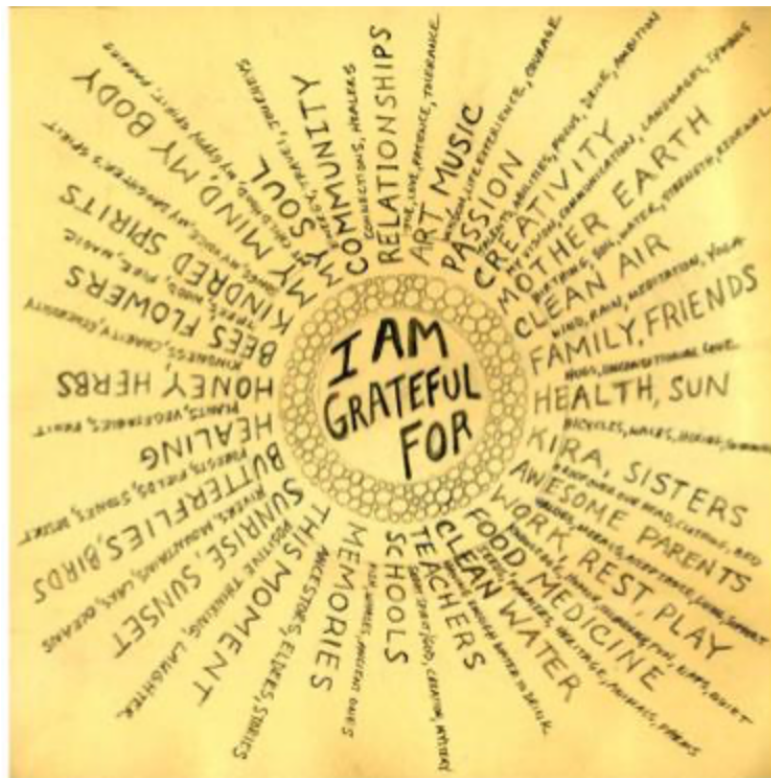


Lent 2021

Cultivating the Fruits of the Spirit

Discussion Questions

Developed by the Pastors and the Adult Deepening Team



Week Three: Gratitude

(Week of March 7)



UNITED PARISH IN BROOKLINE

American Baptist • United Church of Christ • United Methodist

Purpose of this Lenten study

To expand our individual understanding of the gifts - or fruits - of the Spirit

To explore how we can cultivate and embody these gifts to feel more in alignment with and authentic with God

To appreciate that each of us has particular gifts to contribute to the fruitfulness of our community aspirations and efforts

Based on Galatians 5:22-23:

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Purpose of this session

To introduce and examine gratitude as a Christian virtue

Week Three: Gratitude

Opening Prayer

Dear God,

Giver of all the fruits of the Holy Spirit, be with us as we explore the virtue of gratitude in this third week of Lent. We thank you for guiding all of us in the United Parish community who are joining us in this Lenten journey. We give thanks for this opportunity to cultivate gratefulness for your blessings.

Amen

Scripture

Philippians 4:4-9 New Revised Standard Version

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep

on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Luke 17:11-19 New Revised Standard Version

Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers

¹¹ On the way to Jerusalem Jesus^[a] was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, ¹³ they called out, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” ¹⁴ When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were made clean. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. ¹⁶ He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then Jesus asked, “Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? ¹⁸ Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹ Then he said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.”

Discussion Questions

What does gratitude mean to you?

What does it look like?

Whom have you witnessed as the embodiment of an “attitude of gratitude”?

Can you think of moments in scripture or Jesus’ ministry where gratitude played a predominant role?

What do you think about the idea that a regular practice of gratitude can be an antidote for anxiety?

Make a list of ten *specific* things you're grateful for this day.

What do you notice about the list?

What do you often take for granted?

Today's scripture says, "rejoice always" and "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." What does this look like? How realistic is it as a spiritual goal?

How could you incorporate more gratitude into your daily life?

Closing Prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for your great love and care, your goodness and mercy, in this Lenten journey and always. We are grateful that you bring hope even in the toughest of times, strengthening us for your purposes. Thank you for the love, the lessons and the example of Jesus as we journey through Lent and explore the "fruits of the spirit". Forgive us when we don't thank you enough for all that we've been given. With grateful hearts, we give you thanks and praise, Amen.