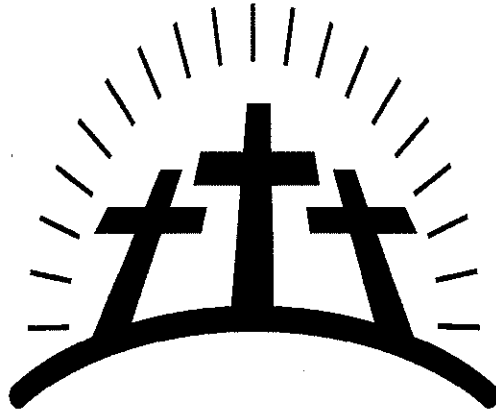


**St. Paul's UMC & Wesley Foundation
invites you to join:**



The Walk to Jerusalem

**A church and community wide program
to increase the health of body, mind and spirit**

Created by: Nancy Evans, RN, BA

St. John Providence Health Parish Nurse

**Adapted by: St. Paul's UMC and Wesley
Foundation**



The Walk to Jerusalem is an imaginary walk that encourages walkers to increase physical activity, spiritual growth and cultural awareness through a virtual tour to Jerusalem.

The good news that Jesus Christ proclaimed and demonstrated isn't only a spiritual reality: it is also very physical. Jesus made that clear with his very tangible metaphors and parables about wheat and coins and seeds and wine. For our Lenten season this year we will be exploring "The Landscape of Lent," taking a look at the physical elements of these crucial stories: ash, water, mud, stones, and more. The resurrection was marked with the movement of a very real rock, revealing a resurrected body! This physical truth points to a spiritual reality, and our Lent will take us to these scenes in Jerusalem, so that we might "touch" these elements and experience the stories anew.

Anyone can participate regardless of your age or physical fitness level. All types of exercise will count, even day-to-day walking around.

The distance from State College, PA to Jerusalem, Israel is 12,519 miles, and this time we are taking a tour of Europe along the way!

Beginning in January, you can help St. Paul's reach Jerusalem by Easter. Log your mileage, steps, and/or time weekly by going online through the link below:

<https://goo.gl/forms/BR0IdyMi6FwtirA11>

You may also drop a note in the offering plate on Sunday with your name, activity you completed (walking, running, biking, steps, physical activity-workout, or other), total mileage, total steps and/or total time. Steps and time will be converted to miles by The Walk to Jerusalem Team.

Be sure to check out the bulletin display and map in the McAllister Lobby for our progress!

If you have any questions contact Renae Schunk at 814-237-2163 ext. 152, Taylor Pawlik at taylor.k.pawlik@gmail.com, or Doug Schunk at dms25@scasd.org.

The Walk to Jerusalem

12 Weeks of Walking
Weekly devotions and Scriptures

Devotions written by members of St. Paul's UMC and
Wesley Foundation

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Week 1 - *Making the Decision*

Written by Doug Schunk

For we walk by faith, not by sight. - 2 Corinthians 5:7

Running a marathon is just dumb. Why would you want to run 26.2 miles? More importantly, why would anyone pay to run 26.2 miles?

I ask myself that question a lot, especially when I'm getting up at dark o'clock and running in the cold darkness of January. For me, the best explanation for why I run is to fight genetics and be a father, husband, son, and friend for as long as I can. Running prevents me from going back to where I was a few years ago...140 lbs. ago.

Did I ever intend to run marathons when I started? Heck no! But as I started to make positive changes in my life, God continued to suggest other challenges for me. At first they seemed daunting and unrealistic. But as the Bible says in Philippians 4:13 - "I can do all this through Him who gives me strength." If God presents you a challenge, have faith that He will also get you through it.

Whether it is for a walk around the block or running a marathon, the hardest part is the first step. Making the effort to making positive changes in your life is the hardest part. Congratulations, by making the commitment to walk with St. Paul's to Jerusalem, the hardest part is over. Now we just have another 12,518.999 miles to go.

Questions to ponder:

- ◇ Why are you participating in the Walk to Jerusalem?
- ◇ What challenges has God put in front of you?
- ◇ In the past when God has put challenges in front of you, how has He gotten you through them?

Week 2 - *Preparing for the Journey*

Written by Linda Keisling

He told them, "Take nothing for the journey - no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic." Luke 9:3

When I set out on a trip, it most often involves planning, anticipation and many details to be double-checked. Piles of things are gathered to go into suitcases and bags- snacks, clothes for every condition, sunglasses, medicines, camera, sports gear and resources for every eventuality. I don't like to be caught off guard! A walk in my neighborhood doesn't take so much planning. I check the weather outside my door, put on walking shoes and clothing to suit the day and grab my house key, water bottle and phone. Pretty simple, just like Jesus' instructions.

As we walk together toward Jerusalem, we travel as one of Jesus' disciples. His words to them in Luke say that they were to take nothing! There were no maps, departure and return dates, spare outfits or food. They did not however go from that place empty or without resources. They had in their hearts and minds all of His teachings, his role model behavior and their faith that He was with them. Their purpose was clear, to spread the good news!

When I walk, I like to take in the details of things around me. Nature is the easiest for me; I love the colors, smells, sounds and beauty. Walking at the mall or on a public street is a little more challenging; I note people's expressions, their pace, how they balance backpacks, briefcases and coffee cups. Parks and playgrounds often delight me with beautiful flowers, active kids and exuberant outside voices. While I walk I pray...lots of thanksgivings to God, prayers for healing infirmities, peace and joy for the burdened and strength for the weary. If for a moment my mind is blank, I remember the instructions in Philippians 4:8 – to meditate upon whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy, and my heart turns immediately toward God, who directs my steps. Be ready with a good word or blessing to share; be ready to tell about the source of your joy. May you be blessed in your journey.

Questions to Ponder:

- ◇ What is the extra baggage that you carry which could be left behind?
- ◇ What Bible verses spur you on even when the going gets tough?
- ◇ How do you apply lessons learned from your life and scripture as you continue to travel?
- ◇ What new promise of Jesus can you now accept by faith to accompany you?

Week 3 - *Taking the Time*

Written by B.J. Rhodes

"All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. - Psalm 139:16

I volunteer in a hospital waiting room. The people who come there are sick, tired, scared and suffering. I have been folding paper cranes and giving them to the patients because they are a symbol of hope.

One day a woman who appeared to have had a stroke came in in a wheelchair. She came over to my table and gestured that she'd like to fold a crane with me.

She had so much courage and persistence as we worked together through the 33 step activity. It was slow going, deliberate and imperfect.

When she finally finished her project of determination, we "high-fived" each other. Through the exercise she had experienced a sense of accomplishment that she told me she hadn't felt for a long time. The years of pain and suffering had taken that away. Now there was joy in her for what she had done in those few moments when GOD took her by the hand and led her through the creation process.

He will do the very same thing with you and me because He knows well each of our hearts. He will take our hand and lead us in the way we are to go when we trust in Him and have the patience to work through our trials. We can have confidence that in His intimate knowledge of our being, He will keep His promise to always be there for us, no matter what journey we are on; through the suffering and also in the joy.

Dear Lord,

Thank you that as your children, You have ordained our days and you do not give up on us. You know our inmost being and You open doors of hope in unexpected ways. Thank You for walking with us through our journey. Amen.

Questions to ponder:

- ◇ Where and how do you see God at work in your life?
- ◇ How do you respond to God's call?
- ◇ What can you do to make a difference in the life of another?

Week 4 - *Plotting the Journey*

Written by Barbara Korner

In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.
- Proverbs 16:9

This verse is often cited as the source of the Yiddish proverb: “Man plans; God laughs.” Anyone who has lived past teen years has learned this lesson. We can often look back and marvel at how plans we made earlier in life turned out completely different than we had imagined.

This doesn't mean we shouldn't plan. Developing mission statements for our personal lives is a valuable way to ensure that we are making decisions based on values rather than emotional whim. It's important for individuals, families and working communities to learn that while goals are important, reaching goals should not come at the expense of upholding values and priorities, particularly when our lives are bound up with others.

The idea of God laughing serves as a reminder that when our faith is anchored in God's omniscience as well as God's mercy and grace, we can accept the reality that our plans are a roadmap. We don't know what the traveling conditions will be. We don't know where the landmines lie. We don't know what unexpected joys wait around the next bend. Many of the disruptions of our lives (disease, divorce, death) are too sad for immediate laughter and we can only take baby steps that keep us anchored to God when we have lost our way. Yet, looking back, we realize that God led us through the difficulty to a place of contentment we hadn't imagined in the midst of the crisis.

There's nothing wrong with planning, yet we must always remember that God directs our daily steps. We must be flexible and ready to take God's direction. We must learn to laugh, when things don't go as we planned, resting in God's grace and mercy.

Lord, I give today to you. Help me in my actions and words to demonstrate that You are in charge of my life. Help me to reflect what is most important to me spiritually in the choices I make as I move through my day. Amen.

Questions to Ponder:

- ◇ What plans have you made that reinforce your values?
- ◇ How have you incorporated God's direction in your planning?
- ◇ How can you access God's plan for your daily life as well as for the “big” plans you have made?

Week 5 - *Where am I Going?*

Written by Justin Frear

"I have fought the good fight. I have completed the race. I have kept the faith." - 2 Timothy 4:7

I recently went on a trip to the Mediterranean with a local Pastor & friend to follow the footsteps of St. Paul. Over the course of this trip we hit Rome, Mars Hill, Ephesus, Athens, & several other key places in Christian history. There was an incredible power knowing that St. Paul had, at one point, stood on the very spot I was standing. Paul was arrested on several occasions for speaking for Christ & therefore against the Roman Empire & it's leaders. Paul dedicated his life to walking around that region & spreading the Gospel.

I don't think it's any coincidence that this trip came on the heels of my dedication to getting healthier & part of that includes running marathons. A marathon is a great metaphor for life. Life has many phases, twists/turns & supporters along the way. There are people who cross the start line before you & people that are overall faster. Likewise there are people who are not as fast & who start after you. There are people who make it look easy & those that struggle. Life is/can be long & winding (Sometimes hilly), but, like a marathon course, your path is predetermined by God.

Paul lived a long, active, life & at the end he uttered the words in the scripture. You can be like Paul! All you have to do is walk & take the gospel with you where ever you go. Ask for God's help & guidance to take the gospel wherever you are off to!

Questions to ponder:

- ◇ What supports are along your marathon course?
- ◇ What message are you carrying as you run/walk/bike?
- ◇ How is God using this journey to Jerusalem to make a difference in your life?

Week 6 - *Walking Cheerleaders*

Written by Jen Gruendler

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. - Hebrews 12:1

For the past couple years I have had the amazing opportunity to spend a week away (twice a year) on retreat with a group of fellow campus ministers. We play and pray and worship together. We spend 24 hours in silence together. We explore best practices of young adult and college ministry together. But the best part of the week is the time spent just being together listening to each other's joys and concerns, deep longings and successes and being present to one another. We celebrate that we are not alone in this journey of ministry. And at the end of the week, when we leave, we covenant to continue to pray for each other and encourage each other in life and in ministry. It's just a really awesome group of saints that surround my life and ministry.

When I think of this passage from Hebrews I often think of this amazing group of Saints who I get the honor to walk life with. I also think of the many people... family, friends, authors whose books have "mentored" me, preacher and pastors and professors who have shaped me, even strangers who I have met on my journey-all Saints in God's Church...surrounding me with prayer and encouragement and reminding me to confidently take the next step, to keep going, to keep the faith. They remind me of the promise we all hold as followers of Jesus that there is not one place we can go outside of God's presence or God's love.

The many Saints that surround us who are present with us now and who have gone before us onto glory cheer us on, cover us in prayer, hold vigil with us in the darkest nights of our souls, and rejoice when we celebrate.

The season of Lent is often thought of as a journey in the wilderness. As we move closer to Jerusalem on this wilderness journey may you hear the sometimes quiet whispers and sometimes loud clashing cymbals of all the Saints that surround you cheering you on full of grace and love.

Questions to ponder:

- 1) Who are the Saints in your life that cheer you on in your journey of faith?
- 2) What is the hardest part of running "with perseverance the race marked out for us"? What road blocks do you experience?
- 3) How do you cultivate relationships with other Jesus followers? How do they enrich your faith life?

Week 7 - *What Kind of Walker am I?*

Written by Virginia Loewen

*Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name,
Praise the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all his benefits – Who forgives all
your sins and heals all your diseases, Who satisfies your desires with good
things So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. - Psalm 103: 1-3, 5*

I was amused by the wording of the Biblical account of Anna in the temple (Luke 2: 36-38) with Simeon when Joseph and Mary brought the baby Jesus to be dedicated. Verses 36 and 37 state that Anna was of a “great age” – the age of eighty-four.

Depending on your point of view, you might think of great age as being extremely old, with all the frailties that being elderly entails.

Or you might think of Anna as saying, “I’m at a *great age!* I’m *eighty-four!* Look what I can still do! I can worship and fast and pray and praise God in his temple.”

Long before Anna, Simeon, and Jesus were born, David wrote about blessing and praising the Lord and remembering all he does for you. In Psalm 103 David has a positive, thankful attitude.

How is your attitude most of the time? Is it negative, self-satisfying and complaining? Or are you thankful, praising God, and remembering all God has done and continues to do for you? Verse 5 says that the Lord “satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

On your walk to Jerusalem you might try a spiritual exercise called prayer-walking. As you walk, rhythmically repeat a short prayer, such as “Lead. . . me. . . on” or “God. . . is. . . love” or “Here. . . I. . . am. . . Lord.” Let your prayer be pure, simple, and meaningful to you. Try it. It will bring you closer to God.

Questions to ponder:

- ◇ Are you willing to step forward and find yourself in God?
- ◇ Are you available to hear God’s thoughts and feel God’s love?
- ◇ How can you serve the Lord at your great age, whatever that age may be?

Week 8 - *Visitors Along the Road*

Written by **Tori VonLeer**

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” - Galatians 5:22-23

Shopping for groceries is not one of the things I enjoy doing. I'm almost always in a hurry and always get way more than what's on my list. The store I use is usually very busy and people from all walks of life shop there.

More often than not, there are people who use the motorized carts or who may not have enough money to pay for what's in their cart. Moms or dads with their kids in tow or the senior citizen moving at a snail's pace. The person who may be homeless who is just waiting. People who need a little grace.

Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia teaches them that living in the law alone doesn't make them Christians. Living **IN** the Spirit will! Paul gives us the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), gifts from God to us to help us live **IN** the Spirit.

We don't need to mentally go through the list of characteristics of living in the Spirit every time we encounter that one person along the road during your day. That person who may just need a smile or a kind word. As Christians, it should come naturally. It's what we **DO**. But it's not always easy. Jesus didn't say it would be easy.

Have you ever lost your patience standing in a line, trying to check out your purchases, when the person in front of you can't find their money? Or the child in the cart drops a glass jar and it shatters all over? Sometimes I find myself gritting my teeth and, instead of offering to help, and feeling my frustration getting the best of me. Counting to ten helps bring me back to where I need to be, at least most of the time. Patience is not one of my better traits. I'm a work in progress, as we all are. Remember, Jesus didn't say it would be easy. Don't forget that!

In Mark 12:31, Jesus gives us the second commandment, “The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself...” The Fruit of the Spirit gives us the tools to love the visitor along the road.

Questions to ponder:

- ◇ Do I struggle with welcoming the visitor along the road?
- ◇ Do I listen for God's voice when I know I'm being challenged to live by the Spirit? What can I do to hear God during stressful times?
- ◇ How am I living **IN** the Spirit?

Week 9 - *Who is my Neighbor?*

Written by Pastor Greg Milinovich

He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself." - Luke 10:27

"When I look into the face of my enemy, I see my brother," says the lyrics to a song by a band called *The Brilliance*. These simple words call us to face the simple and radical truth that loving our neighbor, loving our enemy, and loving ourselves are really all part of the same thing. It all starts, of course, with knowing that we are loved. "We love because God first loved us," says 1 John 4:19. When we understand that we are loved by God, then we are able to start offering that love to others, with a cup that overflows. This is what Jesus was talking about when he said that the greatest commandments of all are to love God with all of ourselves, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

And who is our neighbor? Is it only those who live near us? Is it all of those who are like me? Or who I think are nice? Or who I think deserve it, because they make good choices? What does Jesus mean that I am supposed to love my neighbor? What if my neighbor looks like an enemy? Of course Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan in response to this very question, to demonstrate that we are all neighbors, no matter what. Even when it seems impossible to love, we can, because we know that our love comes from the One who loved us first, with a love that isn't based on our merit or our good choices. God's incredible love for us calls us to love our neighbors. Every single one of them.

Questions to ponder:

- ◇ Have I taken time today – or in this season – to remember just how loved I am by God?
- ◇ Am I finding ways to be a conduit of that love? Is my cup overflowing with love to others?
- ◇ Who are "the neighbors" that God is calling me to love today?
- ◇ Who do I find difficult to love? Why? What will I do about it?

Week 10 - *Walking the Walk*

Written by Mitch Ake

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” - Isaiah 40:31

God’s timing is perfect. He knows what and when things will give us our greatest joy. A lot of the time it can be very hard to wait on God. I always want to know now and move on to the next thing. When God answers our prayers with “not now” or “not yet” instead of “yes” or “no” something amazing can start to work in our lives. When we wait on the LORD we learn to trust, we learn to be patient; it reminds us that God is in control, it allows God to do his work and, it renews our strength. Waiting on God is not a passive waiting. Waiting on God is to work for His good and to trust in His timing. God can do great things in us as we wait. As we wait, God can mold us into the people he wants us to be. It can take a while to change someone’s character and God knows this, and in due time, God will reveal everything he has done in our waiting.

Not only will God do some amazing things in our waiting but also Isaiah tells us that it is good for us that we wait. Isaiah tells us that our “strength will be renewed,” that we will “run and not grow weary.” I don’t know about you, but sometimes I can run for just a minute and grow a little weary. What this verse is saying is that sometimes we won’t get an answer right away. He wants us to “live in the question,” and as we wait, God will do amazing work in us. Even though waiting can be a hard thing to do, He will renew our strength. We will mount up with wings like eagles, we will run and not grow weary, and we will walk and not faint. Wait on the perfect timing of God. He is all-powerful and all knowing. Trust in Him and wait.

Questions to ponder:

- ◇ What is something God has you waiting for?
- ◇ Do you trust that God’s timing is perfect and He is for you?
- ◇ Have there been times in the past that you’ve waited on God and have seen his perfect timing come through?

Week 11 - *Are you Thirsty?*

Written by Pastor Becky McGee

Jesus answered her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." - John 4:13, 14

Water is essential to life. So, too, is God's love. We often thirst for or crave things that aren't really good for us. Or, we don't want to address the underlying need that the craving is hiding. As far as food goes for me, it's dark chocolate and ice cream. Now I am thrilled when I read something that says dark chocolate is good for you, but I can read the fat content and know that I shouldn't over-indulge. Sometimes we may find activities that are attempts at avoiding or covering up our deep yearnings and thirst. When these activities are taken to the extreme, they may be labeled as addictions. Alcohol and drugs are probably the first addictions that come to mind, but shopping, work, gambling, relationships and eating can also be used to try to assuage the thirst or emptiness in our hearts.

Later in the gospel according to John, Jesus says that he "came so that they [the sheep, i.e. us] could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest." (John 10:10b) This is the same hope which Jesus offered to the woman at the well when he says the water he wants to share with her, and us, will gush "up to eternal life." We are created by Almighty God to be in a loving relationship with our Maker. Only a deep, committed and intimate bond with our Creator will truly satisfy our thirst and longings. May we all find ways to drink deeply of the living water our Savior offers to us.

Questions to ponder:

- ◇ What do you crave that may be detrimental to you? What is it that you are really seeking?
- ◇ What scripture passages do you find comforting and reassuring to you when you "thirst?"
- ◇ What spiritual discipline (prayer, scripture reading, etc.) may help to quench your thirst for God's love?

Week 12 - *Satisfaction and Keeping on*

Written by Barb Duclos

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 3:13-14

I am not an athlete. No one will mistake me for one. Ever. I was the chubby girl with pigtails who was chosen for the team after all the good players were selected. I was always among the last to finish the mile run, and I was the only one that threw up on the gym teacher's sneakers when I crossed the finish line. Enough said.

Paul uses a lot of athletic imagery in his epistles, and while I may not be an athlete, I think I understand his point in the passage above. On my Christian journey, I can't dwell on past failures or glory in the successes of what has been. Nor can I just ponder and dream about what the future holds. I need to train. Like an athlete, I have to run today's race - to be focused and strain toward the goal. And our goal should be nothing less than Jesus Christ himself. I must be faithful to that which God has called me, not just when I feel like it, but every single day. I'm not saying I have it all figured out. Some days I do well; on others, I fall short. But with God's help, I need to give my best for God's glory.

I'm off and running - into the arms of Jesus.

Questions to ponder:

- ◇ How are you "in training" for your spiritual journey?
- ◇ What spiritual practices do you engage in? Which do you avoid?
- ◇ What is your goal?



Distance from State College, PA to
Jerusalem:

12,519 miles



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