



Sermon for Sunday, June 5, 2022  
“Summer School” | Day of Pentecost  
Pastor Charlie Berthoud | John 14:26

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I was a bit of a math geek in high school, and I initially planned to be a math major in college before I jumped into sociology and Latin American studies and then seminary.

Our boys were always good in math. They are in college now, both exploring computer science and math. Back when they were in high school, I started reminiscing about my good old days of math, I asked them about calculus, wanting to see what they were working on with their classes.

As I looked at it on multiple occasions, I had no idea what it was. It was like a foreign language to me, and I looked several times. Of course, I realized, I hadn’t studied or used any calculus in decades.

So I got to thinking about how many of us grew up in church and went to Sunday School as kids and had lots of opportunities in our younger days to learn about the Bible and grow in faith. If we haven’t done anything for Bible study or spiritual growth or decades, then the Bible and Christian faith might feel like a foreign language to us.

If we want to understand math or Christian faith or God’s love anything else, we need to keep studying, learning, exploring, and utilizing.

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At the beginning of worship, you heard the mysterious and curious account from Acts 2, about the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit comes after the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, to continue what Jesus began—sharing God’s love in word and deed.

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is a comforter, a healer, a presence and a teacher. In John 14 we read:

“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.

And the Bible tells us repeatedly that Jesus is our teacher, our rabbi. The word disciple means a follower or a learner.

Clearly a big part of Christian faith is learning. At Covenant we talk about Learning God’s Love and Living God’s Love. We need to be intentional about this.

This summer, for thirteen weeks of June, July, and August, we’re going to have Summer School, with regular encouragement to learn and grow.

There are two items on the syllabus: Prayer and Scripture, two foundations of our tradition.

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When you walked into worship today, there were yellow index cards on the table. You at home, I hope you might have an index card or a piece of paper handy, because I would like everyone to jot down a couple of options for your own lesson plan for Summer School.

This card is for your eyes only; you don’t have to share it with anyone.

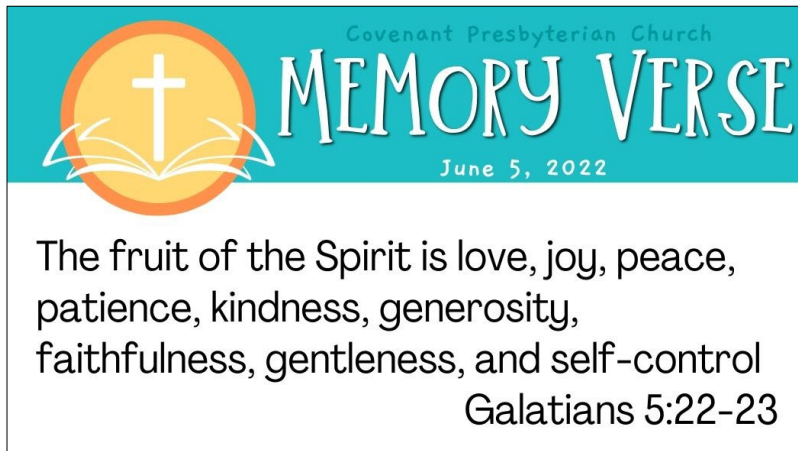
For both Scripture and Prayer, I hope you each write down at least one intention, one possibility to explore over these thirteen weeks.

I have five suggestions for both areas.

For scripture:

Every Sunday this summer, we’re going to have a Bible verse to learn, to memorize, to take to heart. You could put the card at your kitchen table, on your nightstand, in your car... anywhere that you’ll see it regularly.

This week's verse is about the gifts, the fruits of God's spirit. Say it with me:



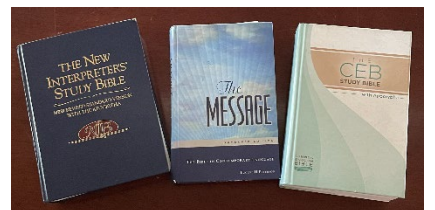
Covenant Presbyterian Church  
**MEMORY VERSE**  
June 5, 2022

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,  
patience, kindness, generosity,  
faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control  
Galatians 5:22-23

It's a good verse for us on Pentecost, with the Spirit coming to teach us and help us to grow, to live more fruitful lives.

Maybe the memory verse is the option you choose for Scripture. Here are some other Summer School curriculum suggestions to help you learn about the Bible

- **A Bible app:** I like YouVersion or BibleGateway, which provide a verse of the day, and options to read or listen to scripture in multiple translations and several languages
- **Gospel of John:** We focused on John's gospel earlier this year. I think it's good for us to read at least one gospel per year.
- **Summer Sunday Scripture Study:** A faithful group does a mini Bible study every week before worship. No experience necessary, and you get early access to coffee and donuts.
- **Study Bible:** Do you have a good Bible, with a translation you can understand? If you're interested in an upgrade, now is a great time. Then you can dig in.



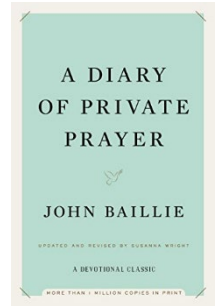
Please take your card write down at least one of these.

My Scripture choice for the summer is with my study Bible, as I'm digging into the little book of Colossians.

The other item on the syllabus for us in our Summer School is prayer. Prayer is making time and space to connect with God. Prayer happens in many ways. I'm

going to offer five ways of praying that I find helpful.

- ***A Diary of Private Prayer, by John Baillie:*** With a morning and evening prayer for every day of the month, I find this helpful. There are many great prayer books out there.
- **Prayer apps:** I like the Daily Prayer app, from PCUSA, and D365
- **Church prayer list:** Take time during the week to remember other Covenant folks in prayer, and use the prayers on the back of the list.
- **Worship:** Our worship service is full of prayer.
- **Silence:** Our lives are too full of noise and distraction. I like bike rides without any technology. I like just sitting in silence for a few minutes. Silence helps me reconnect with God.



Please take your index card again and write down one way you can try being more prayerful this summer.

I'm writing down the John Baillie book and the church prayer list.

Now think about when you can “go to school”, when you can regularly engage with Scripture and prayer during your day. Maybe at the dinner table. Maybe with morning coffee. Maybe you make a commitment to engage with God through Scripture and prayer for a few minutes before you jump on Facebook, check email, or do WORDLE for the day.

We need to be intentional about living the Christian life in between Sundays.

In a world with so much challenge and hardship, we need to good students in the love of God, and help others in the classroom of life as well.

With your new routine of scripture and prayer for the summer, I encourage you to keep in mind the following questions, the three C's if you will. They are sort of like our study questions, our exam questions.

- How is God comforting me?
- How is God challenging me?
- How is God calling me?

For extra credit bonus points, you could consider

- How is God comforting **us**?
- How is God challenging **us**?
- How is God calling **us**?

I really believe that God wants to continue to teach us and show us the path of life, the path of love. God's Holy Spirit is with us. Let's keep learning and growing together.

At the end of worship, we're singing a Pentecost hymn which comes from scripture and flows like a prayer, a good prayer for us today.

Come, O Spirit, dwell among us; come with Pentecostal power;  
give the church a stronger vision; us face each crucial hour.  
Built upon a firm foundation, Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone,  
still the church is called to mission that God's love shall be made known.