

July 5<sup>th</sup> 2026








# WHEN MONDAY COMES

*Faith for the Week Ahead*

✿ Please take this home and use it during the week. ✿

Sunday worship is not meant to stay in the sanctuary.

Each week, When Monday Comes offers Scripture, prayers, reflections, and simple encouragement to help us carry faith into everyday life.

-  Read it with your morning coffee.
-  Use a prayer before bed.
-  Think about the weekly question.
-  Share a thought with someone else.
-  Let God speak in the ordinary places of life.

**Faith is not only for Sunday morning.**

Faith is for Monday decisions, Tuesday worries, Wednesday conversations, Thursday responsibilities, Friday weariness, Saturday hopes, and every step in between.

So please take this home, keep it nearby, and when Monday comes, remember:

*God is still with you.  
Christ is still calling you.  
The Spirit is still working in you.*



United Presbyterian Church of Whitinsville



## Another View

### When God Is Our Shelter

Walter Brueggemann was a well-known Old Testament scholar and teacher who helped many pastors and churches think more deeply about the Psalms. One of his helpful ideas was that the Psalms often speak to three seasons of life.

There are psalms of **orientation**, when life feels ordered, grounded, and secure.

There are psalms of **disorientation**, when life feels painful, confusing, broken, or unfair.

And there are psalms of **reorientation**, when God brings us through the hard season and helps us see life, faith, and hope in a new way.

This week we begin with psalms of orientation.

Psalms 27 and Psalm 91 both help us remember where to stand. They remind us that God is our light, our salvation, our refuge, and our shelter. They help us begin with God instead of beginning with fear.

But we need to be careful.

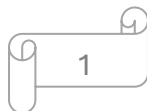
A psalm of orientation does not mean nothing bad will ever happen. It does not mean faithful people will never suffer. It does not mean that if we believe strongly enough, every hardship will pass around us and leave us untouched. That is not real life.

And it is not what these psalms say.

Psalms 27 is full of trouble. David speaks about enemies, evildoers, armies, false witnesses, and violence. He is not writing from a quiet place where everything is easy. He knows fear. He knows danger. He knows what it feels like to have people come against him.

Psalms 91 also speaks about danger. It mentions terror by night, arrows by day, pestilence, destruction, lions, serpents, and deadly threats. This is not a psalm for people who have never been afraid. It is a psalm for people who need to remember that fear is not the strongest thing in the room. God is.

Psalms 91 says, “You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty.” That is a powerful image. It does not say we visit God once in a while



when life gets hard. It says we live in God's shelter. We abide in God's shadow. We make God our refuge and fortress.

The psalm also says God will command his angels concerning us, to guard us in all our ways. That is a beautiful promise.

But it is not a promise that we can live foolishly and expect God to protect us from every consequence. It is not a promise that believers will never have hard seasons. It is not a promise that faith keeps us from every sickness, grief, bill, accident, disappointment, or loss.

Scripture can be twisted when we use it for our own purposes. Even when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, the devil quoted Psalm 91 and tried to use it to get Jesus to test God.

Jesus would not do it, and that should teach us something.

Psalm 91 is not a magic shield we use to avoid life's troubles. It is a call to trust God in the middle of them. It tells us that God protects us from dangers we can see, and also from dangers we may never fully understand. Some dangers are physical. Some are emotional. Some are spiritual.

The wild beasts in Psalm 91 can remind us of the things that threaten the soul: fear, despair, bitterness, pride, hatred, revenge, temptation, and the slow hardening of the heart.

Sometimes God protects us by taking danger away.  
Sometimes God protects us by walking with us through it.

And sometimes, even in a hard season God did not desire for us, God is still at work guarding our hearts in ways we may not see at the time. God may be protecting us from fear becoming our master, from bitterness taking root, from despair having the final word, or from our hearts slowly closing to grace. That is not always easy to accept.

When we are going through trouble, most of us just want the trouble to stop. We want the diagnosis to be changed. We want the bill to be paid. We want the relationship fixed. We want the problem solved. We want God to step in and make everything right.

And sometimes God does provide in direct and wonderful ways. But other times, God's protection looks different than we expected.

God may not come down and make the utility payment or car payment disappear. God may not remove every obstacle from the road. God may not answer in the timing we wanted.

But even then, God can still be at work within us.

That does not make the trouble good. It does not mean God caused it. It does not mean the hardship had to happen so we could learn a lesson.

It means God is faithful enough to meet us even there.

God can give us endurance.

God can deepen our faith.

God can keep fear from becoming our master.

God can keep bitterness from taking root.

God can strengthen us for the next step.

God can help us stand firm in spiritual battles we did not even know we were fighting.

Perhaps only when we meet God face to face will we know how many dangers God carried us through, how many wrong turns God kept us from taking, how many temptations God helped us resist, and how many unseen battles God's angels guarded us from.

Psalm 27 says much the same thing in a different way. David begins with confidence: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

He does not say there is nothing frightening in the world. There is. David knew that better than most. What he says is that the Lord is greater than what frightens him.

The Lord is his light. The Lord is his salvation.

The Lord is his stronghold. The Lord is the one he cannot do without.

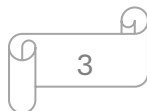
There is one line in Psalm 27 that reaches deep into the heart: "If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up."

That is a powerful statement. David is saying that even if every human support disappears, even if the people who should have been closest are gone, God will still be there for him. God will still help him. God will still protect him.

That is orientation. That is knowing where to stand.

Faith does not mean we never feel afraid. Faith means fear is not the foundation under our feet. Faith means that when everything else falls apart, we still know who holds us.

At the end of Psalm 27, David gives this encouragement: "Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord."



Waiting for the Lord does not mean sitting down and doing nothing.

It does not mean giving up.

It does not mean pretending the problem is not real.

Waiting for the Lord means continuing to trust God while we keep walking. It means doing the next faithful thing. It means praying and acting. It means asking for help when we need it. It means refusing to let fear make all our decisions.

Waiting is active faith.

Waiting is courage with patience.

Waiting is saying, "I do not see the whole road, but I know the One who walks with me."

That kind of faith becomes a witness to others. When others see us keep going, keep trusting, keep serving, keep loving, and keep hoping even in hard times, they see something of God's strength at work in us.

That does not mean we never have weak days. David had weak days.

The psalms are honest about that. But faith keeps bringing us back to the truth.

The Lord is my light.

The Lord is my salvation.

The Lord is my refuge.

The Lord is my shelter.

The Lord is my stronghold.

Psalms 27 and Psalm 91 do not tell us life will be easy. They tell us we are not alone. They do not promise that trouble will never come. They promise that God is faithful when it does.

That is what psalms of orientation do.

They help us remember what is true before trouble comes, so we have something to hold onto when trouble arrives.

They teach us where to stand. So, when fear comes, we do not have to pretend we are not afraid.

We can put our fears into the hands of God.

We can wait for the Lord.

We can be strong.

We can let our hearts take courage.

And we can keep walking, trusting that the God who is our light today will also be our refuge tomorrow.

## Walking It Out This Week

### Standing in God's Shelter

Psalms 27 and Psalm 91 remind us that faith gives us a place to stand. They do not promise that every day will be easy. They do not tell us to pretend we are not afraid. They teach us to begin with God before fear gets the first word.

This week, try starting each day with one simple sentence:

**The Lord is my light and my salvation. God is my refuge and shelter.**

Say it before you check the news.

Say it before you look at your schedule.

Say it before you start worrying about what might go wrong.

Say it before fear has a chance to move in and rearrange the furniture.

Then ask yourself: **What fear am I carrying today?**

Do not pretend it is not there. Name it honestly before God. It may be fear about health, family, money, work, the future, the church, or someone you love. Whatever it is, place it in God's hands.

You might pray: **Lord, this is what I am afraid of today. Help me not to let fear lead me. Help me stand in your light.**

Psalms 27 tells us to wait for the Lord, but waiting does not mean doing nothing. Waiting means trusting God while we take the next faithful step.

So, ask yourself: **What is the next faithful thing I can do?**

Maybe it is making the phone call.

Maybe it is asking for help.

Maybe it is forgiving someone.

Maybe it is resting instead of pushing harder.

Maybe it is showing up when you would rather hide.

Maybe it is doing one small good thing that fear told you would not matter.

That is active faith.

Psalm 91 also reminds us that not all dangers are outside of us. Some dangers threaten the soul. Fear can become our master. Bitterness can take root. Despair can make us believe tomorrow will never come. Pride can keep us from asking for help. Anger can harden our hearts.



So, this week, pay attention to what is happening inside you.

Ask God to guard your heart.

Ask God to keep fear from ruling you.

Ask God to keep bitterness from growing.

Ask God to keep your heart open to grace.

And look for one way to become a sign of God's shelter for someone else.

Send a note.

Make a call.

Listen without rushing.

Offer a ride.

Share a meal.

Pray with someone.

Remind someone they are not alone.

We may not be able to fix every problem. We may not be able to remove every fear. But we can help someone else remember that God is near.

This week, walk with this truth:

**The Lord is my light.**

**The Lord is my refuge.**

**The Lord is my shelter.**

**I can wait.**

**I can be strong.**

**I can take courage.**

**I can keep walking.**

## Prayer for the Week

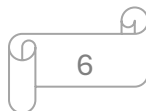
Lord, you are my light, my shelter, and my stronghold.

When I am afraid, help me remember that fear does not get the final word. When the road ahead is unclear, teach me to wait with courage and keep walking in faith.

Guard my heart from bitterness, despair, pride, and worry. Help me trust that you are with me in dangers I can see and in battles I may never understand.

This week, help me stand in your shelter, walk in your light, and become a sign of your care for someone else.

Amen.



## Faith Between Sundays

### Small Steps for the Week Ahead: Leaving Room for Hope

#### Monday

**Psalm 27:1** – “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?”

**Think about this:** What fear is trying to get the first word in your life this week? Name it honestly before God, then remind yourself: fear may be real, but it is not Lord.

#### Tuesday

**Psalm 27:4** – “One thing I asked of the Lord... to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.”

**Try this:** Take five quiet minutes today with no phone, no television, and no rushing. Sit with God. You do not have to say much. Just practice being with the One who is your shelter.

#### Wednesday

**Psalm 91:1-2** – “You who live in the shelter of the Most High... will say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.’”

**Think about this:** Where do you usually run first when life feels unsafe: worry, control, anger, busyness, isolation, or God? Ask God to help you make him your first refuge, not your last resort.

#### Thursday

**Psalm 91:11** – “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.”

**Try this:** Look back over your life and remember one time God carried you through something hard. You may not have seen it clearly then, but you can see it better now. Give thanks for that grace.

#### Friday

**Psalm 27:10** – “If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.”

**Think about this:** Human support can fail, even when people love us. God’s care does not. Is there a place in your life where you need to let God “take you up” and hold you steady?

#### Saturday

**Psalm 27:14** – “Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!”

**Try this:** Do one faithful thing today while you wait. Make the call. Say the prayer. Ask for help. Offer forgiveness. Take the next step. Waiting for the Lord does not mean standing still. It means walking with courage.

## Sunday

Psalm 91:1 – “You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty...”

### Think about this:

Before the week begins, remember where you live. You do not just visit God when life gets hard. You are invited to abide in God’s shelter, to stand in God’s shadow, and to begin this week with trust instead of fear.

## God’s Fuel for the Week Fear Is Not the Foundation

One of the gifts of Psalm 27 and Psalm 91 is that they give us words to carry before trouble comes. Sooner or later, fear will knock on the door. It may come through a diagnosis, a bill, a family concern, a hard decision, an uncertain future, or just the weariness of trying to hold everything together.

Faith does not mean fear never shows up. Faith means fear does not get to build the foundation. Psalm 27 says, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” That does not mean there is nothing frightening in the world. It means God is greater than what frightens us.

Psalm 91 says we live in the shelter of the Most High. That means we do not face the week alone. We do not have to carry every burden by ourselves. We do not have to understand every danger in order to trust the One who holds us.

So, when fear starts talking this week, answer it with truth:

**The Lord is my light.**  
**The Lord is my refuge.**  
**The Lord is my shelter.**  
**The Lord is my stronghold.**

Let those words be fuel for the road ahead.

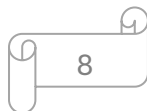
They may not make every problem disappear.

They may not answer every question.

They may not shorten every waiting season.

But they can steady your heart and sometimes that is exactly the grace we need most: not a different road, but courage to keep walking the road before us with God.

So, take courage.  
Wait for the Lord.  
Keep walking.



# Prayers for the Week

## Leaving Room for Hope

### **Monday**

Lord, you are my light and my salvation. When fear rises up, shine your light on the path before me. Help me trust that I am not walking alone. Give me courage for the next faithful step. Amen.

### **Tuesday**

Lord, you are my refuge and my fortress. When I feel overwhelmed, help me run to you first instead of running to worry, anger, or control. Hold me steady in your grace. Amen.

### **Wednesday**

Lord, guard my heart today. Protect me not only from dangers around me, but from fear, bitterness, despair, pride, and anything that pulls me away from your love. Keep my heart open to you. Amen.

### **Thursday**

Lord, thank you for the ways you have carried me through trouble, even when I did not see it at the time. Help me look back with gratitude and look ahead with trust. Amen.

### **Friday**

Lord, when human support feels weak or uncertain, remind me that your care does not fail. Take me up, hold me close, and help me know that I belong to you. Amen.

### **Saturday**

Lord, teach me to wait with courage. Help me be strong, let my heart take courage, and keep me walking in faith. As this week ends, help me rest in your shelter and trust you for tomorrow. Amen.

### **Sunday**

Lord, as this week begins, help me remember where I live. Teach me to abide in your shelter and rest in your care. Before fear, worry, or busyness get the first word, let my heart begin with you. Amen.



## **From the Pew** **The Better Question**

When people find out I worked as a paramedic, one of the questions I sometimes get is, “What was your worst call?”

I understand why people ask. Most folks are not trying to be unkind. They are curious. They know paramedics see things most people do not see. They wonder what stays with you after the ambulance is cleaned, the report is written, the lights are turned off, and the radio is quiet.

But I have never liked that question. Some stories are not mine to tell. Some moments belong to families who were living the worst day of their lives. Some things should not be turned into stories just because someone asks a question.

And the truth is, the worst calls are not always the ones people imagine.

Sometimes what stays with you is not the noise, or the lights, or the scene itself. Sometimes what stays with you is a face. A voice. A question. A family member trying to make sense of something that cannot be made sense of in that moment.

Sometimes what stays with you is the silence afterward. There was one call I have carried with me for many years.

It was a Sunday morning. A woman was on her way to church when her car was hit head-on by a truck carrying two young people who had apparently been drinking through the night.

When we arrived, she was pinned in the driver’s seat. We were with her for about thirty minutes while the rescue crew worked to free her. During that time, she talked with us. She told us about her grandchildren. She talked about a trip she and her husband were planning to take to celebrate his retirement.

And more than once, she asked about the young people in the truck that had hit her. She was worried about them. That is the part that still stays with me.

Here was a woman trapped in a crushed car, living through a nightmare she had not caused, and she was still concerned about the people who had struck her vehicle.

We truly thought she was going to make it. We were working. We were talking with her. We were doing what we were trained to do. There were expectations she would survive.

But once the frame was cut and she was freed, something changed. She looked at my partner, gently touched his arm, and said, “Tell my family I love them, and that I will be OK.” And then, no matter what life saving treatment we tried she died right there. Later we learned there was nothing we could have done to save her. Her injury was hidden and catastrophic. But knowing that does not make the memory easy to carry.

I learned something that day that I later taught my paramedic students. When a patient is frightened, they may cry out, “Do not let me die,” or “I am going to die.” That is fear speaking, and fear is loud.

But when a patient becomes very calm, looks at you with a kind of peace, and says, “Tell my family I love them,” or “Do not worry, I will be OK,” every paramedic should pay attention. That kind of calm can be a very bad sign. It means you had better be sure you have done everything humanly possible, because you may be standing at the edge of a goodbye.

What made that call so hard was not only that she died. It was what was lost.

A woman lost the years she might have had. Years with family. Years with grandchildren. Years of kindness and influence still to give. Two young drivers had their lives marked by something they could never undo. Families were changed. Futures were altered. My partner was a good paramedic, someone who had spent his life helping people. But that call stayed with him in such a painful way that a few months later he quit being a paramedic.

That is what made it the worst call. Not just what I saw.  
What it took. What it changed. What never got to happen because of it.

That is the part people do not always understand when they ask about the “worst call.”

The worst call is not just about what happened. It is about the ripple that moves outward. It touches the person who was hurt, family, friends, the responders, and people who were nearby and suddenly became witnesses to someone else’s pain. Sometimes those ripples last for years. Sometimes they last for generations. Life is fragile that way.

Most of us know that, even if we do not like to think about it. A phone call can change everything. A diagnosis can change everything. An accident can change everything. A loss can change everything.

One moment we are walking through an ordinary day, and the next moment we are standing in the middle of trouble we did not ask for and do not understand. That is why Psalm 27 and Psalm 91 matter.

They do not pretend trouble is not real. They do not say faithful people never suffer. They do not promise that every danger will pass around us and leave us untouched. They tell us where to stand when trouble comes.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” That does not mean there is nothing frightening in the world. There is. Some days are frightening. Some moments shake us. Some memories stay with us.

But fear is not the strongest thing in the room. God is.

Psalms 91 says we live in the shelter of the Most High. That does not mean we never walk through painful places. It means that even there, God is present.

God is present with the frightened. God is present with the grieving.  
God is present with the helpers. God is present in the silence after the sirens stop.

When you work in emergency services, you learn to keep moving. You finish the call. You clean the equipment. You restock the ambulance. You check the fuel. You get ready for the next run. The radio does not wait for your heart to catch up. But later, sometimes, your heart does catch up.

And when it does, you realize you have been standing on holy ground more often than you knew. Not because the moments were easy. Not because everything turned out the way you prayed it would. But because human life is holy. Grief is holy. Compassion is holy. The courage to keep loving in the middle of pain is holy.

Maybe that is why the question, “What was your worst call?” has always bothered me. Maybe the better question is not, “What was the worst thing you ever saw?” Maybe the better question is, “How are you doing after all the things you have seen?”

And that question should not be reserved only for paramedics, firefighters, police officers, nurses, doctors, soldiers, or anyone else who has stood close to tragedy. It is a question the church and all Christians ought to learn how to ask everyone.

Because everyone carries something.

Some people carry memories from a hospital room. Some carry grief from a funeral.

Some carry the weight of a family conflict. Some carry a diagnosis.

Some carry regret. Some carry fear about someone they love.

Some carry pain they have never found the words to explain.

Most people do not need someone to be curious about their worst moment. They need someone to care about how they are doing now. As followers of Christ, we are called to be those people.

We are called to notice. We are called to listen. We are called to ask with kindness. We are called to make room for honest answers.

Psalm 27 and Psalm 91 remind us that God is our light, our refuge, our shelter, and our stronghold. But sometimes people need to hear that truth through the care of another human being.

Sometimes God's shelter looks like someone sitting beside us.  
Sometimes God's light comes through a phone call.  
Sometimes God's refuge is felt when someone asks, "How are you really doing?" and then stays long enough to hear the answer.

When people ask, "What was your worst call?" I usually do not give them the kind of answer they expect. The worst calls are not entertainment. They are reminders that life is fragile, people are precious, and everyone we meet may be carrying something we cannot see. They also remind me that we all need a shelter stronger than ourselves.

Psalm 27 says, "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord." That kind of waiting is not easy. But sometimes it is all we can do. We wait with grief. We wait with questions. We wait with memories. We wait with faith that may feel small but is still real. And while we wait, God holds us.

So maybe the better question is not, "What was your worst call?"  
Maybe the better question is, "Where did you see grace when everything was broken?"

Because I have seen it. I have seen grace in hospital rooms, on roadsides, in living rooms, in ambulances, and in the quiet faces of people who were hurting but still thinking about others.

I saw it in a woman who, even while trapped in a terrible moment she did not cause, was still worried about the young people who had hit her. I saw it when she spoke love for her family. I saw it in the tenderness of a hand touching a paramedic's arm.

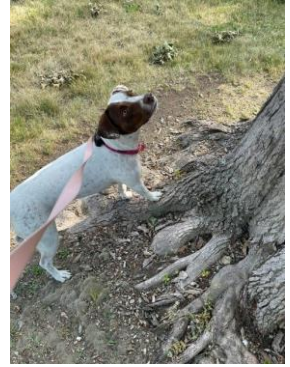
And I believe this with all my heart:  
God is present in the places we would never choose to stand.  
God is our light. God is our refuge. God is our shelter. God is our stronghold.

And when life brings us to the kind of place we cannot get through on our own, God is already there.

## Wisdom from Bird Dog Squirrels, Rabbits, and What Gets Our Attention

Bird Dog is usually a very easygoing dog. On most walks, she is content to stroll along, sniff what needs sniffing, check the neighborhood news, and make sure the park is still operating according to her standards.

But Bird Dog has opinions. Rabbits, for example, do not seem to concern her very much. We can be walking in the park, and a rabbit may be only a few feet away. Bird will stop, look at the rabbit, then look at me with an expression that seems to say, “What is that thing, and why is it in my park?”



She does not bark. She does not lunge. She does not try to chase it. She just studies it, as though she is not quite sure whether it is an animal, a poorly designed cat, or a small member of a committee sent to inspect the grass.

But squirrels are another matter entirely. If Bird Dog sees a squirrel, something changes. The calm, gentle, easygoing dog disappears, and suddenly she becomes a highly focused woodland surveillance unit.

The walk also comes to a complete crawl. Normally, Bird Dog walks along at a reasonable pace. But when a squirrel is nearby, walking her is like walking a snail on a very short leash. Every tree must be inspected. Every branch must be studied. Every sound in the leaves must be taken seriously.

She creeps forward, stops, stares, creeps forward again, and then looks up into the tree as if she is waiting for the squirrel to confess. The squirrel, of course, does not confess.

Every now and then, Bird decides she might be able to climb the tree. She cannot. But that does not keep her from trying. She stands on her back legs, puts her paws against the trunk, and looks up as though she is saying, “Come down here and discuss this like a mature woodland creature.”

I do not know what Bird Dog has against squirrels. I do not know if squirrels offend her sense of order. All I know is that rabbits get a puzzled look, but squirrels get her full attention. And if I am honest, I understand that more than I probably should. We all have our squirrels.

There are things that set us off faster than they should. A comment. A tone of voice. A change in plans. A slow driver. A long line. A church decision.

A problem that is inconvenient, but not really life changing.

Before we know it, we are standing with our paws on the tree, giving far too much attention to something that may not deserve that much of our energy. Or maybe we are just stuck there, staring upward, unable to move on. Like Bird Dog, we have slowed the whole walk down because one squirrel has taken over our attention.

Meanwhile, there may be rabbits nearby. Real needs. Real hurts. Real people. Real opportunities to show kindness. And we barely notice them. Sometimes we get worked up over small things and miss the things that matter more. We chase irritation and walk past compassion. We spend our energy on annoyance and have little left for love.

Psalms 27 says, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” That verse helps us remember where our attention belongs. Not every squirrel deserves our fear. Not every irritation deserves our outrage. Not every problem deserves to become the center of our day.

Psalms 91 reminds us that God is our shelter. If we are living in God’s shelter, we do not have to react to every small thing as though it is a threat. We can pause. We can breathe. We can ask, “Is this worth chasing? Is this where God wants my attention today?”

That does not mean nothing matters. Some things do matter deeply. Some wrongs need to be addressed. Some dangers need to be faced. Some people need protection, help, and care. But not every squirrel is a crisis. Bird Dog may never learn that. The squirrel may always win the battle for her attention.

But maybe we can learn. Maybe this week, when something starts to bother us, we can stop and ask:

Is this a squirrel I am about to chase?

Is this worth the energy I am giving it?

Is there someone nearby I am failing to notice?

What would a loving attitude have me pay attention to right now?

Bird Dog does not know theology, but she does know focus. Unfortunately, her focus is sometimes located about twelve feet up a tree. Still, she teaches me something. What we chase matters, what we ignore matters too.

So, this week, may God help us notice the difference. May God help us spend less energy barking at squirrels and more energy loving the people placed in front of us. And may God Give us enough wisdom to know when to let the squirrel stay in the tree and keep walking.