



# DAILY DEVOTION GUIDE

LORD,  
What do you want to do  
*through me*  
to fulfill your will for  
Point Washington UMC?

# **DON'T MISS IT!**

The next 3 Sundays will be some of the most important and special Sundays in the life of our congregation:

January 27

February 3

February 10

Come and learn more about the future of our church and experience the wonderful worship services we have planned!

Dear Friends,

Point Washington UMC makes a difference in so many ways! One of the ministries that has changed countless lives is our youth ministry. Paul, Cole and all the volunteers are helping our youth to find and deepen their relationship with God, deal with the challenges and struggles of adolescence, and connect to the mission of the church. We give thanks!

Every year our graduating youth share what our POWASH youth ministry has meant to them. Until now, these letters have not been publicized. Since a big part of our Building Campaign is reclaiming our FLC for greater utilization by our children's, adult, and youth ministries, we thought it might be nice for the congregation to have a small glimmer of the difference our youth ministry makes. We know that you will be blessed by the stories of faith and growth our past youth have shared in these devotionals. We thank God for the youth who have written these inspiring stories about what our church has meant to them.

Point Washington UMC has made a difference in all of our lives, hasn't it? Our different ministries and our meaningful worship services deepen our discipleship in many ways. God has truly been with us in the past, and God's hand continues to guide us to God's preferred future as we seek to enlarge and improve our facility and raise the funds to do so.

During the building campaign, we are being asked to pray a simple, yet profound prayer: "Lord, what do you want to do *through me* to fulfill your will for Point Washington UMC?" As you pray our centering prayer, we invite you to use this Devotion Guide as a source of daily meditation and inspiration. Take time each day after you read the essay to reflect and to pray. Strive to discern God's will for you and for Point Washington UMC. May God prepare all our hearts to celebrate God's presence in our lives with an outpouring of our generosity and faithfulness.

In Christ,

*Hunter & Suzanne Harman, John & Amy Giles and Philip & Lauren Justiss*

Campaign Directors

**January 25, 2019**

***Mark 16:15 “He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation...’”***

My life has been impacted ever since I joined the Point Washington Youth Ministry, and it helped me on my walk with Christ. Each activity helps me develop a stronger relationship with Christ.

The mission trips that we go on each summer have had the deepest impact on me, personally and spiritually. The first mission trip to New Orleans showed me what it was like to be a true follower of Christ and serve in his name. Each day on that mission trip I grew connections with new and exciting people. And as the week went on, we could see the impact we had in their lives. Personally, there is nothing else like going on a mission trip. Each trip helps me to mature and have a deeper understanding of the world around us. One of the most surreal moments during the New Orleans mission trip was spending time around the college leaders. They helped me realize that even the smallest things can have the biggest impact.

The youth leaders have had the biggest impact on me. They are always there to help you when you need them. It is very hard to find people like that today. Cole, for example, can always make you laugh and tell you what you are doing wrong in sports. Even while he is doing this, he makes sure that you are understanding how Christ moves through people and changes their lives. The youth leaders’ support and guidance have helped me develop into a responsible young adult.

- Jackson P. Duggan

***Dear Lord, thank you for the impact you make in the world through each of us. May you guide me today to be an instrument of your peace. Amen.***

**January 26, 2019**

***Hebrews 13:7 “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.”***

My experience attending the Youth Ministry at Point Washington United Methodist Church is something that I will always cherish. This is a place where I can go any day of the week and know I am loved and cared for by others. I have had so many great memories when going to programs like Deeper, small groups, Wildside and more. Every single trip that I have gone on with the youth group has been one to remember. These programs and trips have allowed me to grow in my spiritual walk with God and allowed me to create lasting friendships.

One of the things I love the most about Point Washington Youth is the community. There has never been a time where I have walked into the church and not gotten a hive five or a “How ya doing?”, and I wouldn't want it any other way. The youth program is one big loving community. I am so glad to be apart of such an amazing and caring youth program.

I have learned numerous things while attending Point Washington Youth but the thing that has stuck with me the most is to love your neighbor as yourself and to love God with everything you have. While attending here the past five years, the youth leaders have shown this to me. They make it evident that they love God with everything they have and love everyone in the youth program as themselves. As a youth, I'm glad I have great role models within the church who can teach me how to do this.

- Lawson Lawrence

***Dear Lord, thank you for the role models you have given us over the years. May we live out the love that you have showed us through them, and love our neighbors and ourselves. Amen.***

**January 27, 2019**

***Mark 12:30-31 “...Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”***

“Love God, love people.” A small group leader, Mark Johnson, told me this and since then it has been my motto. This simple phrase is known to be the universal principle for all people on earth, and it serves a powerful message that illustrates how we should live our lives. It speaks to all people; it does not matter what race, religion, tradition, age, or culture. God commands for all people to love one another.

When I first began attending Point Washington UMC, shortly after moving here from Wisconsin, I had set in my mind that it would just be some place for me to get out of the house on Wednesday nights. Before this, I was never part of any Bible studies or youth groups. I attended my first small group at Point Washington when I was in the seventh grade. Without knowing anyone who attended, and not even having been to a Sunday service, I was expecting just random welcome greetings and awkward/boring leaders. However, when my brother and I first walked into the building, we were greeted so kindly and with smiling faces. I was pretty surprised to receive such a warm welcome and loving people.

Throughout the course of my time being part of the Point Washington family, I discovered a new identity in my faith as well as my passion. Getting involved in various service projects and mission trips like the Pine Ridge Reservation for ten days. It was one of the most eye-opening experiences. I learned to build relationships with others and spread the word of God. When I go college, I will always remember the valuable lesson I have learned during my years here: “Love God, Love People.”

- Markos Keepman

***Dear Lord, thank you for the lessons you teach us. Help me to always love you and love people. Amen.***

## BUILDING CAMPAIGN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**What is the purpose of the building campaign?** The purpose is to raise the funds to build a new ministry center and make a number of updates, renovations and improvements that our church's ministries need. A comprehensive list is available on the church's office and in the office.

**Will Point Washington UMC incur any long-term debt?** Our goal is through the generosity of the members and friends of Point Washington UMC to not have to incur any long-term debt to make these changes.

**How will giving to the campaign affect my tithe or offering?** This is not our annual stewardship campaign. Your regular tithe or offering should **not** be impacted. Our tithe or offering should always be our first priority. This is an opportunity to give sacrificially above and beyond.

**When and where will I make my commitment?** During our worship services on February 10, 2019, we will offer our estimate of giving cards.

**What is sacrificial giving?** To sacrifice is to give up something of importance so something of greater significance can occur. At its heart, sacrificial giving begins with prayerful discernment as to what God is asking us to give.

**How will the commitments be paid?** It is up to you. Commitments may be paid from now through February 28, 2021. Gifts may be given weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly or in any way that is most convenient for you. Assets that can be converted to cash such as real estate, stocks, bonds, life insurance, and other securities are excellent ways to give. Gifts of appreciated assets may have additional tax benefits to the donor. Many people are also using retirement assets for their charitable gifts because of the tax benefits possible. One option for giving retirement assets, if you are 70 1/2 or older, may be an IRA charitable rollover gift. Please consult your tax adviser to see what opportunities apply to you.

**How much am I expected to give?** The only expectation is that each person pray and ask the question, "Lord, what do you want to do through me to fulfill your will for Point Washington UMC? and go where God leads. While the amounts will obviously be different for everyone, our hope is that each person will be led by God to give generously and sacrificially.

**January 28, 2019**

***1 John 4:7 “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”***

My experience at Point Washington UMC has been nothing short of amazing. My walk with God began only five short months ago when I gave into my friend’s relentless attempts to invite me to church. Growing up in a family that was not religious at all, I wasn’t comfortable in a church environment. I felt out of place, and very out of touch with this God that so many people came to praise. However, to my joyous surprise, I found myself with tears streaming from my eyes in the middle of worship. An overwhelming sense of peace filtered through my entire body, and I felt as though I finally found something I didn’t know I was desperately thirsting for. It was in that moment that I realized that even though I didn’t know the God I was singing about, He knew me. He had His eyes on me from the very beginning, and was simply waiting for me to find Him right there in that church.

Being the only church-goer in my family, I’ve relied heavily on the spiritual support I get from small group. I have never been surrounded by so many girls whose hearts are so wildly in love with God. Every Wednesday night, God gives me the opportunity to connect with Christ-centered souls in a place where His love takes many forms. I see God in those who give of their time to make meals, set up tables, prepare discussions, and lead in worship. I see how close He is to those that feel that Point Washington is a safe place for them, despite their spiritual background or past decisions. Through this church, my heart has expanded to give a new kind of love to the wide array of people that God cares for so much. I sincerely thank Him in my prayers for Point Washington because of the everlasting impact it has had on my life.

- Mackenzie Brundage

***Dear Lord, thank you for creating safe places to discover You. We invite your love to transform our hearts. Amen.***

**January 29, 2019**

***Galatians 6:2 “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”***

I have been in the youth group at Point Washington UMC since I was in eighth grade. Finding a new church was a major concern for my family when we left Albany, Georgia. Now I laugh at the idea of those worries, because of the extreme impact Point Washington has had on my family and our almost excessive involvement in the church. We have spent the last five years at church in the music ministry, children’s ministry, Emmaus clusters, and the youth group. I know many people who I consider friends, but I truly identify with the people at Point Washington youth group more so than any others in my life. They are the most inclusive and welcoming, and provide friendship beyond the surface level. This has spurred my passion to make all relationships real and vulnerable in a way that is not often practiced in our teenage culture.

An especially important relationship for me has been with my youth pastor, Paul. Even when it seemed that no one else would understand my worries and emotions (which were sometimes spiritual and sometimes not), my youth pastor, Paul, would tell me that he is always available to talk. For most, this is an extreme concept, but he lived it out in a way that has changed my perspective on how we should approach and value relationships and conversations. I have also grown spiritually because of Point Washington in ways that I have difficulty believing could have happened without the youth group. Because of Point Washington, I have been shown love, encouragement, and community that embodies what church should be for me the rest of my life. It directed my career desires of becoming a pastor, helped me understand what personal prayer and study should be, and continually showed me the love of Christ - which I am now adamant about sharing with others.

- Logan Lawrence

***Dear Lord, thank you for real, authentic relationships. Use me to build true community everywhere I go. Amen.***

**January 30, 2019**

***Psalm 27:5 “For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.”***

I can still remember the first time I experienced the youth ministry at Point Washington. As soon as I walked in, I was confronted by Paul with a huge smile on his face. He introduced himself to me and told me how glad he was that I decided to come to small groups. After that first night, I was hooked. I was amazed and thankful to have finally found a place where everyone could come together, forget their differences, and have a good time while still worshiping and having serious conversations.

PoWash for me, like many other kids, offered a home away from home. It is a place where we can be comfortable in our own skin, and make relationships with people that have different levels of spiritual and social backgrounds. I have made countless relationships through PoWash, whether its members of other youth groups met on mission trips, or the unbreakable relationships made through the service projects done in various communities throughout the country.

As for my faith, I am proud to say that it grows everyday through the help of Paul, Cole, and my small group leaders Robbie and Mark. Through events like Deeper, and the worship experienced on trips, I have been able to escape from the doubts that I may have had, and let God into my life. Our leaders have provided me with an abundance of life lessons and stories that I will be able to utilize in my upcoming years of college, and reminded me that God is always going to be with me along the way. PoWash has given me an escape from the stressful things in my life, and given me a safe haven where I know my thoughts will be heard.

- Mason Trantina

***Dear Lord, thank you for places that feel like home. May you help us create safe havens for community. Amen.***

## **A LIFE OF GENEROSITY**

*You already excel ...in faith, knowledge, enthusiasm and love. Now add generosity to your virtues. 2 Corinthians 8:7*

The Bible mentions faith 246 times, hope 185 times, and love 733 times. Giving is mentioned 2,285 times! Here are a few reasons why:

### **GIVING DRAWS US CLOSER TO GOD**

Jesus said in Matthew 6:21, "Where your treasure is there your heart will be also." We invest more in the people, things and causes that we care about; and we care more about the people and things and causes that we invest in. When we give money to God, we are drawn closer to God.

### **GIVING BREAKS THE GRIP OF MATERIALISM**

We live in a materialistic world. How do we escape materialism? By giving! When we give generously to God, we break the grip of materialism on our lives. Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, "You cannot serve both God and money." We have to choose what's most important.

### **GIVING STRENGTHENS OUR FAITH**

Sooner or later you've got to decide, Can God be trusted with my finances? Can God be counted on to keep God's promises? The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 9:13, "Your giving proves the reality of your faith." When we give, it's not an opportunity to stretch our faith.

### **GIVING IS AN INVESTMENT FOR ETERNITY**

How do you invest for eternity? Do as 1 Timothy 6:18-19 suggests: "Use your money to do good... Always being ready to share with others whatever God has given you. By doing this, you will be storing up real treasure for yourselves in heaven. It is the only safe investment for eternity. And you will be living a fruitful life down here as well. There is no greater investment than the kingdom of God."

### **GIVING BLESSES THOSE WHO GIVE**

Jesus said in Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Deuteronomy 15:10 promises, "Give generously and do so without a grudging heart and because of this the Lord God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to."

**LORD, What do you want to do *through me* to fulfill  
your will for Point Washington UMC?**

**January 31, 2019**

***Luke 15:20 “And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.”***

I have been attending Point Washington UMC from the time I moved to Florida. As my brother and sister moved through the children’s program, I saw how much fun they were having and how their relationship with Jesus Christ grew. I remember being extremely jealous and all I wanted to do was go with them on Wednesday nights. The first time I walked into the church as a 6th grader I remember being so excited to finally be there and it was everything I wanted, plus more. Through my middle school years I attended almost every Wednesday and became extremely involved. It wasn’t until I entered high school and started playing basketball that I started straying away from the youth program, because daily practice made it hard to attend during basketball season.

After my first basketball season I was nervous to go back on Wednesday nights, I remember thinking I was going to be an outcast for missing so many Wednesdays that year. That was not the case at all, the moment I walked back into the church I was welcomed with open arms as if I never left. This is when I truly fell in love with Point Washington, their open arm mentality is what is so special; when inside the church everyone is accepted and no one is looked down on. No matter how many days I missed for basketball I was always welcomed back like I never missed. My next favorite thing about Point Washington is the amount of opportunities they give for kids to go out in the world and help the less fortunate around the country and world. My first mission trip to Arkansas changed my life forever. From that moment on my faith grew tremendously as well as my appreciation for my life. I cannot think Paul and the youth program enough for how they have impacted my life.

- Hayden Stroop

***Lord, thank you for open arms and hearts. Help us always extend radical hospitality to others. Amen.***

**February 1, 2019**

***Isaiah 41:10 “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”***

It has only been six years that I have been involved in the youth ministry, but it is hard for me to remember a time in my life now that I wasn't involved in this wonderful program. I guess that's because it was somewhere in this time that I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. My life truly began when I gave my heart to Jesus, so for that I will be truthfully eternally grateful to Point Washington Methodist Church.

I remember my first visit to a Big Wednesday and being a little nervous if I would be accepted into this already established family, my nerves were quickly calmed by Paul and his staff, and most importantly my peers that were already involved in the program. After my fears were put at ease, I just could not get enough of Big Wednesday or Wildside, I loved the Lord and the church, it became my home away from home. I have grown socially and spiritually over these past six years in a way that I do not believe would have been possible without this program. I have come to learn that with my spiritual growth comes a responsibility to spread the Good News through words and deeds.

I look forward to the day that I can repay the church in some small way for what it has given me, and hope that this wonderful spiritual springboard propels me to my goal of becoming a youth group leader. If I can be half as good as Mr. Paul, then I know that my life will be filled with happiness in the knowledge that I have given back in some small way what this program has given me.

- Chipper Johnston

***Lord, thank you for calming our fears and providing strength through community. Help us experience the joy of giving back in honor of what you have given us. Amen.***

**February 2, 2019**

***Ephesians 1:16 “I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.”***

I consider my second home to be Point Washington United Methodist Church. I've been attending the church since I was a little girl and I can remember asking Paul when I would be old enough to finally be able to be a part of the youth group, and when he told me I had to wait until I was sixth grader I thought that it would take a lifetime to become that old. But somehow the years flew by and now I'm senior getting ready for the next chapter in my life.

One of the first things that comes to my mind when I think of the youth group is friendship. When I started high school, I was starting at Arnold and I had to leave my friends behind. I started coming to youth group to keep my previous friendships, but I ended up creating friendships with many new people.

One of my favorite things about the youth group is how welcoming it is. My favorite memories of high school are often memories I have in youth group. A special part of the youth group are the bonds and friendships I gained through the mission trips. With all these friendships also came my growing relationship with God. I saw the relationship others had with him, and it inspired me to get to know Christ more and to strengthen my personal relationship with him.

Whenever I'm having a hard week at school or there is drama with my friends, I come to PoWash and it turns my week around. I've grown up at the church and I always feel at home when I come.

- Ashton Duggan

***Dear Lord, thank you for friendships and growing together in Christ. May the church continue to be a place where people feel at home and discover joy in relationships. Amen.***

**February 3, 2019**

***Hebrews 10:25 “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another.”***

I can remember the first time I went to the Youth Group at Point Washington. I wasn't old enough to actually go yet because I was still in 5th grade. My best friend, Lee Cox took me to see if I would want to go next year in 6th grade. This was also the first time I got to meet Mr. Paul, the Youth Minister. I still remember how welcomed and wanted I felt that day, because Mr. Paul is somehow able to recreate that same feeling every single Wednesday.

Point Washington's youth group has been a major part of my life for the past seven years, the one constant thing I have been able to count on through the trials and tribulations of adolescence. This constant contact with such a great fellowship of Christians has helped create my personal relationship with God.

This relationship has lead me through many hard times and allowed me to explore my faith in a safe atmosphere. Point Washington has also given me the opportunity to give back to my community through mission work, along with serving the local community. I have participated in two of Point Washington's mission trips where we got to serve the communities of New Orleans, Louisiana and Mobile, Arkansas. These mission trips really opened my eyes to what is out in the world and how many people just in the United States need the light of God in their lives.

- Aidan Kristopher Dillon

***Dear God, we are so thankful for places like church where we can gather together and encourage each other. And we give thanks for mission trips, where our eyes are open to the need in the world around us. Please guide us to be your vessels to bring encouragement, hope, and service to those that we meet. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.***

**February 4, 2019**

***Proverbs 17:17 “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.”***

With all of my heart I can confidently say that this youth ministry has served as an unbreakable foundation for a delicate time in my life. Point Washington granted me an ordered system for the chaos, a sense of community in a time of isolation, an immense light for the dark, dense path, and (most importantly) it has greatly strengthened my relationship and appreciation for God. Prior to getting involved here, I found attending church as my Christian chore of the week. It was something I was never truly excited or motivated to do, a task that merely satisfied my faith requirements for the week. Now transformed, I no longer consider spending time in or around the church community as a dreaded obligation. Instead, I look forward to Wednesday night and bask in the opportunity to connect with friends and try my best to absorb the message at hand. I find myself a long way from fully understanding what God has in store for my life, but with the help of Point Washington, I am rejuvenated and stimulated to uncover and follow exactly what He has planned for my future endeavors.

Finally, the youth leaders at this church have filled a massive void in my life. Leaving Nashville and moving to Point Washington ultimately was an incredible blessing that God has given me, but in the moment, separating from my dad was difficult. When I arrived here I was upset that I did not have someone to throw the football with, play basketball with or simply banter back and forth with about sports. Once again, God was watching and supplied me with more than I deserved with in three outstanding men and role models: Brantlee Lawrence, Paul Barnett and Cole Moore. These three, and everyone else in the Point Washington Church, have made an outstanding impact on me and I will never forget the vast, limitless value of such a remarkable place.

- Braxton Bibb

***Dear Jesus, thank you for your love through friends. Amen.***

**February 5, 2019**

***John 15:12-13 “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”***

During the summer of 2013, right before I began high school, my family decided to move to the South Walton area. One of my largest concerns moving here was how I could find a youth group like the one I attended in Georgia. I came from a wonderful church and at the time I believed there was no way a group of people could be as welcoming and fun as they were, but Point Washington went above and beyond my expectations.

I remember my first night meeting everyone in the youth group, how much fun I had, and how much love and kindness was in the building. Since this first impression was made, nothing has changed. I have always noticed an amazing amount of love and support inside and outside of church from the Point Washington family. From worship gatherings to meeting up at the church to have a good time playing basketball, all of the experiences I have been blessed with will never leave me. I have made amazing friendships through the Youth program and I know many of these friendships will last a lifetime. For example, since the day I met him, Cole and I have shared a love for sports and our favorite teams. Before I had my license, Cole was my taxi everywhere, not only to and from church on Wednesdays and Sundays, but to restaurants all the way out in Destin, and to watch our favorite teams play over a meal. Never once did he ask for gas money or anything; he did it purely out of kindness and I believe this is a wonderful representation of the Point Washington Community as a whole. The love and acceptance I feel at PoWash will stay with me throughout my life and it encourages me to be more loving, caring, and respectful towards people - the way I am treated by my church family.

- Jonathan Flint Bekkers

***Thank you for such a wonderful church community. Amen.***

**February 6, 2019**

***Hebrews 10:24 “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds...”***

I have been attending youth group at Point Washington since I was in sixth grade and have reaped so many benefits from all of those years of community. I did not really start digging in to the youth ministry until my sophomore year of high school. At this point, my mom had been diagnosed with ovarian cancer and it was the first time I found myself really needing youth group as a spiritual pick-me-up each week. Mrs. Shelli was my small group leader and made more of an impact on me than I ever could have imagined. I was able to really submerge myself into the Word and was surrounded by people who were supporting me the whole way. The environment of Point Washington made it easy for me to feel comfortable opening up about my life and asking questions. Mrs. Shelli became a mentor for me and has helped me grow in my faith so much. Without the opportunity to meet her, my spiritual growth would not have flourished nearly as much as it has. After several mission trips, I felt lead to challenge my faith with a ten-day mission trip to Lima, Peru. Mrs. Shelli invited me on this trip and it was easily the most life-changing experience. After this trip, I was invited to share my testimony with a sophomore and junior girl's small group. Mr. Paul does such an amazing job of making everyone feel so welcome at youth, and has created a sense of family throughout everything we do.

Point Washington is a program that has created bonds and memories for all involved. I, along with so many other seniors, am so grateful for the constant support and love that Paul and all other leaders have poured over us. I have gained a strong foundation in my faith and owe so much of that to PoWash. Our time there is something that we will cherish forever.

- Maddie Duval Hiers

***Dear Lord, thank you for the foundation of love and faith we experience at PWUMC, and for our leaders. Amen.***

**February 7, 2019**

***Matthew 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I with them.”***

Point Washington United Methodist Youth Ministry has become an enormous part of my life. Before I began attending Point Washington, I never attended church or belonged to a youth group. I had gone to several, but never felt as if I fit in, or was really feeling God the way I should be. And I questioned if I ever would. Around Christmas time, I went to the Secret Santa Party, and gradually started attending Wildsides, and then over the summer, I attended the Beach and Bible study.

The youth of Point Washington made me feel so welcomed, included, and like I was truly a soul part of this group. We hang out before every Wildside and Youth Group, and even on the weekends. The church is a safe place for us to all meet and be together, play games, and be with each other.

With Mission Point Washington, I contributed to the Crop Drop, Elf Ride, Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity, and will be a part of Relay for Life. Being a part of this group of high school and middle school kids, helping people in our area, has helped me see what my purpose is - I realize that being a Christian is not just attending church on Sunday mornings, but also helping those in need. Being a Christian is being the body of Christ and treating those around me how Christ would. Being a Christian is showing those who need help that Christ loves them, and through us, he does good for those who need him. I've felt myself being called by him, and it's a feeling I have never felt anywhere else.

Point Washington has made me a better person and been a big part of my senior year. Through Point Washington, I've made best friends and done more things for people than I thought I ever could.

- Madison Stacey

***Thank you, God, for guiding us to help those in need. Amen.***

**February 8, 2019**

***Psalm 61:2 "...I cry to You for help when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the towering rock of safety..."***

Point Washington United Methodist Church has been fundamental in helping me maintain and understand my spiritual foundation. The small group leaders have taught me about the Holy Spirit, and I have formed friendships here that kept me accountable throughout my crucial high school years. Point Washington has been more than just a church to me, it is a place of refuge, growth, and a house of the Lord.

I cannot thank my youth pastor, Paul, enough for everything big and small that he has wholeheartedly done to teach God's children who their Father is. The most obvious and important way that he has taught me this is by designing my small groups and the leaders throughout the years.

Not only have the small groups been a place to grow in faith, but also the overall atmosphere of the church has welcomed all people that join. Whether it be on one Wednesday or every Sunday morning, Point Washington has invested in every person that walks through the doors by loving and welcoming them into a family of believers.

I couldn't be more grateful for the day during my sophomore year when I decided to try out PoWash, and for the strangers that welcomed me in, encouraged me to come again, and left me with my cup running over. Thank you Point Washington for always making your church a foundation, refuge, and house of the Lord.

- Maia Mae Billman

***Thank you, Lord, for creating a refuge for all people at Point Washington. Use us to be your hands and feet as we welcome people to the church and make them feel the same sense of belonging that we have experienced. Help me know what do you want to do through me to fulfill your will. Amen.***

**February 9, 2019**

***Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”***

The power of Christian fellowship has truly saved my life and much of that fellowship has come from this youth ministry. When I was in the sixth grade, my mom was diagnosed with stage three bone cancer. She fought this battle until March of my senior year when she passed away from this disease. Throughout that time period, I needed positive influences on my life since my parents were removed from my life fighting my mom’s battle. Even after she passed, the importance of healthy Christian fellowship never diminished.

At many points in my life, especially in high school, I was tempted to go the other way and to turn my back on my church family and follow the destructive path of my peers. But ultimately, the positive influence of my church family here at Point Washington and my own determination and tenacity in school and golf focused me on my future - earthly and eternal.

Without Pastor Paul, the examples of older guys in the group, and my best friends, I do not think I would have made it through the struggles I faced. PoWash as a whole has left a permanent and meaningful mark on my life. I originally came looking for a youth group, but what I found was more than that: I found my church family. For that and the everlasting impact this youth group has made on my life, I am forever grateful. As Solomon says, a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

- Jacob Walker Lehman

***Lord, thank you for the people you put in our path to keep us close to you. Help us be those people for others. Amen.***

## How Do I Decide What to Give?

Our campaign is an exciting opportunity to take a step in faith and trust God as perhaps never before. It will challenge our priorities, our values, our commitment, and our trust in God's bigger plan for us. How can we give in a way that helps us to grow in our faith?

Prayerfully ask these questions and see if God doesn't impress on your mind a specific amount to give. The amount will almost always be larger than the first number that popped into your mind, since it will be a step of faith.

Lord, what do you want to do *through me* to fulfill your will for Point Washington UMC?

**1. Is my gift based on what I think I can afford OR is it what God wants to give through me?** *“Remember this: whosoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly, but whoever sows generously will also reap generously.”* 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 9:6

**2. Does this amount stretch my faith?** *“God is able to make it up to you by giving you everything you need and more, so that there will not only be enough for your own needs, but also plenty left over to give joyfully to others.”* 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 9:8

**3. Does my gift show that I value an eternal reward more than material things?** *“Use your money to do good...By doing this you will be storing up real treasure for yourself in heaven—it is the only safe investment for eternity! And you'll live a fruitful Christian life down here as well.”* 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:19

**4. Does my gift demonstrate how much I love God?** *“Be a leader in the spirit of cheerful giving...this is one way to prove that your love is real, that it goes beyond mere words.”* 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 8:8

**5. Does this amount represent a genuine sacrifice?** *“I will not sacrifice to my God an offering that costs me nothing.”* 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 24:24

**6. Does it express my gratefulness for how God has blessed my life and family?** *“With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you; I will give thanks to your name, O Lord.”* Psalm 54:6

**Loving God, I want to give an amount that shows how grateful I am for the many ways that you have blessed me. Help me to grow in faith by trusting you with my needs. Please impress on my heart the amount that you desire to give through me. And show me how I can give sacrificially to you. Lord, What do you want to do through me to fulfill your will for Point Washington UMC? I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.**

**February 10, 2019**

***Romans 15:7 “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.”***

When I first moved back to America from South Africa, one of our biggest troubles was finding a church similar to back home. We went through a few, but none had that small-town church feel of a genuine church family. I first came in contact with PoWash when a buddy brought me along to the Wildside services, and I loved it. I attended for a while and my family and I even attended a couple of the Sunday services. Then my crazy teenager years hit hard. I wanted to be anywhere but church as I explored the trials and tribulations of earthly things. With time, something in the back of my head said I belonged in church.

Eventually I was told about Wednesday night small group and I thought I would give it a shot. By now, my family hadn't attended in a long time. My first night was intimidating, due to new faces and friends I hadn't seen in awhile. However, I knew this is where I belong. My small group leader rekindled the dying fire that was my love for Christ and church. He showed me that no matter where we've been or what we do, God's love for us is endless and forgiving. After a few more visits, I realized that this small group of high school guys, and a man with a gift, was my place of refuge and peace. To be able to sit with a group of guys who know that you are anything but perfect, and yet still listen to you when you talk and give nothing but support and advice is magical. Or better yet, it is the love of Christ at work in front of our very eyes.

After some convincing, I got my family back to PoWash, where we now attend regularly as a family. Those Wednesday nights saved my relationship with God, and quite possibly my family as well. Now, I look forward to every week. So thank you Point Washington, for giving me a place of belonging, and a drive to be who God wants me to be.

- Donnie Grosskopf

***Lord, thank you for such a loving church family. Amen.***



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