

# Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.

## HOMECOMING



## Sermon Series for September 11-25, 2022

### Homecoming

So whether you're coming, or going, or already there, the message is simple and straightforward: "Welcome home." Mt. Washington Presbyterian Church is your spiritual home. No matter where you are on your journey, we will be there with you along the way.

*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. – Colossians 2:6-7*

**Week 1: September 11, 2022**

**Welcome Home**

**Hebrews 11:1-39 and 12:1-2**

#### Connect:

"Faith," in its many grammatical forms, can function as a noun, a verb, or an adverb. So how do you define the word "faith?"

#### Engage:

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." – C.S. Lewis

Read Hebrews 11:1-3.

1. What keywords does the author use to describe faith? How does this compare to your definition of faith?

Read Hebrews 11:4-39.

2. This list recalls many great men and women of faith in the Old Testament. What "faith" connections do you see among these characters?
3. Why do you think they trusted God when promises when unfulfilled, the future was uncertain, or disaster loomed?

Read Hebrews 12:1-2.

4. How do all these faithful people listed in Hebrews 11 strengthen our faith?
5. How do we "fix our eyes" on Jesus?
6. How is he the pioneer and perfecter of our faith? Why and how is he the best example of faith?

#### Apply

As a church, we are all about inclusive love. So we say at membership, "because you belong to Christ, you belong to us, and we belong to you."

How can we be even more encouraging to one another in our faith?

#### Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.

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**Week 2: September 18, 2022**

**Service**

**Isaiah 58:1-9a**

#### Connect:

Describe a time when you experienced joy when serving others.

#### Engage:

Judaism defines fasting as the voluntary abstinence from all food or drink. A full-day fast begins with sunset in the evening and continues until sunset the next day. Fasting is an act of worship that relates to penance, purification, and the purging of unholy thoughts and actions. God's people fasted for individual and communal spiritual transformation and to mitigate God's anger for community sin.

Read Isaiah 58:1-9a

1. God redefines spiritual transformation in terms of service to one's neighbor. Why do you think this is more pleasing to God than fasting? What is God trying to illuminate for Israel?
2. What kinds of things is God calling the people to do?
3. How is the call to serve others both a communal and individual call? How can the church focus more on caring in the ways described here? How can you?
4. Jesus often speaks about caring for one's neighbor. What examples of his teaching can you recall? What point is he trying to make? (Matthew 7:12, Matthew 22:31-40, Matthew 25:21-46, Luke 4:18-19, Luke 10:25-37, Luke 11:39-42, Luke 16:19-31, John 15:12-13)

#### Apply

Our witness out in the world is central to our identity as Christians. There is no bench sitting for those who follow Christ. We are to be active and engaged in such a way that Christ's light shines through us.

How can we engage more fully in God's mission of love to the world?

#### Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.

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**Week 3: September 25, 2022**

**Community**

**Colossians 3:12-17**

#### Connect:

Where and when have you experienced loving, caring, and grace-filled Christian community?

#### Engage:

The Old Testament could be considered a guidebook for developing virtues that mimic the character of God. Judaism emphasizes humility, faith, self-control, fear of God, love, kindness, compassion, and altruism, to name but a few. It is no surprise that Jesus and his followers encourage us to do the same.

Read Colossians 3:12-17

1. Paul calls the Christian Community in Colossae "chosen, holy, and beloved." Do these words come to mind when you think of yourself as a Christian? Why or why not?
2. Out of our beloved and holiness, God describes a remarkable set of virtues we are to display. How does one practically "clothe" themselves with these virtues?
3. When these virtues are as prominent as the clothes we wear, we will treat others with patience, forgiveness, and love. How do you see or experience the outward manifestation of Christ's love in our community? Where do you see more room for growth?
4. How does our relationship with Christ empower us to change our attitudes and behaviors?

#### Apply

Christ's transformative love should be the clarion call of our life together. While we cannot be perfect, we all can work at becoming more forgiving and loving. As Jesus said, "they will know you are my disciples because of your love for one another."

Of the virtues and behaviors discussed, what one commitment can you make this week to live a life more reflective of Christ's character?

#### Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.