

## Messiah Lutheran Church Bible Reading Covenant Schedule, 2017-18

***The goal of the Bible Reading Covenant is to foster growing self-discipline, confidence and competence reading and understanding the Word of God in the life and practice of every participant who commits to it before God and one another.***

***Reflecting the changes agreed upon in the summer of 2017, the new Covenant is offered with an example of prayer in preparation for reading the Scriptures. This prayer serves as a guide, but each participant is encouraged to speak to God as an individual child seeking to hear and understand the Word, Will, and Promises of our Heavenly Father, each time we approach the holy texts of The Faith.***

A prayer before reading Scripture:

Lord God, thank You for placing in my hands Your holy Word. Help me to approach the Bible with a right spirit, glad for the chance to draw closer to You in understanding, in trust, and in love.

Teach me to know You better. Be persistent with me so that I don't give up when my reading is difficult. Instead, aid my determination to find each new treasure You lay in my path.

Let me know the joy of discovering new and wonderful dimensions of Your mercy, grace, and love. Open my eyes to see Your Hand in the events of history and in the events of my life. Tend and nourish my faith and trust so that it grows.

Grant me greater clarity of understanding. Free me from partial or mistaken assumptions. Build me up in my ability to use Scripture effectively in my life as a disciple. I look forward to growing as Your child and as a servant of our Lord Jesus. Thank You for giving me this time with You. Amen.

### **The Covenant Schedule, 2017-18**

**September 24: II Peter**

**October 22: Key Texts in Luther's Theology** (Handout provided 24 September)

**November 19: Matthew 5.1-28, Learning the use of a Study Bible, Bible Dictionaries, and Commentaries** (*Note change to **THIRD SUNDAY of the month***)

**December 17: Habakkuk and Haggai** (*Note change to **THIRD SUNDAY of the month***)

**January 28: Zechariah** (*Note, potluck lunch also scheduled for this day*)

**February 25: Joel**

**March 25: Obadiah, Jonah**

**April 22: Job, Chapters 1-10**

**May 27: Job, Chapters 11-22**

**June 24: Job, Chapters 23-37**

**July 22: Job, Chapters 38-42, Summation**

**August 26: Jude; Study Bible/Dictionary/Commentary Review**

### **Notes on this Covenant Year, and the Covenant's Progression Thusfar**

When this Covenant schedule is completed, the only New Testament books which have not been part of the Covenant will be Matthew, Luke, John, Romans, I and II Corinthians, and Hebrews.

John's Gospel was covered in the first In-depth Bible Study. Romans is being covered in the second In-depth, and will conclude early in the New Year. Hebrews is envisioned as the third In-depth Bible Study subject. These three Books of the New Testament are considered by scholars and theologians as the deepest and most challenging in the entire New Testament.

I and II Corinthians were the focus of a Lenten midweek series not many years ago.

In the Old Testament, the Books yet to be scheduled in the Covenant will be the Books of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Joshua, Judges), I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Lamentations, Hosea, Nahum, Zechariah, and the Books of Songs, Poetry and Wisdom (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon).

A Bible study on Genesis was offered some years ago, and more recently, a study spanning I and II Samuel. The first ninety Psalms were scheduled in three Covenant segments in sequence, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

It is envisioned that a 2018-19 Covenant schedule would cover the Gospel of Matthew in the fall and Joshua and Judges in winter/spring, dividing these Books over a number of months, if Covenant participation continues.

**A reminder:** Covenant participants are encouraged to invite friends, whether from other congregations, or unchurched.