

## 2026-2027 Worship Series (Updated 9.14.2026)

Group & Class Leaders here is our worship series calendar. Note that we continue to create discussion guides each week that unpack the scripture, the topic and the sermon. Those guides are available online at [fumcr.com/discussionguide](http://fumcr.com/discussionguide). This document is subject to change, but we hope this allows for you to plan and prepare well. Feel to reach out for questions.

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| <b>Fearless, Be Not Afraid</b><br>Fear is universal. Faith is a choice. The Bible says it more than any other command: <i>"Do not be afraid."</i> Not because life isn't scary, but because we were made for more than fear. In this series, we'll dig into Scripture, name the fears we carry, and explore how God transforms them into something unexpected: courage. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                   |
| September 6                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | What if I don't have enough?<br>"They were straining at the oars against an adverse wind." The disciples are terrified when Jesus gets in the boat with them, yet this directly follows the loaves and fish story where Jesus showed yesterday there is enough, so today there is enough.<br>Fear is one of the oldest human experiences, and it engages the part of the brain that doesn't make healthy decisions. If we operate in fear all the time, it's hard to be faithful. | Mark 6:45-52      |
| September 13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Why am I afraid to fail?<br>We often carry a fear of failure, which is a universal thing. How can we be voices to tell others they don't need to fear failure because grace exists, and how can we give grace when failure happens to ourselves and others.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 2 Timothy 1:3-7   |
| September 20                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Why is the future so scary?<br>Things we can't control can be scary. If the worst thing happened, what would God do? The fear of future often focuses on "what happens to me, my people, and my kids?" Scripture reminds us about a community of people blessing each other in the midst of exile.                                                                                                                                                                                | Philippians 4:6-8 |
| September 27                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | What do I do when I feel lonely?<br>Jesus knows what loneliness feels like. Garden of Gethsemane, his last moments on the cross, etc. As he's dying, he's worried about his mother and his best friend being along as he's dying.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Mark 14:32-42     |
| <b>STANDALONE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                   |

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| October 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>What does God do with darkness?</p> <p>God is poking holes in the darkness so we can find the light. We have been made from Christ, and we are to go and poke holes in the darkness in the world.</p> <p>Evangelism – we are offering a GOOD thing to the world. We are offering healing and hope, not burdens to carry.</p> | John 1:1-5                                                   |
| <p><b>LEAD WITH LOVE</b></p> <p>It's hard to ignore how divided things feel right now. And if you're honest, maybe you've felt the pull yourself: the temptation to write people off, to plant yourself firmly on one side of the line. But Jesus never gave us that option. <i>"Love your neighbor as yourself"</i> wasn't a suggestion, and it wasn't meant for easy times. This series is for anyone wrestling with what that commandment looks like in a messy, divided world. Spoiler: God's grace is bigger than the gap between us.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                              |
| October 11                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>How do I love those I want to hate?</p> <p>Every person is a child of God; how can we listen before we speak?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>1 John 4:16b-21</p> <p>Ephesians 4:25-32 (supporting)</p> |
| October 18                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>How can I be curious, not judgmental?</p> <p>Loving others is easier when we understand each other better. Can we strive to understand others' points of view so we might find grace for what they believe?</p>                                                                                                              | Matthew 7:1-5                                                |
| October 25                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>Can prayer help me be a better person?</p> <p>Prayer reminds us what matters, not unlike a celebration of our saints. How they lived their lives, how they showed what mattered to them.</p>                                                                                                                                 | Luke 6:32-36                                                 |
| <p><b>WILLING AND ABLE</b></p> <p>We all have a picture in our heads of what a leader looks like: confident, polished, out front. But flip through the pages of the Bible and a very different pattern emerges. God has a long history of choosing the overlooked, the unlikely, and the underprepared. In this series, we'll explore what that means for us, and how God might be shaping <i>you</i> into exactly the kind of leader the world needs right now.</p>                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                              |
| November 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>How do others shape who I am?</p> <p>Jethro (Wisdom)</p> <p>When we say saints we think of the “famous” saints, but for us saints are everyday people who do the faithful thing. Jethro is not a name everyone</p>                                                                                                           | Exodus 18:13-24                                              |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | knows, Moses is. But Moses wouldn't be Moses without Jethro.                                                                                                                                                                                             |                    |
| November 8                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | How can I learn to be courageous?<br>Esther (Courage)<br>Esther provides a compelling story of leadership in the hard moments where you're risking something. Harder to make the decisions when you're responsible for the outcomes.                     | Esther 4:12-17     |
| November 15                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Can my words really make a difference?<br>Barnabas (Encouragement)<br>Encouragement as a leadership skill. Barnabas didn't give up on John Mark, the writer of Mark. He was an encouraging presence.                                                     | Acts 4:32-37       |
| November 22                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Will being grateful make me happier?<br>Paul (Gratitude)<br>Leading with gratitude; Paul begins most of his letters with a message of thanks.                                                                                                            | Romans 1:8-12      |
| <b>UNWRAPPED (Advent)</b><br>Happy Birthday, Jesus! During Christmas time we are often so focused on the gifts we need to buy for others that we forget who we are really celebrating. This December, we are invited to ask a different question. Instead of "What do I need to buy?" we will look at "What do I have to bring?" Like the wisemen offering gifts at the manger, we will bring what we can to the one who gave it all. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                    |
| November 29                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | What gift will I offer?<br>We have gifts, and God has the audacity to invite us to help tell the story, to bring a gift and put it under the tree.                                                                                                       | Isaiah 11:1-9      |
| December 6                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Unwrapping faithfulness<br>Mary and Joseph (Gift of faithfulness)<br>Mary and Joseph choose to be faithful to God's call and to one another, even when they don't understand what is happening to their lives and are bewildered by their circumstances. | Matthew 1:18-25    |
| December 13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Unwrapping care<br>Shepherds (Gift of care)<br>The Greek translation is to "guard, watch, or keep". Instead of just guarding or caring for the sheep, they were caring for the message for all the world.                                                | Luke 2:8-14 (NRSV) |
| December 20                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Unwrapping wisdom<br>Magi (Gift of wisdom)                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Matthew 2:1-12     |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | The Magi have the wisdom to both start the journey to Jesus, and to know how to end it. They recognize what they were looking for when they saw it. They recognized the “real thing” when they saw it.                                                                                                                                       |                       |
| December 24                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | The gift of Christmas (Christmas Eve)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Luke 2:8-14           |
| December 27                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | How do I keep the main thing the main thing?<br>Seek first the kingdom of God.<br>The wisemen go on difficult journey but they focus on the Kingdom of God, rather than worrying about the details.                                                                                                                                          | Matthew 6:33          |
| <b>STANDALONE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                       |
| January 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | The Wesley Covenant Prayer – Baptism remembrance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | TBD                   |
| <b>Worth Sharing</b><br>We share what we love. A great restaurant. A favorite team. A good book. It comes naturally until it comes to our faith. Why is that? This series kicks off the new year with an honest question and a practical path forward: how do we share our love for God with the same ease and excitement we bring to everything else? It's simpler than you think, and it starts here. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                       |
| January 10                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Why should I share my faith?<br>We share because God is good. Andrew goes to share with his brother and says, “Come and see.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                | John 1:35-42          |
| January 17                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | What message should I share?<br>Followers of Jesus become “ambassadors for Christ.”<br>We’re not marketing our faith; we’re participating in God’s mission.                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 |
| January 24                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Who could I share my story with?<br>Often we see people giving testimony on a street corner to a group of people they don’t know. What if we told our stories to friends, family, casual acquaintances who might find meaning in a walk with Christ or an invitation to church? One by one in personal conversation, rather than the masses. | Mark 2:13-17          |
| January 31                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | How do I share my story?<br>Anyone who has been through struggle has a story to tell. We’re so good at FUMCR at serving and showing up. Do we tell people why? We walk the walk, but don’t always talk the talk.                                                                                                                             | 1 Peter 2:9-10        |
| February 7                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | (Title TBD)<br>Forming and shaping a testimony takes work and that’s ours to do.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Philippians 2:12-13   |

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| February 10 –<br>Ash<br>Wednesday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | What are you looking for?<br>Can we allow the Holy Spirit to interrogate when we are looking for things from other places that we should look to God for. We want approval, comfort, peace, and we look to people, food, vices, social media instead of God.                                     | John 1:35-39a      |
| WWJD<br>We know Jesus saves; but the story starts much earlier than the cross. Jesus <i>cares</i> . Long before Good Friday, Christ walked among the lost, the broken, and the forgotten, offering hope and healing at every turn. This Lenten season, we're reading through the Gospel of John together, letting the Holy Spirit open our eyes to the full picture of who Jesus is and all the ways he cares for the world, and for us. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                    |
| February 14                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Talking with People<br>Nicodemus comes to Jesus in the dark of the night because he doesn't want people to know he's talking to Jesus. "You have to be born again." Sometimes we ask literal questions about spiritual realities. We are asked to trust and believe things that seem impossible. | John 3:1-8         |
| February 21                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Freeing People<br>Focusing on the Samaritan woman at the well. She's in a place of shame in her life, but Jesus still speaks to her and frees her to go out and invite people to know Jesus. She makes connection in her community to bring people to Jesus.                                     | John 4:5-15        |
| February 28                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Feeding People<br>Jesus feeds people spiritually and physically, and we're called to do the same. Our scarcity mindset is not a limit to God's grace.                                                                                                                                            | John 6:1-15        |
| March 7                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Forgiving People<br>The woman caught in adultery. "Let those without sin cast the first stone." Jesus forgives the woman and also reminds us we are not to condemn. We are all in need of forgiveness which means we can have grace for each other.                                              | John 7:53-8:11     |
| March 14                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Healing People<br>Healing is not always just physical but spiritual as well. We often try to assign blame when ailments occur, but that's not the case. What are we blind to? Jesus gives us an invitation to spiritual healing, but we                                                          | John 9:1-12, 35-41 |

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|                                                              | don't always see or recognize who Jesus is to claim that healing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                           |
| March 21<br>(Palm Sunday)                                    | <b>Saving People</b><br>Jesus saves people in a way that they don't expect. He doesn't just save us from the powers of the world, but he saves us from ourselves.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | John 12:12-26                             |
| March 25<br>Maundy<br>Thursday                               | <b>Serving People</b><br>This focuses on the foot washing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | John 13:1-16                              |
| March 26<br>Good Friday                                      | <b>Loving People</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | John 18-19<br>readings                    |
| March 28<br>(Easter)                                         | <b>Raising people</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | John 20:1-10                              |
| <b>The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly – A study of Nehemiah</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                           |
| April 4                                                      | From current reality to compelling future:<br>Bold vision often begins with a broken heart.<br>Nehemiah hears the news about the destruction of Jerusalem. First, he cries, fasts, and prays. Then he goes to the king to share his plan and ask for his blessing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Nehemiah 1:1-4                            |
| April 11                                                     | Stay the course:<br>Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem. He doesn't come sweeping in like a hero with a plan. He comes and walks around and observes the damage and talks to people, listens to their pain and hurt. Then he begins to say, "We can rebuild it." He builds a coalition of the willing and everyone has a part to play. When they get fatigued halfway through he listens to their complaints, restates the vision and they make adjustments and are inspired to get back to work. | (Reference<br>Nehemiah 3:1-32,<br>4:6-14) |
| April 18                                                     | Stay focused and positive:<br>Throughout the building program, there is opposition. Whenever you are trying to do something bold and wonderful (especially for God) you will face opposition. Nehemiah's enemies invite him to meet in Ono. Your enemies will always try and take you to "oh no." Nehemiah's answer is a key leadership quality - the ability to stay focused and positive when                                                                                          | (Reference<br>Nehemiah 6:1-14)            |

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|          | others are trying to bring you down. I am doing a great work, I can't come down.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                               |
| April 25 | <p>Love over Dogma:</p> <p>Even faithful leaders can drift into harmful methods when fear replaces grace. Nehemiah's desire for holiness and covenant faithfulness comes from sincere devotion to God. Yet the methods become coercive, angry, and exclusionary. The scripture tells the truth about its heroes. It does not sanitize their story. The last points moves us to two tracks that run through the Bible. The tension between the idea of rigid covenant purity (being pure before God), and the "kingdom of God" movement (embraced by Jesus) which wants to share God's love with all people - another way to put it is the quote by William Sloan Coffin: "There are those in the church who put the purity of dogma ahead of the integrity of love."</p> | (Reference Nehemiah 13:23-31) |