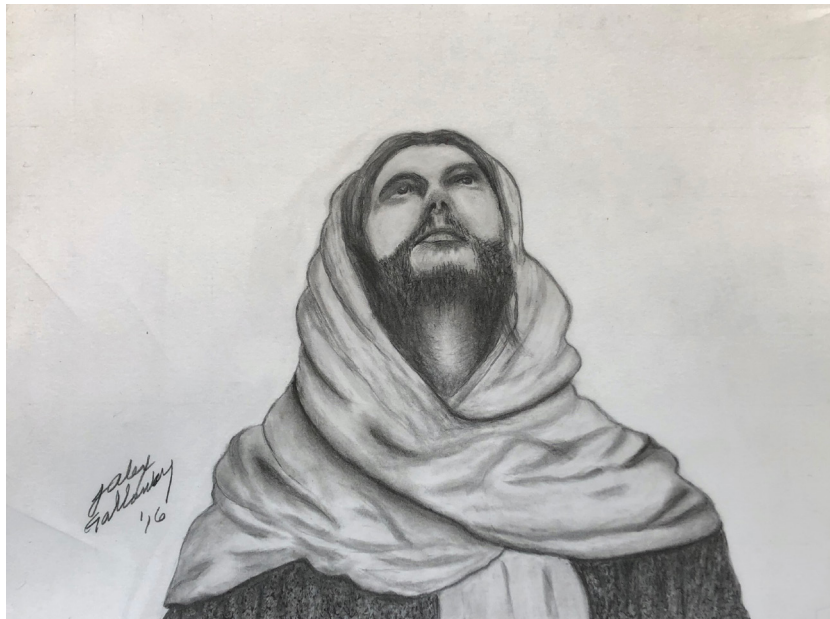


2020 SUMMER DEVOTIONAL

First Presbyterian Church, Greensboro, NC
fpcgreensboro.org

Week four



Come and see

WEEK FOUR
—
DAY ONE

Scripture & reflection

John 1:
35-39

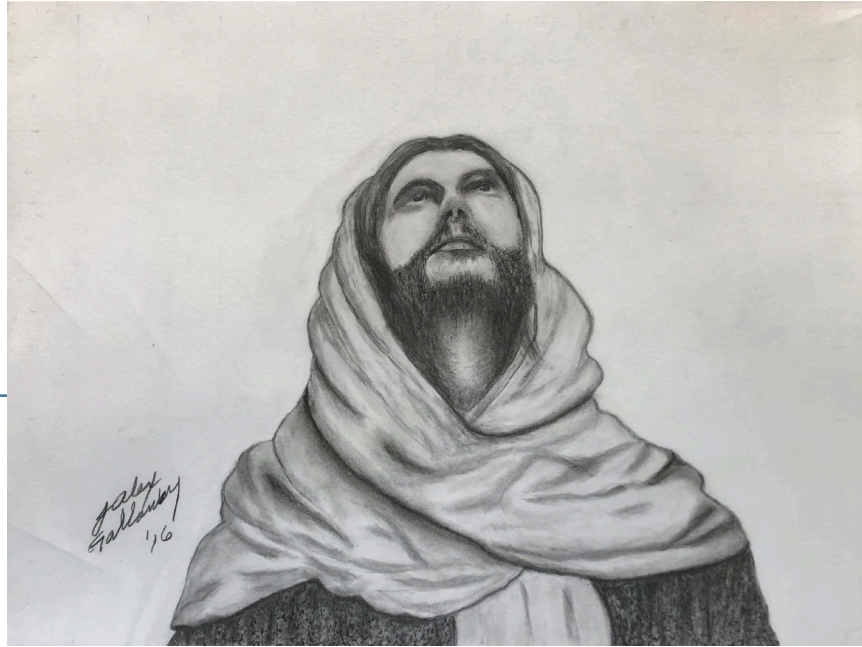
An echo of 'Come and See' reverberates and bounces through the Gospel of John. Remember, it was these famous words that Jesus said to Thomas after Thomas doubted that the resurrected Christ was the one standing in front of him. He said to Thomas, "Come and see...do not doubt but believe."

At the intersectionality of Discipleship Director and Young Adult Minister here at FPC, the invitation to "come and see" is the most obvious invitation to the church. We live in a moment where the cynicism surrounding American Christianity, especially among young people, provokes skepticism over and against graciousness. The often cited 2016 Pew Research study on religion and young people in America found that one of the major factors driving millennials away from organized religion is their perception of church hypocrisy. It troubles me even more to discover that the more engaged the respondents were in their churches as young people, the more likely they were to cite hypocrisy.

We can trust in both the 1st chapter of John and the 20th chapter of John that when Jesus invites the disciples to "come and see," Jesus is who he says he is. I am painting with a broad brush, but the truth is that young adults aren't so sure that the Church is what it says it is. What is the Church? It is the community that responds to the message of reconciliation in praise and prayer. In that response, it commits itself afresh to its mission, experiences a deepening of faith and obedience, and bears open testimony to the gospel.

So, I invite you to reflect. As the Director of Discipleship, I am constantly asking myself, what is being seen? How might people of different ages, races, genders, socio-economic backgrounds, nationalities, etc....see First Presbyterian Church? How might this be different from what I see? What do you see? What is your role in making First Presbyterian Church a place of radical hospitality that gives you the confidence to say to anyone you meet, "Come and See!"?

Matt Logan, Director of Young Adult Ministry and Discipleship



“Come and See” in charcoal by member Alex Galloway

John 1:39

“Jesus said to the disciples, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day.”

Take in the painting, slowly moving your eyes over the image. Invite the Holy Spirit to be present with you in this exercise of visual devotion.

What do you notice when you look at the painting? What first stands out to you?

How do the colors and shapes in the painting make you feel? Does your eye gravitate towards a particular shape or color?

Read today’s scripture verse. Do you experience any resonances between the scripture and the image?

Pause. Breathe. Take in the image once more. Close your devotion time with a prayer, offering to God the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession that are on your heart this day.

WEEK FOUR
—
DAY TWO

Visio divina

WEEK FOUR
—
DAY THREE

Spiritual practice

Centering prayer

For this year's summer devotional, each week includes an invitation to a spiritual practice. We know that our faith deepens and broadens when we engage embodied practices that form us as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. We invite you this week into the practice of centering prayer.

Centering prayer is a contemplative prayer practice, similar to last week's practice of Lectio Divina. In centering prayer, we are invited to pay special attention to our breathing, trusting that the Spirit is present to us always, as close as our very breath. Below are a set of invitations for you to engage your own practice of centering prayer, but know that as with any prayer practice, God remains with you, beckoning you to come and see what God will do.

Find a comfortable place to sit. Light a candle if you have one. Set a timer with a gentle alarm sound for 2-3 minutes (or, if you're feeling ambitious, longer!).

Settle in and begin to pay attention to your breathing. Is it fast? Is it slow? Continue to pay attention to your breath.

Each time you inhale, say these words of Jesus in your mind: "Come and see." Keep repeating this phrase inwardly, focusing on your breathing and trusting that the Spirit is present wherever you are, until your timer goes off.

Prayer

Triune God, you are as near to me as my very breath. Grant that I may abide in your presence as I go about the work and play and rest of my days; through Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever; Amen.