



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ASHLAND



This guide is an invitation to follow Jesus with greater purpose and hope. It will help you to explore the scriptures and challenge you to live out your faith. Each week we'd love for you to think about how you relate: **Up** (with God), **In** (with church) and **Out** (with neighbors).

Weekly Questions:

- How is God getting my attention? For help, think about these areas:
- How are you living up with God?
- How are you living in community with other followers of Jesus?
- How are you living out on mission with your neighbors?
- What are you going to do about it?

From Garden to Garden. Christ – The True Image Arrives

Read John 1:1-18

- In the opening verse of John's gospel, the author recalls the language of Genesis, "in the beginning." John's introduction of Christ reveals that Christ was there at the beginning of creation... with God and *one with God*. If Jesus is the author of creation, does that change the way we view the person of Jesus? Does it change our view of God in the Old Testament?
- Christ's choice to enter into creation and live with us is a unique narrative amongst different faiths and different gods. Why is it so important that Jesus take on flesh as a fellow human? What does this mean for the way God sees us... and the way we might see each other?
- John makes it clear that to see Jesus is to see God, and to follow Jesus is to live in the light and life of God. Do you see examples of the light and life of God in your community or relationships?
- Verse 16 paints a picture of this life with God through Jesus. "Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given." The heart of God is clear in this example; Jesus wants to shower his people with grace and gifts and goodness. What graces are you experiencing right now? How have you seen the fullness of God?
- Our invitation into life with God makes us co-creators with Christ. Because of that, our words, attitudes, actions, and love have the power to bring about life in our neighborhoods. What sort of ways might we speak life into being?
- Theologian Paul Achtemeier says "Almost everyone has a word that he or she has a gift for bringing to life." He gives examples like compassion, justice, generosity, and patience. Do you have a word or idea you specifically feel gifted to bring to life? How has God prompted you to recognize this?

This week, take a moment to notice neighbors. Notice and appreciate beauty around you, removing yourself from being the "center of the universe". Notice how you are a part of the social fabric of your community. Ask God for a heart that beats for his justice and lean into community for healing and support as we navigate this world together.