

Mid-Week Series on Ephesians
July-Aug 2021

The worship lectionary for this summer includes a 7-week journey through Ephesians. This letter celebrates the author's vision for the church. Each week we will look at these readings through the lens of faith formation.

July 14 [Ephesians 1:3-14](#)

Discuss together: Tell about a time when you received an unexpected or undeserved gift.

Have you ever received an inheritance? When I was a teenager a great-uncle left my brothers and me a couple thousand dollars each. My older brother invested his money somehow and I spent my gift rather quickly. But my younger brother, Chris, held onto his gift for a while. Over time, he went back to Uncle Pete's homestead and got to know the family who bought his property. Eventually they decided to sell off a portion of the land and Chris was able to buy some acres with the money he had received from Uncle Pete. He has recently purchased another section which includes a barn with some living space and he loves to invite friends and family there. I'm sure Uncle Pete, who had no children of his own, would have been delighted to see his legacy continue through his extended family.

The opening of this letter to the Ephesians is based on promises made and fulfilled by God through Jesus Christ. God's plan from the beginning of creation until the "fullness of time" was to bring all things together—including humanity—into God's ever-growing extended family. In Holy Baptism we come to God not by any effort or work of our own. It is God who claims us as beloved children. It is God's action to bring us into Christian community. It is God's blessing to make us holy through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sin, and the promise of eternal life. We come to the waters of baptism with nothing to offer God but open hearts to gladly receive what God offers!

Like those who have inherited something for which they did not work, our inheritance of salvation comes to us by what Jesus did for us in his life, death, and resurrection. Everything we come to know and believe about God is made known to us in Jesus. Jesus is at the center of our faith. Over the next several weeks we will hear how we are to live in response to this gift. For this week, let us rejoice in God's goodness toward us and all creation!

Pray: *Loving God, thank you for the gift of your love that we receive through Jesus. Amen*

Ritual: Make the sign of the cross on the forehead of a family member, or on yourself, and say, "You have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever."

Faith Formation

