October 11th 2026

WHEN MONDAY COMES

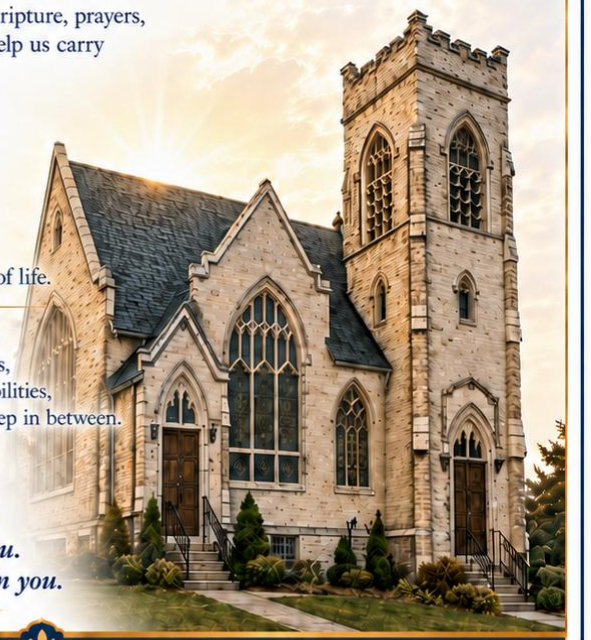
Faith for the Week Ahead

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

It's Still Too Early to Tell – *Philippians 4:1–9*

I was at the doctor's office and asked a man how he was doing.

He smiled and said, "Don't know. It's still too early to tell."

I'm pretty sure he was kidding, but the answer stuck with me.

Sometimes we really do live that way. We wait to see what happens before deciding whether we are going to have a good day.

If things go our way, we're happy. If something goes wrong, we're unhappy. Good news comes and we're up. Bad news comes and we're down. The bill gets paid and life looks pretty good. The car breaks down the next morning and suddenly nobody had better get in our way.

That kind of happiness depends on what happens.

And when happiness depends entirely on circumstances, life becomes an emotional roller coaster.

Paul offers something different in Philippians 4: **"Rejoice in the Lord always."**

Notice that Paul doesn't say, "Rejoice because everything is going well."

Everything wasn't going well.

Paul knew hardship, opposition, disappointment, uncertainty, and imprisonment. Yet he could still talk about rejoicing because his joy wasn't anchored to his circumstances.

It was anchored to God.

Worldly happiness asks, "What happened?" Godly joy asks, "Who is with me?"

That doesn't mean Christians walk around pretending everything is wonderful.

Joy doesn't pay the electric bill.
Joy doesn't make a frightening medical diagnosis disappear.
Joy doesn't erase grief, repair a relationship overnight, or guarantee that tomorrow will be easier than today.

Godly joy is something deeper. It is the steadiness that comes from knowing that whatever is happening around us, **God is still near.**

Paul says exactly that: **"The Lord is near."**

And then he begins talking about prayer. That matters.

When we become worried, frightened, tired, angry, or discouraged, our natural tendency is to keep turning the problem over and over in our own minds. We replay it. We imagine what might happen. We build conversations that haven't taken place yet. We sometimes manage to worry ourselves about tomorrow before today has even finished.

Paul gives us another choice: Bring it to God.

And maybe we need to borrow a little language from the 1960s: **Get real with God.**

When you are frightened about test results, that probably isn't the time for a vague prayer asking God to generally bless everybody everywhere.

Tell Him what you are frightened about.

"God, I'm scared about what the doctor is going to tell me."
"God, I don't know how I'm going to pay this bill."
"God, I'm angry with this person and I don't know how to let it go."
"God, I'm worried about my family."
"God, I don't know what I'm supposed to do next."

Prayer is relational communication with God. We bring what is happening in our physical world into our relationship with Him.

But sometimes we misunderstand prayer.

We treat God a little like one of those snack machines with the spiral racks behind the glass.

You put your money in, press the button, and watch the candy bar start moving toward the edge.

Then it stops.

It just hangs there.

Now you're staring through the glass thinking, *Come on. I paid for that.*

So, you shake the machine.

Nothing.

Maybe you give it a little bump.

Still nothing.

Then you get clever and put in more money to buy the snack directly behind the first one. Surely the second one will knock the first one loose.

Instead, they both get stuck.

Now you've spent twice as much money, you still have no snack, and you walk away with an attitude: ***I'm never using that machine again.***

Sometimes we do the same thing with prayer.

We ask God for something.

Nothing seems to happen.

So, we pray again.

Still nothing.

Eventually frustration becomes disappointment, and disappointment can become distance.

Some people eventually conclude, *Prayer doesn't work.*

But God is not a vending machine.

Prayer isn't putting in the correct amount of faith and waiting for the answer we ordered to fall into the tray.

Sometimes God says yes. Sometimes the answer appears to be no. Sometimes it seems to be not yet. And sometimes we simply don't understand what God is doing.

That can be terribly difficult, especially when the thing we are praying about really matters.

But Paul never promises that every problem will immediately disappear.

He promises something else:

"The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Translated into everyday language, we can experience calm in the middle of chaos.

The problem may still be there.
The diagnosis hasn't changed.
The bill is still sitting on the kitchen table.
The relationship still needs work.

But something has changed.

Perhaps **we** have.

Maybe that is the surprise in the snack machine.

We prayed expecting one particular thing to drop out. The answer we wanted may still be hanging there behind the glass, but suddenly another gift falls into the tray: **Peace.**

It is almost like putting in money for one snack and getting two.

You still wanted the original one.

But God has given you something else you desperately needed: enough peace to get through today, enough courage to face tomorrow, and enough strength to say:

I don't know how this is going to turn out, but I know I'm not facing it alone.

That is peace that **"surpasses all understanding."**

Sometimes it doesn't make sense according to our circumstances.

Someone may look at what you are going through and wonder, ***How can you possibly have peace right now?***

And perhaps the only truthful answer is: ***I don't completely understand it either.***

But Paul doesn't stop with prayer and peace.

He then tells us something very practical about our minds.

Think about what is true.

What is honorable.
What is just.
What is pure.
What is pleasing.
What is commendable.

Paul seems to understand something about us.

God can give us peace, and then we can turn around and fill our minds with everything that works against it.

We can pray about our fear and then spend the next three hours imagining every terrible thing that could happen.

We can ask God to help us forgive someone and then rehearse every hurtful thing that person has ever done.

We can ask God for peace and then feed ourselves anger, resentment, gossip, suspicion, and worst-case scenarios.

Eventually the peace becomes hard to hear beneath all the noise.

That doesn't mean pretending bad things aren't real.

It means bad things don't have to become the only things we think about.

Perhaps one of the questions we should occasionally ask ourselves is:
Would God be pleased with what I am choosing to dwell on right now?
Is it true?
Is it fair?
Is it helpful?

Or am I nurturing a lie, replaying an old wound, imagining disasters that haven't happened, or keeping hatred alive because I have become accustomed to carrying it?

There are things in our past we may never forget.

Faith doesn't require us to pretend they never happened.

But the past doesn't have to decide what our future becomes.

Yesterday can teach us without controlling tomorrow.

And when God's joy begins taking root in us, it should show up in the way we treat other people.

We don't have to spread our unhappiness around.

When life is difficult, we don't have to become hateful, vindictive, rude, or determined to make everyone else miserable too.

Sometimes one of the strongest demonstrations of faith is simply refusing to pass our pain along to the next person.

A kind word.

A little patience.

A smile when we would rather complain.

Helping somebody else see a little hope when we are having trouble seeing much ourselves.

So perhaps the man at the doctor's office was right.

Maybe it really was too early to tell how his day was going to turn out.

Most mornings, it is.

But perhaps we don't have to know everything that is going to happen before deciding how we are going to face it.

We already know something more important:

The Lord is near.

We can get real with God about what frightens us.

We can receive peace even before the problem is solved.

We can choose what we allow our minds to dwell upon.

And we can decide not to add our own unhappiness to somebody else's burden.

That may be what Godly joy looks like.

Not pretending everything is wonderful.

But knowing Who is with us when it isn't.

Faith Between Sundays

Weekly Reflections: October 11–17, 2026
Living in the Peace God Gives

Joy is not the same as pretending everything is fine. Some weeks are hard. Some problems do not disappear just because we pray. Bills are still due. Medical concerns remain. Relationships can stay complicated. Grief can linger.

But Paul reminds us in Philippians that we do not have to let circumstances control everything happening inside us.

We can bring our worries specifically to God. We can receive peace even before the problem is solved. And then we can pay attention to what we allow our minds to keep feeding on.

Worldly happiness asks, "What happened?" Godly joy asks, "Who is with me?"

Prayer for the Week

God, when life feels uncertain, remind me that You are near. Help me bring You the things I am really worried about instead of carrying them alone. Give me peace when circumstances do not change quickly, and help me guard that peace by choosing what is true, honorable, just, and good. Let Your joy show in the way I speak to and treat the people around me. Amen.

Sunday, October 11 — The Lord Is Near

Scripture: "The Lord is near." — Philippians 4:5

Sometimes four words are enough. The problem may still be there. The answer may still be unknown. Tomorrow may still feel uncertain.

But you are not facing any of it alone. Before trying to solve everything today, remember Who is already beside you and give that worry to God in detailed prayer.

Today's faithful choice: When worry begins, quietly say, **"The Lord is near."**

Daily Prayer:

Lord, remind me today that I do not face anything alone. Help me notice Your presence, especially when I am worried or uncertain. Amen.

Monday, October 12 — Get Real With God

Scripture: "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." — Philippians 4:6

God does not need a polished prayer.

If you are worried about money, say so. If you are frightened about your health, tell Him. If you are angry with someone, be honest about that too.

Prayer is not pretending to be more spiritual than we really are. It is bringing our real lives into our relationship with God.

Today's faithful choice: Name one specific concern to God today instead of praying only in general terms.

Daily Prayer:
God, help me be honest with You today. Give me the courage to name what I am really worried about and trust You enough to place it in Your hands. Amen.

Tuesday, October 13 — Peace Before the Answer

Scripture: "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." — Philippians 4:7

Sometimes we pray expecting the problem to disappear. Instead, the first thing God changes may be us.

The diagnosis may still be uncertain. The bill may still need paying. The difficult conversation may still be ahead. Yet somehow we find enough calm to take the next step. That peace may not make sense according to the circumstances.

That is why Paul calls it peace that **surpasses understanding.**

Today's faithful choice: Notice one place where God is giving you enough peace or strength for today, even if the problem itself has not changed.

Daily Prayer:
Lord, I may not understand what is happening, but help me receive the peace You offer. Give me enough strength and calm for the next step. Amen.

Wednesday, October 14 — What Are You Feeding?

Scripture: "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just...think about these things." — Philippians 4:8

Our minds need feeding just like our bodies do. We can feed them truth, gratitude, hope, and things that draw us toward God. Or we can feed them resentment, gossip, fear, imagined disasters, and old arguments we keep replaying.

What we repeatedly feed usually grows.

Paul does not tell us to ignore problems. He tells us not to let problems become the only things living in our minds.

Today's faithful choice: Ask yourself, **"Would God be pleased with what I am choosing to dwell on right now?"**

Daily Prayer:
God, help me notice what I am feeding my mind today. Turn me away from resentment, fear, and bitterness, and toward what is true, honorable, and good. Amen.

Thursday, October 15 — Don't Borrow Tomorrow's Trouble

Scripture: "Do not worry about anything..." — Philippians 4:6

A surprising amount of worry comes from things that have not happened.

We imagine the phone call. We rehearse the argument. We predict the worst possible outcome. Before long, we are suffering from something that exists only tomorrow.

Planning is wise. Preparing is wise.

But borrowing trouble from a future that has not arrived only makes today heavier.

Today's faithful choice: When you catch yourself worrying about something that has not happened, ask, **"Is this a problem I have today, or one I am imagining for tomorrow?"**

Daily Prayer:
Lord, keep me from carrying tomorrow before it arrives. Help me deal faithfully with what is in front of me today and trust You with what comes next. Amen.

Friday, October 16 — Don't Pass It Along

Scripture: "Let your gentleness be known to everyone." — Philippians 4:5

Pain has a way of spreading. Someone treats us badly, so we become impatient with somebody else. We are frightened, so we become short-tempered. We are having a miserable day, so everyone around us gets to have part of it too.

But God's joy gives us another choice. We may not control what happened to us. We can control whether we hand the hurt to the next person.

Today's faithful choice: Do one deliberately kind thing today, especially if you are having a difficult day yourself.

Daily Prayer:
God, when I am hurting, keep me from passing that hurt to someone else. Let Your joy show through patience, gentleness, and kindness today. Amen.

Saturday, October 17 — Practice It

Scripture: "Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard..." — Philippians 4:9

Faith becomes real through practice.

We practice prayer. We practice gratitude. We practice choosing what deserves space in our minds. We practice kindness when we would rather complain. We practice trusting God when we still have questions.

None of us does this perfectly. But Paul does not say, "Master these things."

He says, **keep doing them.** That means we get another opportunity tomorrow.

Today's faithful choice: Look back over this week and choose one practice—prayer, gratitude, guarding your thoughts, or kindness—that you want to keep working on next week.

Daily Prayer:
Lord, help me keep practicing what You are teaching me. When I stumble, help me begin again. Let faith become something I live, not just something I believe. Amen.

From the Pew
Fall Back on Your Training

When I taught diving, students generally loved the swimming pool.

It was warm.

It was clear.

It was controlled.

You could see from one end to the other. You knew exactly how deep it was. There were lane markings, walls, ladders, and very few surprises.

Then I would introduce one of my less popular training exercises.

I blindfolded them.

You would have thought I had announced that the next lesson involved swimming with sharks.

Without their eyesight, students who had been completely comfortable five minutes earlier suddenly ran into walls, lost their sense of direction, and discovered that the familiar swimming pool did not feel nearly as familiar anymore.

They complained.

Sometimes a lot.

But there was a reason for it.

A swimming pool and open water are two very different environments.

In a pool, visibility may be nearly perfect.

In a lake, quarry, river, or ocean, things can change quickly.

Visibility can be good one minute and nearly gone the next. A current can move. The bottom can get stirred up. A diver can kick up silt and suddenly turn reasonably clear water into something resembling chocolate milk.

And when visibility disappears underwater, panic is a very bad option.

So, I would tell my students:

Fall back on your training.

You know how to breathe.
You know how to control your buoyancy.
You know how to use your instruments.
You know how to stay with your buddy.
You know what to do even when you cannot see very much.

The blindfold was not intended to make the pool harder.

It was intended to make the real world easier.

I had one student who absolutely hated the idea.

He did not want to do the blindfold exercise and eventually refused.

I did not force him.

The rest of the class completed it, although I would not exactly say anyone sent me a thank-you note afterward.

Then came their open-water checkout dives at Norfolk Lake in Arkansas.

Several days of rain had changed the lake considerably.

Normally we might have expected about ten feet of visibility.

That day we had only a few feet. Sometimes less.

As the instructor, I knew how serious those conditions could become.

During the checkout dive a student could panic.

A frightened diver might bolt for the surface, forget to breathe normally during the ascent, become disoriented, or move far enough away that I could lose sight of them almost immediately.

Low-visibility diving could become intense very quickly.

But the last thing those students needed was an instructor saying, “This water is terrible. I don’t know if you can handle this.”

They were already nervous enough.

My job was to stay calm and remind them of what they already knew.

You have been trained for this.
You know what to do.
Fall back on your training.

That was not pretending the danger was not real.

I knew better than most of them what could go wrong.

It was reminding them that fear did not have to make the decisions.

One by one, the students settled down and used what they had learned.

They completed their dives.

All except one.

The student who had skipped the blindfold exercise simply was not comfortable enough in the poor visibility to finish his checkout.

Afterward, something interesting happened.

The other students stopped complaining about the blindfold.

Several of them told me essentially the same thing: *That exercise really helped.*

And eventually the student who had refused the blindfold exercise came back too.

He returned to the pool. He did the blindfold training.

Then he went back and successfully completed his open-water checkout.

He eventually went on to do some advanced diving.

Later, what he remembered was not just how much he disliked the exercise.

It was why it had mattered.

He told me, “I thought you were just being tough on us and wanted to watch us struggle. But now I understand. In real diving, zero-visibility situations happen more often than you think.”

I have thought about that many times since.

Maybe some of what God teaches us works the same way.

We read Scripture.

We listen to Christ telling us to forgive.
To pray.
To trust God.
To love our neighbor.
To resist hatred.
To keep doing what is right even when circumstances are not.

Sometimes those lessons can feel rather simple when life is going well.

It is easy to talk about trusting God when the water is clear.
It is easy to talk about peace when nothing particularly frightening is happening.
It is easy to talk about forgiveness before somebody actually hurts us.
It is easy to say we should pray instead of worry when there is not much to worry about.

Then somebody kicks up the bottom. Suddenly we cannot see where we are going.

The diagnosis comes.
The relationship changes.
The job disappears.
Someone we trusted disappoints us.
The phone rings with news we did not want.

And the nice clear swimming pool has become zero visibility.

That is when we discover whether those things Jesus taught us were merely words we heard on Sunday or training, we learned to use.

Faith does not always make the water clear. Sometimes faith teaches us what to do when we cannot see.

And this is where Godly peace matters.

Peace is not pretending nothing bad can happen.

It is not denying that the situation is serious.

It is not saying, “Everything will be fine,” when we honestly do not know that.

Peace is not the absence of danger. Sometimes peace is knowing what to do while the danger is still there.

We fall back on what we have learned.

Pray.

Remember that God is near.

Do not panic.

Do not let fear make every decision.

Stay connected to the people God has placed around us.

Keep doing the next faithful thing we know how to do.

And do not assume that because we cannot see very far ahead, God has somehow disappeared.

A diver in murky water has not necessarily lost the surface.

He has simply lost sight of it.

There is a difference.

Maybe Scripture does something similar for us.

God gives us His Word and the example of Christ while the water is clear so that when life suddenly becomes murky, we have something to fall back on.

We will not always like the training.
We will not always understand why we need it.
We may even resist it for a while.

But sooner or later, every one of us encounters water where we cannot see the bottom.

Don't panic. Stay close to God. And when you can't see what comes next, fall back on the example and grace of Christ.

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

Words of Wisdom from Bird Dog

On the Beach

There is a sand volleyball court in the park where Bird Dog and I walk every day.

Bird Dog thinks it is a beach.

And Bird Dog loves the beach.

As soon as we get there, she starts digging.

I have no idea what she is looking for.

She will dig one small hole with tremendous enthusiasm, suddenly decide that apparently whatever she was searching for is not there, move over a few feet, and begin another excavation.

Then another.

She is completely serious about the whole operation.

The problem is that sooner or later somebody will actually want to play volleyball on this volleyball court.

I doubt they would appreciate discovering Bird Dog's collection of ankle traps.

So, while she moves on to her next project, I fill in the hole she just dug.

Bird Dog notices this.

And she gives me *the look.*

What are you doing?

I just dug that.

Sometimes she will even go back and start digging in the same place again.

Apparently, my filling in the hole is not viewed as assistance.

It is interference.

And that made me wonder whether we sometimes look at God the same way.

God begins filling in something that has repeatedly gotten us into trouble, and instead of being grateful, we feel inconvenienced.

Why can't I keep doing this?

Why do I have to change?

Why did that door close?

Why is God making this harder?

Sometimes what feels like God's interference may actually be God's protection.

Of course, not every hole in life is one we dig ourselves.

Sometimes illness, loss, disappointment, or somebody else's choices put us in places we never chose.

Those are different kinds of holes.

But there are also some holes that have our fingerprints all over them.

Maybe it is anger.

Maybe it is worry.

Maybe it is spending money we should not spend, saying something we should not say, carrying a grudge we should have released, or making the same decision we promised ourselves we would not make again.

Then we pray: *God, please help me get out of this.*

And through grace, wisdom, Scripture, another person, or simply another opportunity, God begins showing us a way forward.

Sometimes the hole gets filled in.

So, what do we do?

Sometimes we move three feet over and start digging another one.

Or worse, we go right back to the old hole and dig it out again.

Then eventually we look toward heaven and ask: *God, why am I in this hole again?*

And God's answer is not: *You made this mess. You are on your own.*

God does not abandon us simply because we repeated a mistake.

He does not stop loving us because we dug another hole.

He does not look down and say, "*I helped you once, that was your last chance".*

That is where grace becomes important.

Grace means that even when the mess is one we created ourselves, God has not forsaken us.

He can still guide us.

He can still teach us.

He can send someone to help us.

He can give us another opportunity to make a better choice.

And He can give us the strength to begin climbing.

But grace does not always mean the consequences magically disappear.

Sometimes we still have to apologize.

Sometimes we have to repair what we damaged.

Sometimes trust has to be rebuilt.

Sometimes we have to change a habit that we would rather keep.

Sometimes climbing out of the hole takes a while.

Grace does not necessarily remove all of that.

Grace means **God stays with us while we do it.**

But grace is not an invitation to keep digging.

Grace helps us out of the hole — and hopefully teaches us something about why we ended up there in the first place.

Part of growing in faith is learning from the holes we have already been in.

Recognizing the habits that put us there.

Listening when God shows us another way.

Accepting that sometimes His protection may feel like interference.

And occasionally having enough sense to leave the shovel alone.

Bird Dog probably is not going to learn this lesson.

Tomorrow we will go back to the park.

She will see her beach.

She will start digging.

And I will follow behind, filling everything back in.

She will probably look at me as though I am ruining her perfectly good work.

But maybe the rest of us can do a little better.

When God helps you out of a hole, pay attention to how you got there. And if you find yourself digging another one, remember that grace has not disappeared — but maybe it is time to put down the shovel.

Bird Dog's Wisdom: If God fills in the hole, maybe don't dig it up again.

God's Fuel

"Worry burns fuel. Prayer helps refill the tank."

Worry has a way of running the engine even when we are standing still.

We replay the problem. We imagine what might happen. We try to solve tomorrow before today is finished. Before long, we are exhausted—and nothing has actually changed.

Sometimes we even mistake worry for doing something useful. We tell ourselves that if we keep turning the problem over in our minds long enough, we will finally find the answer.

But worry rarely gives us more strength. Most of the time, it simply uses up the strength we already have.

Paul tells us in Philippians 4 to bring everything to God in prayer. That does not mean the problem instantly disappears. It means we stop carrying it alone.

Prayer gives us a chance to hand God what we have been gripping too tightly. It reminds us that we do not have to know every answer before we take the next step.

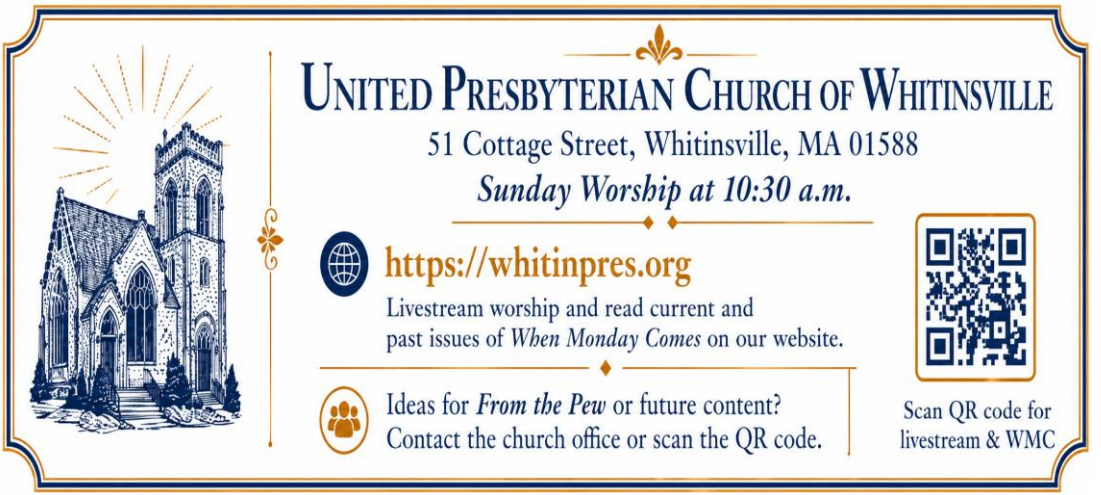
And sometimes the answer to prayer is not a changed situation, but a changed heart—a little more peace, a little more patience, and enough strength for today.

Prayer reminds us that God is present, God is listening, and God is still at work even when we cannot see what He is doing.

So, when the worry light comes on, don't just keep driving until the tank is empty.

Pull over. Pray. Let God refill what worry has drained.

Prayer:

Lord, when worry drains my strength, help me turn to You. Quiet my mind, steady my heart, and give me enough grace for the road ahead. Refill me with Your peace, and remind me that I never travel alone.

Amen.