



# HOPE RISES

## **JOURNEY GUIDE** **2020 STEWARDSHIP** **CAMPAIGN**

[katyfirst.org/hope](https://katyfirst.org/hope)

*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord...  
to give you a future with hope. — Jeremiah 29:11*



# HOW TO USE THIS JOURNEY GUIDE

The Journey Guide is for your spiritual growth as we explore what it takes to be a church that makes **HOPE RISE** in our children and community. We will take this spiritual journey together as we commit ourselves financially to the mission of Katy First UMC.

We invite you to be honest about your thoughts and experiences as you write in this book, and bring it to church with you each week of our **HOPE RISES** series.

During the Sunday school hour at 9:45 am Sunday School classes will watch a video lesson and work through the Group Session. **If you don't regularly meet with a Sunday School Class or a Community Group and need help finding one, visit [katyfirst.org/community](http://katyfirst.org/community).** We can help direct you to a group of your peers.

If you prefer to do your bible study solo or if you miss a Sunday, you will be able to find the Group Session video on our website at **[katyfirst.org/hope](http://katyfirst.org/hope)**.

Lastly, we ask that you keep your Journey Guide with you during the week to read your Daily Devotionals. To break up all the reading, you might enjoy each week's spiritual activity. When you bring your Journey Guide with you on Sunday, ask your friends what they found interesting during the week.

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# WELCOME TO HOPE RISES

**HOPE RISES IS A STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN FOR SUSTAINING AND GROWING MINISTRY AT KATY FIRST.**

**WE ARE RAISING OUR MINISTRY SUPPORT SO THAT WE MAY BE A RISING HOPE FOR CHRIST IN KATY.**

Katy First United Methodist Church has a rich history of changing lives with the good news of the Gospel. As you think back on your time here, you can probably identify some of those moments. Moments where you saw hearts changing for Christ and when you felt your own heart moved for Him. We expect that those moments are why you are a part of our church today.

**HOPE RISES is the theme of our 2020 Ministry Funding Campaign. Our vision - To be a welcoming and serving church that embraces the diversity of our community and the inclusion of all God's children, mobilized to address the specific needs of families, neighborhoods and schools - frames our ministry goals for the next 5 years.**

Over the next five weeks we will focus on intentionally becoming a church that ensures **HOPE RISES** in our children, for our community, and through our church.

On **February 23, we will dedicate our financial Estimates of Giving** to support our church's ministry and mission. This Journey Guide is designed to help us grow spiritually as we consider our giving decisions.

During this time, **we ask that you pray for this campaign. God is doing something bigger than us, and none of this will be possible without the prayers of hope from God's people of hope.** Thank you for being a part of what God is doing through Katy First.

Grace and Peace,  
Rev. Dr. Dick White & Rev. Mark Kimbrough

# WHERE WE ARE GOING

## THE WORK AHEAD MAY NOT BE EASY, BUT IT IS ROOTED IN PRAYER.

In 2017, our church embarked on a journey called Vibrant Church Initiative. Working with the Texas Annual Conference, a team of Katy First UMC leaders met for nine months to discern where God is calling our church over the next decade.

While the church prayed and shared their support, the Vision team looked at data and confronted stark truths about our congregation. As a whole, we are an aging congregation that does not look like our neighbors as far as age, race, and socioeconomic status, but geographically we are positioned to meet the needs of thousands around us. We understand that the challenge before us is changing some of our ingrained patterns and activities so that we may answer God's call.

The Vision Team produced a vision for Christ in our community and in our congregation. It was a result of hours of passionate meetings, reflective homework, and deep prayer.

Through this process, we've not only realized who we are, but who we are meant to be.

### MISSION

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

### VISION

Our vision is to be a welcoming and serving church that embraces the diversity of our growing community and the inclusion of all of God's children, mobilizing to address the specific needs of families, neighborhoods, and schools.

## WE'RE REINVESTING IN OUR CHILDREN.

If you ask those who attend here regularly what they think our church values are, a common response might be that our church is deeply passionate about our children's ministry. And they wouldn't be wrong.

"We believe God has called us to adopt Lindsey Elementary School as a mission outpost and start building relationships with its students, staff, teachers, and the students' parents."

— Rev. Mark Kimbrough

Each week, we serve dozens of children on Sunday mornings in our classes and choirs. **Our summer programs served over 360 children and 60 youth. Now, God is clearly calling us to do more, to dare greater.**

## **NOW IS THE TIME TO RE-ENERGIZE OUR CHURCH FOR DISCIPLESHIP.**

Our mission as part of the United Methodist Church is clear. We exist to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” We want everyone who enters our doors to be able to take intentional steps toward encountering Jesus. We are challenged to create specific pathways by which people in our community and congregation will encounter Jesus Christ and to have ample staff with enough tools to make followers of Jesus.

## **OUR HOPE RISES GOALS**

**100%  
PARTICIPATION**  
FROM EVERYONE THAT  
CALLS KATY FIRST THEIR  
FAITH HOME

**\$1.5  
MILLION**  
FOR MINISTRY SUPPORT SO  
THAT WE MAY BE A RISING HOPE  
FOR CHRIST IN KATY.

HOPE RISES is a call to generosity for absolutely everyone. We are asking that everyone make a one-year commitment representing the time period from January 1 of this year through the last day of 2020

### **WHAT ARE YOU ASKING ME TO DO?**

#### **ASK**

Over the next few weeks, pray and ask God what he is calling you to do. Talk with your loved ones and trusted advisors about what this commitment will mean.

#### **LISTEN**

We need to listen for God’s leading.  
Use these next few weeks for reflection and find moments of quiet to hear God’s voice.

#### **RISE**

Be prepared to rise up and be amazed.  
We serve a God that promises hope.  
He is going to show up in huge ways, and we anticipate a huge impact from our collective HOPE RISES commitments.

# THE GIVING LADDER

Whether you are a seasoned giver or you have never given before, **HOPE RISES** asks everyone to stretch their spiritual muscles and generosity.

The Giving Ladder is a tool that can help you assess where you are right now and where God is calling you to be.



**ABUNDANT**

## **I GIVE BEYOND MY 10% TITHE.**

Are you giving freely and joyfully from what God has given you? This may be a time for you to become re-energized and excited about the things God is promising for your church home.

**TITHING**

## **I FAITHFULLY GIVE 10% (THE TITHE) OF MY INCOME.**

What is the HOPE RISES gift that challenges, grows, and blesses you?

**INTENTIONAL**

## **I GIVE CONSISTENTLY-BUT LESS THAN 10% OF MY INCOME.**

This journey is about a heart change that is only accomplished by surrendering our lives completely over to God. What is on your heart?

**OCCASIONAL**

## **I GIVE, BUT NOT CONSISTENTLY.**

We are not asking anyone to give from what they don't have, nor are we asking anyone to give under compulsion. What would radical, sacrificial generosity look like for you?

**FIRST TIME**

## **I HAVE NOT GIVEN BEFORE.**

This is your chance to experience the joy that comes from your generous support of God's work through Katy First UMC.



JANUARY 26 SERMON

# THE HOPE OF UNSTOPPABLE PROMISE

## ROMANS 5:1-5

As you may be able to guess by the name of “Hope Rises”, we are going to be talking about hope today and for the next few weeks. But what is hope? **You’ll hear several “hope is…” statements in this sermon.**

**Try to take note when you hear one of those statements today. Which one resonates with you the most?**

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## JANUARY 26 SESSION 1 | GROUP SESSION

### WATCH THE VIDEO

Each week's Bible study will be an intentional and intensive study of the Bible passages that Pastors Dick White and Mark Kimbrough will preach from in Confluence and Sanctuary services. Each of our five Bible studies will be guided by the acronym **S.O.A.P. - Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer.**

S.O.A.P. is a guide for moving through scriptures during this series, but it is also a helpful practice that you can carry with you into the future. Today we are diving into Paul's unconditional confidence in the always-exceeding power of biblical hope.

### GROW TOGETHER

1. What is something new that you learned in today's study?
2. Where were you most challenged – or where did you most disagree – with today's study? What do you think the Apostle Paul would say in response to you?
3. How do you think a person – or a church – actually “practices the promises of God?”
4. Think back to the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus. What promises do you see God offering you in Christ? Can you give a specific example of one of those promises previously or currently at work in your life?
5. What promises do you see God specifically offering Katy First United Methodist Church, especially at this time in our congregation's life?

### PRAY TOGETHER

**Lord God, you are setting a great challenge before your people who call this church home. We recognize the magnificent promises that you are offering us, and we intend to practice them. Send us your Holy Spirit, that we might faithfully practice your promises this week and throughout the campaign. In Jesus name, we hope and pray. Amen.**



**MONDAY, JANUARY 27**

**READ GENESIS 12:1-9**

*So Abram went as the Lord told him. — Genesis 12:4*

**REFLECT**

The God of the present is also the God of the future, and the God who makes provision for us today is also busy making promises for us tomorrow. As E. Stanley Jones said, “I don’t know what the future holds, but I do know who holds the future.” God makes promises about the future because the future is His to promise.

Hope is that “something beyond” which keeps the Christian going. It is the motive, the motion, and the message behind all of life. So thank God; we are able to keep going. Our underlying confidence is that God is as good as his word. Or better yet - God’s word is as good as He is. And because of that we begin each day...stepping out on hope.

**PRAYER**

*God, whose name is Hope and whose gift is the future: help me live today as if tomorrow is already here. Help me take You at your word, and empower me to confidently follow You throughout the day ahead. Amen.*

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 28**

**READ PSALM 103:1-5**

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits... — Psalm 103:2*

**REFLECT**

Today, for just a few minutes will you consider the possibility that your life is built on blessings? For just a few moments, can you be open to the idea that there is nothing more important in your life than the generosity of God?

For instance, put your hand to your chest. Feel your heart? Every beat of your heart is a gift. You didn’t earn that heartbeat, you didn’t put down a deposit on it, and you can’t put it on layaway. Each beat is a blessing, and the next one’s a bonus.

Now, take your hand and put it to your mouth. Feel your breath? That’s a gift. Every 24 hours you take 18,720 of them, and each of them is a gift. The most important things in life are not for sale. The most important things in life are gifts. And the heart of life is built on the generosity of God.

**PRAYER**

*Dear God, give me open eyes to the blessedness of life, and especially to the extravagance with which You love me.*

**SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FOR THE WEEK**

How easy is it for you to put your faith in God?

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What do you think God hopes will happen in your life?

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What would you do if you knew that you could not fail?

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*Empower me to live this day with arms wide open to the giftedness of each moment, and help me not to be stingy in my praise or thanksgiving to You. Amen.*

### WEDNESDAY JANUARY 29

#### READ JOHN 21:15-19

*When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, Son of John, do you love me more than these?"*  
— John 21:15

#### REFLECT

As Christians, we're meant to be living dynamic and exciting lives. Time after time, the Bible presents a vision of faith so full and expansive that the very book vibrates when you read it.

And yet, for too many of us, this is not a part of our experience. There are still too many people who have lost more than just the desire to live, but more seriously, the desire to make a difference.

The disciples did that one time. After Jesus was resurrected, the only question they could come up with was, "Well, what are we going to do today?" And Peter said, "I'm going fishing."

And yet you remember the story from there – the encounter with Jesus that interrupts all Peter's assumptions: "Peter, do you love me more than these?"

More than what? More than the other disciples love Jesus? More than Peter loves the nets and boat and sails of Galilee? Or is it something more? Is it "Peter, do you love me more than the small life, the easy-path life? Do you love me more than the small things that you've wrapped your life around?"

And Jesus says, "Feed my sheep - follow me.

Jesus gave himself to something beyond himself, someone apart from himself - to "his sheep." And it was that kind of self-giving that made his life big.

#### PRAYER

*Dear God, I'm tired of playing games and playing it safe, when I could be feeding sheep and following You. So, here I am Lord – send me. Amen.*

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 30

#### READ PROVERBS 14:31; 19:17

*Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord. — Proverbs 19:17*

#### REFLECT

The entire Bible says that God cares for the poor in a special way. The poor have God's ear and God's care. God is on their side. God's care for the poor is so intense, his identification with them so strong, that any of us who oppress the poor insults not only them, but also God himself. "Those who oppress the poor insult their MAKER." (Proverbs 14:31)

Christians, therefore, are called not only to see the poor but also to take responsibility for them. We don't have the option of letting them struggle on their own. As Isaiah 32 says, we may not "ruin the poor with lying words" by making those ruinous generalizations we've all heard: "They're too dumb to learn. They're too lazy to work. They're too ignorant to vote." God cares for the poor in a special way. Do we?

#### PRAYER

*"O Lord, give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." In Jesus name. Amen. (from Psalm 82)*

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 31

#### READ PSALM 24

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.*  
—Psalm 24:1

#### REFLECT

Let's face the truth. By global standards

most of us are prosperous. True, we may not feel terribly rich, but that is only because we have lost perspective. When we keep comparing ourselves with people even wealthier than ourselves, we can fool ourselves into thinking we are not so very well off.

Let's face another truth. We are therefore "the rich" whom the Bible addresses so pointedly and with such fearful warnings.

Let's face a third truth. None of our wealth is ours. The earth is the Lord's. The fullness of our granaries is the Lord's. So is our gross national product. According to scripture, our "personal assets" are not personally ours.

Salvation is a free gift from God. Wealth is not, it comes with strings attached. We've been entrusted with varying amounts of the Lord's vast resources. One day we will need to give account for what we have done with those resources.

Our question is not, "All right, how much do I give away?" That question still assumes we own our wealth. The real question is far more troubling: in the face of God and the world's poor, how much do I dare keep for myself?

### PRAYER

*O Lord God, help me to look at myself without evasion. Then help me to look at those who have far less than I do. Finally, help me understand that you care deeply what I do next. Through Jesus Christ, Amen.*

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1

### READ LUKE 6:27-31, 37-38

*Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.*

— Luke 6:38

### REFLECT

An old story tells of a wealthy man, getting on in years. He called an employee who had been with him a long time. He said, "I'll be gone for a year. While I'm gone, I want you to build me a house. Here's a check to cover the entire cost. Take it and build a nice house."

So the old man left on his trip and the employee went to work. But he began to cut corners in the construction. He built a beautiful exterior shell, but it covered a lot of shoddy workmanship. He lined his own bank account with several thousand dollars that he saved cutting corners.

The first day back from his trip, the old man wanted to see the house. When they arrived, he beamed with pride and said, "You've been my faithful assistant for all these years, and I wanted to find a way to show my appreciation. So here are the keys. The house is yours."

What kind of spiritual house are you building with the opportunities God has entrusted to you? Are you giving the best for him, which produces the best for you? Or, like the story, are you withholding the best from God, which ultimately cheats only you?

When we give meaningfully to others, we give meaning to ourselves. When we marry great living and great giving, then our souls are blessed deeply.

### PRAYER

*Dear God, life is indeed for giving. Help me through the rest of today to be a Life Giver to someone else. Help me receive all that You have in store for me by giving all that I have stored for others. Amen.*



**FEBRUARY 2 SERMON**

# **THE HOPE OF GOD GIVEN SUPPLY**

## **2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-15**

“God will provide,” is something that we say often. It’s a comfort and a truth. But we often question the limits of what we are able to give to God. In this sermon we’re asked to challenge that way of thinking.

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## FEBRUARY 2

# SESSION 2 | GROUP SESSION

### WATCH THE VIDEO

Pastor Mark Kimbrough will take us through today's scripture using a tool called S.O.A.P. which stands for Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. In today's passage, Paul writes very frankly to the Corinthians. He asks them to feed all of the believers in Jerusalem during a massive famine.

Paul's appeal is not based on the church's ability to give, but on God's ability to provide. In the video we learn that the "hope of supernatural supply" is the impossibility of us out-giving God. When Paul says it's impossible for us to out-give God, what's Paul saying to our church as we attempt to be faithful today?

### GROW TOGETHER

1. What was the most help or the greatest comfort to you in today's study?
2. When you look at our church, where do you see our primary mistake – assuming the wrong owner, setting the wrong anchor, or asking the wrong question? Based on what?
3. When you look at your household, which mistake are you least likely to make – assuming the wrong owner, setting the wrong anchor, or asking the wrong question? Based on what?
4. What God given supply might God offer Katy First United Methodist Church through our HOPE RISES stewardship campaign?
5. When I think about my practice of generosity, who gets the left-overs? What does this reveal about your belief in the hope of God given supply?

### PRAY TOGETHER

**Lord, we know that when we trust in You, we cannot fail. Thank you for revealing Your word to us today. May our generosity reflect the hope we have in your generosity to us. Amen.**

**MONDAY FEBRUARY 3****READ 1 JOHN 4:7-12**

*Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.*  
—1 John 4:7

**REFLECT**

Can you name the five wealthiest people in the world? Ten people who have won a Nobel Prize? The last decade's worth of World Series winners?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. They were the best in their fields, but achievements are forgotten. Accolades are buried with their owners.

You can probably easily list a few teachers who aided your journey through school, or three friends who have helped you through a difficult time, or the names of people who have made you feel appreciated or special.

The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that care. This is what the Apostle Paul understands in today's Bible passage. Community - deep connectedness with God and with people - is what you were made for. It is God's design and desire for your life. It is the one indispensable condition for human growth.

**PRAYER**

*Dear God, You pour Your life upon me through the love of others. I cannot have You if I do not have them. Help me see Your heaven in their care, and help me express the hope of heaven through my tender heart toward them. Amen.*

**TUESDAY FEBRUARY 4****READ GALATIANS 5:1, 13-15**

*For you were called to freedom...but through love become slaves to one another.* — Galatians 5:13

**REFLECT**

Paul says, "Be free - be servants." Is that a contradiction? Or is that the truth? But Paul says, "You can be a slave and therefore free!" Which one is true freedom?

There is a big difference between the love of freedom and the freedom to love. As Paul notes, freedom is not the right to do as we please. Freedom is the liberty to do as we ought.

As the people of Jesus, the "ought" of our lives is love. The law of freedom is the law of unselfish love. We find ourselves - by losing ourselves. And we free ourselves - by giving ourselves. Are you free but still a slave? Or are you a slave - and therefore free?

**PRAYER**

*Lord, may I never take any freedom for granted. Empower me instead to exercise true freedom by freely giving myself to others, even as Jesus freely gave himself for me. Amen*

**WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 5****READ REVELATION 3:14-22**

*Listen, I am standing at the door, knocking; if you will hear my voice and open the door, I will come to you and eat with you, and you with me.*

— Revelation 3:20

**REFLECT**

Some years ago, divers located a 400-year-old ship off the coast of Northern Ireland. Among the treasures found on the sunken ship was a man's wedding ring. Etched on the band was a hand holding a heart and this inscription, "I have nothing more to give you."

Great love is never passive. Great love likes to give the best and not hold back. No little cheap trinket will do, you want to give your best. In one way or another, great love always says, "I have nothing more to give you."

## SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FOR THE WEEK

List every need or wound  
in the world that breaks your heart

List those gifts, talents, and abilities  
in your life that excite and interest  
you the most.

When you compare the two columns, ask how could you best love Jesus and follow him using those gifts

In the gospel of John, Jesus says: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." We needed a Savior, and God sent us one. We needed a Life-Giver and God sent us one. God so loved the world that he gave the world everything He had - His only Son.

### PRAYER

*Dear God, when I see Jesus, I see it all - all You have done for me, all You have offered me, all You have promised me, all You hold in anticipation for me in heaven. You have given me everything, and there is nothing finer or no One better. May I stand amazed at Your love, and may I open the door of my life to You. Enter in, Lord Jesus. Amen.*

### THURSDAY FEBRUARY 6

#### READ MATTHEW 19:16-30

*But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first. — Matthew 19:30*

### REFLECT

Mitch Albom wrote the bestselling book, "The Five People You Meet in Heaven." The premise of the book raises

an interesting question - who will be the most prominent people in heaven? List your top ten. Billy Graham? Mother Theresa? Martin Luther King Jr.? Other great heroes and leaders of the faith?

Jesus says that the pecking order of heaven is not based on earthly status. Heaven will measure our achievements by how we've lived up to the level of our gifts. In Heaven we shall be measured only by the level of what we did with what God gave us.

Heaven's pecking order contains a wonderful promise: God will never require of us anything that he has not equipped us to achieve.

We often hear that the world has yet to see what a soul entirely devoted to Christ might accomplish. Only his supreme love can motivate such a servant.

### PRAYER

*Lord, I care not about my position in Heaven. Give me only a small place close enough to see Your face. Your face alone defines the boundaries of all that golden land. Amen.*

**FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7****READ 1 JOHN 3**

*How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help? — 1 John 3:17*

**REFLECT**

We are rich. In the words of our focus passage, we DO have “the world’s goods.”

But do we see our “brother or sister” in need?

Do we see the children at the elementary school who struggle to learn because they are struggling to eat at home? Do we see the homeless on the street corner, whose cardboard sign is not a sign of poor motivation, but poor health?

The challenge at this moment is to truly SEE them – to see them with enough compassion and indignation to do something about it. The challenge is not to become so numbed to these struggles that their crying needs simply become part of the landscape.

Today’s focus passage warns the rich and seeks to protect the poor. Those of us who have so much cannot hide behind the excuse that the needs around us are too big, too remote, too complex, or too disturbing. All those comments may be true, but their truth is not sufficient to answer to God’s question: “How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help?”

**PRAYER**

*O God, do not rebuke me in your anger, or discipline me in your wrath. It is for you, O God, that I wait. Do not forsake me. O Lord; do not be far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation. Amen. (From Psalm 38)*

**SATURDAY FEBRUARY 8****READ GENESIS 22:1-14**

*So Abraham called that place “The Lord Will Provide,” as it is to this day... —Genesis 22:14*

**REFLECT**

Genesis says, “God tested Abraham.” “Take your son, your only son, the son whom you love...take Isaac, and make him a sacrifice to me.”

I wonder how it would be to pack the next morning, to set off on a trip that has no end? Love trying to protect what faith has to give.

I wonder what it’s like...to have your back against the wall, your toes hanging over the edge looking into midnight blackness, your knees sinking into goodbye, and God says, “Wait!”? It must be like getting your own life back when there was no life left.

And Abraham named the place, “God provides.” And the Old Testament says that some 1100 years after that, Solomon built the Temple on that rock still known as “THE LORD WILL PROVIDE.”

It is obedience that turns our sacrifice into God’s provision. Every time we say yes to God, then whatever costs we pay are exceeded and outmatched by God’s provision. And in the end, maybe our story is not about Abraham being found faithful - it is about God being found faithful.

**PRAYER**

*God of great risks and greater rewards; Your demands would crush me if it were not for Your supply. I am never asked for more than You can provide. Therefore, provide me what I most need now – that is, the courage to follow where I cannot see, and the faith to offer what I do not possess. For a sacrifice in the name of One who gave His all, Jesus Christ. Amen.*





**FEBRUARY 9 SERMON**

# **THE HOPE OF IRRATIONAL EXTRAVAGANCE**

## **2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-5**

At this point you may be thinking, “How can I become enthusiastic about the needs of the church when I have needs of my own? I have my own mortgage. My own debt.”

In this sermon, we’re asked to understand the difference between giving by reason and giving by revelation. Throughout the Bible we encounter stories of people who give even more than they reasonably could or should have. It surely wouldn’t make a good story if they had just given what was reasonable. What will our story be?

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## FEBRUARY 9

# SESSION 3 | GROUP SESSION

### WATCH THE VIDEO

We've seen how biblical hope means practicing the promises of God and we have discovered that no matter how high hope rises, you can't out-hope and you can't out-give God.

This week we learn that we are not the owners of our stuff. God is the manager and has first rights to how we direct our blessings. Once that sinks in, we can find that it's easy to be generous when our stuff does not belong to us.

### GROW TOGETHER

1. What is something new that you learned from today's study?
2. What was the most help or the greatest comfort to you in today's study?
3. Where - or how - did the Macedonian people and practices most challenge the Corinthian church? Why do you think that was the case?
4. What message does HOPE RISES most need to hear from the Macedonians?
5. In the story that we heard in the video, the older woman said, "I dare you to do it again!" When was Katy First UMC so risk-taking, or so faith-acting, or miracle-making, or gift-giving in the past that God is now saying through HOPE RISES, "I dare you to do it again!"

### PRAY TOGETHER

**Lord, we see that you have been at work for quite some time to bring us to where we are, and we can only imagine what work you will continue to stir as history extends beyond us. We are ready to creatively live into your Heavenly dreams for us. Amen.**

**MONDAY FEBRUARY 10****READ PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7**

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. — Philippians 4:6*

**REFLECT**

The author Richard Foster calls praying “in everything” simple prayer, the most common kind of prayer in the Bible. You talk to God about whatever is on your heart. You pray to God not about what you think ought to be in you, but about what really is in you, about the desires of your heart. And if you’re going to grow in prayer and overcome worry, you must begin by becoming an “in everything” pray-er.

Those who pray “in everything” can trust God to respond graciously and wisely. But you’ve got to learn to hold your prayer loosely and trust that if God doesn’t answer in the way that you want it to be answered, God has very good reason. Your job is to talk to God about what is really on your heart.

**PRAYER**

*“Everything,” God? You want to hear “everything?” Okay, Lord – take me as I am, and take my heart as it is. Let me be open and honest with You, that I might know Your saving mercy “in everything.” For I pray with the authority given me by Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**TUESDAY FEBRUARY 11****READ 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-15**

*For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave accord to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints. — 2 Corinthians 8:3-4*

**REFLECT**

Ron Sider wrote a famous book entitled “Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger.” Sider suggests that we who

are upwardly mobile ought to keep on increasing not only the amount but also the percentage of our income that we give away. If even the government taxes on a graduated scale, can the Christian church be content with a lesser righteousness? Why not a “graduated tithing?”

Certain Christians have already been doing that. These are heroes of giving – people who, though rich, become poorer so that others become richer. How do they dare reduce their own comfort level and endanger their own financial security? Where did they ever get this idea of self-sacrifice?

We are often afraid to give because we are privately banking on financial security as our main comfort in life and death. Thus, instead of celebrating the opportunity to give, we shrink back and build bigger barns for our goods.

But we know it won’t work. Our wealth won’t last. And someday all our earthly goods will be either a reproach to us or a sheer irrelevance. For what we “take with us” when we die is only so much as we have given away.

**PRAYER**

*Merciful God, we remember our Lord Jesus Christ who, though rich, became poor for our sakes so that we, in our poverty, might become rich. Amen.*

**WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 12****READ MARK 15:16-22**

*They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Rufus and Alexander. — Mark 15:21*

**REFLECT**

When he was coach at the University of Oklahoma, Bud Wilkerson said, “Football is 75,000 people who desperately need exercise watching 22 people who desperately need rest.”

Football divides people into two

camps - those on the sidelines and those on the field. You either watch or play.

Funny thing is, the cross says the very same thing. There are two kinds of people in the world - the bystanders and the burden-bearers. You recall this story from the scriptures. A whipped and bruised Jesus now drags his cross toward Calvary. Suddenly he staggers, and his beaten body gives way under the weight of his cross. Mark writes: "And they compelled...Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Rufus and Alexander...to bear the cross."

Those who feel the weight Jesus carries are changed. The cross invites us to bear the burdens of others. Are you a bystander or a burden-bearer?

### **PRAYER**

*Burden-Bearing Christ, for just a moment, let me feel Your cross. Let me carry the weight that You carried - not just the mass of wood but rather the weight of grace. For a moment, let me bear the burdens of Jesus. Amen.*

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### **THURSDAY FEBRUARY 13**

#### **READ PHILIPPIANS 3:1-14**

"But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14)

### **REFLECT**

A comic strip in the Sunday paper showed a little girl on a two-wheel bike, crying to her father. She has a skinned knee. She says, "Daddy, I tried an' I tried, but I can't do it." Dad says, "Here honey - let me give you a hand, and you pedal."

He gets behind the bike, starts pushing. He says, "It's okay! I've got you!" They go down the street and pick up speed. Then, without a word,

he releases the bike. The little girl looks back, realizes she's controlling the bike, and a big smile breaks out.

And as she rides off by herself, Dad says, "The hard part...was letting go." It's never easy letting go, is it? No matter how worn the past, no matter how wonderful the future, it's hard to give up our history, isn't it. It is hard to not be anchored down by the accomplishments and achievements of a former time.

We can't encounter God without letting go of the past. God can't fill us with fresh things until we make some room in our hearts by letting go. After all, our security is not in the past; our security is in God.

Paul says, "I forget what lies behind, and I reach for what is ahead." When you let go of the past, God begins a new thing for you, and it will be even better than it was before. God's still here and God's still doing new things among us.

### **PRAYER**

*Dear God who knows me better than I know myself: what memories are holding me back? What part of my soul needs freedom from the past? It's not easy to let go, but it's not healthy to hold on. So I let go in the name of Jesus. Amen.*

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### **FRIDAY FEBRUARY 14**

#### **READ MATTHEW 5:13-16**

*You are the light of the world...let your light so shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

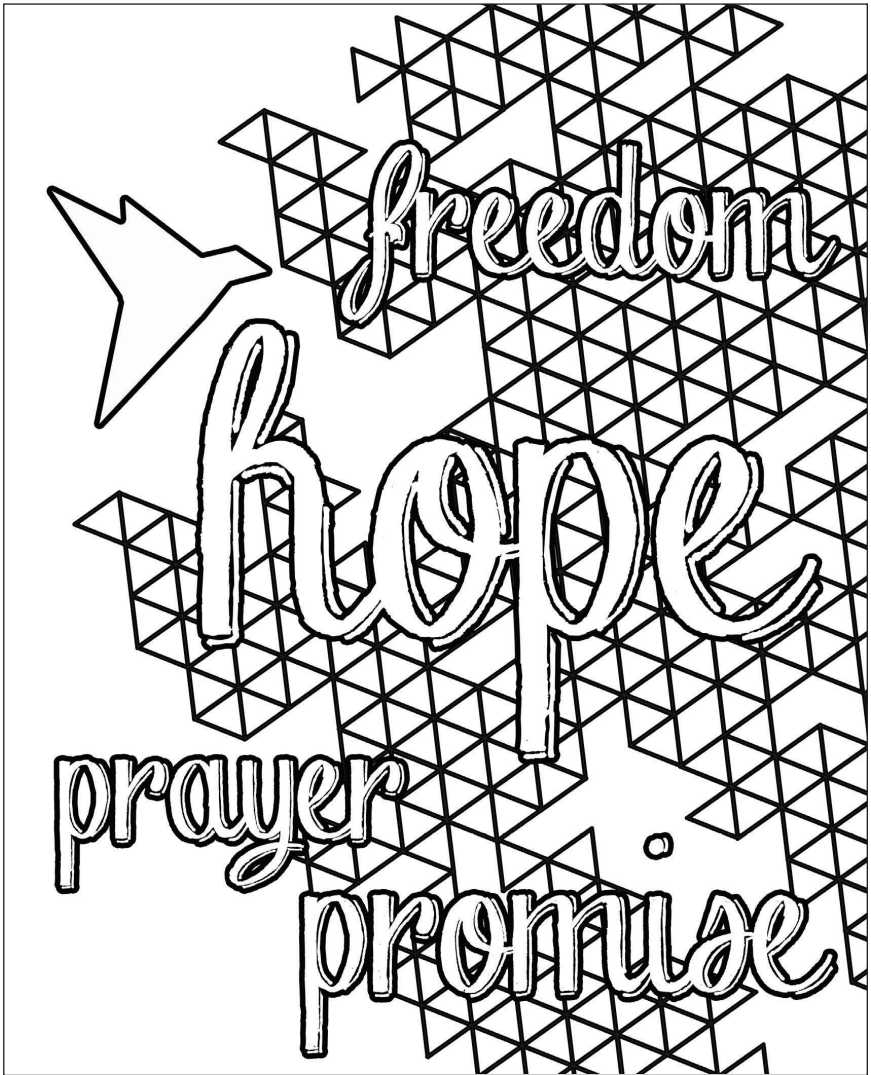
— Matthew 5:14,16

### **REFLECT**

Len Sweet tells about a five-year-old boy he knows who learned about the "Parable of the Sheep and the Goats" in Sunday School. The teacher saying, "When you give something to another

## SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FOR THE WEEK

What new thing could God do for you if you blessed the past, said a prayer over it, and released it to God? This week, as you color in this page, be in prayer about God's next steps for you.



person, you're really giving it to Jesus," replayed in his head.

While walking through the park, the boy noticed an elderly woman sitting on a bench. She looked lost and lonely, so he went over to her and offered her some of the M&Ms he was eating. She smiled and accepted them. The two sat on the bench together.

Finally, the boy got up to leave. When he arrived at his grandmother's house, she saw a big smile on his face and asked, "What made you so happy?" He said, "I shared my M&Ms with Jesus and she had a great smile."

Our example is the only light some people will ever see into the wonder of Jesus. There are no lamps that cannot throw at least a little light on some darkened portion of a fellow traveler's pathway. Take confidence now in the potential power of your lamp, for its light source is truly unquenchable.

#### **PRAYER**

*Dear Living Light of Life: may it be my honor to reflect just a bit of Your glory upon a dark and directionless soul today. May I be in awe of the awesome responsibility that is mine – to show them who You are and how You love. Shine on, Lord Jesus! Amen.*

### **SATURDAY FEBRUARY 15**

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#### **READ LUKE 18:31-34**

*Then Jesus took the twelve aside and said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished."*

— Luke 18:31

#### **REFLECT**

How could Jesus live at all, carrying what he did? He knew that when all other human support began to dwindle around him, God would draw very close to him with a companionship that only the Father and Son could experience.

Count the times that Jesus used the word "Father" in the last few weeks of his life, and you will see how his soul grew strong in the iron grip of God's love. Even on the cross we see this divine connection. We hear the Father's earlier words, cried once again over the Jordan River, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The desperate and lonely work of the cross would be accomplished by a Son who would give his last drop of blood to please his Father – a Father who treasured his Son's devotion...and understood. The goal of life is not so much to grasp God's will for our lives, but rather to be grasped by it.

#### **PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, I want to please You just as You sought to please Your Father. It is not enough that I go to church or perform small religious acts. Unless I gain Your smile, carrying my own cross will bring me little pleasure. In this way will I measure the reason for my life. Amen.*



**FEBRUARY 16** SERMON

# **THE HOPE OF SACRIFICIAL GIVING**

## **2 SAMUEL 24:18-24**

In a church it can seem like everyone is asking for something. Whether it is your time, or work, or money. We hear the call for volunteers, the call to give, and we think, "Surely someone else will provide that, so this does not apply to me."

Here's the truth: There are some blessings in life that are too important to be left to others. Someone else's generosity is no substitute for your own.

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## **FEBRUARY 16**

# **SESSION 4 | GROUP SESSION**

### **WATCH THE VIDEO**

Today's lesson focuses on Second Samuel, the last of a two-volume work witnessing to the life and faith of David, King of Israel. David purchases land located at the highest point of the region, and he constructs a place of worship and gives a sacrificial gift towards God's chosen place of worship.

As you watch the video today, be open-minded about viewing the word "sacrifice" as more than a word that we associate with self-denial. "What if biblically-based sacrifice means giving up something we love for something we love more?"

### **GROW TOGETHER**

1. Where were you most challenged – or where did you most disagree – with today's study? What do you think David would say in response to your objection?
2. Why do you think it was important to the author of 2 Samuel that David's final act is this moment of sacrificial giving?
3. 2 Samuel 24 is about David's legacy. In terms of legacy, what would you say is your most important, most lasting, and most memorable act? What would others say it is?
4. Like David teaches, what do you need to revisit to energize your sacrificial generosity – the meaning of sacrifice, the desirability of sacrifice, or the intimacy of sacrifice? Why?
5. Like David on Mt. Moriah, we stand on the shoulders of those before us and on the brink of what comes after us. Upon whose shoulders does your faith stand and what sacrifices did they make from which you benefit? What do you hope is your legacy, and our legacy, that is left at Katy First?

### **PRAY TOGETHER**

**Lord, thank you for Your word today. We are working to understand sacrifice not as the world sees it, but as You understand it to be, for "an offering that doesn't cost me is not an offering." Amen.**



**MONDAY FEBRUARY 17**

**READ JOHN 12:1-9**

*Mary took a pound of perfume – pure and expensive nard – anointed Jesus feet, and wiped His feet with her hair. So the house was filled with the fragrance of oil. Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot (who was about to betray Him) said, “Why wasn’t this fragrant oil sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” — John 12:3-5*

**REFLECT**

Frugality or extravagance: which does God favor?

When Mary dumped her costly perfume on the feet of Jesus, the question was answered. Stewardship is important, but not so all-important that the disciples of Christ are to become stingy in their celebrations of God’s outrageous grace.

Consider a thousand acres of wildflowers, and ask yourself how frugal God is. Consider the myriad of

life forms, hidden in the dark heart of unseen seas. Now think of how God saves, how freely the life of Jesus, like a large and lavish river, completely deluges us in joyous forgiveness.

So when Mary, whom God had abundantly forgiven, came to Jesus she dared not dab a bit of perfume here and there. She dumped the sweetness, worth at least \$10,000.00 in today’s currency, on the object of her adoration. Judas said it was a waste of money, but Jesus knew better.

**PRAYER**

Dear God, abundance is Your very nature. If I give by ledger and carefully count the coins, I sin against a God who despises penny-pinching giving. O God, lavishly you love. May any stinginess, therefore, never be welcome in my life. May I give as You give. Amen.

**SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FOR THE WEEK**

As this series comes to its peak, we hope you will be able to reflect on your journey so far.

When I was first introduced to HOPE RISES my reaction was...

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Along the way, the thing I was most surprised to learn was...

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I understand “Hope” to mean...

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The biggest challenge for me has been...

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I see God working in my life through...

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I know that I can best give back to God by...

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## **TUESDAY FEBRUARY 18**

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### **READ MARK 10:17-30**

*For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.*

—Mark 10:27

### **REFLECT**

A retired minister whose son was a pilot in the Air Force received a telegram. The telegram read, “Your son, David, reported missing - believed dead.”

The heartbroken father fell to a chair. For hours he agonized with God. And then he turned the telegram over and wrote, “All that I have and all that I am I give to God and for his service.”

The minister passed an abandoned church with a sign reading, “FOR SALE BY AUCTION.” He entered the church and, after more prayer, decided to buy and restore it. In his grieving state of mind, he accidentally sent the telegram to them instead of the auction offer.

To his surprise, the auctioneer announced that the church had been sold to the pastor, who had made the highest offer. He then read from the back of the telegram what he thought was the pastor’s bid. It read, “All that I have and all that I am I give to God and for his service.”

Have we grown to the point that we can say, “All that I have and all that I am I give to God and for his service?”

### **PRAYER**

*Dear God, in Your son Jesus, You have already given me Your best gift, Your highest offer, and Your finest love. Therefore...all that I have and that am I give to You for Your service. Amen.*

## **WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 19**

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### **READ MATTHEW 4:18-22**

*And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him.” — Matthew 4:19-20)*

## **REFLECT**

In the New Testament, the word for a fully devoted follower is the word “disciple.” It means to be an apprentice to someone. A disciple – like Peter, James, or John – had made a decision to spend every day with Jesus to learn how to be like him.

And now it’s our turn. What happened to Peter, James, and John on the other side of the world 2,000 years ago can happen again. Every day, there are invitations – some strong and some subtle – for you to be an apprentice of Jesus, to be a Jesus-follower.

I recently ran across a writing by a young pastor in Zimbabwe, Africa, who was later martyred for his faith in Christ. It is, in itself, as clear a statement of disciple living as you can find:

“I’m part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have Holy Spirit power. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made – I’m a disciple of his. I won’t look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still. I now live by faith, learn in His presence, walk by patience, and uplifted by prayer, and I labor with power.”

If we were willing to learn the meaning of real discipleship and actually become disciples like that, the church would be transformed, and the resulting impact on our lives, our marriages, our families, and our community will be staggering.

### **PRAYER**

*Dear Jesus, would you please take total ownership over who I am and where I go today? I need to be with you throughout every hour, so that I can watch you, hear you, learn from you and follow you. Amen.*

## THURSDAY FEBRUARY 20

### READ LUKE 6:12-16

*Now during those days Jesus went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer with God. — Luke 6:12*

### REFLECT

In today's Bible reading, Jesus prepares one of the most important decisions of his life – he will choose his disciples. It's a decision that has earth-shaking implications...right down to today. And it keeps him up all night. He's up all night trying to make this decision.

At every turning point, at every crossroads, at every intersection of importance, you find Jesus on his knees, listening for God's voice.

For Jesus, there is no decision without prayer. For Jesus, to make a choice without prayer is to make no choice at all – it's that important, that essential, that indispensable. For Jesus, there is nothing more decisive in a decision than prayer.

How decisive is prayer for you? Only prayer makes our decisions look like Jesus. Only prayer makes our decisions act like Jesus. Only prayer makes our decisions decide like Jesus. We never look more like Jesus than when our decisions look like prayers.

### PRAYER

*Dear Divine Prayer Partner: When I face a challenge worthy of keeping me up all night, at least keep me up all night with You. Keep me awake to Your will, and keep me alert to Your way. Amen.*

## FRIDAY FEBRUARY 21

### READ ISAIAH 6:1-8

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!" — Isaiah 6:8*

### REFLECT

In this reading, Isaiah has a stunning experience of the reality of God. Angels everywhere sing, "Holy, holy, holy - Lord God Almighty."

And Isaiah says, "I am a man of unclean lips," which is a poetic way of saying, "I don't know dirt. I don't know dirt about life or love or faith at all."

But God touches him and God says, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And a guy who doesn't know dirt says, "Here am I, send me!"

The most supernatural experience you will ever have is when God calls you out of yourself into the pains and problems of other people to speak the God word, to do the God deed, to be the God person in that moment.

You may never speak in some unknown heavenly tongue - but if you dare speak an intervening word into a struggling child's life, you've been touched by God. You may never meet a winged apparition face-to-face - but if you ever wipe the tear off a homeless person's face, you've been touched by God. You may never have a prophet's eye to look into tomorrow and predict the future, but if you can see the desperate needs of our surrounding community clearly enough to tell someone about Jesus, you've been touched by God.

### PRAYER

*You have a job to do Lord? Here am I, send me. You need someone to carry Your love in this broken world? Here am I, Lord - send me. You say that You have children whose spirits need healing? Here am I, Lord - send me. Amen.*

## **SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22**

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### **READ ACTS 3:1-10**

*Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk. — Acts 3:6*

### **REFLECT**

Extraordinary acts begin with ordinary efforts.

When Mother Theresa won the Nobel Peace Prize. A reporter asked her, "What's the secret of your success? How do you make such a difference?"

And Mother Theresa simply said, "I do what I can where I am with what I have."

This is what the apostle Simon Peter understands. When he and John are confronted by a man lame from birth, Peter is more than aware of what he does not have.

But Peter does not dwell on his inadequacies; for Peter has been with Jesus Christ. And Peter knows from first-hand experience that every believer has something to give. Every Christian child, every Christian adult, every Christian family has something to give. Peter believes that miracles happen when ordinary gifts meet extraordinary need.

### **PRAYER**

*Lord, You are more precious than silver. Lord, You are more costly than gold. Lord, You are more beautiful than diamonds. Lord, let me give every ordinary bit of time, talent, and treasure that I have, that in Your name, someone might rise up and walk. Amen.*



**FEBRUARY 23** SERMON

# **HOPE RISES COMMITMENT SUNDAY**

## **JEREMIAH 29:11-14**

Even though we are wrapping up this five week sermon series, this is not the end of our story. HOPE RISES is a campaign that will set us up to flourish for the next five years of ministry at Katy First United Methodist Church. We thank you for your commitment to showing up with open minds and open hearts for the work Christ is ready to do through us.

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## **FEBRUARY 23**

# **SESSION 5 | GROUP SESSION**

### **WATCH THE VIDEO**

We are finally getting to dig deeper into the passage where you will find our HOPE RISES theme verse, Jeremiah 29:11. This direct word of assurance from God has been comforting His people for thousands of years, and we know that this passage has a profound meaning for the future of Katy First United Methodist Church.

Not only are we being challenged spiritually and financially through this campaign, we are required to get out of our comfort zones so that we may act on God's promises.

### **GROW TOGETHER**

1. What was the most help or the greatest comfort to you in today's study?
2. Reflecting on Katy First UMC, where or what are the comfort zones our congregation might have to leave in order to hear God anew?
3. What risks for your personal faith would you take if you knew that God owns the future?
4. What risks would you take for this congregation if you knew your tomorrow would not be for harm, but would be a future with hope?
5. What in your HOPE RISES decision process might this promise passage challenge you to revisit?

### **PRAY TOGETHER**

**Lord, we have gratitude in knowing that You have worked with us in the past. We have comfort in knowing that You walk with us in the present. And we have great hope in knowing that You wait for us in the future. Amen.**

This is the end of your Journey Guide, but

## **OUR STORY IS JUST BEGINNING**

Thank you for embarking on this HOPE RISES journey with us.

It takes courage to be open to spiritual growth and radical generosity.

We would love to hear your HOPE RISES story.

Share your experience with us on  
instagram by tagging #katyfumc or by  
emailing [lmartinson@katyfirst.org](mailto:lmartinson@katyfirst.org).



# ENNEAGRAM

## KNOW YOUR NUMBER

### WORKSHOP

## FEBRUARY 29, 2020



Know Your Number workshop, led by Joey Schewee is the first step in working with the Enneagram. Each personality number is reviewed in detail, including an evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, and the interpersonal challenges each number faces.

**8:30 AM-5PM | Cost \$10**  
Underwritten by Coen Family

More information or register  
[katyfirst.org/enneagram](http://katyfirst.org/enneagram)



Church Office Hours:  
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Friday 8A-noon  
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