

Midweek Lent series for 2023
Five gifts of discipleship: Living Our Baptism

When a baptized Christian affirms the faith (often called confirmation) the presiding minister addresses those making public affirmation of baptism and asks the question: Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

**to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?**

RESPONSE: We do, and ask God to help and guide us.

This series is based on Paul's letter to the church at Philippi

Order of service:

Welcome
Hymn
Prayer
Scripture
Reflection on the Question
Hymn
Dismissal

Week 1: Live among God's faithful people
03/01/23

Scripture: Philippians 1: 3-11

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Reflection Theme: *Lent always begins with the reading of Jesus being tempted in the desert. He is able to resist and choose God's way. Sometimes we are not as strong, choosing paths which are not healthy or of God. It is not easy. But God gives the gift of community to teach us, accompany us, and encourage us. In the beginning of Paul's letter to the Philippians, Apostle Paul reflects his love for Christian community.*

Discussion Question: *What does it mean for you to live among God's faithful people?*

Prayer: *Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of the church. We are especially grateful for those who have taught us what it means to be Christian, those who have modeled love, kindness, and*

mercy. Bless our church and guide us to be a model of faithful living. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Week 2: Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper
03/08/23

Scripture: Philippians 3:7-11

⁷Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Reflection Theme: For centuries, Christians have been encouraged to give up something during the season of Lent, and in doing so, increase an appreciation of the sacrifice of Jesus. Apostle Paul recognizes his own personal sacrifices to follow Jesus, but he confesses how much he has gained. The sacrifices pale in comparison to the gain in Christ. More than anything, Paul wants to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. Hear the word of God.

Discussion Question: What does it mean for you to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper?

Prayer: Gracious God, we thank you for the gifts of Word and Sacrament. Open our hearts to the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Open our lives to your freeing love; for you alone can feed our hungry spirits through your Word and satisfy our every need. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Week 3: Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed
03/15/23

Scripture: Philippians 1:12-20

¹²I want you to know, beloved, that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel, ¹³so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to everyone else that my imprisonment is for Christ; ¹⁴and most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, dare to speak the word with greater boldness and without fear. ¹⁵Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. ¹⁶These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment. ¹⁸What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true; and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death.

Reflection Theme: Lent invites us to go inward and become more contemplative. This is an important part of the Lenten journey, but Jesus did not die to keep it a secret. His death and resurrection are meant to be the good news proclaimed from the housetops. Apostle Paul found

courage to boldly proclaim Christ—despite imprisonment and threats of death. He even discovered how God used the negative experiences of his life to proclaim Christ.

Discussion Question: *What does it mean for you to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed?*

Prayer: *Gracious God, we thank you for the good news of Christ Jesus. Use our lives to boldly proclaim your good news made known in Christ. Use our words and our actions to reflect the goodness of your love. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.*

Week 4: Serve all people, following the example of Jesus
03/22/23

Scripture: *Philippians 2: 5-11*

⁵*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,*
⁶*who, though he was in the form of God,*
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
⁷*but emptied himself,*
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
⁸*he humbled himself*
and became obedient to the point of death —
even death on a cross.
⁹*Therefore God also highly exalted him*
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
¹⁰*so that at the name of Jesus*
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹*and every tongue should confess*
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Reflection Theme: *We associate acts of loving kindness and mercy with the season of Lent. Through art, music, preaching, teaching, and other means, the church tells the story of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. But the example of Jesus is more than his death. Throughout his life, Jesus served. He was a servant leader, one who was willing to get down on his knees and wash the feet of the disciples.*

Discussion Question: *What does it mean for you to serve following the example of Jesus?*

Prayer: *Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of service. We are recipients of your love made known in Christ. Fill our hearts with compassion, so we might serve out of a spirit of love rather than under the mantle of obligation. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.*

Week 5: Strive for justice and peace in all the earth
03/29/23

Scripture: *Philippians 4:8-9*

⁸Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Reflection Theme: *Holy Week tells the story of Jesus—a story filled with injustice and violence. Though innocent, Jesus was sentenced to a violent death. Where is the justice and peace? On our behalf, Jesus encountered injustice, violence, and death itself in order to bring a new order—one in which the lion and lamb might lie down together. Until that time comes, we continue to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. We press on.*

Discussion Question: *What does it mean to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?*

Prayer: *Gracious God, we thank you for the promise of a world of justice and peace. Your love for your beloved humanity is breathtaking. To send your son Jesus Christ to live among us and die for us is humbling. Allow us to partner with you to bring justice and peace in all the earth. Show us the way. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.*