

GLENKIRK CHURCH



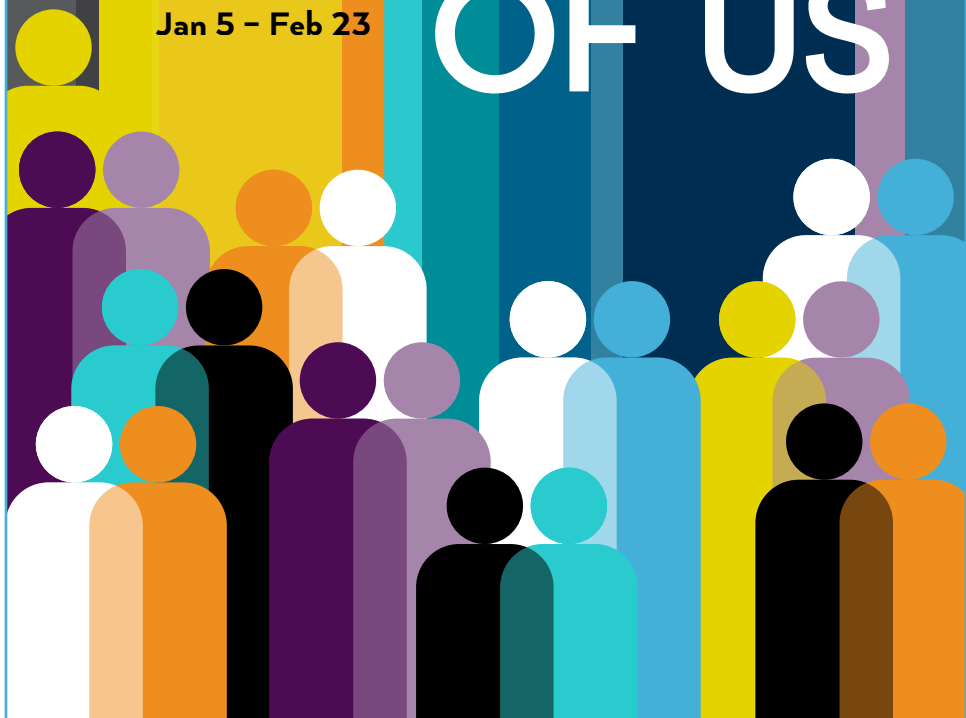
WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

DEVO

JANUARY 6 - 10, 2025

THE STORY OF US

Sermon Series
Jan 5 - Feb 23



MONDAY

Read [Ephesians 2:5](#); [Ezekiel 36:26](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:23-24](#)

Heart Transplant

“[God] has made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions.” (Ephesians 2:5)

Is it possible that God can do this, that He can “raise us from the dead” as Jesus raised Lazarus (John 11:38-44)? Can God put living flesh on dry, lifeless bones, bringing life to the formerly dead, “[putting His] Spirit in [us so that we] will live” (Ezekiel 37:14)? Yes! He has done it; He is doing it; He keeps on doing it. It’s an amazing truth. Some of us have a story to tell.

Ezekiel talked about replacing a “heart of stone” (spiritually dead) with a Spirit-animated (“quickenened” per some Bible translations) beating “heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26). Some of us were raised in church, but it didn’t seem special to us. We knew the songs by heart. We listened to sermons and studied the Bible, but the words didn’t change the way we lived. And the people around us didn’t seem to be getting anything out of the sermons either. Like many in ancient Israel, we were caught up in empty ritual, churchgoing out of habit instead of out of grateful desire to worship our Savior. Our “faith” was perhaps unexamined, taken for granted.

And then something happened to make us get serious about being serious with God and a relationship with Him that wasn’t working. Maybe we even asked God what could be done about it. And He showed us. He seemed to be waiting for this moment because as we sought Him and His input, something happened. Things were different. The words on the page of the Bible came alive. Prayers didn’t seem to just bounce off the ceiling or be mechanical and lifeless. We were different people. We had become “*alive with Christ*” (Ephesians 2:5), seeing everything anew due to our revived hearts.

This week we’re going to talk about these death-to-life experiences.

“May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. ... The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)

QUESTIONS

What is your story? How did your walk with Jesus come about in your life? How did you come alive in Christ?

PRAYER

Pray for Pastor Tim to receive healing and rest in this new season and for God to guide him in what comes next.

TUESDAY

Read [Revelation 21:17](#); [Matthew 11:28-30](#); [Matthew 7:7-8](#)

Invitation to Whosoever Will

Jesus said, “Come to Me, all of you who are weary and worn out and tired, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, because My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30 paraphrased)

A yoke is for two oxen. Guess who the other “ox” is in Jesus’ yoke. It is the Lord and Savior Himself! How would you like to be “yoked” to Jesus, God the Son, who came to save us in our fallen plight, the only One with the sinless perfection and divine capacity to reconcile us with God? The early disciples found it to be worth everything to follow Jesus. Some who were fishermen left their nets. One left his lucrative tax-collecting business. Others left their jobs, if they had one. After committing to following the Messiah, there was no turning back for any of them. As the Apostle Peter declared, “We have left everything to follow You!” (Matthew 19:27).

Jesus said, “If any of you wants to be My follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross every day, and follow Me. For the person who wants to save his or her life will lose it. But the person who loses their life for My sake and the Gospel will find it. What

does it profit a person to gain the whole world but lose their own soul?” (Luke 9:23-25 paraphrased). Nothing. Zero. Zilch. It profits nothing.

Jesus gave us a good starting point. He said, “Ask, seek, and knock. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened” (Matthew 7:7-8). Over and over Jesus reminds us to be askers (Matthew 7:7; John 14:14, 15:7, 16:24), to be sincere seekers of the heart of God in Christ, to have an examined faith that does not settle for empty ritual.

QUESTIONS

Are you an asker? Are you a “comer”? Do you keep coming every day to Jesus to learn how to live His life?

PRAYER

Pray for our congregation as we undergo this change in leadership. Pray for spiritual growth and for hearts and minds to be at peace during this time of transition.

WEDNESDAY

Read [Ephesians 2:8-10](#); [Hebrews 11:6](#); [Philippians 2:7-10](#)

Faith is a gift to be opened and put to good use.

Jesus said, “*I am the Way and the Truth and the Life*” (John 14:6). Yes, we need to read the operating instructions and practice the Way of Scriptures. Like a muscle, faith needs to be exercised—this is one of the reasons God allows trials in the lives of believers.

Jesus showed us the Way by coming from heaven, consenting to be stripped of His prerogatives as co-equal member of the divine Trinity. He pleased the Father by walking faithfully and sacrificing willingly, dying in our place. His sinless perfection and righteous standing with the Father are the gift to those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). From His Father and from the Holy Spirit, Jesus developed His teachings that He passed on to us through His disciples. Jesus’ disciples followed Him because they had faith in Him. They left all to learn how to be His apprentices. As a result, we can receive and pass along Christ’s story and message.

Jesus’ mother Mary exercised her faith by welcoming the Angel Gabriel’s words. She responded “*Let it be to me according to your word*” (Luke 1:38). Mary was with Jesus at the beginning of incarnation (coming to earth veiled in human flesh). She witnessed all of His phases of growing up, even His early death on Calvary’s

cross and His resurrection from the grave to new life, “*the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep*” (1 Corinthians 15:20) and embodiment of the future resurrection that all in Christ eagerly anticipate.

Mary lived on after Jesus’ resurrection and told Luke her story so that we could have it today via his Gospel. Even today her account to Luke is an integral part of the *Jesus Film* that portrays the Gospel in thousands of languages, resulting in new communities of faith. While “*blessed ... among women*” (Luke 1:42), the Gift Mary bore as Jesus’ mother included “*a sword [which pierced her] own soul*” (Luke 2:35)—yet she bore it faithfully.

QUESTIONS

How does your story relate to the gift of faith? How are you continuing to use the gift of faith through your life?

PRAYER

Pray for our new transitional pastor, Reverend Gary Watkins. Pray for wisdom, discernment, and guidance as he joins our church.

THURSDAY

Read [John 6:63](#); [Ephesians 1:17](#); [Hebrews 4:12](#)

Resurrection and Revelation

Water baptism symbolizes our coming to life in Jesus by identifying our coming up out of the grave (dying to our old life without Jesus) to a new eternal life with Him by the Holy Spirit. The symbolism is powerful, but the reality—a changed life which glorifies God in Christ—is what counts.

Recently I asked a friend his version of his story of coming alive in Christ. “Revelation” was a key word and concept for him. He had faithfully gone to a church for 10 years. During that time, he tried to make sense of the life in Christ, asking one person after another if he was “understanding the pieces of the puzzle” (so to speak), and if he was “solving it” correctly. Then one Sunday the pastor preached a sermon on how God gives each of His children “*the Spirit of wisdom and revelation*” (Ephesians 1:17) and how Jesus said, “*My sheep hear My voice; He knows them, and they follow Him*” (John 10:27). In other words, he no longer had to rely primarily on others to determine if he was getting it right. As one of Jesus’ sheep, he could get direction and wisdom directly from His Shepherd’s heart (mouth).

My friend dates his coming alive in Christ to that moment. He realized that no other intermediary or third party was needed—Jesus’ atoning sacrifice led to the temple’s veil tearing from top to bottom

(Mark 15:38), signifying that Jesus had fully and sufficiently dealt with our separation from God. It seems that Jesus’ sheep hear His voice in different ways at different times, often through the Bible (aka the Word of God). Psalm 23—“*The LORD is my Shepherd*” (23:1)—and other Scripture came alive for him in new, stirring and increasingly meaningful ways. We come alive in Christ in different ways and circumstances. But it is the same Jesus Christ we all follow; the One we are comforted to know “*is the same yesterday and today and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8).

QUESTIONS

How did you come alive in Christ? How have you heard His voice? Jesus said that the words He has spoken “*are full of the Spirit and life*” (John 6:63).

PRAYER

Pray for our future senior pastor. May he or she be encouraged, equipped, and prepared in this season.

FRIDAY

Read [John 5:24, 10:10, 11:25-26](#)

Passed from death to life

“One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” (John 9:25), so said the man born blind in John 9 after Jesus healed him. That’s the one thing blind Bartimaeus knew also—that he was blind but Jesus made him see (Mark 10:46-52). Our statement of surprise is similar: “Once we were dead; now we are alive in Christ.” What a miracle of grace!

Jesus claimed to be the resurrection and the life: “The person who believes in Me will live, even though they die” (John 11:25). Psalm 23:4 says, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.”

Satan is our accuser: “He comes to steal, kill and destroy, but Jesus comes to give life and even more life” (John 10:10 paraphrased). Jesus is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). Jesus said, “Everyone on the side of truth, listens to Me” (John 18:37).

When N.T. Wright wrote *Surprised by Hope*, he captured the surprise and wonder of witnesses who saw Jesus alive after His death on a cross. They had thought and hoped that Jesus was the One, the Messiah, who would rescue them from Roman rule. Surprise! Jesus rose from the grave. His story did not stop. In many ways, the story was only beginning.

Imagine Paul’s surprise to encounter Jesus as his Messiah on the road to Damascus. Paul had surely crossed Jesus off his list of who the Messiah might be. Even knowing this, Jesus chose Paul to bring the good news of Jesus’ messiahship to Jews and non-Jews alike. Many came alive in Christ as a result of Paul’s encounter. His vocation switched gears. His letters to the earliest churches, written for our benefit too, are full of how to be alive in Christ.

Paul endured many hardships in carrying out this assignment. Yet he endured faithfully, even with joy while imprisoned due to his faith. He had seen and come to know the risen Lord, “the Truth” and the One through who Paul thereafter saw everything differently and clearly.

QUESTIONS

Where else in the Bible and/or church history have people suffered hardships to live out their faith in God? Have you endured difficulty living out your life in Christ? How can you encourage others to stay the course?

PRAYER

Pray for our church leadership throughout this transition at Glenkirk.



These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org. If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.

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