

## WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION

**“BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.”  
(PSALM 46:10)**

Prayer can be challenging. It isn't an easy decision to stop our busy lives and set aside time to deepen our relationship with God through prayer. Yet, we know that with God as our center, we can do nothing else but turn to our "Abba."

**“WHEN YOU PRAY, GO TO YOUR INNER ROOM AND CLOSE THE DOOR. PRAY TO YOUR FATHER IN SECRET/SILENCE AND YOUR FATHER WHO HEARS YOU IN SECRET/SILENCE WILL REWARD YOU.” (MATTHEW 6:6)**

Learning to listen is instrumental to hearing God's vision for us as followers of His Word. If we are talking to God all the time, how can we hear what God has in store for us? Beginning this week and in the weeks to come, we will be asked to prayerfully experience Five Pilgrimage Points which will progressively ask us to listen, open and grow more deeply in our love for the One who is.

## WEEK 1 PRAYER

*“Oh Spirit within me, around me, **Beyond Me**, I commit to saying, “Here I am, Lord! Show me Your Ways. Help me find moments every day this week of solitude to practice letting go of my busy life that is so full of distractions. Distractions that keep me from sitting with You and opening my heart to listen to You. For I know that my relationship with You and my church's transformation can only happen when I intentionally take time to make You my center.” I will humbly hold this prayer in the quiet times that I spend with You, my Creator, my All. In Your Name, I pray. Amen.*

## WEEK 1 PRACTICE

This week, notice times throughout your day when solitude naturally occurs; early morning walks, time in your car, moments when your office door is closed, at home after everyone else has gone to sleep. Don't ignore these moments and don't try to fill them with stuff, mental "To Do" lists, phone calls. Appreciate these periods of solitude and savor them! Tell God that you are going to spend this time in quiet prayer, resting and listening. Tune into what may keep you from enjoying these moments. What feelings, situations, or images surface that keep you from just being with God? What distractions change your focus from gazing at your Creator to worrying about tomorrow, solving a work conflict, or anticipating the next scheduled event? Name that distraction, then let it go! This is your time with your God! When your time together is finished, the walk is done, you've arrived at your destination and life pushes you to the next thing, thank God for your time together and recommit to spending time listening again tomorrow. Your pilgrimage has begun and God is already there waiting for you!

# WEEK 1 PILGRIMAGE POINT

## HISTORIC SANCTUARY

**THE SITE.** The land for the historic sanctuary was purchased in 1869 and the structure itself completed in the spring of 1872. The building possesses an enchanting simplicity. As you are enjoying the deep solitude of the reverent space, you can sense the muffled sounds of the world outside. Walk slowly and prayerfully throughout the sanctuary. Take time to notice the details in the beautiful space.



**THE PEWS.** Examine the handcrafted pews that were built by a local carpenter whose shop was next to the railroad depot. Each pew is its own geometric study with a unique arc, length and angles. The wood, arriving on wagons as enormous oak logs, was hewn and crafted into these exquisite pews using the most primitive of tools almost 150 years ago. How easy it would have been to have a single aisle and make fifty identical pews like every other church.

**THE WINDOWS.** Look at the gothic arched windows with their handmade colored glass (a costly item in that day) with its uneven coloring and characteristic waves and imperfections. The interesting play of light and the traffic moving outside can be seen through the lighter colored panes. Notice the circular rosette shape at the top of each window, a design that is repeated in other places around the building.



**THE ALTAR RAIL.** Take time to kneel at the communion rail, original to the building, and imagine our spiritual forebearers who poured out their petitions before the Lord, received Holy Communion, were confirmed as members, or knelt to accept Jesus Christ as Savior. This may truly be one

of the most anointed places in the city. Please lift your own petitions to the Lord, and also pray that the generosity of our entire church would be inspired to rapidly pay down our debt so we can begin plans for the next phase of our new building which will be the formal sanctuary.



**THE PULPIT.** Take a careful up-close look at the pulpit, which also is original. Observe its exquisite carving and excellent proportions. Imagine the powerful sermons calling lost sinners to repentance and promising freedom in Christ Jesus to all who would trust in Him alone for their salvation.

As you meditate on this exquisite building, consider its massiveness and the thickness of the brick walls. The entire structure was so much more beautiful and solid than any other building of its type at that time. It is especially worthy of mention that this was built in the aftermath of the war when reconstruction everywhere required funds for our member's own lives and homes. They certainly could have built a smaller, less durable building that would have accomplished the purpose, but they instead cast a vision for a worshipful church home for the ages that reflected the centrality and priority that Christ had on their hearts and lives. It has been a gift from them to a people who would not even be born for over 150 years in the future!

**CONSIDER THAT EACH GENERATION HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THIS MAJESTIC PLACE OF DIVINE WORSHIP.**

**THE BUILDING.** The rest of the building is charming in its own way. The addition of the annex in 1916, construction of the basement "fellowship hall" in 1949, addition of the chancel in 1965, and beautiful organ and annex seating in 1981.

