

Sunday, November 21, 2021 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – John 18:33-37
“Everyone Who Belongs”**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes) In pairs or groups of three, have participants complete the following sentence – Jesus is....

John 18:33-37. Context. After Jesus is arrested, he is brought before the authorities, first religious then secular. It is only the secular Roman authorities that can impose the death sentence of such a public figure. Pontius Pilate was the Roman Procurator in Judea at the time. One of his principal tasks was to crush even the slightest hint of insurrection or rebellion. Hence his interest in claims of Jesus' kingship. But, of course, he doesn't really understand Jesus.

Read John 18:33-37

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 John 18:33-37 again.

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

Group Dialogue:

- Begin by naming the distinctions between Pilate, the Roman representative to the region, and Jesus. [Pilate had governmental authority. Pilate, as a Roman, would have felt superior to all Jews, much less the arrested leader of revolt. Jesus had been physically beaten and betrayed by his disciples. Pilate would have felt in charge and in control of Jesus' fate.]
- Do you think Jesus' declaration that his kingdom is not from this world would have confused Pilate, relieved Pilate, or made him more hostile against Jesus?
- What might it mean for Jesus' kingdom to not be of this world? [Jesus is not suggesting his kingdom makes no difference on earth. Rather, Jesus is contrasting his kingdom to Pilate's.]
- Jesus ends this part of the conversation by switching themes to truth. How is living in God's kingdom related to living in the truth?
- How can living in the truth of God's kingdom help us to live a life that matters?

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:

God of truth, guide us by the values of your kingdom. Give us the ears to discern your voice above all the noise and all the untruths. May others see in us the truth and abundance that comes from walking in the light of your kingdom. **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.