



# Weekly Booster

## CHURCH STAFF

### Pastor

David B. Clark

[pastordavid@shen.church](mailto:pastordavid@shen.church)

### Office Manager

Jeff Hiser

[office@shen.church](mailto:office@shen.church)

### Pianist

Terry Stafford

## Bells & Choir Directors

Dan & Linnea Shook

## Multimedia & Website

Jeff Hiser

## Sunday Media Booth

Alan Hutchison

Jeff Hiser

## Sunday Facebook Host

Craig Harris,

## Facebook Contributors

Pastor David B. Clark,

Barb Cunningham,

Craig Harris, Jeff Hiser

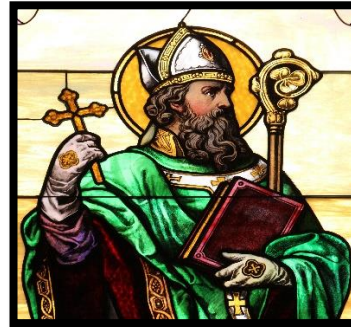
## Sunday Praise Team

Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane,

Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay,

Jeff Hiser, Drew Morelock,

Pastor David



## Lessons from St. Patrick for Today's United Methodists

**St. Patrick is an important part of church history, and he has many lessons to teach us. Feel free to use the prayer at the end in any church setting or for your own personal devotion!**

Happy St. Patrick's Day! As United Methodists, we believe in the importance of church tradition. In fact, tradition is one of the four sides of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral (the other sides of the Wesleyan quadrilateral are scripture, reason, and experience). Although Wesley himself never used the phrase "Wesleyan Quadrilateral," this framing is a helpful device to help us understand and interpret the world around us from a Wesleyan perspective. John Wesley believed that questions bring us closer to God and that study can deepen our faith.

In the United Methodist tradition, we do not revere saints in quite the same way as our Catholic brothers and sisters do; however, we do believe that there are important lessons that we can learn from our ancestors in the faith. In the United Methodist tradition, any Christian who has gone home to glory is called "a saint that has gone before."

St. Patrick is one of the most famous and revered saints in Christian history and there are many lessons we can learn from him. In this post, we will discuss the life and legacy of St. Patrick, as well as some of the lessons we can learn from him.

*Continued page 2.*

*Did you know Iowa is the only state bordered by two navigable rivers; the Missouri River to the west and the Mississippi River to the east?*

### Reminders

#### March 17<sup>th</sup>

Men's Monthly Breakfast-8:00 a.m.  
No PK-6 or Jr/Sr High  
Sunday School  
Soup Cook-Off – 5:00-6:30 p.m.  
Emmanuel Lutheran

#### March 19<sup>th</sup>

Ad Board Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

#### March 20<sup>th</sup>

Bible Study – 11:00 a.m.  
Praise Team - 5:00 p.m.  
Choir – 5:30 p.m.  
Bell Choir – 6:30 p.m.

#### March 21<sup>st</sup>

T.O.P.S.

**\*\*No Men's Saturday Bible Study  
Until Spring - TBA**

**\*\*Worship Assistants are needed  
for March 31<sup>st</sup> & April**

**\*\* Fellowship Volunteers needed  
sign-up in Fellowship Hall**



**Two Volunteers Needed each Thursday  
to Deliver Meals  
Sign-Up Sheet is on the  
Welcome Center Counter**

## St. Patrick - Continued from page 1.

### History of St. Patrick

St. Patrick was born in Roman Britain in the late 4th century but was kidnapped and taken to Ireland as a slave when he was young. After six years of slavery, he managed to escape and return to his family. When Patrick grew up, he became a priest. Eventually, God led Patrick back to Ireland to evangelize in the same land where he had once been a slave. He went to Ireland as a missionary to spread Christianity to the pagan Irish people.

St. Patrick faced many challenges during his mission, including opposition from the pagan priests. However, he persevered and is credited with converting the majority of the Irish people to Christianity. St. Patrick is also known for using the shamrock, a three-leaved plant, as a tool to teach the concept of the Trinity.

### Teaching the Trinity with the Shamrock

One of the tools I use when teaching young people about the Trinity is the symbolism of the shamrock. Although any attempt to explain the Triune God with human language is bound to fall short since we cannot encapsulate God with the limits of our human speech, I have found that the shamrock is a helpful symbol that children can understand. I inherited this idea from St. Patrick and I am grateful for this helpful teaching tool.

According to legend, St. Patrick used the shamrock to explain the concept of the Holy Trinity to the Irish people. He pointed to the three leaves of the shamrock and explained that like the three leaves, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct entities but are also One, just as the three leaves are part of the same plant.

This simple illustration helped the Irish people understand the complex concept of the Holy Trinity, which became a cornerstone of Christian theology. Today, the shamrock is still used as a symbol of St. Patrick's and is closely associated with Ireland and its culture.

### Lessons from St. Patrick

*Continued page 6*

*Did you know that the first electronic digital computer was built and operated by researchers at Iowa State University in the 1930s?*

## Volunteers Needed



**LAST PERSON LEAVING  
PLEASE TURN OUT LIGHTS  
AND LOCK DOORS**

First United Methodist Church  
**Please wear your  
name tag on  
Sunday mornings**




## Church Office Hours

**\*\* Children & Jr.-Sr. High  
Sunday School – PK-6  
during service, Jr/Sr High  
at 10:30 a.m.**

**\*\*Choir – Wednesdays,  
5:30 p.m. Sunday 8:30 a.m.  
\*\*Bell Choir –  
Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.**

The front door to the church  
will be unlocked during  
office hours and closed only  
for errands and lunch.

**Monday**  
9:00-11:00  
12:00-3:00  
**Tuesday**  
9:00-11:00  
12:00-3:00  
**Wednesday**  
**CLOSED**  
**Thursday**  
9:00-11:00  
12:00-3:00  
**Friday**  
9:00-11:00  
12:00-3:00

Please continue to call in  
advance if you need in the  
church to make sure  
someone is in the office. If  
you reach the answering  
machine please leave  
your name, number, and  
a brief message and your  
call will be returned. Calls  
after 2:00 p.m. may be  
returned the next  
business day.



Which rock did Moses  
strike to make water  
come out of it?

- a) Machpelah
- b) Gibeon
- c) Horeb
- d) Uz

Where were Joseph's bones  
buried?

- a) Jerusalem
- b) Galilee
- c) Egypt
- d) Shechem

Who was Ezra?

- a) Judge
- b) Priest
- c) Governor
- d) King

**Check page 4 for answers from  
the previous week.**



18<sup>th</sup> – Jon Skillern  
19<sup>th</sup> – Chase Hiser  
20<sup>th</sup> – Chris DeLong, Elliott Lundgren  
23<sup>rd</sup> – Connie Andersen, Susan Foster

**\*\*See a wrong birthday or anniversary, or need one added, please call the  
office, or send an email to [office@shen.church](mailto:office@shen.church)**

**Shenandoah First United  
Methodist Church**

200 Church St.  
Shenandoah, IA 51601

Phone 712-246-2081

Church E-mail  
[office@shen.church](mailto:office@shen.church)

Same address – a new look at  
<https://shen.church>



<https://shenchurch.onechurchsoftware.com/>



United Methodist Church,  
Shenandoah, IA

<https://www.facebook.com/methodist.church.shenandoah>



Services are now on our YouTube  
channel only.  
<https://www.youtube.com/@shen.church8192/streams>

**\*Prelude/Postlude/Accompanist: Terry Stafford**

**Call to Worship**

**Leader: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.**

**People: Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.**

**L: The Lord makes a new covenant with us and writes the law upon our hearts.**

**P: The Lord is our God, and we are God's people.**

**L: Let us seek the Lord**

**P: and treasure God's word in our hearts.**

**“Sacrificial Bravery”**

**Scripture Reading: John 12:20-33**

**Songs**

**O God, Our Help in Ages Past #117  
Change My Heart, O God #2152  
In Christ Alone #3105**

**Last Week's Attendance**

**In-Person Worship – 63  
On-Line Worship – 12**

**Our Mission:**

**“Know & Serve God by Sharing Christ's Love.”**

**Our Vision:**

**“We will grow in holiness, our community will thrive, & we will make a difference in our world.”**

**Answers for March 10<sup>th</sup> are b) 3 Kings b) the blood of His crown c) every month**

**Quiz hints – Q1) Exodus Q2) Joshua Q3) Ezra**



## March 2024

Chunky Style Soups, Spaghetti Sauce and Pasta (any kind), Hamburger, Tuna and Chicken Helpers, Potato Flakes, Boxed Potatoes, Green Beans, Corn, Macaroni & Cheese, Cake, Brownie, Cookie, and Pancake Mix and Cereal, Bar Soap,

Deodorant, Shampoo & Conditioner, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste.

There are times when people who use the Food Pantry come to the pantry on foot. They are then forced to walk home carrying, pushing, or pulling several pounds of food. Southwest Iowa Transit, for a very reasonable fee of \$5.00, will take individuals with their food items home. If you are interested in helping pay for these fees, simply seal your cash (whatever you would like to give) in a plain envelope and add it to your donated food items.

### *Bring Your Change to Make a Change*

*Collected each Sunday after  
the children's message*



*"Each of you should GIVE what you have decided in YOUR HEART to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for GOD LOVES a cheerful GIVER." (2 Corinthians 9:7)*

The Noisy Offering is one more way to do ministry for those in need and also teach your children the importance of giving and serving. Each Sunday a new opportunity for mission giving will take place after the Children's Message. Sunday School students will walk around the congregation, collecting your loose coins and currency in their colorful metal pails. This would be a good time to clean out the loose change from

your pockets or purse. The money donated in March will go to the **Heifer International Organization**.



## St. Patrick - Continued from page 2.

### Lessons from St. Patrick

St. Patrick's life and legacy teach us many lessons that are particularly pertinent for the United Methodist Church today. Here are a few of them:

1. **Perseverance:** St. Patrick faced many challenges during his mission, but he never gave up. He continued to preach the gospel and do his best to win hearts for Jesus. We can all be inspired by St. Patrick to continue to share the Good News, even if we find ourselves in an unfamiliar place or on a difficult journey. The United Methodist Church is going through a stormy time right now, but I believe that if we remain true to our commitment to persist in preaching the Gospel as "plain truth for plain people," God will see us through.
2. **Humility:** Despite his many accomplishments, St. Patrick remained humble throughout his life. St. Patrick eventually became a bishop and is now considered to be the Patron Saint of Ireland. Nevertheless, he gave all the glory to God and recognized that he could do nothing without the power of the Holy Spirit. He recognized that his success was due to God's grace and not his abilities. The story of his life is a good reminder to all of us that we are called to remain humble and that "the least of these" is the greatest in God's Kingdom.
3. **Prayer:** St. Patrick was known for his devotion to prayer. Some legends claim that he prayed hundreds of times a day. He was constantly seeking guidance and strength from God. We can all learn from his example and be inspired to make more time in our busy schedules to pray and connect with God. The Bible reminds all Christians that we should "pray without ceasing." As United Methodists, it is a good spiritual practice to take time to pray for our local church as well as our entire connection, including our church leaders and those congregations that are struggling with difficult and divisive questions at this time.
4. **Love:** Even though St. Patrick was forced into slavery, he followed the call of the Holy Spirit to return to Ireland and share the Good News of Christ in the same land where he had once been in bondage. St. Patrick's mission was to spread the Gospel and convert people to Christianity. He did this with love, patience, and a deep understanding of the Irish people and their culture. As followers of Christ, we can all learn from his example and seek to share our faith with others in a way that is respectful, compassionate, and culturally sensitive. One of the joys of our connection as United Methodists is that we are united with diverse congregations and local churches throughout the world. It is a joy to be part of a denomination that praises God in so many unique ways in so many different places.



## Where Should I Start Reading the Bible

Many new and seasoned Christians have a story about their attempts to read the Bible cover to cover that goes something like this: “It was going great as I read through Genesis and Exodus, but somewhere in Leviticus or Numbers, I started to get bogged down in details I didn’t quite understand. And by the time I hit Deuteronomy, I was done.”

While it’s true that “all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16), the Bible is not like any other book. While a person who’s approaching the Bible intending to read it through can certainly try to read it from front to back, it isn’t necessarily intended to be read that way. The Bible can be seen more as a library than just a single book.

The Protestant Bible is comprised of 66 books and many of those books are written in a variety of different genres or types of literature. There’s no need to be intimidated by this idea, as it’s similar to the different types of music we listen to: we approach classical music differently than we do classic rock or rap, listening to one type for one reason and the other types for other reasons. In the same way, the Bible’s different literary genres all need to be read with a little different approach. Starting to read through the Bible at Genesis<sub>1</sub> and trying to read straight through without having a specific strategy can get frustrating if we don’t know how these books and their literary genres work together.

So, let’s start by looking at what these literary genres are. There are a few ways to classify the genres of the Bible, but they typically fall into these categories.

### **Historical narrative**

#### **Books include:**

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jonah, Acts

While most of the Bible’s books have some element of history to them, these are the ones that are primarily focused on communicating stories of historical significance. In these books, we’ll find a lot of the Bible stories we probably heard when we were kids.

They focus mainly on the story of the Israelite people: the people whom God chose to be in a special relationship with him, and through whom his plan to redeem the world came to be. This is the line of characters and stories that underpin the stories of the New Testament—the people and places we read about form the background to the stories of Jesus and the early church. While these long historical documents can be a little difficult to read, taking them on with an eye toward understanding the story of Jesus makes them a fascinating study.

Wisdom literature

**Books include:** Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes

Wisdom literature focuses on what it means to live well. Some of the language is poetic and figurative, so it can't always be read in the same way that we would read the Bible's historical books. For instance, Proverbs 13:14 tells us that "the teaching of the wise is a fountain of life . . ." This doesn't mean that wise teaching is a literal fountain, but rather a continuing source of intellectual and spiritual nourishment.

When we read through wisdom books, we can find divine instruction, hope, encouragement, and insights for practical daily living. The Book of Job is a well-known work that explores humanity's relationship with suffering and God's part in walking with us through our earthly experience, as fraught as it is with complexity, anxiety, difficulty, and sorrow. This book and the brief account of the Teacher in Ecclesiastes can provide us with an amazing and healthy perspective on our lives as they are lived every day in God's presence. Life is hard; God is so, so good.

A walk through the 31 chapters of Proverbs can also fortify our daily lives as we select one chapter to read per day of the month. The practical instruction that we receive from this book is amazingly relatable to whatever situation we encounter as we try to follow the path of Jesus.

Poetry

**Books include:** Psalms, Song of Songs, Lamentations

While many Old Testament books contain portions of poetry, these three books are written as verse. Unlike English poetry which focuses more on rhyme and meter, Hebrew poetry creates an emotional impact by focusing on balanced, parallel lines and repetition to emphasize emotion.

We can see an example of this in Psalm 24:3-4 where we're told,

*<sup>3</sup>Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?*

*Who may stand in his holy place?*

*<sup>4</sup>The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,*



*who does not trust in an idol  
or swear by a false god.” —Psalm 24:3-4*

Both verses use repetitive lines to drive the point home. To ascend to the mountain of the Lord and stand in his holy place both communicate a blamelessness before God; faithfulness is communicated by the comparable ideas of not trusting in idols or swearing by false gods.

Many people who find themselves in difficult circumstances turn to the Psalms, where King David and other writers were at their most raw and honest with their heavenly Father. The pleading and praises we see in many of these beautiful songs connect and resonate with our deepest emotions.

The Song of Songs is a fascinating look at the relationship between a king and his bride; many scholars have tried to relate this short poem to the relationship of Jesus to the church, so it can be read on many different levels.

The book of Lamentations follows the book of Jeremiah. It leads people through a difficult time in the history of the Israelite nation and is a fascinating study of how we can relate to God when faced with our sins and their consequences.

Prophecy

### **Books**

**include:** Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

The Bible’s prophetic literature focuses on God’s word spoken through his prophets. These messages tend to emphasize Israel’s need to repent before they experience the Lord’s judgment. When reading prophecy, it’s essential to understand who God is talking to through his spokespeople and the overall message he is trying to convey.

When looking at these historical accounts, take the time to ask yourself, “How does what I’m reading relate to the world I see today?” While there are no direct correlations necessarily to be found, the indirect correlations are abundant.

We also see in these books some incredible references to Jesus’ birth, death, and resurrection to which we need to pay particular attention (particularly, but not exclusively, in the book of Isaiah). These prophets, writing hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus (Luke 2), predicted fascinating things about Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection that could point to only one individual throughout history: Jesus, the promised Messiah.

These inspired books can also teach us in very practical ways what the blessings of obedience to God’s Word and his way look like.

## Apocalyptic literature

**Books include:** Daniel, Revelation

Like some of the Bible's prophetic literature, the apocalyptic writings focus on future events in the life of the author. Some of what we read about in these books has already been fulfilled; other ideas that we encounter can only be fulfilled at the end of time.

Because so much apocalyptic literature involves dreams and visions translated into symbols and imagery, this is often the most difficult genre to understand—and the easiest to misinterpret. Witness the many books written about the end times and the individuals—some well-meaning and some not so much—who have predicted specific dates for these events to happen.

Each book of apocalyptic literature has many fascinating images that fire the imagination and that in and of themselves inspire wonder and praise in the hearts of people who read and study them.

(Spoiler alert: in the end, God wins.)

## Gospels

**Books include:** Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts

Sometimes the Gospels get lumped in with the historical narrative books of the Bible, and that makes sense. After all, their entire value rests on the truths of their historic accounts. But what separates them into their genre is that the Gospels focus on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus—the story that has transformed the entire world and given hope to billions of people over the last two thousand-plus years.

While all four Gospels concentrate on the life of Jesus, they each have a unique emphasis or reason for telling their story. Consequently, each one approaches the story of Jesus differently. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called “synoptic” gospels. That’s just a fancy way to say that they all tell the story of the life of Jesus using the same accounts, although they each also cite different episodes that the other writers leave out, giving us a more complete picture of the life and ministry of Jesus on earth.

The Gospel of John is not one of those synoptics, as it examines primarily who Jesus said he was—the only individual in history who was both fully God and fully human at the same time—what Jesus’ purpose was on earth, and how he accomplished it.

Luke’s Gospel and Acts are both technically epistles (in that they are letters to a specific recipient), but they revolve around the Messiah and his establishment of the early Christian church, so they also fall into this literary genre.

As has been mentioned already, the stories in these books hold the key to the hope of the world, because in them, in a way that the Bible's other literary genres don't provide, we get to meet and come to know Jesus the Savior uniquely and wonderfully.

Epistles

### Books

**include:** Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, Jude

Epistles are letters, and like modern letters, they're made up of a greeting, a body of text, and a closing. These letters focus on instruction, correction, and encouragement for the new first-century churches that were established as Jesus' disciples spread the word of his life, death, and resurrection to a world that desperately needed to hear that story.

The primary author of these letters is the apostle Paul, who was known as the "evangelist to the Gentiles" (non-Jewish peoples). He exerted arguably his greatest influence when he was locked in prison, where most of these letters were penned to their waiting audiences.

Through these fascinating letters, we learn, in a very practical sense, how to live our daily lives as followers of Jesus. Paul wrote to believers who were just like us: They wanted to know more about how Jesus' life and teachings could impact their daily lives.

Reading through these letters exposes us to the wisdom of the ages written by individuals who had direct, first-person contact with our Savior, Jesus, while he walked the earth. Keeping that in mind when approaching these letters gives them an urgency and an applicability that can completely transform who we are and how we see life in this world and our relationship with others.

Some books have multiple genres

There's some genre-hopping going on throughout the books of the Bible. Daniel is both historical narrative and apocalyptic literature, and Acts works as both history and Gospel. Proverbs is a wisdom book that includes poetic elements. But the point is that learning to see these books through the lens of genre can help make Scripture reading a lot easier.

So where do I start?

Now that we have a better picture of the Bible as a collection of books, we can be more intentional about how we approach it. Instead of walking into what is essentially a library and trying to read our way through the books indiscriminately, we can read them strategically. As we do, we'll find that with each Bible book that we read, we gain a better understanding of the others.

Here are some suggestions to get started:

### The Gospel of Mark

**Genre:** Gospel

**Chapters:** 16

**Total Verses:** 678

For the Christian, the Bible is ultimately about redemption through Jesus Christ. It makes sense, then, to begin our biblical journey in the Gospels, and Mark's is a great place to start. Running the length of a longer magazine article, this book should take less than two hours to read in a single sitting.

Mark's Gospel provides an overview of Jesus' life without getting a reader bogged down in too many details. Once we have an understanding of this Gospel's narrative and all the characters, we'll be able to dive into the other Gospels with more clarity and understanding.

**Key verse:** *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* —[Mark 10:45](#)

### The Gospel of John

**Genre:** Gospel

**Chapters:** 21

**Total Verses:** 879

Where Mark focuses on what Jesus *did*, John looks closely at what Jesus *said* about himself. We find some of the clearest explanations of who Jesus was, and is, and what he came to accomplish, in John's Gospel account. It's from John's Gospel that we learn that "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" ([John 3:16](#)).

John takes us on a journey. As we read his account, we begin to understand how Jesus orchestrated his crucifixion—the critical aspect of his taking our place as our sinless Savior. In offering himself up to pay for the sins of humanity, Jesus took the punishment for sin that was ours, and once and for all time created a pathway that sinful people could follow to restore their relationship with God. There is no more amazing story in all of history than this one.

**Key verse:** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* —[John 1:1](#)

### Genesis

**Genre:** History

**Chapters:** 50

**Total Verses:** 1,213

Genesis sets up many essential biblical themes. It's here that we learn that God was responsible for creating the heavens and earth; we witness humans as they rebel against their creator; and we watch God establish the nation of Israel as the people who will help facilitate his plan for the salvation of the world. The entire biblical story of God's working with and redeeming humanity is established in this important book.

Genesis is a genuinely enjoyable read, but we realize pretty quickly that as we approach it, we're reading about an ancient, foreign culture. It's helpful to have some tools on hand to make sense of some of the unfamiliar concepts and traditions that we'll come across. Resources like the *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible* or the *NIV Study Bible* have instructive notes and other features that can provide a lot of helpful context.

**Key verses:** *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.* —Genesis 1:1

*The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people, and your father's household to the land I will show you.*

*"I will make you into a great nation,  
and I will bless you;  
I will make your name great,  
and you will be a blessing.  
I will bless those who bless you,  
and whoever curses you I will curse;  
and all peoples on earth  
will be blessed through you."* —Genesis 12:1–3

## Proverbs

**Genre:** Wisdom literature

**Chapters:** 31

**Total Verses:** 915

While there is of course theological truth to be found in the book of Proverbs, it's essentially a compilation of simple instructions for living wisely. Following these principles will help us live a life of integrity and virtue. As mentioned above, reading one chapter a day for each day of the month (reading two or more chapters on the last day of the month that don't have 31 days) can provide a solid, substantial, God-honoring path to our daily walk.

As we're reading Proverbs, it's important to remember the difference between a principle and a promise. For example, Proverbs 22:6 says, "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." The point is that it's important to be intentional about teaching our values and beliefs to our children. But it's not a promise that doing so will ensure a specific outcome.

Again, Proverbs is full of wise advice about living, but it shouldn't be read as God promising certain results for specific behaviors. Remember that the wisdom that Proverbs offers is wide-ranging and more general. But the principles it establishes and the practical, common-sense advice it consistently delivers are essential reading for any believer who wants to more closely follow God's way.

**Key verse:** *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.* —Proverbs 1:7

## 1 John

**Genre:** Epistle

**Chapters:** 5

**Total Verses:** 105

Since the beginning of the Christian church, authorship for this letter has been attributed to John the Apostle. In this letter, John makes simple contrasts such as light vs. darkness, truth vs. falsehood, and love of God vs. love of what is ungodly. This letter is intended in part to assure Christians of their salvation and to emphasize how great God's love for his people truly is.

**Key Verses:** See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! —1 John 3:1

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. —1 John 5:13

## Psalm 119

**Genre:** Poetry

**Total Verses:** 176

The entire book of Psalms is full of insight and comfort. Christians throughout history have turned to the Psalms when they have needed direction, consolation, and encouragement. Psalm 119 is the longest and shares the author's heart for God's Word. If you're diving into Scripture for the first or for the thousandth time, Psalm 119 will help you see what falling in love with the Word of God looks like.

**Key verse:** Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. —Psalm 119:105

## Bible Reading Plans

If we're brand new to the Bible, it's good to have an understanding of the Bible's message and scope before we dig into a through-the-Bible reading plan. Here is a great collection of reading plans that will provide a strong working knowledge of Scripture.

## 7-Day Reading Plans

These short plans can help us easily find our way into the Word. They tie into felt needs and bring us straight to the passages we're looking for. Following are topical plans written with the needs of different age groups in mind.

- [Following Jesus](#) – NIV Boys Bible
- [God Takes Care of Us](#) – NIV Illustrated Holy Bible for Kids
- [Women of Faith](#) – NIV Ultimate Bible for Girls
- [God's Promises](#) – Beautiful Word Bible
- [Paul's Missionary Travels](#) – NIV Adventure Bible

## 2-Week Reading Plans

These plans, taken from the excellent work of Philip Yancey and Tim Stafford in *The Student Bible*, lead new readers through two weeks of examining critical aspects of the Christian life. However, all believers, as students of the Bible, can benefit from taking two weeks and finding out more about the different aspects of Christian life that these helpful reading plans highlight.

- [Becoming a Christian](#)
- [God and Nature](#)
- [Holy Spirit](#)
- [Prayers of the Bible](#)
- [Social Justice](#)

## 4-Week and Longer Reading Plans

The more extensive reading plans offered below give readers a choice of commitments and topics. Included in these are front-to-back reading plans for those who want to take on that challenge, Bible overview plans, and reading plans that feature other topics that allow readers to drill down into the areas that most interest them.

- [30 Days with Jesus](#)
- [Bible Character Study](#)
- [Introduction to the Bible](#)
- [Men and Women of the Bible](#)
- [60-Day Overview of the Bible](#)
- [100-Day Summer Bible Reading Plan](#)
- [One Year Through the Bible](#)
- [Three-Year Bible Reading Plan](#)

Most full-Bible reading plans focus on getting readers through the Bible in a year, which is a very reasonable amount of time to read through this work. As the average reader reads at a rate of about 200 words per minute, this means that most people should be able to get through the entire Bible in a year by spending around 15 minutes a day on this effort. Another way to look at it is this: since there are a total of 1,189 chapters in the Bible, an average reader should be able to work their way through the Bible in a year by reading three or four chapters each day.

How to stick to your reading plan

Let's be honest; a year is a long time to stay committed to something—especially when we're working through some of the harder-to-read passages. Here are four tips for seeing our one-year reading commitment through.

### **1. Read at the same time every day**

Habits are built on persistent behavior. If we're doing our reading at random times every day, it's going to be harder to establish a routine. But once we begin reading the Bible at a specific time of day (and even in a consistent place), it's going to be a lot easier to follow through.

### **2. Find a Bible-reading partner**

If we're serious about this commitment, we can help ourselves if we find someone who will join us. Setting goals with a friend can make all the difference in the world. Not only will two people hold each other accountable for their daily reading, but they'll also be able to go deeper by discussing what they're reading together.

### **3. Get a Bible with helpful notes and other features**

Bible reading isn't very fun when we don't understand what we're reading. It's incredibly helpful to have a Bible that can help one understand what's happening (and how it applies to life).

Two such helpful resources are the *NIV Student Bible* and the *NIV Quest Study Bible*. They both provide insights on leading readers through the basics of the Bible in a helpful, insightful, and non-intimidating way. Built specifically for those somewhat new to the Bible, they provide just the right amount of help without overwhelming a reader with too much information.

Another great resource is Broken into four volumes and by many of the genres mentioned earlier, this Bible is free from chapter and verse numbers and provides a seamless reading experience. When done with a partner or group, this approach to reading the Bible can be very enlightening and meaningful. Other Bibles in this same family that you might want to check out are the [NIV Sola Scriptura Bible Project](#) and [The Bible in 90 Days](#).

Zondervan offers a wide variety of ways to engage with the Bible that will help readers expand their reading. Reference Bibles offer features that allow students to dig more deeply into the Scriptures using a comprehensive cross-reference system; devotional Bibles targeted to men, women, and children help



to bring understanding to the Bible through a consistent devotional reading time; journaling Bibles allow readers to engage with Scripture with their thoughts, pictures, and prayers.

Finally, more in-depth study Bibles, such as the *NIV Study Bible* and the *NIV Grace and Truth Study Bible* give readers intensive insight into the Word. These titles, written by expert theologians and seminary professors, help bring a new level of practical understanding to the Bible.

#### 4. Listen to an audio Bible

For much of the church's history, people *listened* to God's Word instead of reading it. For those who find daily reading a struggle, audio Bibles can provide a refreshing change of pace.

In fact, with the NIV 50th Anniversary app (available for iPhone and Android), anyone can read or listen to the full Bible text—and it's free!

#### Benefitting from God's Word

The Bible can be pretty intimidating for the new Christian, but it doesn't have to be. Knowing where to start reading can help immensely. As readers make their way through Scripture using any of these different "get-started" strategies, they'll discover the assurance, strength, and wisdom that only come from being immersed in God's Word.

*Adapted from the Weekly NIV Blog. Holland. HarperCollins Christian Publishing. NIV Weekly Blog, All Rights Reserved 501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214, USA, March 11, 2024.*



Palm/Passion Sunday – March 24<sup>th</sup>

Maundy Thursday – March 28<sup>th</sup>

Good Friday – March 29<sup>th</sup>

Holy Saturday – March 30<sup>th</sup>

Easter Sunday – March 31<sup>st</sup>



St. John's Episcopal Church, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, the First Congregational Church, and the First Presbyterian Church of Shenandoah will host their 8<sup>th</sup> Soup Cook-off fundraiser for Heifer International at the Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Shenandoah this coming Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup> beginning at 5 p.m. Anyone may bring a crock pot of soup or chili between 4:30 and 4:50 p.m. or you may come and enjoy all the soups.

People will be able to vote for their favorite soups with cash. A prize will be awarded for the soup that raises the most money. Donations may also be placed in a Free Will donation can. All the proceeds will go to Heifer International.

**Villisca United Methodist Church**  
 is hosting a  
**SPRING Women's Conference**  
 on **Saturday, April 13**  
 from **9am to 3pm.**

Everyone is invited!  
 To secure your spot, please call the church office at 712-826-3132

Cost is \$30 per person which includes a light breakfast and lunch

No Sunday School  
 For PK-6 & Jr/Sr High  
 March 17<sup>th</sup>  
 \*\*School Spring Break

*Men's Breakfast*  
*This coming Sunday*  
*March 17<sup>th</sup>*  
*8:00 a.m. – Fellowship Hall*

MEET THE AUTHOR

**GAIL BLANKENAU**

Gail Blankenau is a professional genealogist, speaker, and author.

Learn about her book, *Journey to Freedom*, and her experiences researching the escape of two enslaved black women, the Grayson Sisters. Their courage influenced proslavery and antislavery factions in history.

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2024  
 9:30-10:30 AM  
 \$10  
 PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED

TO REGISTER:  
 CALL 712-246-1499 I.W.C.C.



# Holy Week Shenandoah, First UMC

PALM SUNDAY	MARCH 24 @ 9:00AM
GOOD FRIDAY	MARCH 29 @ 6:30PM
EASTER SUNDAY	MARCH 31 @ 9:00AM

Holy Week Services at Shenandoah, First UMC will include Palm Sunday (March 24), Good Friday (March 29 @ 6:30pm), and Easter Sunday (March 31). On Palm Sunday we will participate in the traditional waving of palm branches and also experience a dramatic reading of the passion of Jesus. The evening Good Friday service will be a contemplative service remembering the death of Christ. Easter Sunday will be a joyous celebration of new life and partaking of Holy Communion together. Throughout Holy Week, the sanctuary will be open (times to be determined) to pray through the Stations of the Cross.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor David B. Clark

