

Glade Weekly News

January 20-26, 2025



Glade Church, a United Church of Christ (UCC) congregation, is a progressive Christian community—welcoming, compassionate, and joyful—seeking to embrace all people wherever they find themselves in life. We strive to discern God’s still-speaking voice through worship, study, fellowship, and service. We work for God’s peace and social, economic, and ecological justice.

Lectionary Readings for the Week

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 — Psalm 19 — 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a — Luke 4:14-21

Scripture for the Week

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 (Common English Bible)

- ¹When the seventh month (Sept-Oct) came and the people of Israel were settled in their towns, all the people gathered together in the area in front of the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring out the Instruction (Torah) scroll from Moses, according to which the Lord had instructed Israel.
- ²So on the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the priest brought the Instruction before the assembly. This assembly was made up of men and women and anyone who could understand what they heard. ³Facing the area in front of the Water Gate, he read it aloud, from early morning until the middle of the day. He read it in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand, and everyone listened attentively to the Instruction scroll.
- ⁵Standing above all of the people, Ezra the scribe opened the scroll in the sight of all of the people. And as he opened it, all of the people stood up. ⁶Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all of the people answered, “Amen! Amen!” while raising their hands. Then they bowed down and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.
- ⁸They read aloud from the scroll, the Instruction from God, explaining and interpreting it so the people could understand what they heard.
- ⁹Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all of the people, “This day is holy to the Lord your God. Don’t mourn or weep.” They said this because all the people wept when they heard the words of the Instruction.
- ¹⁰“Go, eat rich food, and drink something sweet,” he said to them, “and send portions of this to any who have nothing ready! This day is holy to our Lord. Don’t be sad, because the joy from the Lord is your strength!”

Word for the Week

Belonging



Pastor Kelly's Comments on the Scripture

Nehemiah 8:1 begins by narrating the Torah to the Jews, who all gather as one people. The emphasis on oneness is important because the books of Ezra-Nehemiah focus on the story of the Jews returning from exile, trying to forge a new identity. In this passage, all people have gathered to listen.

What I love about this particular passage is that the reading of the Torah happens outside the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah is rebuilding the wall around the city, but the Torah in the public square implies that all who are interested in listening to it are welcome. All people, whether they are “insiders” or “outsiders” are invited to come and share in the reading of the sacred text.

There is no discrimination here, and I would imagine that the experience brought the feeling of living in a community, of being **home**, sharing in a communal activity. The reading goes on for six long hours, and everyone pays attention. Whether they were reading Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, men, women, and children all gathered, excited to listen.

It evokes a beautiful picture – the unifying power of listening, learning, and worshiping together. I'm afraid, however, that this passage is isolated in other passages that are not at all empowering. The book of Nehemiah ends with violence against anyone who was deemed to be an “outsider.” In other words, if one couldn't prove their pure Jewish lineage, they were banished. The political and religious authorities, who were hand-in-hand, decided that the community must go back to pure bloodlines. The leaders decided this was best for the nation of Israel, God's chosen people.

While the exiles were away, many of the people who stayed in Jerusalem married outsiders/gentiles/non-Jewish people. People in these mixed marriages, along with their descendants, were all thrown out. Called less-than. Turned out of their homes and families.

With recent events, I think we need to pay particular attention to the history here, and work to prevent it from happening again. Ezra read God's law, but what he forgot was the spirit of that law, which was pure, simple, unconditional love. While joining together in worship and learning is a wonderful thing, it is dangerous to begin to think that we must act on behalf of God's will – especially if those actions would lead us to answer “no” to the question, “Are we showing love to our neighbors?”

God's love does compel us to act – always for justice, always for love, always for peace. If we see that our neighbors are being denied justice, then we must stand and speak out for them, because it is only with justice will they have love and peace.

Pastor Kelly Bryant

Office Day Next Week: Monday, January 27th. Kelly isn't listing hours to not place limits on their availability to you. Please contact them for a meeting at a time that fits your schedule on office days. Should you need Pastor Kelly, please don't hesitate to contact them.

540-521-9993, bryantkj@gmail.com.

Join us for worship at 11:00 a.m. every Sunday Morning

Attend in-person at 1600 Glade Rd. Blacksburg, or on Zoom at

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88914981619?pwd=Q3E4Rk95d2llZGtONlVqSDcrMm1xdz09/#_success

Annual Congregational Meeting This Sunday!

Topics will include the 2025 Glade Budget and open Council positions. Both of these items will require a quorum to vote. You are able to attend in person or via Zoom. If you are unable to attend, please email a member of Council with proxy information or provide a written proxy request before the meeting starts. Minutes from the last quarterly meeting and a proposed agenda for this meeting were emailed yesterday.

Spiritual Formation Class and Youth Group meets again on February 2

Spiritual Formation for adults and Youth Group meets on the first and third Sundays of each month.

Next meeting date is Sunday, February 2 at 9:45 AM. We hope you'll join us!

Volunteers are needed for Kids Church and Youth Group

There are leader slots available for youth, kids, and nursery. Session topic info is available on the sign-up link below. Youth Group is on the first and third Sundays of each month at 9:45 AM. Kids Church is on the second and fourth Sundays of each month during worship service. Here is the link to sign up to serve our children: [Kids Church and Youth Group Volunteer Signup](#)

Laundry Love
Thursday January 23 from 6-8 PM at North Main Laundromat.

Laundry Love has opportunities to volunteer. This is a great way to put “Words” into “Actions” of faith and love. We do this at the laundromat on North Main across from the Y-Thrift Shop. Click below to volunteer!

VOLUNTEER FOR LAUNDRY LOVE

Help provide an extravagant welcome

We have Greeters posted at the two main entrances to the church to welcome people as they arrive on Sunday mornings. Greeters hand out a bulletin, make sure visitors receive a visitor card to fill out, and answer any questions they may have about the church service and the building. See Sandra Bryant for more information or to sign up to be a Sunday Greeter.

Coffee & Devotion Group Meets via Zoom on Wednesdays at 10:00 am

This virtual get-together meets at 10 a.m. on Zoom and lasts for about an hour for a time to meet people, share thoughts, hear a brief devotion, and join in prayer. This time of fellowship is open to everyone, it's a time to gather for conversation, devotion and prayer. Come meet some people you may not know.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89240288592?pwd=KzhRWlJiQTkzWWRIYTNUckdPaUNqUTog>

Radical Conversations [RadCon] Meets Saturdays at 11:00 am

Radical Conversations meets from 11:00-12:15 each Saturday morning at the church. This is a time for open discussion of a wide range of topics. RadCon is open to any and every interested individual. For the remainder of 2024, the group will meet for social time.

UCC Purpose, Vision, and Mission Statements

Purpose: To love God with all our heart, mind soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves. (From the Gospel of Matthew)

Vision: United in Christ's love, a just world for all.

Mission: United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.



John 17:21 is the scriptural foundation of the United Church of Christ