

DECEMBER 6–12

This week's readings revolve around the themes of creation and sin—aspects of our existence that are very closely linked in the Biblical record.

One of the things to consider as you work through your devotions this week is how the greatness and beauty of creation can make us more aware that we are so wonderfully made, even as we often fail to act so wonderfully.

Date: _____

A Reading from the Book of Psalms (8:3-5)

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet. *Amen.*

Reflect on a how small you are and yet how important you are in God's sight. How does that make you feel?

Date: _____

A Reading from the Book of Psalms (19:1)

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Recall a specific moment or time when you felt something of God in creation. Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for that moment.

Date: _____

A Reading from *Mere Christianity* (C.S. Lewis)

These, then, are the two points I wanted to make. First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave that way...these two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in.

What do you make of this statement? Does this sound like an accurate description of your own life? Why do you think Lewis calls this "the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves?"

Date: _____

A Reading from the John Wesley's Sermons

Ye know that the great end of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our first parent. Ye know that all religion which does not answer this end, all that stops short of this, the renewal of our soul in the image of God, after the likeness of him who created it, is no other than a poor farce and a mere mockery of God.

How do you think the practice of your Christian faith serves renew the image of God within you?

Date: _____

A Reading from *The Book of Common Prayer* (p. 848)

Sin is the seeking of our own will instead of the will of God, thus distorting our relationship with God, with other people, and with all creation.

Can you come up with examples of sins that have distorted you relationship with God? What about with other people? With creation?

Say a brief prayer, confessing your sins and thanking God for forgiveness.

DECEMBER 13 – DECEMBER 19

The readings this week involve the covenant stories we talked about at our last meeting. Some of them imaginatively invite you to place yourself in the lives of the characters in the story; others are about your relationship to these covenants today.

Several of the Biblical readings are drawn from the New Testament, indicating just how important these Old Testament stories were in the life of the early Church.

Date: _____

A Reading from the Book of Hebrews (11:7)

By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household.

Do you think you would have been able to trust the lord enough to build a rather ridiculous looking boat in your backyard? Are there times when acting according to the will of God might make you look ridiculous?

Date: _____

A Reading from the Book of Genesis (18:13–15)

The Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ Is anything so wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.” But Sarah denied, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. He said, “Oh yes, you did laugh.”

Even though Sarah doesn't believe the promise, God still works through her. What does that say about God's keeping of promises?

Date: _____

A Reading from the Book of Genesis (18:14)

“Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?”

What do you think?

Date: _____

A Reading from The Book of Matthew (1:1)

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

This is the very first verse of the New Testament. Why do you think Matthew bothered to include Jesus' ancestral relationship with Abraham?

Date: _____

A Reading from the Book of Romans (4:16)

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us).

How is it that we are 'descendants' of Abraham? If he is our ancestor in the faith, we are descendants of the whole Biblical tradition. What does it mean to be a part of the Biblical family?