

WEEKDAY WORSHIP

July 16-22, 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 2:11–22 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?q=389950434>).

Other readings are: 2 Samuel 7:1–14a; Psalm 89:20–37; Mark 6:30–34, 53–56.

The theme is: Household of God.

As we noted last week, the letter to the Ephesians affirms that Christ unites all things and all people. Jesus' followers are adopted as God's children, with no distinction between Jews and non-Jews. That was a difficult message for some to accept, especially so for Jews who had fervently kept God's laws. We see in this reading that Gentiles were called the "uncircumcised," while Jews were called "the circumcised." These names were more than descriptive. They were used to separate the two groups, with the "uncircumcised" considered to be inferior to "the circumcised." Circumcision was, after all, a sign of the covenant; and the "uncircumcised" were considered to be outside of God's covenant! However, the writer of Ephesians declares that Christ has changed all of that! While Gentiles were once strangers, they are now members of God's household. The original recipients of this letter would most certainly have noticed the decisively political language used here. The Gentiles are "citizens" of the very place where God dwells. They lived in a Roman-occupied land where Roman citizens were entitled to benefits that they were denied. They were told that peace would come as they sacrificed to Caesar, but Ephesians states that they have peace because of Christ's sacrifice. Christ's death breaks down dividing walls and makes peace between people who were estranged. Unity would come through spiritual transformation, brought about by the grace 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.

Where do you see divisions? How can you be an agent of reconciliation?

Continue to reflect upon the worship theme of July 15:

If you were writing a letter to the Christian churches of your community, what would you say?

Prospect Presbyterian Church, Maplewood, NJ, www.prospectchurch.org

Rita Boyer, rita@prospectchurch.org