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Monday, January 23

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9

This passage is known as the Shema. Everyone at Chain of Lakes is being encouraged to memorize the first three verses of this passage. Keep practicing! Memory work is a matter of repetition.

This passage teaches us one of the tasks of the church. We are to help people love God with all our heart and soul and might. We are called to teach these words to our children.

This interpretation is very consistent with the teachings of the Scripture.

One way to evaluate a congregation is by the love that the people have for God. As you pray today, continue to pray that we at Chain of Lakes will grow in our love for God.

Tuesday, January 24

Read Psalm 23

This is one of the best known Psalms. It teaches each of us about fear. Even though we will go through difficult times we need not fear those times. God is always present to us and is leading us through. The result of this realization is a deep sense of peace.

We might have fear right now about a situation in our life. Pray that we ourselves can be open to how God is leading us through this situation.

We also probably know of someone who is going through a hard situation. Not only pray for the situation, but pray for the person's inner spirit. Pray that he or she won't experience fear.

Wednesday, January 25

Read Ezekiel 37:1-14

This passage might not be as well known as some other passages we're studying this week. It

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teaches us that God can do amazing things. God took a valley of dry bones and created life.

We are called to never give up on what God can do. J. B. Philipps once wrote a book called, "Your God is too small." We humans often forget about how God can do things that are amazing and unpredictable.

Think yourself about a situation in your life. You might believe that you have figured it out and no hope exists. However hope does exist—this passage from Ezekiel teaches us. God can do something in this situation that we could have never imagined.

As you pray today, pray that you can be open to the possibilities of God. Pray that we at Chain of Lakes can be a congregation who can be open to the surprises that God can do through us.

Thursday, January 26

Read Mark 2:1-12

This passages teaches humans how to love. The faith of the friends of the man who was paralyzed in this story is a faith that you and I are called to develop. These friends loved the man who was paralyzed so much that there were willing to do whatever it took to bring him to Jesus. If they encountered an obstacle, they were going to find a way around the obstacle.

If the obstacle was getting the man to travel—they decided to carry him.

If the obstacle was a crowded door—they decided to take the man to the roof.

If the obstacle was a roof—they decided to dig a hole in the roof.

If the obstacle was getting the man who was paralyzed through the hole—they figured out a way to let him down.

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This is the type of love that God wants us to share for our friends. It is a passionate love that will do whatever it takes to help.

You have friends for whom you can share this love. Today as you pray, pray for the passion and inspiration to love this way. Pray that when we encounter an obstacle to love, we will figure out a way to overcome that obstacle.

Friday, January 27

Read Acts 2:37-47

This story teaches us about the church. This is the story of how the Holy Spirit brought people together in an amazing way. This movement of the Spirit happens in our world in churches all the time. The Spirit can do things where all we can do is have an experience of awe—Wow!

When the people came together they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers. These four activities are important parts of a local congregation. When we are led by the Spirit to participate in them, we can experience amazing things. Awe—Wow!

As you pray today, pray that Chain of Lakes and all churches can be this Spirit-led community.

Saturday, January 28

Read Romans 5:1-11

This passage teaches us about God. God sent Jesus to die for us at the right time. Because of Christ all of us have peace with God. We have access to grace through an event that we had nothing to do with.

As you pray today, give praises to God for this gift of Christ. Spend time repeating this prayer, "I praise you Jesus for dying for all of us at the right time." Repeat this prayer over and over. As you do this, you'll most likely experience the presence of God. Enjoy!