



WEEK 5: REFUGE AND SANCTUARY

Opening Prayer: God, we invite you in today, where you already are, among us. We make room in our hearts, in our minds, in our conversation for you to meet us and to change us. Amen.

Quote: "The unafraid are open to the neighbor, while the frightened are defending themselves from the neighbor. The unafraid are generous in the community, while the frightened, in their anxiety, must keep and store and accumulate, to make themselves safe. The unafraid commit acts of compassion and mercy, while the frightened do not notice those in need. The unafraid are committed to justice for the weak and the poor, while the frightened see them only as threats. The unafraid pray in the morning, care through the day, and rejoice at night in thanks and praise, while the frightened are endlessly restless and dissatisfied. So dear people, each of you: Do not fear! I have called you by name; you are mine!" – Walter Brueggeman

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Matthew 2:1-18

1. What motivates Herod's actions in this passage – both near the beginning and then in verse 16?
2. In what ways do you see God at work in this passage? How does God's way of doing things differ from Herod's?
3. How do Jesus, Mary, and Joseph find protection from Herod's violence?
4. What does the massacre (vs. 16-18) tell us about what humans are capable of?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Where do you see fear, anger, and power converging in our world today?
2. In what ways is God calling you as an individual and the church community to respond? How do the experiences of the Magi, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus inspire us to "resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves" (words from our UM baptismal covenant)?
3. Who are the people who need sanctuary in our world? In what ways can we provide it?

CLOSING PRAYER: God-with-us, we thank you for this space. Help us to go out now and live spacious lives, making room for others, especially those who need sanctuary in our broken our world. Amen.

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<p>Week 1: Room, When Pressure is Closing In</p> <p>Sunday – Joshua 2:1-21</p> <p>Monday – Psalm 124</p> <p>Tuesday – Psalm 42:1-5</p> <p>Wednesday – Psalm 42:6-11</p> <p>Thursday – Isaiah 29:19-20</p> <p>Friday – Luke 1:46-50</p> <p>Saturday – Luke 1:51-55</p> <p>Week 2: Room in Your Heart</p> <p>Sunday – Mark 1:1-8</p> <p>Monday – Matthew 3:8-12</p> <p>Tuesday – Luke 3:10-17-10</p> <p>Wednesday – Isaiah 40:1-5</p> <p>Thursday – Daniel 9:17-19</p> <p>Friday – James 4:1-10</p> <p>Saturday – Isaiah 35:8-10</p> <p>Week 3: Room in Relationships</p> <p>Sunday – Luke 1:24-45</p> <p>Monday – Romans 15:4-7</p> <p>Tuesday – 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10</p> <p>Wednesday – Hebrews 2:14-18</p> <p>Thursday – Matthew 25:34-40</p> <p>Friday – 1 Samuel 23:15-18</p> <p>Saturday – Exodus 4:10-16</p>	<p>Week 4: Room for Hope</p> <p>Sunday – Matthew 1:18-25</p> <p>Monday – Hebrews 11:1-3</p> <p>Tuesday – Isaiah 11:1-5</p> <p>Wednesday (Christmas Eve) – Luke 2:1-7</p> <p>Thursday (Christmas Day) – Luke 2:8-20</p> <p>Friday – John 1:1-14</p> <p>Saturday – Psalm 146:5-7</p> <p>Week 5: Refuge and Sanctuary</p> <p>Sunday – Matthew 2:1-18</p> <p>Monday – Matthew 2:19-23</p> <p>Tuesday – Jeremiah 31:15-17</p> <p>Wednesday – Hebrews 11:8-10</p> <p>Thursday – Psalm 72:1-4</p> <p>Friday – Isaiah 9:2-7</p> <p>Saturday – Revelation 21:1-6</p>
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