



FaithWestwood UMC

Sermon Series / August 2 to September 6, 2026

The **ExtraOrdinary** sermon series will focus on the ordinary people in the Bible who did extraordinary things for God. FaithWestwood will welcome some extra ordinary folks to share their stories too!

This *abbreviated* guide may be utilized by FaithGroups and/or Individuals.

This guide follows the **SOAP** Bible study method (**Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer**) which is ideal for beginners and for mature Christians. If you would like to connect with a FaithGroup on-site and/or online, please check out the latest **GROW Catalog** on our website faithwestwood.com

Family Activities / see **INSERT**

Mission Offerings & Activities / look for the **"GOLDEN"** banner on **back page**



© 2026, Study Guide for August 2 to September 6, 2026.
By Rev. Cindi Stewart for FaithWestwood United Methodist Church
Mission Offerings & Activities by Caring Ministries Director Vikki O'Hara
Family Activities by Next Gen & Family Engagement Director Leah Dinoso

August 2 / Holy Communion

Optional Ice Breaker: Share a time when you had to stand up for your faith.

Gracious LORD, only You can take everyday ordinary circumstances and make them extraordinary. Only You can take everyday ordinary people and make them extraordinary. Bless me to hear their stories. In the name of Jesus I pray, AMEN.

ExtraOrdinary: Stephen – Stephen was chosen to care for needs identified in the early Church. After Stephen was seized, he preached a powerful message before being martyred. As a church, how do we boldly respond to the needs of the community – and what are we willing to do for Christ?

Scripture: Acts 6:1-7 (7:51-60) (NIV) / 6 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ²So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, **“It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”**

⁵This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

(Stephen said) ⁵¹**“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! ⁵²Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— ⁵³you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”**

⁵⁴When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶**“Look,”** he said, **“I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ⁵⁷At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.**

Week of 08/02 (continued)

⁵⁹ While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Observation:

Which **words / phrases / verses** stand out to you?

Who is the **audience** for these verses?

What is the **context** of this passage?

What are the primary **themes**?

What is **God revealing** in these verses?

Application:

How do these verses **apply to your life** today?

What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?

Prayer Requests & Prayer: Gracious LORD, help me to be an extraordinary person who responds to extraordinary needs. AMEN.

~ notes ~

August 9 / Blessing of the Backpacks

Optional Ice Breaker: Share a time when you needed to follow someone to an unexpected place and/or opportunity.

Gracious LORD, only You can take everyday ordinary circumstances and make them extraordinary. Only You can take everyday ordinary people and make them extraordinary. Bless me to hear their stories. In the name of Jesus I pray, AMEN.

ExtraOrdinary: Ruth – Ruth chose to follow her mother-in-law, Naomi, to her land. There, they meet Boaz, and he becomes their kinsman-redeemer. How do we claim the ways in which God calls us by name and redeems our lives?

Scripture: Ruth 4:9-17 (NIV) / ⁹ Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, **“Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. ¹⁰ I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!”**

¹¹ Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, **“We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. ¹² Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”**

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. ¹⁴ The women said to Naomi: **“Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! ¹⁵ He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.”** ¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. ¹⁷ The women living there said, **“Naomi has a son!”** And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Observation:

Which **words / phrases / verses** stand out to you?

Who is the **audience** for these verses?

What is the **context** of this passage?

What are the primary **themes**?

What is **God revealing** in these verses?

Week of 08/09 (continued)

Application:

How do these verses **apply to your life** today?

What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?

Prayer Requests & Prayer: Gracious LORD, help me to be an extraordinary person who follows others to extraordinary places. AMEN.

~ notes ~

August 16 /

Optional Ice Breaker: Share a time when you were called to do something you did not want to do!

Gracious LORD, only You can take everyday ordinary circumstances and make them extraordinary. Only You can take everyday ordinary people and make them extraordinary. Bless me to hear their stories. In the name of Jesus I pray, AMEN.

ExtraOrdinary: Jonah – The reluctant prophet Jonah was called to prophecy to Nineveh and ran away! In the belly of the whale, he prayed and found the strength to do what he was called to do. How is the LORD calling us out of our comfort zones to proclaim God's goodness?

Scripture: Jonah 3:10 – 4:11 (NIV) / 3 ¹⁰When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened. ⁴But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. ²He prayed to the Lord, **“Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. ³Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”** ⁴But the Lord replied, **“Is it right for you to be angry?”**

⁵Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. ⁶Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. ⁷But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered.

⁸When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, **“It would be better for me to die than to live.”**

⁹But God said to Jonah, **“Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?”**

“It is,” he said. **“And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.”**

¹⁰But the Lord said, **“You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. ¹¹And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”**

Week of 08/16 (continued)

Observation:

Which **words / phrases / verses** stand out to you?

Who is the **audience** for these verses?

What is the **context** of this passage?

What are the primary **themes**?

What is **God revealing** in these verses?

Application:

How do these verses **apply to your life** today?

What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?

Prayer Requests & Prayer: Gracious LORD, help me to be an extraordinary person who proclaims your goodness in extraordinary ways. AMEN.

~ notes ~

August 23 / Church & Brunch All at Once (9 & 10:45 am)

Optional Ice Breaker: Share a time when you have been bold & courageous in your journey. **OR** Share how you have prioritized your faith in your life.

Gracious LORD, only You can take everyday ordinary circumstances and make them extraordinary. Only You can take everyday ordinary people and make them extraordinary. Bless me to hear their stories. In the name of Jesus I pray, AMEN.

ExtraOrdinary: Joshua – The reluctant prophet Jonah was called to prophecy to Nineveh and ran away! In the belly of the whale, he prayed and found the strength to do what he was called to do. How is the LORD calling us out of our comfort zones to proclaim God's goodness?

Scripture: Joshua 1:1-9 (NIV) / 1 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ² **"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. ⁵ No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.**

⁷ **"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."**

Observation:

Which **words / phrases / verses** stand out to you?

Who is the **audience** for these verses?

What is the **context** of this passage?

What are the primary **themes**?

What is **God revealing** in these verses?

Week of 8/23 (continued)

Application:

How do these verses **apply to your life** today?

What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?

Prayer Requests & Prayer: Gracious LORD, help me to be an extraordinary person who acts in bold and courageous ways. AMEN.

August 30 /

Optional Ice Breaker: Share a time when you faced difficult circumstances and/or people and were called to do so with grace and love.

Gracious LORD, only You can take everyday ordinary circumstances and make them extraordinary. Only You can take everyday ordinary people and make them extraordinary. Bless me to hear their stories. In the name of Jesus I pray, AMEN.

ExtraOrdinary: Ananias – As Saul was being transformed into Paul, the Lord Jesus calls Ananias to be a willing servant in the process. How do we face difficult challenges and people with tremendous grace and love?

Scripture: Acts 9:10-19 (NIV) / ¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!”

“Yes, Lord,” he answered.

¹¹ The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”

¹³ “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

Week of 8/30 (continued)

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, **“Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”** ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

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Application:

How do these verses **apply to your life** today?

What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?

Prayer Requests & Prayer: Gracious LORD, help me to be an extraordinary person who faces difficult challenges and peace with grace and love. AMEN.

~ notes ~

September 6 /

Optional Ice Breaker: Share a time when you utilized “spiritual gifts” (identified or self-identified) to respond to a spiritual situation.

Gracious LORD, only You can take everyday ordinary circumstances and make them extraordinary. Only You can take everyday ordinary people and make them extraordinary. Bless me to hear their stories. In the name of Jesus I pray, AMEN.

ExtraOrdinary: Tabitha/Dorcas – In Joppa, there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek, Dorcas) who became sick and died. The apostles raised her to life. In the name of Jesus Christ, how are we called to do the “work” of using our spiritual gifts to serve the Lord?

Scripture: Acts 9:36-42 (NIV) / ³⁶ In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. ³⁷ About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. ³⁸ Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, **“Please come at once!”**

³⁹ Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

⁴⁰ Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, **“Tabitha, get up.”** She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. ⁴² This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.

Observation:

Which **words / phrases / verses** stand out to you?

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What is **God revealing** in these verses?

Application:

How do these verses **apply to your life** today?

What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?

Prayer Requests & Prayer: Gracious LORD, help me to be an extraordinary person who uses my spiritual gifts to make a difference for Jesus. AMEN.

Mission Offerings & Activities

08/02 – Helping Hands. Our **Helping Hands Fund** offers short-term financial assistance to people in our church family facing an unexpected financial need. **Activity:** Continue adding new or gently used, clean, household items for **The Furniture Project** to the tubs in the foyer and inside the west entrance, under the coat rack.

08/09 – Iglesia Comunitaria. Our sister United Methodist Church in South Omaha, **Iglesia Comunitaria**, will use these funds to assist with their greatest current needs, including their own Helping Hands fund, which offers short-term financial assistance to those in their congregation who may be facing an unexpected financial need. **Activity:** Remember to donate gently used “gift” items and SHOP the **Greater Love Gift Shop**. (Open on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday – or check with staff any time the office is open). Proceeds support our **Greater Love Fund Mission Fund**.

08/16 – Outside the Walls Sunday. This offering will help our Missions Committee cover the costs of materials and supplies for September’s **Outside the Walls** weekend. (Saturday, 9/26 and Sunday, 9/27.) **Activity:** Try a new serving opportunity in our Hospitality Ministry. Contact Shane Goughnour, Music and Worship Director, via email at shane.goughnour@faithwestwood.com (or find him on Sunday mornings) to learn more about serving as part of the coffee team (opening or closing), donut team, or as an usher, greeter, or connector.

08/23 – FaithWorks Pantry. As those in our community continue to face increasing food insecurity, today’s mission offering will help us purchase items in bulk to stock our pantry shelves. **Activity:** Sign up as an individual or group to bring a meal to feed 10-12 members of our Wednesday evening **GriefShare** group using the following link: <https://mealtrain.com/lve0kw>

08/30 – Outside the Walls Sunday. Help our Missions Committee cover the costs of materials and supplies for September’s **Outside the Walls** weekend (Saturday, 9/26 and Sunday, 9/27.) **Activity:** Volunteer as shoppers, food distributors, and re-stockers at our FaithWorks pantry (second Thursday and Wednesday prior as well as fourth Saturday) sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/FWPantryServe>

09/06 – Helping Hands. Our **Helping Hands Fund** offers short-term financial assistance to people in our church family facing an unexpected financial need. **Activity:** Volunteer (spring through autumn) to serve with a variety of tasks in the FaithWorks Pantry Garden throughout the growing season. Contact: Nancy Vogel.