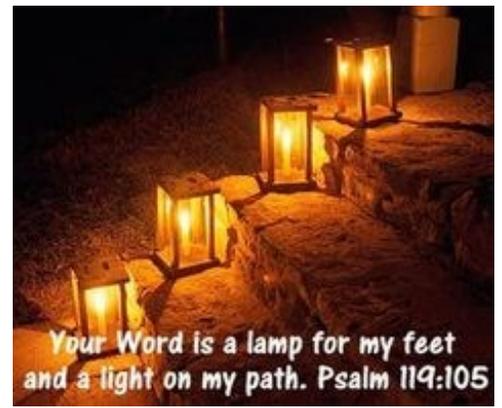




From the Desk of Deacon Andrew

As disciples of Jesus, the Bible is our “first language” of our faith. Reading, studying, praying, and reflecting on God’s word is central to our Christian identity and life. It tells us who God is and what God wants to say to us. It is the very heart of our worship. It guides and directs all of our creeds and confessions.



Throughout our lives we are called to be rooted and dwell in our “Book of Faith”, the Bible. But let’s face it, the Bible is not an easy book to read. It can be confusing, challenging, sometimes boring, intimidating, and frustrating (especially if you open it to the first page and try to read it straight through!). To help with this, there are many apps, programs, plans, tools and guides available to help people approach the Bible more easily with a bit of encouragement. Think of it this way: before you can learn to swim, you have to get comfortable near and then in the water.

Starting this month, we will highlight a specific book or section of the Bible on our website, e-blast, and Facebook page, and try to “unpack” it a bit to help you wade into the water. These notes are compiled from numerous Study Bibles, textbooks, and other well-vetted resources to provide you with a “Bible book at a glance” approach to reading the Bible. Each month we will highlight a new book or section, outlining the context and major themes for the writing in order to help you better understand the unique message it holds for us.

As you read the Bible, here are some possible **Reflection Questions** to keep in mind. Don’t think of these as a checklist, but rather different lenses through which you can approach and swim in the waters of the Bible.

- * *What is God up to in this text?*
- * *What does this passage tell me about God or about life?*
- * *How does it fit with what I know about Jesus?*
- * *What life lesson is here for me?*
- * *What does this passage say to our world? Our nation? Our community? Our church? Me?*
- * *What images come to mind?*
- * *What would I be concerned about if I took these words seriously?*
- * *What new possibility is God offering me?*
- * *What elements of this text are unfamiliar or strange to me?*
- * *What scares, confuses, or challenges me in this text?*
- * *What delights me or gives me hope in this text?*
- * *What feelings do I have when I read/hear this passage?*
- * *What thoughts or memories does this text stir in me?*
- * *Does this text reveal something:*
 - *I should believe about God?*
 - *I should praise or thank or trust God for?*
 - *I should pray about for myself or others?*
 - *I should have a new attitude about?*
 - *I should make a decision about?*
 - *I should do for the sake of Christ, others, or myself?*

