August 23 2026

WHEN MONDAY COMES

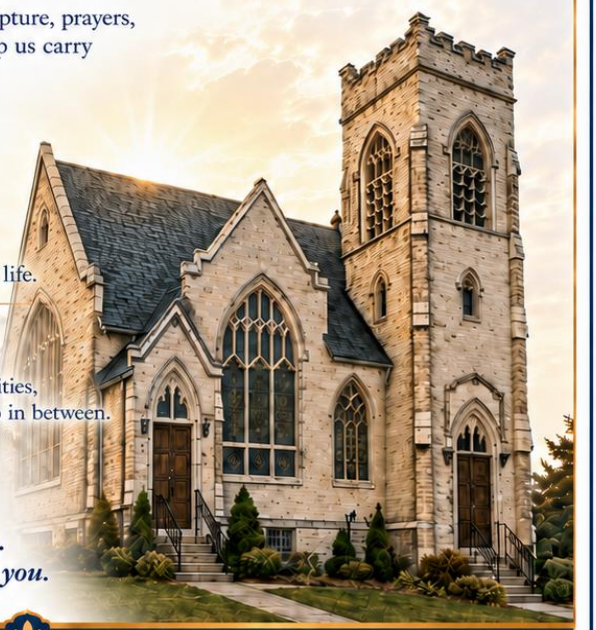
Faith for the Week Ahead

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

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Sunday Worship at 10:30 a.m. • https://whitinpres.org

Another View
The Next Faithful Choice

Most of us will never stand before Pharaoh and receive an order as terrible as the one given to the Hebrew midwives. Yet nearly every day, we make smaller choices that reveal what we truly value.

We decide whether to repeat a rumor, join in gossip, laugh at a joke that degrades someone, remain silent when another person is treated unfairly, or go along with something we know is dishonest. We decide whether our desire to fit in is stronger than our willingness to live according to what we believe.

Faithfulness is often revealed not in one dramatic moment, but in the next ordinary choice.

The book of Exodus begins with an ominous sentence:

"Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph."

Joseph had once helped save Egypt during a devastating famine. Because of him, his family and the other Israelites had been welcomed into the land. Egypt became a place of safety, provision, and new beginnings.

But generations passed. Joseph died. His brothers died. The people who remembered what Joseph had done were gone.

The new Pharaoh did not know Joseph's story. When he looked at the Israelites, he did not see neighbors whose ancestors had helped Egypt survive. He saw growing numbers, outsiders, and a possible threat.

Fear changed the story.

Pharaoh began telling the Egyptians that the Israelites were dangerous. If war came, he warned, they might join Egypt's enemies. Something had to be done.

That is how fear often works. It takes a person or group and turns them into an explanation for everything that is wrong. Instead of addressing complicated problems honestly, we look for someone to blame. We make another race, nationality, religion,

generation, political group, workplace department, or individual into the convenient cause of our frustration.

Once people accept that story, cruelty can begin to sound reasonable.

Pharaoh's fear became policy. He placed taskmasters over the Israelites, forced them into hard labor, and made their lives bitter. Yet the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread.

Pharaoh could make them suffer, but he could not cancel God's purposes.

When forced labor failed, Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, to kill every newborn Hebrew boy. The midwives were now being asked to become part of the system Pharaoh had created.

They faced a terrible choice. They could obey the king and protect themselves, or they could obey God and protect the children entrusted to them.

They chose life.

Pharaoh had wealth, armies, authority, and monuments intended to preserve the greatness of kings—yet Exodus does not even tell us his name. The names remembered are Shiphrah and Puah, two midwives who quietly chose life over fear. The powerful ruler became anonymous, while the faithful choices of two ordinary women are still being told today. Perhaps that reminds us that God measures a life differently than the world does.

Scripture tells us that the midwives feared God and did not do what Pharaoh commanded. They could not overthrow the Egyptian government. They could not free the Israelites or end their oppression. But they could refuse to become instruments of death.

Faithfulness sometimes begins with refusing to become what fear demands of us.

The Czech writer Václav Havel wrote about how unjust systems gain power over ordinary people. A system does not survive only because powerful leaders demand obedience. It survives because individuals gradually adjust themselves to it.

People may not truly believe the lie, but they learn to live within it. They remain silent. They repeat the expected words. They perform the small actions that keep the system functioning. They tell themselves that they have no choice, that everyone else is doing it, or that their participation does not really matter.

The first compromise may appear harmless. That is what makes it dangerous.

We tell ourselves:

"I do not agree with it, but I will remain silent."
"I would never do the worst thing, but this smaller part is probably harmless."
"It is only a joke."
"I am only repeating what someone else told me."
"No one will know."
"I am just doing what my supervisor asked."

Each small accommodation makes the next one easier. Eventually, we may no longer simply live within the system. We help become the system.

Shiphrah and Puah refused that first moral compromise. They could not dismantle Pharaoh's system, but they would not allow Pharaoh's system to take up residence within them.

Most of us encounter these choices in much more ordinary settings.

They happen around workplace tables, in break rooms, over coffee, through text messages, at family gatherings, and sometimes even in church. They often happen among people we know and trust, because those are the places where we may feel safe enough to say things we would never say publicly.

Someone begins criticizing an absent coworker. Another person adds a rumor. Soon the conversation has reduced someone's entire life to one mistake, one weakness, or one unverified story.

Someone tells a joke that uses a race, nationality, religion, or group of people as an extension of our fears and frustrations. We may know it is unkind, but we laugh because everyone else is laughing.

Someone uses language we would be embarrassed to use in worship, yet we adopt it because we want to belong.

Someone blames another group for every problem, and rather than challenge the exaggeration, we quietly accept it.

We may not be able to change the entire culture around us, but we can refuse to let that culture decide how we speak and whom we blame.

Faithfulness may mean declining to repeat a rumor. It may mean changing the direction of a conversation, refusing cruel humor, or reminding others that the person being discussed is more than the worst thing being said about them.

It may mean admitting, "I do not know whether that story is true, so I am not going to pass it along."

It may mean speaking respectfully about someone who is not present to defend themselves.

It may mean remembering that every person being reduced to a label is someone God created and loves.

Sometimes faithfulness costs more than social discomfort.

A friend I once worked with is a Seventh-day Adventist. His understanding of the Sabbath meant that he would not work from sundown Friday through sundown Saturday. He was so committed to that belief that he had quit jobs rather than violate his conscience.

Some coworkers accused him of using religion as an excuse to avoid weekend work. Once that accusation began, others would join in: "I wish I had a religion that could get me out of working Saturdays."

It was easy to make a joke about his conviction when they were not the ones risking their employment to keep it.

I saw something different. I saw someone willing to accept the cost of living according to his beliefs.

His decision was not an attempt to earn salvation or prove that he was better than anyone else. It was his effort to live honestly before God according to his understanding of Scripture.

I admired his commitment. I would like to believe that I would surrender a job rather than surrender a deeply held conviction, but I am grateful that I have never been forced to find out.

When Saturday work was necessary, I often took the shift. I did not share his exact understanding of the Sabbath, but I respected it. I could not live his faith for him, but I could help make room for him to live it faithfully.

That was not a moral compromise on my part. It was an accommodation that respected another person's conscience.

Healthy compromise helps people live and work together. Moral compromise asks us to participate in something we believe is dishonest, harmful, dehumanizing, or contrary to God's will.

There is an important difference.

We may not share every conviction held by another Christian, coworker, neighbor, or friend. But we can respect the courage required to live honestly before God. We do not have to mock someone's faith, question their motives, or pressure them into violating their conscience simply because their convictions differ from ours.

Romans 11 adds another important truth. Some Gentile Christians apparently believed that because they had been welcomed into God's promises, God must have rejected Israel.

Paul responds emphatically: "By no means!"

God has not abandoned His people because "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."

Paul warns the Gentile Christians not to become proud. Their inclusion in God's mercy does not mean someone else has been pushed away. They are not replacements who now have permission to look down upon those who came before them.

Being included in God's grace never gives us permission to exclude another person from it.

Pharaoh looked at the Israelites and decided they were expendable. Paul warns Christians against making a similar judgment about Israel. In both passages, human beings are tempted to decide who matters, who belongs, and whom God has abandoned.

But God does not throw people away.

That truth should influence how we treat the people around us. It should affect how we speak about those with whom we disagree, how we respond to people whose beliefs differ from ours, and how quickly we join in blaming someone else for our fears and problems.

It should also cause us to examine the witness of our own lives.

If someone were asked to describe us, what would they say?

They might remember our careers, hobbies, adventures, accomplishments, or mistakes. They might say that Mark was a pilot, a SCUBA diver, a firefighter, or a stained-glass artist.

Those are meaningful parts of a life.

But would they also say that Mark was a faithful follower of Christ?

Would they remember that he spoke truthfully, protected vulnerable people, refused to spread gossip, made room for the convictions of others, and tried to give God the greater glory?

Would they remember only that we said we believed in Christ, or would they remember that being around us gave them some glimpse of Christ's mercy?

Most of us will never face Pharaoh. But we will face the next conversation, the next workplace decision, the next opportunity to protect someone's dignity, and the next moment when following our conscience may cost us something.

In those moments, we do not have to solve every problem or change an entire system by ourselves. Shiphrah and Puah could not free Israel, but they could protect the lives placed before them. One faithful choice became part of the much larger story God was writing.

The same can be true of us.

A rumor that stops with us does not travel any farther. A person who is defended instead of ridiculed knows that someone sees their worth. A coworker whose beliefs are respected discovers that faith and compassion can still have a place at work. A truthful word, a gracious response, or a quiet act of courage may seem small, but God has always been able to do remarkable things through ordinary acts of faithfulness.

Paul reminds us why we can live with that hope: God does not abandon His people. God's gifts and calling are irrevocable, and God's mercy is greater than our failures, fears, and divisions.

When we are uncertain what to do, we can ask:
Which choice protects life?
Which choice preserves another person's dignity?
Which choice reflects God's mercy?
Which choice allows me to live truthfully before God?
Which choice gives God the greater glory?

Then we take the next faithful step, trusting that we do not take it alone.

Every time we refuse a lie, stop a rumor, make room for another person, speak with kindness, or choose mercy over fear, we help tell a better story—the story of a God who does not throw people away and who continues working through ordinary people like us.

The world may still build fences, but by God's grace, we can keep making taller ladders.

Weekly Reflections: August 23–29, 2026

The Next Faithful Choice

Faithfulness is not always demonstrated through one dramatic act. More often, it appears in the next conversation, the next decision, and the next opportunity to treat someone with dignity.

This week, pay attention to the small choices before you. A rumor can stop with you. A person can be defended instead of ridiculed. Someone's conscience can be respected. A truthful word, a gracious response, or a quiet act of courage can become part of the larger story God is writing.

Prayer for the Week

Faithful God,

Help me recognize the choices placed before me each day. Give me wisdom to know what is true, courage to refuse what is harmful, and compassion to protect the dignity of others.

When fear encourages me to blame, remind me to seek understanding. When gossip invites me to join in, help me guard my words. When another person's convictions differ from mine, teach me to respond with respect rather than ridicule.

Keep me from the small compromises that slowly draw me away from You. Help me choose the action that protects life, extends mercy, and gives You the greater glory.

Use my ordinary words and decisions to make Your grace visible. When the world builds fences, show me how to build a taller ladder.

Amen.

Sunday, August 23
The Choice Before Us

Scripture:
"But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them." —Exodus 1:17

Shiphrah and Puah could not overthrow Pharaoh or end the suffering of the Israelites. What they could do was refuse to become part of the harm he demanded. Their faithfulness began with the choice directly in front of them.

Most of us will never face a command as terrible as theirs, but we regularly encounter moments when we must decide whether to follow fear, pressure, convenience, or conscience. We may be asked to remain silent, repeat a rumor, laugh at someone else's expense, overlook dishonesty, or dismiss another person's deeply held belief.

We may not be able to change everything, but we can choose what kind of person we will become within the situation before us.

Today's faithful choice:
Before making a difficult decision, ask: "Which available choice protects dignity, reflects mercy, and gives God the greater glory?"

Prayer:
Faithful God, give me wisdom to recognize the choice before me and courage to choose what is truthful, merciful, and right. Amen.

Monday, August 24
Remember the Whole Story

Scripture:
"Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph." — Exodus 1:8

The new Pharaoh looked at the Israelites and saw only a threat. He did not remember Joseph, the famine, or the ways Joseph's family had helped Egypt survive. It is easy to judge someone by one mistake, one rumor, one disagreement, or one difficult moment. But every person has a longer story than the part we happen to know.

Today's faithful choice:
Before judging someone, pause and ask, "What part of their story might I not know?"

Prayer:
God of truth, help me see people as more than labels, rumors, or problems. Teach me to remember their humanity. Amen.

Tuesday, August 25
Let the Rumor Stop Here

Scripture:
"But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread."
—Exodus 1:12

Pharaoh spread fear about the Israelites. He encouraged people to believe that an entire group was dangerous and responsible for Egypt's problems.

Fear still travels through careless words. Gossip, exaggeration, and rumors can turn someone into a convenient target.

We may not be able to correct every false story, but we can refuse to help it travel.

Today's faithful choice:
Do not repeat information you cannot verify. When gossip begins, change the subject or say, "I do not know whether that is true."

Prayer:
God of wisdom, place a guard over my words. Let rumors stop with me and kindness begin with me. Amen.

Wednesday, August 26
Make Room for Conscience

Scripture:
"But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them." — Exodus 1:17

Shiphrah and Puah understood that Pharaoh's authority did not remove their responsibility before God.

People of faith do not always interpret every issue in exactly the same way. A conviction that seems unnecessary to one person may be deeply important to another. We do not have to share another person's belief before we can respect the courage required to live by it.

Today's faithful choice:
Look for one way to make room for another person's sincere conviction rather than mocking, dismissing, or testing it.

Prayer:
God of grace, help me respect the conscience of others even when their convictions differ from mine. Amen.

Thursday, August 27
Refuse the First Compromise

Scripture:
"The midwives feared God." — Exodus 1:17

Moral compromise rarely begins with one enormous decision. It often begins with something that appears small:

"It is only a joke."
"Everyone else is doing it."
"I do not agree, but I will remain silent."

Each small surrender can make the next one easier. Shiphrah and Puah could not dismantle Pharaoh's system, but they refused to let that system decide who they would become.

Today's faithful choice:
Notice one situation in which you are tempted to go along merely because speaking or acting differently would be uncomfortable.

Prayer:
God of courage, help me recognize the first small compromise and choose what is honest, merciful, and right. Amen.

Friday, August 28
God Does Not Throw People Away

Scripture:
"For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." — Romans 11:29

Paul insists that God has not rejected Israel. Human failure does not make God abandon His promises.

We sometimes treat people as though one failure, disagreement, or difficult season has erased their value. But God's mercy is greater than the labels we place upon one another.

Being included in God's grace never gives us permission to exclude someone else from it.

Today's faithful choice:
Think of someone you have quietly dismissed. Ask God to help you see that person through the eyes of mercy.

Prayer:
Faithful God, thank You for not abandoning me. Help me extend to others the mercy I have received from You. Amen.

Saturday, August 29
Build a Taller Ladder

Scripture:
"God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all."
—Romans 11:32

The world gives us many reasons to build fences: fear, pride, suspicion, resentment, and the desire to protect ourselves.

God's mercy invites us to respond differently.

A ladder may be a truthful word spoken for someone who is absent. It may be a shift worked so another person can honor a religious conviction. It may be an apology, an invitation, a rumor stopped, or a kindness offered across a disagreement.

Small acts of faithfulness may not remove every fence, but they can help someone cross it.

Today's faithful choice:
Do one thing that makes it easier for another person to experience dignity, belonging, or mercy.

Prayer:
God of abundant mercy, make me part of the help You send. When the world builds fences, show me how to build a taller ladder. Amen.

From the Pew

Three Patients, One Water Jug

My father used to tell me, "Don't become part of the water-cooler crowd."

He was not warning me about dehydration. He meant the people who gathered around the water cooler at work and spent their time gossiping, complaining, and discussing everyone who was not there to defend themselves.

Years later, while working as a paramedic, I answered a medical call that gave his warning an entirely new meaning.

The call came from a business reporting a leg or foot injury in the employee break room. It sounded fairly routine. Someone had probably tripped over a chair, dropped something on a foot, or twisted an ankle.

When we arrived, however, we discovered that one empty water cooler had somehow produced three patients, five gallons of water on the floor, one very unhappy maintenance worker, and enough blame to fill another jug.

Several employees had been taking a break and standing around the water cooler talking. Someone filled a cup and used the last of the water. That started a conversation about how the maintenance staff never replaced the empty five-gallon jugs quickly enough.

One person decided to take matters into their own hands. A full jug was sitting nearby and replacing it would show the maintenance department that someone else could do the job.

This was back when the large bottle sat upside down on top of the dispenser. You removed the cap, lifted approximately forty pounds of water, and tried to turn the jug over and place it into the opening before water went everywhere.

It was a maneuver requiring a firm grip, reasonable upper-body strength, and perhaps a small prayer.

The employee lifted the jug, removed the cap, and began turning it over. Just as the bottle reached the top of the dispenser, it slipped.

The full jug fell onto the person's lower leg and foot. When it struck the floor, water poured across the tile.

The other employees, attempting to escape the sudden indoor flood, began slipping. One person injured an ankle. Another fell backward and injured their back.

Three patients. One water jug.

The person with the ankle injury eventually signed a refusal of transport. The employee struck by the jug had considerable swelling and pain in the lower leg, with a possible fracture. The person who fell backward was placed on a backboard, as was common practice at the time.

We transported the two more seriously injured employees to the hospital in the same ambulance.

But while we were treating the physical injuries, another kind of injury was taking place in the break room.

Nearly everyone blamed the maintenance man.

The employees insisted that the entire incident had happened because he had failed to replace the jug quickly enough. Never mind that there had still been some water in it before the break began. Never mind that someone else had chosen to lift a forty-pound container without being sure they could control it. Never mind that the maintenance worker had not dropped the jug or caused anyone to run across a wet tile floor.

He was the designated fall guy.

As the maintenance man was called in and quietly tried to mop up five gallons of water, one employee offered the helpful observation, “The floor is probably cleaner than it has ever been before.”

I do not remember the maintenance man saying anything in response. I remember his face.

Of everyone injured that day, he may have carried the wound that lasted the longest.

Bruises heal. Sprains improve. Broken bones mend. But public humiliation, unfair accusations, and words spoken by a crowd can remain with someone for a very long time.

As we were preparing to leave, the boss arrived and asked how three employees had managed to injure themselves because of a “water bubbler.”

He was apparently from New England, where many people call a drinking fountain or water cooler a bubbler. At the time, I had never heard the expression, and neither had most of the employees.

That started an entirely new argument about whether the object was a water cooler, a dispenser, or a bubbler.

I never heard how that discussion ended. I had two patients to transport and had already learned more than enough about what could happen around a water cooler.

The entire event began with something small: an empty jug and a complaint.

The complaint became a group conversation. The conversation became a judgment about someone who was not present. The judgment led to an impulsive action. When that action went badly, the group protected itself by blaming the person it had already decided was at fault.

That is how a water-cooler crowd often works.

People gather around a shared frustration. Someone tells a story. Another person adds details. Suspicion becomes a fact. A person becomes a problem. Before long, everyone agrees on who should be blamed—even when that person has little or nothing to do with what happened.

Most of us would never intentionally cause someone serious harm. But we may still participate in the smaller choices that make harm possible.

We laugh at the remark.
We repeat the rumor.
We add what we heard from someone else.
We remain silent while another person is ridiculed.
We decide that because several people agree, the accusation must be true.

Pharaoh did something similar in Exodus. He looked at the Israelites and turned them into the explanation for Egypt's fears. He told a story in which an entire group became a threat. Once enough people accepted that story, harsh treatment began to seem justified.

Shiphrah and Puah refused to become part of that system. They could not stop Pharaoh from speaking, but they could stop his command from passing through them.

We can do the same.

We may not be able to prevent every rumor from beginning, but it can stop with us. We may not be able to change the whole water-cooler crowd, but we can refuse to add another accusation.

We can say, "I do not know whether that is true."

We can remind people that the person being criticized is not present to explain.

We can refuse to turn someone into the scapegoat for a problem that belongs to many people.

We can remember that every person has a story, a family, fears, struggles, and a God-given dignity that should not disappear simply because the group needs someone to blame.

Paul reminds us in Romans that God does not cast people aside. "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." God remains faithful even when human beings fail, wander, misunderstand, or disappoint one another.

If God does not throw people away, neither should we.

My father's advice was good: "Don't become part of the water-cooler crowd."

That does not mean we must avoid every break room or refuse to speak with coworkers. It means we should pay attention to what happens when we are there.

Are we carrying gossip away in our cup, or are we bringing grace into the conversation?

Are we helping blame spread, or helping it stop?

Are we making someone smaller so the rest of us can feel better, or are we helping others remember that every person matters?

The water on that break-room floor was eventually cleaned up.

I suspect the words took much longer to dry.

Words of Wisdom from Bird Dog

Get Off the Stump and Keep Walking

Bird Dog considers the park where we take our walks to be her personal property.

She permits other people to use it, of course, provided they understand that she remains responsible for inspecting the paths, investigating unusual smells, and keeping the local squirrel population under control.

One particular squirrel lived in a huge tree along our regular route. It seemed to take special pleasure in tormenting Bird Dog. The squirrel would run partway down the trunk, stop just close enough to convince her that she might catch it, and then race safely back up the tree when she charged.

Bird Dog never caught the squirrel, but that did not prevent her from trying. Their daily confrontation had become part of the walk.

Then one afternoon, everything changed.

The tree had been there that morning. By the time we returned later in the day, it was gone.

Not damaged. Not missing a few branches. Gone.

All that remained was a large stump.

Bird Dog stopped and stared.

She looked at the stump, then around the park as though someone must have moved the tree while she was not watching. She searched for the familiar trunk, the branches, and perhaps even the squirrel she had spent so much time trying to chase away.

She seemed genuinely bewildered.

Something she considered permanent—something that helped hold her understanding of the park together—had disappeared without warning. No one had asked her permission. No one had given her time to prepare. The familiar landmark and her familiar enemy were simply gone.

We can react the same way when something important in our lives suddenly changes.

A job ends. A friend moves away. A loved one dies. Our health changes. A church tradition disappears. A role that once gave us purpose is no longer ours. A place that held years of memories is sold, altered, or torn down.

We stand before what remains and wonder, “How did this happen?”

Sometimes we even begin to miss the things that once frustrated us.

Bird Dog never liked that squirrel. Yet when it disappeared, she seemed almost disappointed. At least the squirrel had given her something familiar to chase. She knew what to do when it ran down the tree. She understood that part of the world.

The missing tree left her facing something new.

Human beings often prefer a familiar problem to an unfamiliar future. We may complain about an old routine, difficult responsibility, frustrating relationship, or stubborn situation. But when it disappears, we may suddenly wish it would return—not because it was good, but because we knew how to live with it.

The familiar can feel safer than the unknown.

But not everything familiar is good for us.

Some changes are necessary. A destructive habit may need to end. An addiction may need to be confronted. A harmful relationship may require distance, firm boundaries, or even an ending. An unhealthy workplace, damaging pattern, or way of living may have to be left behind so that healing can begin.

We may know that the change is right and still miss part of what was lost.

We may miss the routine, the companionship, the sense of certainty, or even the temporary comfort the old habit provided. That does not mean returning to it would be wise. It means we are human.

We can grieve what was familiar without pretending it was healthy. We can miss part of the old life while still embracing the freedom, healing, and new possibilities God is placing before us.

Missing the tree does not always mean it should still be standing.

We can also confuse what is familiar with what is permanent. A building, tradition, position, relationship, or routine can become so central to our lives that we begin to believe it is what holds everything together.

Then it changes, and we wonder whether anything remains secure.

But God was never confined to the tree.

God is present when the tree is standing, when it is being removed, and when all that remains is a stump. God is present along the familiar path and in the part of the journey we have not yet learned to recognize.

Our circumstances may change. Our routines may change. Even the ways we practice and express our faith may need to change. But the faithfulness of God does not disappear with the familiar things around us.

Bird Dog eventually stepped down from the stump and continued her walk.

The park was different, but it was still the park. There were other trees, new smells, different paths, and many things requiring immediate investigation.

Now, when we pass the place where the tree once stood, she gives the stump a quick glance. She has not forgotten what was there. She still notices the empty place.

But she no longer stops and stares.

She looks into the distance for something else.

That may be what healthy faith looks like after loss or change.

We do not have to pretend the missing tree never mattered. We may still glance toward the empty place. We may remember what once stood there and even miss the familiar problems that came with it.

Moving forward does not mean forgetting.

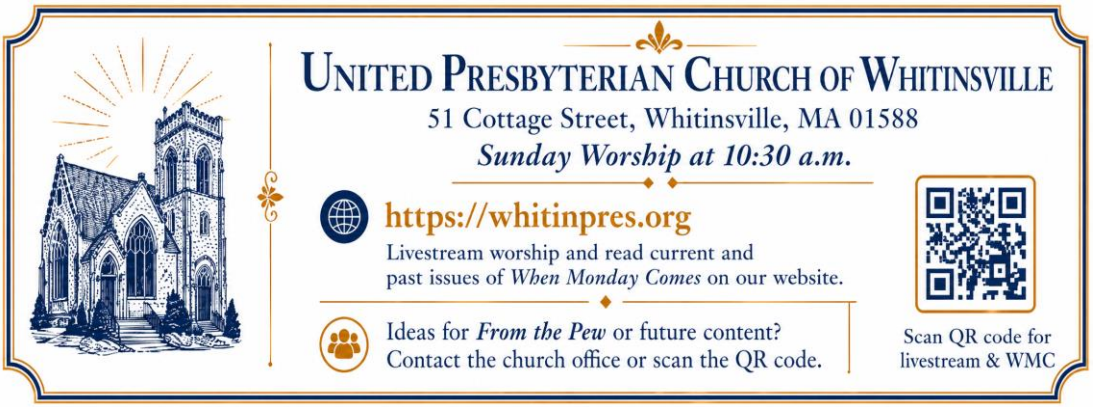
It means realizing that the stump is not the whole park.

There is still more life around us. There are still people to love, work to do, paths to explore, and signs of God's presence waiting to be noticed. There may also be new freedom, new healing, and new opportunities that could not appear while we remained tied to what had been.

We are allowed to pause. We are allowed to wonder what happened. We are allowed to grieve what has disappeared—even when the change was necessary.

But we do not have to spend the rest of our lives standing on what is left.

God remains with us. The path continues. And somewhere ahead, there is almost certainly another squirrel waiting to get Bird Dog's attention.

Bird Dog Says:

"You can wonder where the tree went, but eventually you have to get off the stump and keep walking."