

August 2015 - May 2016



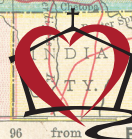
THE GRACE AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH *Atlas*



Join us as we journey through the 2015-2016 school year and explore themes that are important to our daily lives, our community and the greater world.

During our journey we will focus on Scripture. We will also utilize outside reading materials, worship, art, study, music, discussion, hands-on mission, prayer and any other resource that helps us truly come to a deeper understanding of what it means to live as modern-day Christians in a complex and ever-changing world.

This is an opportunity to embrace our 4G Faith as we commit to GATHER, GROW, GO & GIVE in a shared journey as a church family.



GRACE AVENUE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

August 22 - September 20, 2015



It's Back to School Time. Increasingly, our students are asked to learn and follow rubrics on almost all their assignments. A rubric is something that "articulates the expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria (what counts) and describing levels of quality". It seems clear that Jesus has expectations of his disciples, especially as it relates to interpersonal relationships. It is time to go back to school on how we treat one another.

August 22/23: Romans 12: 9-21
"Relationship Rubrics: Back to School"

August 29/30: Deuteronomy 10: 12-22
"Relationship Rubrics: Welcome the Stranger"

Sept. 5/6: Galatians 5: 13-15
"Relationship Rubrics: Love Your Neighbor"

Sept. 12/13: Acts 11: 19-30
"Relationship Rubrics: Engage in the Community of Faith"

Sept. 19/20: Mark 8: 34-38
"Relationship Rubrics: Follow the Savior"

"Love each other like the members of your family. Be the best at showing honor to each other."

Romans 12:10

Suggested Resources & Reading

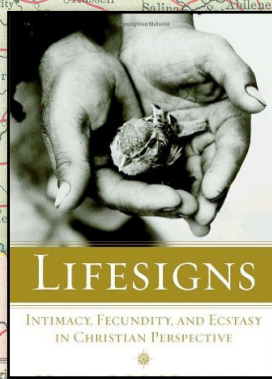
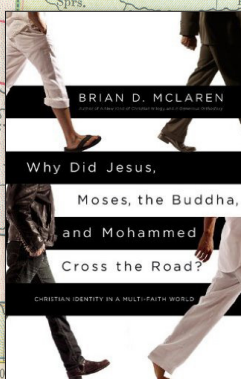
Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road?:

Christian Identity in a Multi-Faith World
by Brian D. McLaren

Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi
By Richard Rohr

Lifesigns: Intimacy, Fecundity, and Ecstasy in Christian Perspective
By Henri Nouwen

www.theworkofthepeople.com/welcome-the-stranger
Video featuring Parker Palmer



September 26 - November 1, 2015

The Art of Creation

The creed begins, “We believe in God who has created and is creating...” We are called to live in the rhythm of God’s creative process yet we are frustrated and blocked spiritually. How do we get in touch with our creative selves? What would it mean to allow our God-given creativity to be unleashed in the world? With creativity, how might we take better care of one another and our planet?

Sept. 26/27: Genesis 1: 1-5
“The Art of Creation: Illumination”

Oct. 3/4: Genesis 1: 6-19
“The Art of Creation: Environment”

Oct. 10/11: Genesis 1: 20-25
“The Art of Creation: Creatures”

Oct. 17/18: Genesis 1: 26-31
“The Art of Creation: Imagination”

Oct. 24/25: Genesis 2: 1-3
“The Art of Creation: Sabbath”

Oct. 31/Nov. 1: Revelation 21: 1-6a
“The Art of Creation: New Creation”

“When God began to create the
heavens and the earth...”

Genesis 1:1

Suggested Resources & Reading

*Think Like a 5 Year Old: Reclaim Your
Wonder & Create Great Things*
by Len Wilson

*The Well-Played Life: Why Pleasing God Doesn't
Have to Be Such Hard Work*
by Leonard Sweet

Creativity
by Matthew Fox

*Original Blessing: A Primer in Creation
Spirituality Presented in Four Paths, Twenty-Six
Themes, and Two Questions*
by Matthew Fox

Creativity and Divine Surprise
by Karla M. Kincannon

The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking
by Edward B. Burger

Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self
by Richard Rohr

*Encyclical Letter, Laudato Si', Of the Holy
Father Francis on Care for our Common Home*
Found at <http://w2.vatican.va>

God's Trombones, The Creation
James Weldon Johnson, DVD

The Green Bible and Study Guide
Published by Zondervan

November 7 - November 22, 2015

REACHING FOR — THE STARS —

Since the beginning of time, humans have looked up into the heavens with wonder. We seek to identify and understand an existence beyond our own. Our souls long for, and recognize in the universe, a greater abundance and capacity. We sense and experience God in this greatness. In just over a month, people will be flocking to movie theaters to see the next chapter in one of the most profound and influential meta-narratives of the past 50 years; Star Wars Episode VII, The Force Awakens. What if we moved our generosity discussion from request to quest? What could happen if we chose to live into the abundance of God's "force"? What if, instead of lowering our expectations, we dared to reach for the stars?

Nov. 7/8: Psalm 8

"Reaching for the Stars: Awakening"

Nov. 14/15: Matthew 2: 1-12

"Reaching for the Stars: Connecting"

Nov. 21/22: Philippians 2: 12-18

"Reaching for the Stars: Shining"

"When I look up at your skies,
at what your fingers made—
the moon and the stars
that you set firmly in place..."

Psalm 8:3

Suggested Resources & Reading

*The Paradox of Generosity:
Giving We Receive, Grasping We Lose*
Christian Smith & Hilary Davidson

*Imagining Abundance: Fundraising,
Philanthropy, & A Spiritual Call to Service*
by Kerry Alys Robinson

*The Wisdom of Generosity: A Reader in
American Philanthropy*
by William J. Jackson

*How Star Wars Conquered the Universe: The
Past, Present, and Future of a Multibillion
Dollar Franchise*
by Chris Taylor

More than just a geek's delight, this book is a creativity manual.
— Walter Isaacson, author of *The Inventors* and *Sure Jobs*

**HOW STAR WARS
CONQUERED
THE UNIVERSE**

THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF
A MULTIBILLION DOLLAR FRANCHISE.

CHRIS TAYLOR

KERRY ALYS ROBINSON

**IMAGINING
ABUNDANCE**

FUNDRAISING, PHILANTHROPY, AND
A SPIRITUAL CALL TO SERVICE

"A spectacular achievement."
— THOMAS H. GROOME
Author of *What Makes Us Catholic*

November 28 - December 27

A Season of Song

Everyone prepares for Christmas with seasonal songs in their heads and their hearts. The songs range from silly to sentimental to sacred. Luke's Gospel account of Jesus' birth is woven into a fabric of songs. These songs comprise a playlist of the one who is Emmanuel; God with us.

Nov. 28/29: Isaiah 12: 1-6

"The Opening Song"

Dec. 5/6: Luke 1: 5-25

"The Voiceless Song"

Dec. 12/13: Luke 1: 67-79

"The Blessing Song"

Dec. 19/20: Luke 1: 46-55

"Mary's Song"

Dec. 24: Luke 2: 1-20

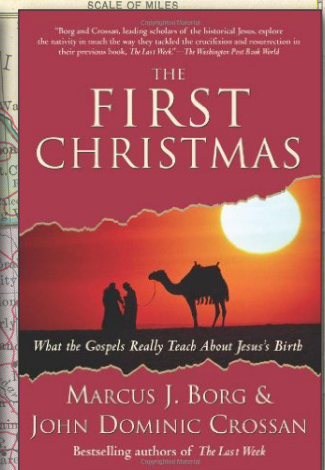
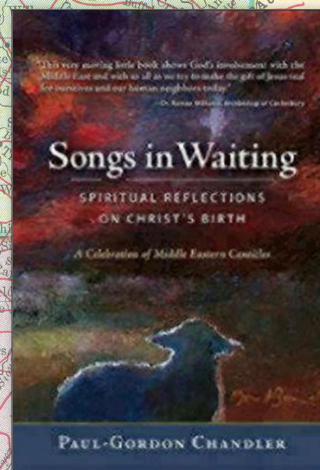
"The Angel's Song"

Dec. 26/27: Luke 2: 25-38

"The Dismissal Song"

"Sing to the Lord, who has done glorious things;
proclaim this throughout all the earth."

Isaiah 12:5



Suggested Resources & Reading

The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Birth

by Marcus Borg & John Crossan

Children of the Stone:

The Power of Music in a Hard Land
by Sandy Tolan

The Birth of the Messiah

by Raymond Brown

Songs in Waiting: Spiritual Reflections on Christ's Birth

by Paul -Gordon Chandler

Exploring Advent with Luke: Four Questions for Spiritual Growth

by Timothy Clayton

January 16 - February 7, 2016

The Jesus Platform

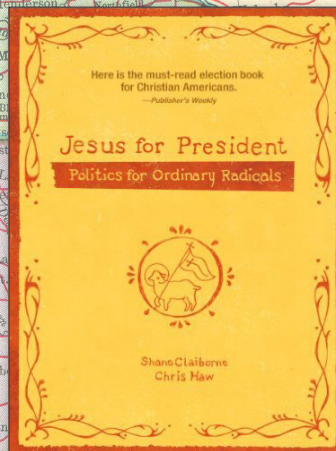
The 2016 campaign is now well underway, but what are we campaigning for? Every group and candidate seems to have a platform; a set principles and aspirations upon which their policies would be carried out. Does Jesus have such an agenda? Luke 4 would seem to indicate that he absolutely does. Are we ready to endorse, campaign and follow him?

Jan. 16/17: Luke 4: 14-30
“The Jesus Platform: Witness”

Jan 23/24: Luke 4: 14-18a
“The Jesus Platform: Good News”

Jan 30/31: Luke 4: 14-18
“The Jesus Platform: Freedom”

Feb. 6/7: Luke 4: 14-19
“The Jesus Platform: Jubilee”



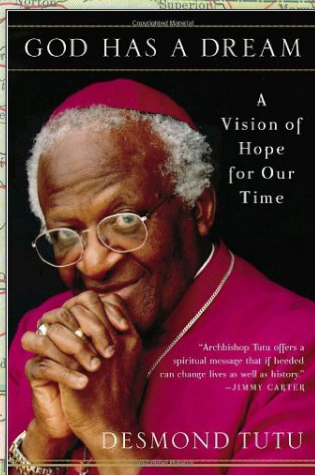
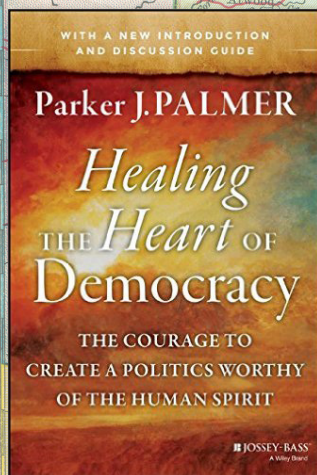
Suggested Resources & Reading

God has a Dream
by Desmond Tutu

Jesus for President
by Shane Claiborne

Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit
by Parker J. Palmer

A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I am a missional, evangelical, post/protestant, liberal/conservative, mystical/poetic, biblical, charismatic/contemplative
By Brian D. McLaren



February 13 - March 20, 2016

LET THE REIGN COME DOWN

Lent is a time for renewing our faith and commitment to Christ. To do this we acknowledge and choose to participate in God's activity; in God's reign. Far too often we have disengaged from the more challenging aspects of our faith and retreated into the spiritual malaise of self-satisfaction and self-protection. Lent is a time for self-sacrifice and engagement. It is a time to live out our baptismal vows.

Feb 13/14: Luke 9: 51-56
"Let the Reign Come Down"

Feb 20/21: Ezekiel 14:1-8
**"Let the Reign Come Down:
Renounce, Reject, Repent"**

Feb 27/28: Amos 5:21-24
**"Let the Reign Come Down:
The Freedom & Power to Resist"**

March 5/6: Isaiah 2:1-4
"Let the Reign Come Down: The Open Church"

March 12/13: Micah 6:6-8
**"Let the Reign Come Down:
Christ's Representatives"**

March 19/20: Luke 19:28-44
**"Let the Reign Come Down:
Recognizing Our Salvation"**

**"Do you accept the freedom and power
God gives you to resist evil, injustice,
and oppression in whatever forms they
present themselves?"**

From the United Methodist Baptismal Vows

Suggested Resources & Reading

*By Water and the Spirit: Making Connections
for Identity and Ministry*
by Gayle Carlton Felton

*Announcing the Reign of God: Evangelization
and the Subversive Memory of Jesus*
by Arias Mortimer

A People's History of Christianity
by Diana Butler Bass

*A Call to Action: Women, Religion,
Violence, and Power*
by Jimmy Carter

*The Boundary-Breaking God: An Unfolding
Story of Hope and Promise*
by Daniell Shroyer

March 27 - May 1, 2016

The Easter Effect

With Easter comes the bold announcement that resurrection and new life reverberates throughout all creation. God does not simply have the last word but the ultimate word. Jesus Christ is alive. We are left to decide what effect this has on our lives. The Book of Revelation may be the boldest book in the Bible, not because of its predictions, but because of its invitations. The invitation of Easter Day rings true throughout Revelation and our daily lives; Why do we seek the living among the dead?

March 27: Luke 24: 1-12
"The Easter Effect"

April 2/3: Revelation 1: 4-8
"The Easter Effect: Promise"

April 9/10: Revelation 5: 11-14
"The Easter Effect: Worship"

April 16/17: Revelation 7: 9-17
"The Easter Effect: Restoration"

April 23/24: Revelation 21: 1-6
"The Easter Effect: Re-Creation"

April 30/May 1: Revelation 22: 1-5
"The Easter Effect: Culmination"

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the one who is and was and is coming, the Almighty."

Revelation 1:8

Suggested Resources & Reading

Revelation (Interpretation Bible Studies)
by William C. Pender

Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection and the Mission of the Church
by N. T. Wright



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