October 4th 2026

WHEN MONDAY COMES

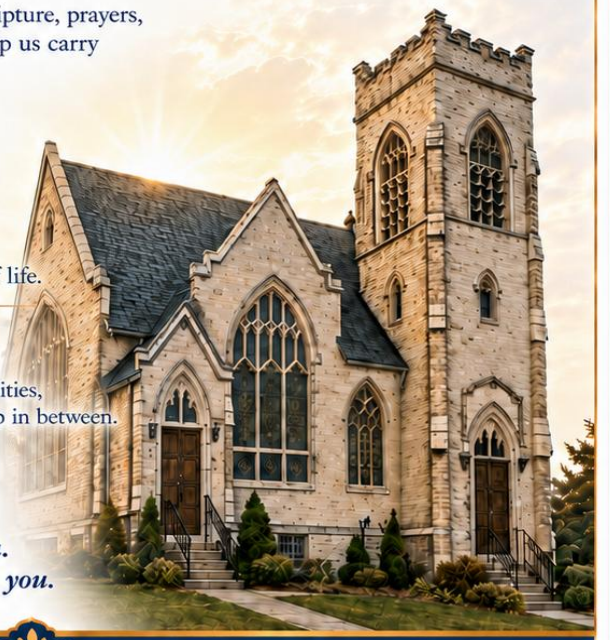
Faith for the Week Ahead

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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51 Cottage Street • Whitinsville, MA 01588
Sunday Worship at 10:30 a.m. • https://whitinpres.org

Another View
Make God Your Backer – Psalm 19:12–14

One of the first things you learn when driving a fire truck is that it has blind spots—big ones.

It does not matter whether you are a brand-new probie, a captain, or the fire chief. If you are backing that apparatus, you are supposed to have a backer or spotter watching for you.

No backer, no backing.

The reason is simple. There are places around a large vehicle that the person sitting behind the wheel simply cannot see.

And what you cannot see can still hurt someone.

Years ago, I responded to an accident where a worker was killed by an asphalt truck backing into a parking area. The truck was moving slowly. It was daylight. Other workers were nearby. Yet somehow that man ended up in the truck's blind spot and was run over.

Even afterward, nobody could really explain exactly how it happened.

I have never forgotten that call.

It taught me something important:

A blind spot does not become harmless simply because we cannot see what is in it.

That may be part of what David understood when he prayed:

"Who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults."

We often think of hidden faults as things we deliberately hide from everybody else.

But some faults may be hidden from **us**.

There may be attitudes, habits, resentments, prejudices, words, or behaviors that have become so familiar that we no longer recognize them.

We may think we are being honest when everyone else hears harshness.

We may call something concern when the conversation has really become gossip.

We may claim to have forgiven someone while still carrying around what they did twenty years ago.

Sometimes everybody around us can see something that remains completely invisible from where we are sitting.

That is what makes a blind spot a blind spot.

But David does not stop there.

He continues: *"Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me."*

Now we are dealing with something different.

Sometimes we cannot see the danger.

Sometimes we can see it perfectly well and choose to ignore it.

I know because I have done exactly that.

I was once assigned to Station 10, what we jokingly called the "vacation station" because it ran fewer calls than our other stations. We only had three firefighters assigned there, and getting somebody to come outside and back you into the bay could sometimes be difficult.

One person might be writing reports. Another simply did not want to come outside. Some of the old-timers would say, "We never had backers when I was driving."

And I was the newer guy.

So sometimes I went along with it.

I had backed that truck into the station hundreds of times. I knew the bay. I knew the truck. I could practically do it in my sleep.

And sometimes I backed it in without a spotter.

I knew the rule.
I knew why the rule existed.
I simply chose to ignore it.
Nothing happened.

And that can be the dangerous part.

When we ignore a warning once and nothing happens, it becomes easier to ignore it again.

The first time, we know we are making an exception. After enough times, the exception begins to feel normal.

We tell ourselves:

Everybody does it.
Nothing happened last time.
I know what I'm doing.
I've done this hundreds of times.

But none of those explanations make the blind spot disappear.

I wonder if we sometimes treat sin the same way.

I don't think any of us completely understands how destructive sin can be. If we did, perhaps we would not treat some of it so casually.

We convince ourselves that we have it under control.

Until we don't.

Or, borrowing a thought from Dr. Seuss, sometimes we can—**except when we can't, because sometimes we won't.**

David seems to understand both dangers.

There are things about himself he cannot see: *"Who can discern their own errors?"*

And there are things he does see but may still choose:

"Keep your servant also from willful sins."

That is why we need a backer.

When backing a fire apparatus, the spotter stands where he can see what the driver cannot.

If the backer gives the STOP signal, you stop.

You do not continue backing and shout out the window: "But I don't see anything!"

Of course you don't. **That is why the backer is there.**

Maybe we need to think about God that way. **Make God your backer in life.**

Ask Him to show you what you cannot see.

Sometimes He does that through Scripture.
Sometimes through prayer.
Sometimes through the Holy Spirit troubling our conscience.
Sometimes through a spouse, friend, pastor, fellow Christian, or another person willing to tell us something we would rather not hear.

God can use people and circumstances to show us what is sitting in our blind spot.

It is a little like going through a CT scanner.

You can lie on the table. You can slide through the machine. You can go through all the motions, but if the scanner is never turned on, you have learned nothing about what is happening inside.

We can do the same thing with God's Word.

We can read Scripture.
Hear sermons.
Attend Bible studies.
Know the familiar verses.

And still never allow the Word of God to examine us deeply enough to reveal what is happening inside.

Sometimes God turns on the scanner.

A verse suddenly bothers us.
Someone says something we cannot easily dismiss.
The same problem keeps appearing in different relationships.
Our conscience will not leave something alone.
Then we have another choice.

We can look at the results. Or we can fold them up, put them away, and decide we really did not want to know after all.

David chooses another way. He ends the Psalm with this prayer:

"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer."

David is asking God to examine both places—the things that come out of his mouth and the things that remain inside his heart.

Maybe that can become our prayer this week:

God, be my backer.
Show me what I cannot see.
Warn me when I am choosing to ignore what I already know.
Use Your Word to examine what is happening inside me.
And when You show me something that needs changing, give me the courage not to ignore the results.

God does not point out the blind spot because He wants to embarrass the driver. He points it out because He does not want us to hurt someone—or ourselves.

And perhaps that is one more reason David can call Him: **"My Rock and my Redeemer."**

The safest driver is not the one who believes he has no blind spots. It is the one humble enough to admit that he does—and wise enough to trust the One who can see them.

Faith Between Sundays

Weekly Reflections: October 4–10, 2026

Seeing What We Cannot See

Psalm 19 ends with a remarkably honest prayer. David does not pretend that he understands everything going on inside himself. He asks, *"Who can discern their own errors?"* Then he asks God to forgive what is hidden, restrain what is willful, and shape both his thoughts and his words.

That takes humility.

Most of us can recognize somebody else's blind spots much faster than our own. The harder question is whether we are willing to let God examine us.

God may use Scripture, prayer, another person, an uncomfortable situation, or even a mistake to show us something we have missed. When that happens, the question is not simply, **"What did God show me?"**

The real question is: **"What am I going to do about it?"**

Prayer for the Week

Lord, show me what I cannot see in myself. Help me recognize the things I have excused, ignored, or allowed to become normal. Give me humility to listen when You correct me and courage to change direction when I need to. May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to You, my Rock and my Redeemer. Amen.

Sunday, October 4
Check the Blind Spot

Scripture: *"Who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults."* — Psalm 19:12

A blind spot is dangerous precisely because we do not know what is there.

The same can be true in our lives. We may have habits, attitudes, or ways of speaking that we no longer notice. We may honestly believe everything is fine.

David does not assume that because he cannot see a problem, no problem exists.

He asks God to look where he cannot.
That is a good place to begin this week.

Today's faithful choice: Ask God one simple question: **"What is there about me that I may not be seeing clearly?"** Then be willing to listen.

Prayer: Lord, help me see myself honestly. Show me what I cannot see on my own, and give me the humility to listen. Amen.

Monday, October 5
When God Says Stop

Scripture: *"Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me."* — Psalm 19:13

Sometimes we do not see the danger.
Sometimes we see it and keep going anyway.
We know the conversation has turned into gossip.
We know our temper is rising.
We know we are about to say something we will probably regret.
We know we should stop.

That moment is like seeing the backer's raised hand.

The safest response is not to argue. It is to hit the brake.

Today's faithful choice: Pay attention to one moment today when you know you should stop—before speaking, reacting, judging, or continuing something you know is wrong.

Prayer: Lord, when You tell me to stop, help me stop. Keep me from excusing what I already know is wrong. Amen.

Tuesday, October 6
"Everybody Does It"

Scripture: *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* — Romans 12:2

One of the easiest ways to justify a bad choice is to notice that everybody around us is doing the same thing.

That does not make it right.

Sometimes we go along because we do not want to be difficult.

Sometimes we have heard, *"We've always done it this way."*

Sometimes we simply get tired of being the person who objects.

But a bad habit does not become a good one because it has become normal.

Following Christ occasionally means refusing to go with the flow.

Today's faithful choice: Notice one thing you do mainly because "that's what everybody does." Ask whether it actually reflects the person God wants you to be.

Prayer: Lord, give me courage to follow You even when everyone around me is going another direction. Help me choose what is right, not merely what is easy. Amen.

Wednesday, October 7
Read the Results

Scripture: *"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts."* — Psalm 139:23

Getting a medical test is not much help if we refuse to look at the results.

Neither is asking God to search us if we have already decided we do not want to hear what He finds.

Sometimes Scripture makes us uncomfortable.
Sometimes another person tells us something we would rather dismiss.
Sometimes the same problem keeps showing up in our lives.

Instead of immediately defending ourselves, maybe we should ask:

"Could there be something here I need to see?"

Today's faithful choice: If something makes you defensive today, do not immediately push it away. Ask whether there might be even a small piece of truth worth considering.

Prayer: Lord, search my heart and help me receive what You show me. Give me courage to face the truth instead of hiding from it. Amen.

Thursday, October 8
Listen to Another Set of Eyes

Scripture: *"The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice."* — Proverbs 12:15

Sometimes God shows us our blind spots through other people. That can be difficult. We usually prefer encouragement to correction.

But someone who cares about us may see something we cannot see from where we are standing.

Not every criticism is correct. Not every opinion should control us. But wisdom means being willing to listen before deciding that everybody else must be wrong.

Today's faithful choice: Think of one person you trust enough to tell you the truth. Be grateful for them—and be willing to listen when they do.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the people who care enough to speak honestly to me. Give me wisdom to listen and humility to learn. Amen.

Friday, October 9
What Comes Out Started Inside

Scripture: *"For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."* — Luke 6:45

We sometimes apologize by saying, *"I didn't mean that—it just came out."*

But Jesus reminds us that what comes out of our mouths often tells us something about what has been going on inside.

Harsh words may reveal anger.
Constant criticism may reveal dissatisfaction.
Gossip may reveal something about how we view another person.

That does not mean one bad sentence defines us.

But it may be worth asking where the sentence came from.

David prayed about both **the words of his mouth** and **the meditation of his heart.**

He knew they were connected.

Today's faithful choice: Before saying something about another person today, ask: **"What is happening in my heart that makes me want to say this?"**

Prayer: Lord, guard both my heart and my words. Change what is happening inside me so that what comes out of me reflects Your grace. Amen.

Saturday, October 10
Rock and Redeemer

Scripture: *"May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer."* — Psalm 19:14

Psalm 19 does not end with David frightened that God might discover something wrong with him.

It ends with trust.

God is his **Rock**—the One who gives him stability.

And God is his **Redeemer**—the One who restores what has gone wrong.

That is why we can ask God to show us our blind spots.

We are not asking an enemy to collect evidence against us.

We are asking the One who loves us enough to tell us the truth and gracious enough to help us change.

Today's faithful choice: End this week by praying Psalm 19:14 slowly. Ask God to shape both what you think and what you say in the week ahead.

Prayer: Lord, be my Rock and my Redeemer. Shape my thoughts, guide my words, and help me enter the coming week with a heart that is open to You. Amen.

From the Pew
The Bible on the Shelf

There are people God places in our lives whose importance we do not fully understand until years later.

Bill and Georgia Kirkwood were two of those people in my life.

Along with my parents, they were among the people who taught me what being a Christian looked like.

I wish I had understood that better when I was young.

Georgia had known a life that was not always fair to her. She lived in a time when she could be told where she was allowed to sit on a bus simply because of the color of her skin. She and Bill never had much money. They did not own a car, so the bus was how they got where they needed to go.

Georgia once told me that when the weather was bad and the roads were dangerous, she would pray for everyone riding that bus.

Not just herself. Not just Bill.

Not just the people who treated her kindly.

Everyone.

Even the people who would have expected her to sit in the back.

I did not understand the depth of that faith when I was young.

I do now.

Bill had his own hardships. After years of working around chemicals in a dry-cleaning facility—chemicals we later understood should never have been handled the way they were—he developed cancer.

I do not remember him spending his time complaining about what had happened to him.

I do not remember bitterness.

What I remember is Bill's steady, quiet and faithful trust in God.

Neither Bill nor Georgia gave me long theological lectures about suffering, forgiveness, grace, or trusting God when life does not turn out the way we think it should.

They did something much harder.

They lived it.

I just wasn't old enough—or wise enough—to realize that their lives were teaching me.

When I was confirmed, Bill and Georgia gave me a Bible.

At the time, I thought it was a nice gift. Probably the sort of gift you were supposed to receive at confirmation.

What I did not understand was what that Bible cost them.

They did not have extra money. The money spent on that Bible could have bought groceries. It could have paid a bill. It could have gone toward something they genuinely needed.

Instead, they used it to buy a Bible for me – a boy whose family already had far more than they did.

And I put it on a shelf.

Over the years, that Bible traveled with me.

College, jobs, apartments and houses.

Moves across several states.

It always seemed to find another shelf.

Occasionally, I would take it down — not necessarily to read it, but to look inside the front cover where Bill and Georgia had signed it.

I would remember them.

Then I would put it back.

The Bible grew older with me.

Today it is nearly sixty years old. The cover shows its age. The pages have traveled a lot of miles.

And if I am truthful, much of that wear came from moving from one shelf to another rather than from being worn out through constant study and use.

For years now, I have found myself wishing I could talk with Bill and Georgia again.

There were so many things I wanted to ask them.

How did you trust God when life was unfair?

Georgia, how could you pray for people who did not treat you with the same grace?

Bill, how did you face illness without letting bitterness take over?

How did you live with so little and still give so generously?

How did your faith become something you lived instead of something you merely talked about?

I wished I had listened more closely when I had the chance.

I wished I had asked the questions when they were still here to answer them.

Then one day I began to understand something.

They had already left me with the conversation.

It had been sitting on my bookshelf the whole time.

The book they gave me contained the things that had shaped them.

Grace. Forgiveness. Sacrifice. Hope. Faithfulness.

Trust when the road ahead was uncertain.

Love for people who did not necessarily love you back.

Bill and Georgia had not simply given me a Bible.

They had lived God's words in front of me so faithfully that, years later, I could finally begin to understand what those words looked like when somebody truly believed them.

I sometimes wonder if they knew.

Did they know that the young boy receiving that Bible would carry it around for almost sixty years?

Did they know it might sit unopened for long stretches of time?

Did they know there would come a day when that boy, now an old man, would take it down and finally begin asking the questions they had already spent their lives answering?

I cannot know.

Maybe they simply hoped.

Maybe they trusted God enough to believe that putting His Word into someone's hands mattered even if they never lived long enough to see what God might do with it.

And there is something else I have come to understand.

For a long time, I thought I kept that Bible because it reminded me of Bill and Georgia.

I still do. But now it reminds me of something more.

It reminds me of what I missed then—and what I should cherish now.

It reminds me that sometimes God puts something important into our lives long before we are ready to understand why we will need it.

Sometimes it is a person.
Sometimes a lesson.
Sometimes a word spoken at exactly the right time.
Sometimes it is a Bible handed to a young boy by two people of quiet faith who probably could have used the money for something else.

And sometimes that gift sits patiently on a shelf. Waiting.

Not because God has forgotten about it. But perhaps because we have not yet grown into the questions it was meant to help us answer.

If there were ever a fire and I could save only one physical possession, that old Bible would be very close to the top of my list.

Not because of the paper.

Not because of the cover.

And certainly not because it is valuable to anyone else.

I would save it because Bill and Georgia Kirkwood gave it to me.

Because their names are inside.

Because their faith is wrapped around my memories of it.

Because it reminds me that two people once believed God's Word mattered enough to sacrifice something in order to place it in my hands.

And because, almost sixty years later, I finally understand something I wish I had understood then:

I spent years wishing I could ask Bill and Georgia how they knew what they knew.

They had already given me the answer.

It was sitting on the shelf.

Maybe that is one of the quiet ways God works.

We read His Word.

We live our lives.

Years pass.

And then one day we discover that the book we thought we had been carrying all those years had been patiently waiting to carry us.

Bill and Georgia are gone, so I cannot ask them the questions I wish I had asked.

But the faith they lived is still speaking.

And the book they gave me is still answering.

"Have something from your pew? A story, question, observation, or moment when faith showed up during the week? We'd love to hear it."

Wisdom From Bird Dog

Stick Your Head Through the Moose Hole

While exploring New Hampshire, we stopped for ice cream at a place that had one of those tourist photo boards where you stick your head through a hole and suddenly become whatever character is painted on the front.

Bird Dog went to New Hampshire looking for meteors and somehow became a moose.
She was not consulted about the career change.

This particular one was a moose.

A rather cheerful-looking moose holding an ice cream cone.

Becca looked at me and said, “Put your head through the hole.”

My answer was immediate. “No.”

There was absolutely no way I was sticking my head through a painted moose.

People were standing around.

Someone might take a picture.

I am, after all, a respectable adult. A grandfather. An elder at our church. A person who has held responsible positions during his life.

I have a reputation to maintain.

So, there would be no moose picture.

Becca considered my carefully reasoned position for approximately two seconds before coming up with Plan B.

“Let’s put Bird in it.”

Bird Dog had just finished eating some ice cream and had not been included in the negotiations.

One moment she was standing there minding her own business, probably hoping somebody would drop another bite of ice cream.

The next moment she was lifted into the air, ice cream still on her face, with her head sticking through the moose hole.

And do you know what Bird Dog did? Nothing.

She did not worry about looking ridiculous.

She did not wonder what the other dogs might think.

She did not question whether becoming a moose was appropriate behavior for a respectable dog of her age and position.

She simply looked through the hole.

Everyone laughed.

Becca got a great picture.

Bird Dog got another story.

And I stood nearby maintaining my dignity.

Later, however, I started thinking about it.

I wish I had put my head through that moose hole.

I could have sent the picture to my grandchildren. They would have laughed. I would have laughed.

Years from now it might have become one of those ridiculous family photographs somebody pulls out and says: “Remember when Grandpa became a moose?”

Instead, I protected my dignity.

Bird Dog got the memory.

That bothered me a little.

How many things do we miss in life—not because they are wrong, dangerous, or foolish, but because we are worried that **we might look foolish**?

We don't ask the question because everyone else might already know the answer.

We don't try something new because we might be terrible at it.

We don't volunteer because we might make a mistake.

We don't join in because somebody might notice that we don't know what we're doing.

Sometimes we worry so much about protecting the image we have built of ourselves that we miss the joy sitting right in front of us.

And that made me realize something about pride.

We usually think pride looks like somebody standing in the middle of the room saying:

“Look at me.”

But pride can also sound like:

“Don't look at me.”
Don't let them see me make a mistake.
Don't let them see me trying.
Don't let them discover that I don't know.
Don't let me look foolish.

Sometimes pride makes us show off.

And sometimes pride makes us hide.

Bird Dog apparently has neither problem.

She did not volunteer to become a moose, but once her head went through that hole, she seemed perfectly comfortable with the situation.

Her expression almost said: “Well, apparently this is what we're doing now.”

And everyone smiled.

Maybe there is a little wisdom in that.

There is a difference between dignity and becoming imprisoned by the image we are trying to protect.

At this point in my life, I am beginning to think I would rather reach the end with a few embarrassing photographs than an impeccable record of never looking ridiculous.

I'd like my grandchildren to have some pictures that make them laugh.

I'd like a few stories that begin: “I can't believe Grandpa actually did that.”

Because sometimes the embarrassment lasts thirty seconds.

The memory lasts a lifetime.

Bird Dog got that right. I didn't.

I still wish I had taken my turn. Maybe next time I will.

Bird Dog Says:

“If life gives you a hole in a moose, stick your head through it. Pride rarely makes a good souvenir.”

And maybe the question Bird Dog asks of us humans is: **What moose hole have you been walking past because you're worried about how you might look?**

A Little Bible Challenge for the Week

Sometimes the hardest part of reading the Bible is simply opening it.

So, this week, no homework. No theological exam. No requirement to read seventeen chapters before breakfast. Just a few small reasons to take the Bible off the shelf and see what you find.

Treasure Hunt

A man killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day. — 2 Samuel 23:20

A dead man came back to life after his body touched the bones of a prophet. — 2 Kings 13:20–21

An iron axe head fell into the water—and floated back to the surface. — 2 Kings 6:1–7

A prophet was told to cook his food over dung—and objected strongly enough that God allowed a substitution. — Ezekiel 4:12–15

Jesus told Peter to catch a fish—and there was money in its mouth to pay a tax. — Matthew 17:24–27

People carried handkerchiefs and aprons that Paul had touched to the sick. — Acts 19:11–12

A king saw mysterious handwriting appear on the wall during a banquet. — Daniel 5:5–6

A man was so left-handed that it helped him carry out a secret mission against a king. — Judges 3:15–23

Someone used a household statue, some goat hair, and a bed to fool soldiers into thinking a man was still sleeping there. — 1 Samuel 19:11–17

A prophet was mocked by a group of youths, and two bears came out of the woods. — 2 Kings 2:23–24

Someone fell asleep during an extremely long sermon, fell three stories, and had to be brought back upstairs. — Acts 20:7–12

See if you can find these people and moments: You do not have to do them all at once. Find one today. Another tomorrow. Maybe one will send you looking at the verses around it. That is usually how it starts.

This Week's Challenge

Open your Bible once when you weren't planning to. Read until something makes you stop. Then ask: "God, what do You want me to notice here?"

One Last Thought

Maybe the goal this week is not to see: H**ow much Bible you can get through**.

Maybe the better question is: **How much of the Bible can get through to you?**