

Messiah Lutheran Church Bible Reading Covenant Schedule, 2018-19

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 presented in summer, 2018, the new Covenant schedule is presented here. The approach is two-phase, with the former "Full Book of Scripture" applying to a requested study of Leviticus in September through December, followed by an extension of the "multidimensional study of a text" process first used in connection with an examination of the Matthean Beatitudes using texts requested by Covenant participants in summer 2018.

The prayer below continues to serve as a model for prayer in preparation for entering Scripture, 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, when we open 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, 2018 - 19

Part 1: Book Study

September 23: Leviticus

October 28: Leviticus

November 25: Leviticus

December 23: Leviticus

Covenant, 2018-19, Part 2: Text Unit Study, Small Groups, with Study Resources

January 27: Genesis, Chapters 22.1-19: Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac

February 24: Abraham/Isaac, continued.

March 24: Exodus 3.1-18: God Calls Moses

April 28: God/Moses, continued.

May 26: Matthew 4.1-11: The Temptation of Jesus

June 23: Temptation, continued.

July 28: Mark 9.2-13; Matthew 17.1-13; Luke 9.28-36: The Transfiguration

August 25: The Transfiguration, continued.

Notes on the Covenant's Progression to date:

New Testament books which have not been part of the Covenant include Matthew, Luke, John, Romans, I and II Corinthians, Jude, and Hebrews.

John's Gospel and the Letter to the Romans has been covered In-depth. I and II Corinthians were the focus of a Lenten midweek series a few years ago.

In the Old Testament, the Books yet to be scheduled in the Covenant are the remaining Books of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, 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.

The goal of developing participants' familiarity with published Bible study resources will continue.

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