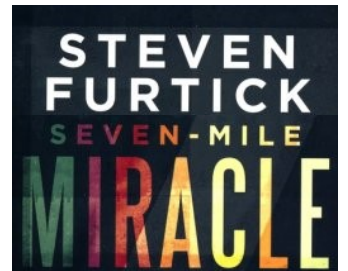


WHERE WILL LENT TAKE YOU THIS YEAR?

Where are you on your journey in relationship to God and with others?

How will you choose to deepen your walk so that you are living a life daily centered on God?

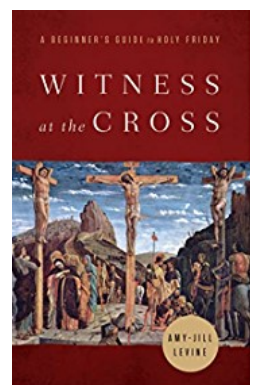
For the Sunday Sermon Study Series, the book, **SEVEN-MILE MIRACLE** by Steve Furtick offers some thoughts as he talks about the seven short statements made by Jesus as he hung on the cross. Jesus speaks words of forgiveness, salvation, relationship abandonment, distress, triumph, and reunion. Furtick speaks of the Emmaus Road, standing on the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, and other locations which are filmed on location in the Holy Land.



Steve Furtick is a pastor, songwriter, and NY Times best-selling author. As founder and lead pastor, he has helped grow the multi-site Elevation Church into a global ministry through online streaming, TV, and the music of Elevation Worship. He holds a Master of Divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and is the author of several books. Pastor Steven and his wife, Holly have three children and live in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The book is an easy read with a few questions for thought at the end of each chapter. When you watch the video portion, you will find that it ends with a familiar hymn (Nothing But The Blood, The Solid Rock, I Have Decided To Follow Jesus, I Need Thee Every Hour, It Is Well With My Soul, Christ The Lord Is Risen Today, and Blessed Assurance) which reflects the main thought for the week.

Two of our Adult Small Groups have chosen to do **WITNESS AT THE CROSS** by Amy-Jill Levine. In this study, Amy-Jill Levine's focus is on the minor or "lesser" people who gather at the foot of the cross as Jesus dies. She reminds us that Matthew, Mark, and Luke were not there. Only John was at the cross; therefore, each of the four Gospels have different people at the foot of the cross, and so each Gospel offers a different perspective.



Levine helps us experience Holy Friday from the perspective of those who watched Jesus die as she pauses alongside the bystanders and scoffers, the other victims, (usually identified as thieves), the centurion and the soldiers, the Beloved Disciple, the women, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, Jews and Romans, friends and strangers, the hopeful and the despairing. She invites us to hear, see, and feel how they individually experienced Christ's death. Levine shows how the people at the cross each have distinct roles to play. Each Evangelist presents a distinct picture of the death of Jesus. Each portrays different individuals and groups of people at the cross, each offers different images and dialogues, and so from each, we learn how those meanings and messages cross the centuries to any who would come to the cross today. She helps us know how each was affected by it and challenges us to place ourselves there and answer the question, "what does it mean for me (us) today?"

For those of you who might not be familiar with Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, she is University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies and Mary Jane Werthan Professor of Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School and College of Arts and Sciences. An internationally renowned scholar and teacher, she has authored numerous books and continues to speak at churches, clergy groups, and seminaries. Asbury has enjoyed her materials in the past, and this one won't disappoint! This book is an easy read and accompanies the video featuring A-J Levine.



One Last Thought...

By now you have received a copy of The Discipleship Pathway. Hopefully you have looked at it and decided **ONE (perhaps TWO)** area that you would like to pursue moving toward a deeper walk with Jesus and thus striving for a life daily centered on God. Perhaps you have a friend or a companion walking with you. Lent would be an excellent time to participate in an Adult Small Group where you will find support and encouragement along life's journey.

You are encouraged to pick up a book, check out which group(s) you would like to join. You will find that the groups will hold each other up in prayer, experience personal discovery and spiritual growth, and help each other with the many challenges that the present-day world presents. Some of the classes meet via ZOOM; others in person; and some offer both. Regardless, the groups are all about our relationship with God and with others.

This Lent We are Offering a Third Option

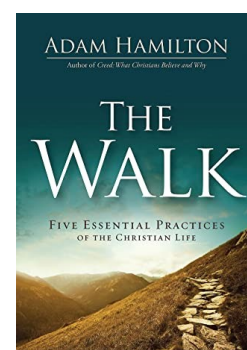
An **Online Option** which is centered around the Gospel of Luke. This online offering comes from Highland Park UMC. For 33 days, a young adult from that congregation offers thoughts on a passage from Luke. The sessions run from 2-10 minutes in length. This study will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023. It is available on YouTube at:

<https://www.hpumc.org/reading-plans/luke-brp>

If you choose to participate online (or for more information), please contact Pastor Tom.



EXCITING NEWS! WE NOW HAVE A NEW SMALL GROUP!!!! Beginning the Sunday after Easter, (Sunday, April 16, 2023) Pam Thornton and Marian Paulson will be leading a study entitled THE WALK by Adam Hamilton. This is an excellent way to begin to move forward on the Discipleship Pathway. Several people have completed THE WALK, and as with all his studies, it was very well received. People reported that the things suggested are "very doable". If you haven't done this study, we encourage you to do so. If you have done it, perhaps you'd like to do it again as a "refresher course". This study could be of benefit to everyone as it offers a way to better understand more about the Discipleship Pathway. This group will meet on Sundays in Room 304 on the top level of the church from 9:30-10:30 AM.



Please give prayerful consideration to joining a group or participating in the online option as you journey through Lent and move forward in your walk along life's journey.

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

AGAPE PLUS

This mixed class meets on Sundays from 9:30-10:25 AM on the upper level in Room 302-303. Beginning on February 26, they will participate in the Sunday Sermon Study Series for Lent, SEVEN-MILE MIRACLE by Steven Furtick. Everyone is welcome!

EXPLORATIONS

This mixed class will begin their study for Lent entitled WITNESS AT THE CROSS by Amy-Jill Levine on Sunday, February 26, 2023. They meet at 9:30 AM on the main level in Room 202. Everyone is welcome to join this class at any time throughout the year as they tackle unusual studies!

LADIES ARM GROUP

This Ladies ARM group is a caring and sharing group of women whose primary focus is to create an atmosphere where group members affirm and encourage one another. They meet every other Thursday from 7:00-9:00 PM via ZOOM. They will begin their study for Lent, WITNESS AT THE CROSS by Amy-Jill Levine on February 9. All women are welcome! Please contact the Sharon Phillips or the church office for the link to ZOOM.

THURSDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

This mixed group meets on Thursday Evenings from 7:00-8:30 PM via ZOOM. They will participate in the Sunday Sermon Study Series, SEVEN-MILE MIRACLE by Steven Furtick beginning on February 23, 2023. Please contact Chris Harvey or the church office for the link to ZOOM. This group would be delighted to have you join them!

UPPER ROOM MEN'S GROUP

The goal of the Men's Group is building Faith through Study, Service and Fellowship. This is done by watching a short video, having group discussions and studying the Word and how it relates to everyday life as a Christian man. Fellowship is built through some fun time at each meeting and through one-on-one prayer partners. They meet the second and fourth Saturday mornings at the church in Room 302-303 on the second level and via ZOOM at 8:00 AM. They will continue their study on COURAGE by Tom Berlin. An "open chair" is always there to greet you, so please join them! Please contact Cliff Pim or Phil Paulson for more information.

WINGS

WINGS is currently meeting via ZOOM on Wednesday evenings from 6:15-7:30 PM. They will be participating in the Sunday Sermon Study Series, SEVEN-MILE MIRACLE by Steven Furtick. WINGS does a variety of studies and service projects throughout the school year and is open to everyone. Please contact Jean Black or the church office for the link to ZOOM. All are welcome!