



First Church Tucson Weekly Digest

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Gustave Doré, 'Jacob Wrestling with the Angel' (1855)

# Jabbok Wrestling Match

By Paul Cho on August 3rd, 2020

There is a fascinating story in Genesis 32, just as Jacob is preparing to see his older brother, Esau, confronted by the fear that Esau might take his life, Jacob wrestles with an angel and demands a blessing. The wrestling match took place at the Jabbok River and resulted with Jacob not only being blessed but also given the name, Israel. The rest, as they say, is history.

There is likely not a soul among us that planned to spend this year battling all the issues we are facing. I am not just talking about the pandemic or the upcoming elections. It was going

to be a pivotal year in the United Methodist Church at General Conference. Likewise, on a personal level, people had planned vacations, educational advancements, retirement, and many more. All of these things have either been put on hold or cancelled all together. I received news from more than a couple of students who will not be coming back this fall semester. It seems, nothing is going to plan.

I feel like Jacob. I have certain fear of the unknown, I see nothing in sight. All I have is pure desperation, grasping at anything in reach and holding on to dear life. Can you relate?

While a part of me wants to shout that ‘this is all wrong,’ ‘the world has gone backwards,’ scripture reminds me that not all is lost.

Certainly in the case of Jacob, in his desperation he wrestled with God and was spared his life. Certainly for the disciples, they faced the death of their teacher and their personal failure just before they encountered Christ’s resurrection. It is a recurring biblical theme that dark night of the soul meets us just before the dawn.

Even as things look bleak and dim, there is hope for us yet.

My time away from this ministry setting has given me some clarity. When there is no plan (or in our case, when plans cannot continue), perhaps we become free to discover who we are, what we are made of, where our passions lie, what our values are. You cannot deny that often we are asked, pulled, pushed, voluntold to do things that are honestly not of our own accord. Social persuasion is a powerful force. But now that our former rules and pressures are on hiatus, perhaps we can be free to feel, say, and do what the Spirit in our soul has been asking of us. There is certainly time left for us to embark on this journey.

I pray for God to bless us for this journey of rediscovery ahead. I pray for God to be ever present so that all of us at First Church Tucson may collectively experience God’s faithfulness at work in our midst. I pray that we find our renewed call, our renewed values, our renewed commitment in becoming disciples of Jesus Christ.

In the meantime, stay healthy, stay strong, mask up, and please, vote.

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THIS WEEK’S  
ANNOUNCEMENTS & GATHERINGS

## Exploring Biblical Wisdom

Gather for group Lectio Divina as we seek spiritual formation. **Tues @ 11AM.**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/98179862680?pwd=ck15OU5KbWUyY0NwOUNxbzJkOUVBUT09>

**ZID: 981 7986 2680**

**PW: 6226481**

## Music History Workshop

This Summer, join Music Ministry Director Lorena Suarez as she unpacks the rich history and tradition in the musical arts! This week, 20th-century music and I. Stravinsky. **Wed @ 5:30PM.**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/92978304567?pwd=Mmo4UWZtc012TUxzVS9VYXlpVU1iZz09>

**ZID: 929 7830 4567**

**PW: 6226481**

## Progressive Christianity Book Study

Read, Reflect, and Share in the richness of progressive Christian literature. **Thurs @ 2PM.**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/98015738087?pwd=eGFpVWRCUnZraWxUU1d0anRiU2pFQT09>

**ZID: 980 1573 8087**

**PW: 6226481**

## Sunday Morning Live!

Join us live on Sunday mornings on Facebook livestream. **Sun @ 10AM**

Visit [fb.com/firstchurchtucson/live](https://fb.com/firstchurchtucson/live)

## Sunday Morning Fellowship

Join on Zoom for fellowship immediately following the live stream. **Sun @ 10:30AM**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/97274927766?pwd=bVlqNmZjTk84bHFHd0JRS0U5R0c4Zz09>

**ZID: 972 7492 7766**

**PW: 6226481**

## Korean Language Ministry

한국어 사역 온라인모임을 소개합니다. 주일 오전 1130 페북 실시간 방송이 있습니다.

[fb.com/tucsonkoreanchurch/live](https://fb.com/tucsonkoreanchurch/live)

방송 직후 Zoom을 통해 교제의 시간에 초대합니다.

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/99861120822?pwd=VWlyZ3FrM2ZrNHhrVIRlNHc1NTBLQT09>

**ZID: 998 6112 0822**

**PW: 6226481**

또한, 금 오후 7시에 (기존 토요일 새벽 기도회 대신) 온라인 모임을 위에 표시된 Zoom 가상 공간에서 갖고, 일요일 오후 1시에는 한어권 청년들의 모임이 따로 있습니다.

## Support the Ministries at First Church Tucson

Now is the time to give courageously to ministries that matter to you.

Visit this [link](#) or go to [www.bit.ly/givetofumc](http://www.bit.ly/givetofumc) to set up online donation.

You may also send gifts via Paypal to recipient address: [finance@firstchurchtucson.org](mailto:finance@firstchurchtucson.org)

And as always, you can mail in checks to the church office. Alternatively, have your IRA advisor automatically make payments from your IRA to the FUMC checking account.

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### THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Sumin Lee (Aug 5)

Lori Green (Aug 7)

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### SONG FOR **THOUGHT** "You Are My Hiding Place" **Michael Ledner**

by **Lorena Suarez**

Director of Music Ministries on August 1, 2020

At the age of 27, Michael Ledner was going through a difficult moment in his life, the separation from his wife. Although this painful period, one day in January 1980, when sitting at his bed while strumming his guitar, he was inspired by the Psalm 32 to write the touching hymn *You Are My Hiding Place*.

A year later, while he was living for a short time in Israel, he received a call from Maranatha! Music to have his song published.

Ledner remembers his song with these words: "There was fighting going on at that time in Northern Israel, but I was in Southern Israel. The song seemed to bring comfort to some of my friends that were up North while they were in the shelters and listening to the bombs going off in the background."

The song shares some interesting similarities with Andrew Lloyd Weber's "Phantom of the Opera" written in 1985, but luckily Ledner wrote his song earlier, in 1980. Enjoy!

**Lyrics:**

You are my hiding place.  
You always fill my heart with songs  
Of deliverance,  
Whenever I am afraid,  
I will trust in You,

I will trust in You.  
Let the weak say,  
“I am strong  
In the strength of the Lord.”

**Suggested recordings:**

Maranatha Singers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sKGTzn1qT4>

Selah

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIVC6rfX3Z8>

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## LECTIO DIVINA PRAYER GUIDE

for Individuals and Families

CENTERING - *Practice Square Breathing*

- Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds,
- Exhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds.
- Repeat as necessary.

SONG OF PRAISE

Select a song of your choice, or  
Refer to this week's Song for Thought

OPENING PRAYER - *Psalm 19:14*

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable to you,  
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

READING

Matthew 14:13-21

REFLECTING

Take a minute or two in silence.  
Allow your thoughts to rest on a word, a phrase, a memory from this passage.  
Journal or share your thoughts from this moment of meditation on the passage.

RESPONDING

Respond to the reflection through the guidance from the Holy Spirit.

MINUTE MEMOIR - by Paul Cho

It is soul crushing to find ourselves unwanted, dismissed, or abandoned, especially when we are desperate for help, for healing, for company. The fact that Jesus does not command the crowd to go away, but rather insists that the disciples give them something to eat is an astonishing move of mercy. Considering that Jesus was offered such grace and compassion during a time when he himself was grieving the death of John the Baptist further highlights the depth of mercy that is lavished upon us.

Likewise, we who are called to be followers of Christ must also look to providing spaces for the “crowd” to be cared for. Whether they are those who are outcast because of their skin color, sexual orientation, gender identity, differently abled, different socio-economic status, whatever their need is, the church must claim that ‘we’ are the ‘crowd’, and the crowd need not go away. In the grace of God through Christ, we will be found with whatever we need to serve them.

RESTING

Dwell in your reflection and response.  
Take time to offer God praise and glory.  
Repent and seek forgiveness.  
Offer joys and the concerns, adding in your personal prayers.  
Lastly, offer a thanksgiving for God’s grace and mercy.

CLOSING PRAYER *Wesley Covenant Service Prayer*

I am no longer my own, but yours.  
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;  
put me to doing, put me to suffering;  
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,  
exalted for you, or brought low for you;  
let me be full,  
let me be empty,  
let me have all things,  
let me have nothing:  
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things  
to your pleasure and disposal.  
And now, glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.  
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.  
Amen.



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