



Trail Guide – August 24, 2020:

Ordinary Time

When we encounter trials, do we believe that we will get through it? Are we willing to change if change will help see us through? Two promises from Sunday's scripture stand out: "I will make a way through..." says the Lord; and, "I am doing a new thing..." Both of these promises depend on our willingness to persevere through difficulty and our willingness to change. Our readings this week radiate from these two promises, like rays of sunshine to brighten our day, to warm the hearts that are chilled, and to shine light into dark places. Read, reflect, and recognize God's way for today. "I am making a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" – Isaiah 43:19.

Grace and peace.

Mon, 08/24 – [Philippians 4:18](#) – Even in prison in Rome, the Apostle Paul could find a reason for gratitude and take time to express it to the Philippian followers of The Way (Jesus). Today, find a reason to be thankful. Express your gratitude to another – and to God.

Tues, 08/25 – [Acts 16:23-25](#) – Years before his experience of imprisonment in Rome, Paul was imprisoned in Philippi. As he later wrote to the Philippians, no doubt this remembrance came to mind. Not only were Silas and he thrown into a jail cell, they were beaten beforehand. The only time I've experienced a physical beating it came from playing rugby. Ugh! It wears you out and the last thing you feel like doing is singing. Are you feeling beaten down, worn out? Find some worshipful music to listen to, or to sing. Your circumstances likely won't change, but your capacity to confront them will be filled and renewed.

Wed, 08/26 – [Job 28:14](#) – Have you ever wished to be elsewhere, thinking that a change of scenery will do you good? Sometimes it does. But sometimes our change of scenery replies, "It's not in me". Why? Because it's the same you, whether there or here. What we need is not new surroundings but a renewed heart, refreshed and restored by God's love – and replenished by reaching out to love someone else. Love. Be intentional.

Thur, 08/27 – [Mark 7:33](#) – Sometimes it is in the solitude that we sense the closeness and comfort of God. "Taken aside by Jesus, To be quite alone with Him, To hear His wonderful tones of love 'Mid the silence and shadows dim; Taken aside by Jesus, Shall I resist the desert place, When I hear as I never heard before, And see Him "face to face"?" – S. C. Rees

Fri, 08/28 – [Exodus 15:25](#); [1 Peter 1:6-9](#) – Your faith, my faith, will be tested. Again. Count on it. We are not greenhouse plants protected from the elements. No, we are to be like the trees planted by streams of living water, out in nature, exposed to all the elements. Only then will our roots grow deep. Check out [James 1:2-4](#). Is your faith being tested these days? In what ways?

Sat, 08/29 – [John 19:17](#) – The cross was a choice. It still is, for every one of us. It's not some burden God inexplicably places on us to cause circumstantial suffering. No. The cross(es) you and I are called to carry are always an invitation to sacrifice. It is a call to deny and even put to death that in us which is abhorrent to God. It's never pleasant. It's never easy. But the cross we carry always carries us to resurrection life. Transformation. Christ-likeness. Remade in the true image of God. For our own - and everyone else in our lives - good. Can you see it? "See! I am doing a new thing!" – [Isaiah 43:18](#)

Please share the stories of how God has made/is making a way for you – or the way(s) in which you are praying for God to make a way through – create a "breakthrough" – for the obstacles you are facing now. jim@leesburgumc.org. Looking forward to next Sunday!