

Sunday September 20, 2020 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

Bible Study – Exodus 16:2-15
“What is it?”

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have each participant answer the question, “What is the last thing you complained about?”

Exodus 16:2-15 Context: The thanksgiving and celebration that the Israelites experienced when God saved them from the Egyptians quickly changed as they realized that in the wilderness where God and Moses had taken them there was no water or food. All of a sudden, slavery in Egypt didn’t look so bad – at least there they always had enough to eat. This week’s reading relates their complaint – one that never seems to end – and God’s response: sending quail and manna from heaven. The name “manna” is derived from the Hebrew phrase that translates, “what is it?” As to the composition of manna, there are various rationalistic theories to explain it: an aromatic resin secreted by trees; “honeydew” secreted by aphid-like insects. But in the end, we’re still left with the question, “what is it?” In John’s Gospel, Jesus comments on this passage, saying that he is the true bread from heaven, the “panis angelicus” of César Franck’s famous anthem (the lyrics taken from a hymn of Thomas Aquinas written for the feast of Corpus Christi).

Read Exodus 16:2-15

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Exodus 16:2-15 again

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- The last two weeks, we saw mighty acts of deliverance by God on behalf of the Hebrew people. What do you imagine has taken place for the people now to be grumbling against Moses and Aaron (16:2)?
- Why is it fitting for the manna to be given daily? [One reason is it reinforces the need for daily dependence.] How did God provide such that they could keep the Sabbath? Why was that so important?

- How is “manna” (or literally “what is it”) a fitting description for this bread-like substance? How can the question, “What is it that God is doing among us?” provide us nourishment on our journey?
- If a friend asked you tomorrow, “What is God doing now?” how would you answer?
- How can you express your gratitude this week for what God has done and is doing among us?

Read Exodus 16:2-15 again

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Gracious God, we give you thanks for how you provide for us. Forgive us when we fail to see how you are at work and see only what is lacking. Equip us to be the people who display gratitude and generosity through our words and deeds. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.