



DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

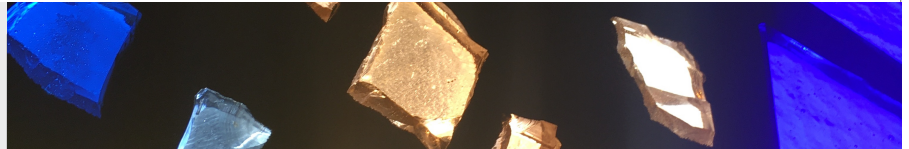
Week of October 16, 2022 (Joshua 24:1-15)

Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

Loving God, with thankful hearts we come before you. Thankful for those who made this church more than just a far-fetched dream but who brought it to life and established it within this community. We are thankful for those who have served, worshiped, and who have cared for others and so built up the community of God we call Aldersgate United Methodist Church.

Today we are mindful that flowing on from a legacy of the past we have responsibility for the present and the future. Help us channel our faith into action. Help us learn from your eternal story of presence and interaction how we too can facilitate that presence in our world today.

Help us learn to be peacemakers in a fractious world, care-givers to the poor and vulnerable, seekers of justice for those who...



Devotions for Life

The Story: Joshua 24:1-15

Context: This week we take a significant jump, as we sail past the books of Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy and thereby leave the Torah. While not the most thrilling reading, these books are important as they give us a sense of the sort of day-to-day goings-on in Israel's wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. Now we are at the point where Moses has died, and Joshua is Israel's new leader. They have crossed over into the land of Canaan, the Promised Land.



This is a difficult passage, as, on one hand, Israel is no longer wandering in the wilderness, but have found the land promised to them from God. The covenant God made with Abraham has come to fruition. But on the other hand, it comes with domination, violence, and death. A lot of ink has been spilled trying to understand this. Did God really call for and ordain this violence? The text here seems to think so. What do we do with this?

... cannot find it for themselves. Help us to learn how to care for the grieving and give encouragement to the young. Help us look beyond thoughts of self and recognise what we can do for others.

Lord, you ask us to be loyal to your ways.

Teach us your ways; unveil in the stories of scripture the God who we must serve. Let us catch a scent of you as we live out our daily lives.

Continue to teach us and show us how to best serve You. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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Compassion & Justice: **Community Outreach Focus:** **Funds for UMCOR**

Every October we raise funds for UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). This year we will target those funds toward a UMCOR's Menstrual Hygiene Kits. This is an often overlooked need in relief efforts after a natural disaster. If you have the means, simply contribute funds to Aldersgate and designate it "UMCOR". We will collect the supplies, and then we will assemble these kits after worship on October 30th.

As we read and hear this story, it's important to live in this tension. We cannot simply dismiss it, but we also shouldn't just accept it either. We must wrestle with it. But beyond that, also look at what else is in this passage? What other themes emerge? What does it have to say about our relationship with God, one another, and the world?

Questions for Reflection & Discussion:

1. What words and phrases stand out to you in this story?
2. Why do you think Joshua goes through Israel's history before making his point?
3. What parts of Israel's history does Joshua seem to focus on? What does he skip or gloss over?
4. What does it mean to "revere the Lord and serve [the Lord] in sincerity"? What do these key words "revere", "serve" and "sincerity" mean to you?
5. What is important about the phrase, "...it was not by your sword or by your bow"?
6. How do you feel about Israel's conquering of the land being done in God's name and/or by God's hand?
7. Joshua calls on the people to "choose this day whom you will serve...": What "gods" might we be faced with choosing between in 21st Century America?
8. If our culture has largely decided no to "serve" the Judeo-Christian god (which some statistics indicate), how can/should the Christian church respond to that?
9. If you claim the Judeo-Christian God as "Lord", why do you? And why go to/belong to a church anyway? What's the point?
10. What does it mean to own land versus belonging to the land?

