

Milwood  
United  
Methodist  
Church

9/29/24-10/5/24

# Small Group Guide

Walking together on our Journey of Faith

1. **Circle Up** - Find our spots; Reach out to anyone we expected to be here but isn't.
2. **Opening Prayer** - Let's find a quiet spot in our hearts to talk to God together:

O God,  
Be for us our companion on the walk,  
Our guide at the crossroads,  
Our breath in our weariness,  
Our protection in danger,  
Our refuge on the Way,  
Our shade in the heat,  
Our light in the darkness,  
Our consolation in our discouragements,  
And our strength in our intentions.

So that with your guidance  
we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the Road  
enriched with grace and virtue  
may we return safely to our homes  
filled with joy.  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

3. **Sharing** - by mutual invitation (after you're done, you invite a person to share), and folks have the option to pass if they need to.
  - a. How is your soul doing?
  - b. Where have you seen God this week?
  - c. What's one thing you're grateful for and one thing you're worried about?
4. **Prayer for Each Other**
  - a. Pair off (2-3)
  - b. Leader will begin prayer, then we'll pray silently for our partner for 30-60 seconds, then we'll end with the Lord's Prayer together.
  - c. Leader: "God of new beginnings, you've brought this group together to walk together on our journeys of faith. Give us the courage to care for, encourage, and pray for each other. Help us open our hearts to each other as we lift each other in silent prayer."

- d. Lord's Prayer: (see next page)

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

- 5. **Scripture** - Somebody read this out loud. Everyone else, try to listen without an agenda.

Philippians 3:12-16 - This is a letter from Paul, who is in prison, to his favorite new church. Over and over he's encouraging them to be united, not divided by their pasts.

I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it, but one thing I have laid hold of: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal, toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us, then, who are mature think this way, and if you think differently about anything, this, too, God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

## 6. Study/Discussion

- a. What word, image, or phrase jumped out at you?
- b. Have someone else read it out loud, and this time try to listen to where the Spirit might be nudging you.
- c. Pause for a minute of silent contemplation.
- d. Where did you feel the most presence or nudge?
- e. What might God be speaking to you/us/me?
- f. [optional, if time] Theological Term: Perfection
  - i. What does it mean to you?
  - ii. John Wesley described Christian Perfection as a heart "habitually filled with the love of God and neighbor" and as "having the mind of Christ and walking as he walked."
  - iii. What does this passage tell us about perfection?
  - iv. What does this mean for our faith journeys and for the church?
- g. Read it a third time

## 7. Encouragement

- a. Are you worshiping regularly? Are you serving regularly?
- b. If yes to all those, do you know where God is calling you to use your gifts to meet the deep need of the world?
- c. Have you invited someone else along for the journey?

## 8. Logistics

- a. Our next meeting
- b. Plan for Service

- 9. **Closing Prayer** - Read the Opening Prayer one more time. Feel free to add your own blessing to the end.