

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series: Any Questions

What is the will of God? Why do bad things happen to good people? How can I face the future? Does prayer really work? Asking questions and having doubts is a normal part of the human experience. We do not have to be ashamed of our doubts or hide our questions before God. In fact, God fully welcomes them and welcomes us. It is even possible that we are closer to God when we are asking questions than when we think we have all the answers.

This Lent, join us as we bring some of our biggest questions and doubts to God. We will practice embracing this deeply human part of ourselves of asking, wondering, and wrestling in the mystery of faith as we move together toward the great and joyous hope of the Easter resurrection.

Message Description:

Many books, movies, and songs attempt capture our curiosity with heaven. What will heaven be like? Where is it? How do we get there? When will Jesus return? And for all the references to the kingdom of God, eternal life, the final judgement, and heaven in scripture, the nature of heaven is still quite a mystery. Throughout Church history, theories have swirled around the interpretation of Revelation 20-21 and the "millennium," that is, the 1000 years that Jesus will rule on earth before the final judgment and resurrection. Will Jesus return before then, after the 1000 years, or is it even possible for God's ways to be fully honored on earth? What role does or should the church play in all of this? Much of this we cannot know. Jesus himself said he didn't know the day or the hour when the Son of Man would return. If that is the case, it seems we have a job to do to share the gospel, to love our neighbors, and to live according to the Kingdom values as citizens of that unshakeable Kingdom now. The rest is left to the mystery of God.

Key Scripture

John 14:1-5, Colossians 1:15-17, Revelation 21:1-5; Matthew 24:36-37

Questions based on this week's teaching:

1. What do you think heaven is like?
2. What role do you think the church plays (or should play) in the kingdom of God coming on earth as it is in heaven?
3. The kingdom of God is often described as a dual reality; an overlap of the ages with the age now on earth, and the age that is to come in heaven. Jesus comes to announce the kingdom of God and promises to return to establish his reign. But that doesn't mean we can't catch glimpses of the age to come. In this sense, where have you experienced foretastes of heaven lately (and the peace, joy, love, mercy, and freedom it brings)?
4. What is giving you hope right now?

For further reading:**What is the kingdom of God?**

<https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-what-is-the-kingdom-of-god>

Is the end goal of life just to get to heaven?

<https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-what-is-our-end-goal-as-a-united-methodist>

Please be intentional about praying together!**Consider joining us as a house group for one of our Thursday nights of prayer and worship throughout Lent.**

Starting February 1 at 7pm, the pastoral team will meet in the lower level at MUMC (enter building A their main sanctuary building) for an intentional time of prayer and worship as we seek God's presence and guidance in this season.

Let us not underestimate the power of our community coming together in an hour of need to pray!

Close in prayer:

Pray together. Create intentional time and space to offer prayers for one another, that we might share in the comfort of Christ together and experience the Spirit's presence.

Consider the simple acronym of ACTS to guide your time of prayer together:

- A- Adoration.** *Share praise reports or reasons to praise God. (Reading a psalm together can help)*
- C- Confession.** *Leave space to pray silently or individually to confess sins.*
- T- Thanksgiving.** *Share something in the group that you are thankful for this week.*
- S- Supplication, or petition.** *Share concerns and prayer requests you have.*