# **Expressing our love toward others:**

- + What are some ways you can express your love towards God directly? What makes you feel closely connected to God?
- + Name a few ways we can demonstrate love toward others in our local and church communities this week.
- + What inspires you to love your enemies?

# **GROWTH:**

### **JOURNAL PROMPT**

God, help me to live intentionally this fall as I learn more about your Holy Spirit and the attributes of a life rooted in you. Nourish me through my study of your word, community with my small group, and worship in church. Show me clearly the tasks, relationships, and work to which you are calling me. Amen.

### **CALLING PROMPT**

God is inviting you to participate in his ministry by answering the unique call on your life.

How can you actively respond to scripture and God's presence this week?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Let's prepare for the week ahead, shaped by our time together today.

Gracious God, we trust that you go with us in the week ahead. We are changed each time we gather to learn more about you and your Word. Please give us boldness to proclaim your good news in the coming week and bring us back safely together again in this community. Amen.



# **OPENING PRAYER**

Gracious God, help us to feel your presence during our gathering as a community today. As we do life together and learn more of your Word, help us to grow in faith. Help our time to be fruitful and the fellowship within our group to flourish. Thank you for the gift of today and of this small group study. Amen.

### COMMUNITY

Time to build relationships: mix + mingle!

- + What specific point resonated with you from the weekend's sermon?
- + If you couldn't attend, ask others in your group what stood out to them. (Note: Links to both video and audio versions of previous sermons can be found at https://standrewmethodist.org/worship/sermons/)
- + Where did you see God's presence in your past weekend?

# WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE NOTES

VIDEO – WEEK 1: LOVE

# **SCRIPTURE**

A great starting place is always in God's word. This week we are in:

### **JOHN 15:12-17**

"12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other."

### **JEREMIAH 17:8**

"They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.

It does not fear when heat comes;

its leaves are always green.

It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."

### **SITUATION**

Love is a prevalent theme throughout all of scripture and is deeply expressed through Christ's selfless and loving sacrifice on the cross. As Jesus is preparing his disciples for a similar life oriented around selfless servanthood, mission, and loving ministry... he shares with them his words of inspiration (John 15). Jesus reminds his disciples that the fruit they are to bear, is rooted in love above all else... it is to be a new kind of fruit which is enduring and lasting. It is no surprise then that the way they can practice nourishing one another is by loving each other selflessly and consistently.

# **QUESTIONS:**

# What makes love truly genuine?

+ Have you ever had a relationship and kind of love in which you felt like there was a before & after?

# What helps you feel "nourished" like the plant in Jeremiah 17:8?

- + Reflect on someone who you know who inspires you as being "planted by streams of water". Who are they? What do you notice about them?
- + What gives us the ability to "bear fruit"?

# What does it mean to love each other as I have loved you? (John 15)

- + What does it mean to lay down one's life for one's friends?
- + Do you feel like you've ever done that?
- + Has anyone ever done this for you?