

WEEKDAY WORSHIP

July 9-15, 2018

Worship as encounter with the living God cannot be limited to one hour per week. "Weekday Worship" invites you to extend your worship beyond the sanctuary, to hear the story of the Bible as your story, lived out each day of each week. Feedback is appreciated and should be directed to Rita Boyer.

BIBLE READING

This week's reading is: Ephesians 1:3–14 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=389853894>).

Other readings are: 2 Samuel 6:1–5, 12b–19; Psalm 24; Mark 6:14–29.

The theme is: Who Does God Say We Are?

While the letter to the Ephesians is attributed to Paul in the letter's opening verse, contemporary scholars think that it was most likely written by someone other than Paul, most likely one of Paul's co-workers and students. It was a common practice to write under the name of one's teacher, and clearly this letter and this particular passage echo major themes of Pauline theology. Those who first heard the words of this letter would have understood them as coming from the community of people who were related to Paul. In our society, where egos are large, such an approach to teaching may be difficult to comprehend. Indeed, charges of fraud would occur! Rather than coming from an individual to an individual, this letter comes from the Pauline community of those who devoted themselves to the gospel and is directed to another community. Its message is a statement about unity – not only in the Pauline community but with all of creation. The all-encompassing presence of Christ and grace of God envelopes us as well as everything in the cosmos! No one is excluded. All are children of God. Gentiles were part of the Ephesian audience. Since they were not God's chosen people, where did they belong? According to Paul and these words from Ephesians, all people are included in God's redemptive plan. All are welcomed as adopted children of God.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

"Questions to Consider" enable you to connect your story to the biblical story. Rather than easy questions to be answered at first glance, these questions or reflections can be returned to and meditated upon throughout the week.

In the early church Jews and Gentiles struggled with how to be blended into one family. Today's church is diverse and divided, with open conflicts between "evangelicals" and "progressive" Christians. What does this passage say to you about unity in today's church?

Continue to reflect upon the worship theme of July 8:

The disciples were sent out in pairs. Who are your partners in ministry?

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