



## ▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

**Saturday/Sunday, 4/14-15/18**

**“NEW: Commitment”**

**II Corinthians 5:17 and Matthew 3:13-17 (NIV)**

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!  
(II Corinthians 5:17)*

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”*

*Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.*

*As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*

*(Matthew 3:13-17)*

**Family Activity:** This week, take time together to read the story of Jesus’ baptism, from Luke 3:21-22 and Matthew 3:13-17. See if you can be creative and find items around your house that can help retell the story of Jesus’ baptism (dove, water, heart, clouds/sky). Baptism is an important way we receive God’s grace and are welcomed into God’s family. After you have read the story of Jesus’ baptism, share stories about when family members were baptized.

Discussion Questions:

- How does your family welcome a new family member?
- How do you think God welcomes new family members?

If you would like more information or family resources on baptism, contact Pastor Jessica Richard ([jrichard@plattewoodschurch.org](mailto:jrichard@plattewoodschurch.org)).

**Monday, 4/16/18**

**“Jesus Shows Up”**

**Matthew 3:13, 14 (The Message)**

*“Jesus then appeared, arriving at the Jordan River from Galilee. He wanted John to baptize him. John objected, ‘I’m the one who needs to be baptized, not you!’”*

- Why would Jesus need to be baptized? I am confident as you contemplate the meaning of these verses, there are a variety of answers. I have heard Jesus' baptism was his starting point for ministry. I have been told Jesus' baptism was a model for our baptism. What do you think?
- "Jesus then appeared" indicates Jesus took the initiative to be baptized before he showed up. Consider this: Jesus was baptized to fulfill the will of God, because being a disciple means being obedient and open to receiving the Spirit. How does your baptism make a difference in your life? How does the United Methodist tradition of baptizing infants make a difference in how you participate in raising and nurturing your child and children of the church?

**Prayer:** Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and include *these persons* now before you in your care?

With God's help we will proclaim the good news  
and live according to the example of Christ.

We will surround *these persons*  
with a community of love and forgiveness,  
that they may grow in *their* trust of God,  
and be found faithful in *their* service to others.

We will pray for *them*,  
that they may be true disciples  
who walk in the way that leads to life. (United Methodist Hymnal, pg. 35)

**Tuesday, 4/17/18**

**"One Baptism"**

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)**

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:*

*The old has gone, the new is here!*

- "Pastor, I'd like to be baptized again."  
I respond, "For what reason."  
The answer, "I have slipped away from God's love. I want to start over."  
I inquire, "Do you believe God has left you?"  
The answer, "No."

In the United Methodist Church, we believe in one baptism. "Baptism is not administered to any person more than once, for while our baptismal vows are less than reliable, God's promise to us in the sacrament is steadfast." (UMH, pg. 32) Are there things in your life that separate you from God, that pull you away from God's love? What actions or rituals can you create that would be meaningful to you and restore your relationship with God?

- When Paul writes, "... if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come ..." he does not mean that we, as individuals, have become new creations, he means we have *become* a part of the new creation. Paul believes that the life of Christ has changed the world, its purpose, its future. How did the nature of the world change with the coming of Jesus the Christ? How does this affect your life?

**Prayer:** Dear God, your love is faithful and steadfast. Even when I move away from you, you stay close. Please forgive me ... Hold me tight. Remind me that I belong to you and your love in the name of Jesus'. Amen.

**Wednesday, 4/18/18**

**“Obedience”**

**Matthew 3:16 (NIV)**

*And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending on him like a dove and alighting on him.*

- My favorite Bible commentary is The People’s New Testament Commentary (by M. Eugene Boring and Fred B. Craddock). I recently ordered a new copy because my first copy is held together with rubber bands. I want to share with you their perspective on this verse. “The story of Jesus’ baptism has meaning for the church, but it is not presented by Matthew as a model for Christian baptism, as though the meaning is ‘since Jesus was baptized, we should be too.’” “Christian baptism is a matter of obedience and receiving the Spirit,” just as it was with Jesus. Have you ever thought of baptism as an act of obedience? How so? Have you ever thought of baptism as being open to receiving the Spirit? How so?
- On Easter Pastor Steve preached with this question: Where’s your Galilee? The woman found the empty tomb with an angel hanging out with the message that Jesus was not there. He told the women they could meet Jesus in Galilee, just as he told them (Mark 16:1-8). The end. In light of Matthew 3:16, and the concept of obedience, how is God calling you to obedience? What now?

**Prayer:** Lead Me Lord, Lead Me in Thy Righteousness by Samuel Wesley (father of John and Charles Wesley)

Lead me, Lord, lead me in thy righteousness,  
make thy way plain before my face.  
For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord only,  
that makest me dwell in safety.

Teach me, Lord, teach me truly how to live,  
that I may come to know thee,  
and in thy presence serve thee with gladness,  
and sing songs of praise to thy glory.

**Thursday, 4/19/18**

**“Hope”**

**Psalms 31:24 (NIV)**

*Be strong and take heart, all you who **hope** in the LORD.*

- On my calendar is a quote by Bonnie St. John:

Practice Optimism  
See a new dawn –  
a new point of view –  
and create a new direction  
where none seems possible.  
Show your strength and courage  
by being optimistic.

I really like these words, except for the last one – optimistic. Optimism means having a positive attitude about something. In my way of thinking a positive attitude comes from within ourselves, which means it is based on our ego. So, how about changing the last word to “hopeful.” For me, hope is based on something bigger than ourselves. Let’s call that bigger than ourselves being “God.” When our hope is in God, we can see life differently, as the poem says because our hope is based on how God has acted in the past through our experiences, as well as our understanding of acts of hope in the Bible. What new point of view do you hope for? What new direction might God be pointing you towards?

- As you think about PWUMC, what seems impossible? How might God be asking us to show strength and courage about the mission of the church by being hopeful?

**Prayer:** Dear God, give me eyes to see a new dawn and a new point of view, and create a new direction where none seems possible. Help me to show strength and courage by being hopeful. “May your unfailing love be with me, LORD, even as I put my **hope** in you.” Psalm 33:22

**Friday, 4/20/18**

**“Set Apart”**

**Matthew 22:39 (NIV)**

*Love your neighbor as yourself.*

- Jesus teaches us to “Love your neighbor as yourself.” It is the second-greatest commandment. This commandment deserves our attention. If we truly want to love our neighbor, we will focus on loving ourselves. Loving ourselves involves taking care of our hearts, minds, souls and strength. What are some things you need to give up to care for yourself? What are some things to add?
- To be holy means to be “set apart” as God’s beloved children. I think self-care (loving our neighbors as ourselves) involves setting apart from that which distracts us from God’s love. I think it also means to set apart time and space to nurture our relationships with God, each other and self. What are examples of each part of us that needs care (hearts, minds, souls and strength)? How can the church participate in this effort?

**Prayer:** Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;  
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.  
Make friends of God’s children, help those who are weak,  
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;  
Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone.  
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;  
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.

**This week’s devotional was written by Pastor Nancy Liston  
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