

**Opening Prayer:** (Common to all Groups)

**Lord, we thank you for today and for this time to gather as friends in faith. We pray for our church and our community. Guide us and help us to deepen friendships and seek to grow in faith together. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

### Opening Discussion

1. How is everyone? Highs and lows from the week?
2. Can you name the 2 teams playing in the Super Bowl this year? What is your favourite "game night" snack?

### Isaiah 40:21-31

<sup>21</sup> Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

<sup>22</sup> It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,  
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers,  
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain  
and spreads them like a tent to live in,  
<sup>23</sup> who brings princes to naught  
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

<sup>24</sup> Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,  
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,  
when he blows upon them, and they wither,  
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

<sup>25</sup> To whom, then, will you compare me,  
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

<sup>26</sup> Lift up your eyes on high and see:  
Who created these?  
He who brings out their host and numbers them,  
calling them all by name;  
because he is great in strength,  
mighty in power,  
not one is missing.

<sup>27</sup> Why do you say, O Jacob,  
and assert, O Israel,  
"My way is hidden from the Lord,  
and my right is disregarded by my God"?

<sup>28</sup> Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.

<sup>29</sup> He gives power to the faint  
and strengthens the powerless.

<sup>30</sup> Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted,  
<sup>31</sup> but those who wait for the Lord shall renew  
their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;  
they shall run and not be weary;  
they shall walk and not faint.



### What is a Small Group?

- Faith Exercise - Intentionally deepening our relationship with God.
- Building Community - Intentionally deepening our relationship with others in faith.
- Common Interest – Intentionally celebrating common ground.

### Group Parameters:

- Gatherings will begin with Prayer & Scripture to unify this ministry across the groups.
- Members will remain courteous and ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to share.
- Thoughts and feelings shared are private and should remain confidential.
- You are encouraged to share news but cautioned about crossing into the territory of gossip.
- Grow in friendship, faith, and community with one another through this experience.

### Mark 1:29-39

#### Jesus Heals Many at Simon's House

<sup>29</sup> As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. <sup>30</sup> Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. <sup>31</sup> He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

<sup>32</sup> That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed by demons. <sup>33</sup> And the whole city was gathered around the door. <sup>34</sup> And he cured many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons, and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

#### A Preaching Tour in Galilee

<sup>35</sup> In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. <sup>36</sup> And Simon and his companions hunted for him. <sup>37</sup> When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." <sup>38</sup> He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also, for that is what I came out to do." <sup>39</sup> And he went throughout all Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

V S H Z X U C N P N O D N J S  
I I Z J C R R T Q E M K K J I  
L M V J E H D B E D O C G F C  
L O I O X P N E Q B S P I C V  
A N P P S I C K R L Y D L Z Y  
G L R J Z W E W K R N X J E N  
E V E N I N G H O A A A G O G  
S C A V D Z X O H R G N H Y U  
X Q C O X A D E L Q O D E W J  
H T H R Q T O W N C G R L S A  
U E R J K Q T I E O U E P U M  
T J A H E R Y U P T E W E N E  
F O D L L S D E M O N S D S S  
M H H B E I U H S M I U F E J  
R N Z E A D P S F E V E R T A

### Jesus Ministers in Galilee

So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. Mark 1:39

Based on Mark 1:29-39

FEVER	SIMON
SUNSET	VILLAGES
JOHN	SYNAGOGUE
HEALED	TOWN
HAND	DOOR
PREACH	BED
PEOPLE	JESUS
EVENING	JAMES
ANDREW	
DEMONS	
HELPED	
SICK	

Therefore welcome one another as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. – Romans 15:7

## Discussion Questions

Let me share with you this lengthy quote from a commentary I have been studying, “Though we now arrive at the fifth Sunday of Epiphany, we realize that we still have only reached verse 29 in the Gospel of Mark... In just a few verses, we have been swept up into an exciting crescendo of activity. Hardly has the “good news” been announced when John the Baptist appears on the scene gathering crowds who respond to his persuasive preaching of the “forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:5). The promised “One who is coming” arrives and is baptized accompanied by splitting heavens and a voice announcing divine favor (Epiphany 1). Even when Jesus astonishingly announces that the “good news” of God’s reign has already arrived and calls hearers to repentance and faith, we might be just a little taken aback when a group of fisher folk suddenly abandon their former lives and follow Him (Epiphany 3). But there is no time to grab a breath. Immediately, Jesus leads them to a synagogue on the Sabbath where the crowds marvel at His authoritative teaching and power to exorcise demonic powers (Epiphany 4).

Even in today’s reading, there is no slacking of the pace. As the Sabbath ends, it might have been tempting for Jesus to bask in the successful exorcism, the accolades of his authoritative teaching and a reputation that has already spread “immediately” throughout all of Galilee” (Mark 1:28). But in this story there is no time for resting on laurels. Three times in succession, once in last Sunday’s verse, Mark 1:28, and now twice in the opening words of our lesson, we hear the word “immediately,” a word whose repetitive impact (fourteen times in Mark 1 and 2) many readers of Mark have noted. It needs to be allowed its effect in spite of the NRSV’s and other translators’ attempts to omit or soften it. With this word, the story fairly bursts through the synagogue doors and pushes towards the rest of Galilee — to the rest of the week, to the rest of our lives and to the place this story of Jesus will take us. The gospel for this day reminds us that the story of Jesus is always on the move and will not allow any of us hearers to remain who or where we are. Within a few short verses, the end of today’s lesson will invite us to join this Jesus whose “preaching” and healing of the demonic in life will take him “throughout the whole of Galilee” (Mark 1:29).

This mission has a grand sweep. It is also particular and close to home. It is at least of some interest, if not a bit puzzling, that we find those same four fishermen who answered Jesus’ call and “abandoned everything” (Mark 1:14-20) back at home and still concerned with the realities of day-to-day life. For example, a mother-in-law is sick with a fever. Yet, Jesus’ power extends even here, and we get an anticipatory glimpse of just where this story and mission might lead us. Jesus took her by the hand and “lifted her up” (verse 31). The Greek literally reads “he raised her.” It is surely no accident that here for the first time our imaginations are teased with this promissory “good news” word which will follow this story of Jesus (eighteen times in the gospel) to its surprising, climactic resurrection ending.”

One author sums it up this way, “The stories presented in chapter 1 do not only provide us with information about the past but promise to engage our present lives and shape our future as people of faith. These stories have the power to pick us up and place us in the very midst of the story of what God is doing in and through our lives today.”

**What is God doing in and through your life today? What is God doing in and through our church today? In what situation would you like to know the presence of God more fully? How would this revelation help? How has/does the Gospel of Jesus Christ both challenge and invigorate your faith?**

**How can the group pray for you this week?**

**Musical Reflection:** *Chris Tomlin – Indescribable*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgfty5QyyRY>



BLAST Kids Club is learning about the Fruit of the Spirit.

This week we are exploring Patience.

Ephesians 4:2

<sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

HE HEALS THE  
BROKENHEARTED  
AND BINDS UP  
THEIR WOUNDS.  
HE COUNTS THE  
NUMBER OF  
THE STARS;  
HE CALLS THEM  
ALL BY NAME.

Psalms 147:3,4

### Psalm 147

#### Praise for God’s Care for Jerusalem

<sup>1</sup> Praise the Lord!

How good it is to sing praises to our God,  
for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.

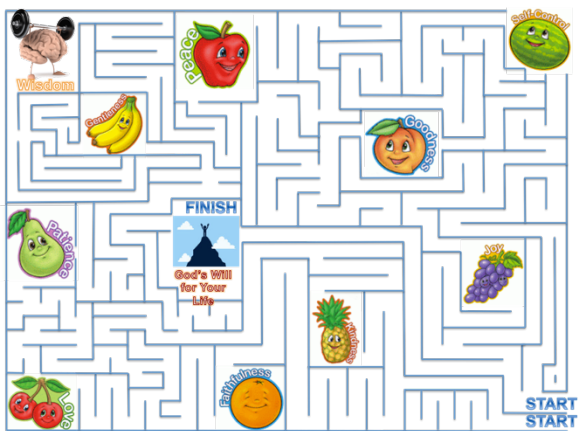
<sup>2</sup> The Lord builds up Jerusalem;  
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.

<sup>3</sup> He heals the broken hearted  
and binds up their wounds.

<sup>4</sup> He determines the number of the stars;  
he gives to all of them their names.

<sup>5</sup> Great is our Lord and abundant in power;  
his understanding is beyond measure.

<sup>6</sup> The Lord lifts up the downtrodden;  
he casts the wicked to the ground.



*Makrothumia* is the type of patience listed in the “fruit of the Spirit.” That means God can and desires to help us better extend patience to others in our lives... if we’re willing.

*Therefore welcome one another as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. – Romans 15:7*