in the body of Christ. Theologian Willie Jennings says this about the focus text of this lesson, "This is the condition of risk in which Christianity comes to exist and without which authentic Christianity does not exist. This risk of faith that comes to each of us, but none of us carries it alone. This risk here is found not in believing in the new revelations but in new relationships. The new word that God continues to speak to us is to accept new people, different people that we had not imagined that God would send across our paths and into our lives."(Willie James Jennings, Acts: Belief a Theological Commentary on the Bible) Scripture: Acts 10:9-16, 34-43

APRIL 14: THE PATH AHEAD

This final lesson returns to the title story of this study and pairs it with another text from Philippians. The Galatians text challenges us to be prepared to speak up for the truth of the gospel when others distort it by separating from their brothers and sisters. Paul says he stood up to Peter face to face. The Philippians text is the section that comes right before the well-known Christ hymn. Paul offers a very hopeful vision of the shared life we could enjoy as Christians who truly live into God's vision and vocation for us as image bearers. The path ahead is charted between the pure grace of the comfort and joy we share when we place others needs before ours in our shared life and the requirement that we witness to the truth of the gospel in a world that wants to keep us self-centered and separated from each other and God. Scripture: Galatians 2:11-21; Philippians 2:1-4

Lenten Readings – Walking the Path of Gospel Truth

Ash Wednesday is March 6

- Wednesday, March 6 Genesis 1:26-31
- Thursday, March 7 Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-6
- Friday, March 8 Isaiah 56:1-8
- Saturday, March 9 Proverbs 30:7-9

Lesson 1: Beginning to Walk the Path of Gospel Truth (Sunday, March 10)

- Monday, March 11 Psalm 146
- Tuesday, March 12 Isaiah 65:15-25
- Wednesday, March 13 Leviticus 25:8-24
- Thursday, March 14 Isaiah 61:1-4, 10-11
- Friday, March 15 Luke 4:1-13
- Saturday, March 16 Luke 4:14-21

Lesson 2: The Intersection of Salvation and Racism (Sunday, March 17)

- Monday, March 18 Galatians 3:23-29
- Tuesday, March 19 Philippians 2:1-4
- Wednesday, March 20 Philippians 2:1-11
- Thursday, March 21 Romans 15:7-13
- Friday, March 22 Ephesians 1:15-23
- Saturday, March 23 Ephesians 2:4-16

Lesson 3: Breaking Down the Dividing Wall (Sunday, March 24)

- Monday, March 25 Joel 2:28-32
- Tuesday, March 26 I Corinthians 3:10-17
- Wednesday, March 27 Ezekiel 43:1-5
- Thursday, March 28 Ezekiel 47:3-12
- Friday, March 29 Revelation 21:1-5, 22-24; 22:1-2
- Saturday, March 30 Ephesians 2:11-22

Lesson 4: Dwelling Place of God (Sunday, March 31)

- Monday, April 1 Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:1-13
- Tuesday, April 2 Deuteronomy 15:1-5
- Wednesday, April 3 Acts 2:43-47
- Thursday, April 4 Acts 4:32-37
- Friday, April 5 Acts 10:1-23
- Saturday, April 6 Acts 10:23-48

Lesson 5: Where the Spirit Leads (Sunday, April 7)

- Monday, April 8 Galatians 3:23-29
- Tuesday, April 9 Philippians 2:1-4
- Wednesday, April 10 Philippians 2:1-11
- Thursday, April 11 Acts 4:32-37
- Friday, April 12 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
- Saturday, April 13 Ephesians 4:1-6

Lesson 6: The Path Ahead (Sunday, April 14)

- Monday, April 15 Isaiah 42:1-7; Luke 4:16-19
- Tuesday, April 16 Luke 4:16-19
- Wednesday, April 17 Luke 7:22; Psalm 146
- Thursday, April 18 Amos 5:14-15, 23-24
- Friday, April 19 James 1:22-27
- Saturday, April 20 Micah 6:6-8; Psalm 82:1-5