**Bringing Church Home – January 21, 2018**

**Bible** **Bites**

*These short passages come from the Lectionary readings for today.*

Monday Jonah 3:1-5 The people of Nineveh repent big time

Tuesday Psalm 62:6 Hope only in God, nothing or no one else

Wednesday Psalm 62:7 God is like a rock

Thursday Psalm 62:8 God is a safe refuge

Friday 1 Cor. 7:29-31 How to behave in the “last days”

Saturday Mark 1:14-20 How to behave here and now

**Get Acquainted with Jonah this Week**

He is one of the strangest prophets of them all. His story is in the book named after him. There are only four chapters and some great scenes: a hurricane at sea, man overboard, whale food, whale vomit, sheep and cows dressing up and an amazing plant that grows *huge* overnight. (Go to biblegateway.com and read it in The Message translation.) Make a drawing or painting or a video of one of the passages. Take your creation to church and if your church has a website or Facebook page, be sure it’s posted there.

**Holy Conversation**

*Talking points for a family or small group conversation*

The writers of Jonah, 1 Corinthians and Mark are all concerned with how people of faith should live in the world. What might work for you?

* A period of repentance like the people of Nineveh? What would that look like these days?
* Detaching yourself from people and possessions as Paul encouraged the Corinthians? How might you do this thoughtfully?
* Leaving your “nets” as Mark reports Simon and Andrew did? What are the “nets” that are keeping you from living as faithfully as you’d like to?

**Caring**

*An idea for putting faith to work*

Do you know someone who is carrying a difficult burden: illness? family dilemma? money challenge? Take the time to write a note or call that person. Resist the temptation to solve the trouble. Simply *be* *present*. Pray.

**A Prayer for the Week**

*You could pray this for yourself or that person who is overwhelmed.*

Oh God! My cares and concerns are swallowing me up! It’s like living in the belly of a beast! I don’t have anywhere to turn and I’m alone! I’m afraid! Help me! You are my only safety, my only rock and my only refuge, my only hope. Send help - and one more thing - give me the grace to recognize it when it comes and give you thanks. Amen.

**A Blessing**

*You could place your hands on another and say this blessing.*

*You could also say it tenderly for yourself.*

May you pass unharmed through the turbulent waters of life.

May the might of God’s presence defend you.

May the goodness and mercy of God surround you.

**Bible Verse for the Week**

In God is my safety and my honor;

God is my strong rock and my refuge. Psalm 62:3

**A Poem for the Week**

Jesu

Jesu is in my heart, his sacred name

Is deeply carved there; but the other week

A great affliction broke the little frame

Even all to pieces; which I went to seek:

And first I found the corner where was J,

After where ES, and next where U was graved.

When I had got these parcels, instantly

I sat me down to spell them, and perceived

That to my broken heart he was *I ease you,*

And to my whole is *JESU.*

*George Herbert (1593 – 1633) was a classical scholar and musician. He eventually was ordained and spent the rest of his life in the small parish of Bemerton in Wiltshire, England. He wrote many religious hymn texts. See ##382, 402, 403, 487 and 592 in our Hymnal.*