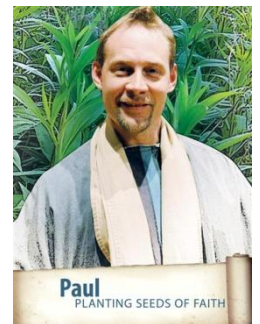


Throughout the Scriptures, there are many critical characters in the story of God among us. They are part of the story that was written and continues to unfold. We are part of that story, as well, and we can learn how to live our lives as we learn more about them.

May 29: Paul ... Missionaries for Christ

ACTS 17:22-31

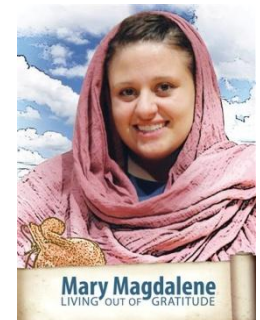
Paul the apostle stands before a Greek audience and boldly declares that the “unknown god” they worship can actually be known and this God is the Lord of heaven and earth. As followers of Jesus we are missionaries to all in what we say and do.



June 5: Mary ... An Extended Family

ACTS 1:6-14

Mary, the mother of Jesus, has raised her son and watched him die on a cross. She is witness to his resurrection and ascension. No one could go through this these experiences alone. God has given us one another and Mary’s extended family became her support in very difficult times. We are called to be extended family for one another.



June 12: Moses ... Followers Need Leaders

NUMBERS 11:24-30

Moses is one of the first great leaders to emerge in the story of God. Moses expertly delegated authority and it was his hope that all of God’s people would be prophets and that God’s spirit would be active in and through all people. The Spirit of God is active in us working through us. Moses was right.



June 19: Adam and Eve ... We Are God's Creation

GENESIS 1:1 – 2:4a

The creation story places humankind as having dominion over all that God has created. As God's creation we are called to care for it and protect it. And, in God's own pattern, we are called to be creative as well as create Sabbath; a time of rest and renewal.



June 26: Jeremiah ... Prophecies Confirmed

JEREMIAH 28:5-9

Jeremiah is used by God to confront Judah and Jerusalem for their worship of idols. They have broken covenant community, and it's Jeremiah's job to tell them so. He demonstrates knowledge and wisdom that can only come from God. As followers of Jesus, we may be called to give correction when covenant community is broken among us.



July 3: Zechariah ... Prisoners of Hope

ZECHARIAH 9:9-12

Zechariah is both a prophet and priest who not only focuses God's people on rebuilding the temple, but proclaiming the message that God is at work and plans to live again with them in Jerusalem. God is going to save them from their enemies and cleanse them from sin, and this oracle gives us a hint as to how this will happen. Not only are we free people in Christ, but we are also prisoners of hope.



July 10: Matthew ... Sowing in the Kingdom

MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18-23

In Matthew's Gospel, we read how Jesus and his disciples sow seeds of faith by proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom is near, and at hand. As a literate tax collector, Matthew can reflect on the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus because he witnesses all of this firsthand. As followers of Jesus, we are called to sow seeds of faith.



July 17: Isaiah ... Leaning Into God's Future

ISAIAH 44:6-8

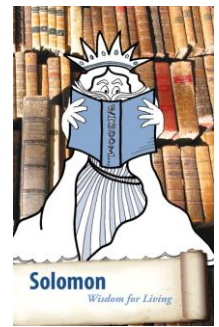
This 8th century B.C. prophet warns the people to turn back to Yaweh and be the people of God who care for the poor and broken in their society. He boldly declares that there is one God who is alive and at work, and we can know this because the things of God continue to occur. As followers of Jesus, we can lean into God's future with hope and confidence.



July 24: Solomon ... Wisdom For Living

1 KINGS 3:5-12

As the son of King David, Solomon has access to riches, wealth and power, and his greatest achievement seems to be the building of the temple in Jerusalem. When God asks him what he needs, he asks for wisdom to govern the people and discern right and wrong. God grants this gift, but Solomon's personal sin and idolatry lead to the downfall and destruction of the kingdom. As followers of Jesus, we need more than wisdom, but also we need to learn how to live wisely.



July 31: King David ... Witness To All Nations

ISAIAH 55:1-5

Isaiah tells us that King David is a witness to the people and a great leader of the people of Israel. Once again we hear the call to covenant community, and to live as witnesses to the things of God. Centuries later, the one who is the King of Kings comes from the bloodline of this earthly king. As followers of Jesus, we can learn from the witness of King David.



August 7: Elijah ... Hearing the Voice of God Speak

2 KINGS 19:9-18

His name actually means "Yahweh is God." Elijah is a great prophet who raises the dead, brings fire down from the sky, and ascends into the clouds in a whirlwind. Elijah claims to hear the voice of God speak directly to him. As followers of Jesus, we learn to listen for the voice of God in a variety of ways.



August 14: Canaanite Woman ... Breaking Through Barriers

MATTHEW 15:21-28

There are many women in the Scriptures who are profoundly connected to God's story but remain unnamed. In this story, we have a person simply called "a Canaanite woman" whose persistence pays off in the healing of her daughter. All kinds of barriers are broken in her encounter with Jesus. As followers of Jesus, we need to consider what barriers are preventing us from doing the work of God in the world.



August 21: Abraham and Sarah ... Beyond Our Imagination`

ISAIAH 51:1-16

Ten generations after Noah and twenty generations after Adam, another great father of faith steps onto the stage of humanity. Abraham and Sarah are sent from their home in Haran to take possession of this new place that God has prepared for them. The promise to them was not only that they'd have children at a very old age, but that their descendents would number beyond their imagination. In their wildest dreams, these two cannot imagine what God would do. As followers of Jesus, we can dream great dreams because God is able to do things beyond anything we can imagine.



August 28: Peter ... Losing Your Life to Find It

MATTHEW 16:21-28

This beloved friend and disciple of Jesus is regarded as the first pope of the Catholic church. He was put to death at the hand of Emperor Nero. Ironically, our text for today tells us we may need to lose our life to find it. In true human form, Peter often does not understand what Jesus is up to. Even though he is slow to catch on and quickly denies his relationship with Jesus, he becomes a great example of faith for us. As followers of Jesus, we are called to lose our life to find it.



September 4: Ezekiel ... Repentance Leads to Reconciliation

EZEKIEL 33:7-11

Ezekiel's name literally means "God will strengthen." At age 25 he was one of 3,000 Jews exiled to Babylon. His calling was to be a prophet, appointed by God to call the people back to God through repentance. The gift of repentance has the potential to lead to reconciliation, as wrongs are admitted and we turn around and live into a new direction. For this weekend we will focus on repentance, and respond to the call of Ezekiel.

