

FIREPROOFING

your life

FaithWestwood UMC
February 1-15, 2026

In this pre-Lenten sermon series, **Fireproofing Your Life**, we will discover ways we can be resistant to those fires we face in our days, our relationships, and even in our faith!

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

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

“Love in Action” Challenges / look at the **end** of each lesson

Family Activities / see **INSERT**

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



© 2026, Study Guide by Rev. Cindi Stewart for FaithWestwood
United Methodist Church, Pre-Lent, February 1-15, 2026
Mission Offerings & Activities by Director of Caring Ministries Vikki O’Hara
Family Activities (insert) by Director of Family Ministry Leah Dinoso

Week of February 1 / Holy Communion

Fireproofing Your 1,440 Minutes – As Jesus teaches the sermon on the mount, he encourages the crowds to not worry about tomorrow. How do you and I “fireproof” our days worrying less and trusting more?

Matthew 6:25-34 (NIV) / 25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

31 “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Opening

- Intro: What is the **number one** thing you **worry** about most? (Don’t worry, you will have an opportunity to reflect & discuss how to manage/conquer later).
- Pray: **Abundant God, this day give me a proper perspective about worrying from the teaching of Jesus. Fireproof my 1,440 minutes today and tomorrow and always. May I seek your kingdom and righteousness daily. In the name of Jesus, AMEN.**

Observing

- Read **Matthew 6:25-27**. Reflect on the context of first century life in which Jesus speaks these words – how did those who were **poor in spirit** hear these words?
- Jesus focuses on not worrying about your **life**, what you will **eat or drink**, your **body**, and what you will **wear**. How does Jesus utilize the example of the **birds of the air** to prove his point?
- Read **Matthew 6:28-30**. In these verses, Jesus specifically talks about **clothing**. Why might this be an important **topic** of conversation for the **crowds** in Jesus’ day?

(Week of February 1)

- As Jesus speaks about **clothing** using the example of **flowers** – how does this concept also relate to worrying about your **life / eat & drink / body**?
- Read **Matthew 6:31-34**. According to Jesus, those questions in **verse 31** have **kingdom implications** – how can one best **seek first** his **kingdom & righteousness**?
- **Verse 34** speaks about **tomorrow** and its own worries & troubles. What do you think Jesus wants to emphasize by saying these words?

Reflecting

- What is one of your favorite **clothing** items? As you think about **verses 28-30**, what might Jesus have to say about **clothing** in our day (i.e.: fast fashion, excess, landfills of clothing items)?
- Read **verses 27** and **34** again. **Worry** does not **add** anything as you live out your days. Yet **worry** may **take away** things. How does **worry** rob you of joy, peace, hope, etc.?
- Thinking about the **number one** thing you **worry** about most, how does this **worry** affect your life?
- What is one step you may take to **manage/conquer** this worry in your life?

Sending Forth

- After sharing your **prayer requests**, read or sing from **As a Fire is Meant for Burning** (FWS #2237, verse 1):

♪ As a fire is meant for burning with a bright and warming flame,
so the church is meant for mission, giving glory to God's name.
Not to preach our creeds or customs, but to build a bridge of care,
we join hands across the nations, finding neighbors everywhere. AMEN.
- **“Love in Action” Challenge**: I imagine you have a “worry wart” somewhere in your life; what is **one** act of love & caring that you might share to come alongside this person / these people? Commit this **love in action** this week.

~ notes ~

Week of February 8 / Souper Jersey Sunday

Fireproofing Your Relationships – The Apostle Paul encourages the Roman Christians to put their love in action! How do you and I “fireproof” our relationships by putting our love in action today?

Romans 12:9-16 (NIV) / ⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Opening

- Intro: Think about an act of **love** recently demonstrated to you. Who provided that act of **love** (family member, friend, neighbor, stranger)?
- Pray: **Loving God, teach me about your unconditional love. Inspire my love to be sincere, devoted, and honorable. Motivate me to put my love in action every day so that I may fireproof my relationships. In the name of Christ we pray, AMEN.**

Observing

- In **Romans 12**, the Apostle Paul addresses those Roman Christians with instructions about not conforming to the patterns of the world (v. 2) and living in humble service to the body of Christ (vv. 3-8). Then he shares about putting **love in action**.
- As a whole, which of these **verses** speaks to your mind, heart, spirit on this day?
- Read **Romans 12:9-13**. How do these words reflect what the Apostle Paul was not seeing in that early Christian community in Rome?
- From **verses 9-13**, choose a few verses to dissect and discuss their importance within the Body of Christ. Which are most applicable in today’s world / church?
- Read **Romans 12:14-16**. Again, how do these words reflect what the Apostle Paul was not seeing in that early Christian community in Rome?
- Many of these verses reflect what Jesus had taught his disciples. How do these words *also* present a **reversal** of what people might expect to hear?
- From **verses 14-16**, choose a few verses to dissect and discuss their importance within the Body of Christ. Which are most applicable in today’s world / church?

(Week of February 8)

Reflecting

- Now reflect on the following verses thinking about your ***relationships***.
- **Verses 9-13:** How might your **love** be ***more sincere*** in your **relationships**?
- How might living out **verse 12 *strengthen*** your **relationships**?
- **Verses 14-16:** How might you best **live in harmony** with those in your life?
- What do the words in **verse 15** mean to you?

Sending Forth

- After sharing your **prayer requests**, read or sing from **As a Fire is Meant for Burning** (FWS #2237, verse 2):

♪ We are learners; we are teachers; we are pilgrims on the way.
We are seekers; we are givers; we are vessels made of clay.
By our gentle, loving actions, we would show that Christ is light.
In a humble, listening Spirit, we would live to God's delight. AMEN.

- **“Love in Action” Challenge:** Choose **one** or **two** verses from the focus passage and meditate on you might practice those in your **circle of influence / relationships**. Develop a plan and complete it within this week.

~ notes ~

Week of February 15 /

Fireproofing Your Faith – After Jesus takes his inner circle of disciples onto a mountain to pray, he is transfigured before them, and they have an amazing spiritual experience. How do you and I “fireproof” our faith to trust and believe?

Mark 9:2-9 (NIV) / ² After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. ³ His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.

⁴ And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁶ (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

⁷ Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

⁸ Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus. ⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Opening

- Intro: Briefly share about one of the **first mountaintop experiences** you experienced in your life (think about something formative in your faith journey).
- Pray: **Holy God, I find myself on holy ground in Your presence. Bless these moments to remember and to reflect upon the transfiguration of Jesus. This week, inspire me to fireproof my faith. In the name of the Transfigured Christ we pray, AMEN.**

Observing

- In the traditional Christian calendar, remembering this story of Jesus’ transfiguration precedes the beginning of the Lenten journey. Keep this in mind as you observe and reflect on these verses today. **Transfiguration: a complete change of form or appearance into a more beautiful or spiritual state (Oxford Languages Dictionary).**
- Read **Mark 2:2-6**. Jesus brings along the “inner circle” of disciples: **Peter, James, and John**. What about these **disciples** allowed them to be included?
- Jesus took these disciples to a high mountain where he was **transfigured**. How is his appearance described? As Jesus is joined by **Moses and Elijah**, what does their presence represent?
- How does **Peter** attempt to make sense of this scene, and how do you hear the explanation of his behavior in **verse 6?**

(Week of February 15)

- Read **Mark 2:7-9**. As a cloud appeared and covered **them**, it is assumed this meant Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Then a voice says, “**This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!**” Like the words spoken from heaven at the baptism of Jesus, these words identify and affirm Jesus as the beloved Son of Man and Son of God.
- How does **verse 7** connect to what happened before and after this experience?
- **Verses 8-9** reveal how quickly the scene changes. Why do you believe Jesus instructed these disciples **not** to share this experience with anyone until the Son of Man has risen from the dead?

Reflecting

- Imagine being on that **mountain** with that inner circle of **disciples**. How might you respond to **Jesus' transfiguration**?
- This passage is often related to the **mountaintop experiences** that humans experience. How did your **first mountaintop experience** inspire your **spiritual journey**?
- As this scene demands **faith** – how does this passage inspire your **faith** today?

Sending Forth

- After sharing your **prayer requests**, read or sing from **As a Fire is Meant for Burning** (FWS #2237, verse 3):

♪ As a green bud in the springtime is the sign of life renewed,
so may we be signs of oneness 'mid earth's peoples, many hued.
As a rainbow lights the heavens when a storm is past and gone,
may our lives reflect the radiance of God's new and glorious dawn. AMEN.
- **“Love in Action” Challenge:** Your days and relationships can be challenging, and your **faith** may be tested and tried. To “**fireproof**” your faith, write down a significant **mountaintop experience** in your journey, and be prepared to share it with someone who may need a **faith-lift**.

~ notes ~

Mission Offerings & Activities

02/01—Helping Hands. Today's mission offering supports our **Helping Hands Fund** which offers short-term financial assistance to people in our own church family facing an unexpected financial need.

Mission Activity: Continuing throughout the month of February, we are collecting new items to stock the "The Zone" at **Central Middle School** – a no cost CMS resource providing students with basic needs like clothing and personal care items. Lists of needed items are available on the blue CMS table in the foyer, and donations may be placed in the marked tubs outside the church office and on the CMS foyer table.

02/08—FaithWorks Pantry. Today's mission offering will help us **purchase items in bulk** to keep our pantry shelves stocked during this time of increased food insecurity.

Mission Activity: Continue adding new and gently used household items for the Furniture Project to the collection tubs in the foyer and inside the west entrance, under the coat rack. Lists of household items (housewares, small appliances, bakeware, dishes, glassware, towels, bedding, etc.) are available on the racks on the wooden tables outside the worship center and on the gray Furniture Project table in the foyer.

02/15—Iglesia Comunitaria. Today's mission offering will be used to purchase the entire **Spanish curriculum for three Sunday school levels:** Pre-K, Kindergarten-3rd grade, and grades 4-6.

Mission Activity: Remember to bring at least four (or more) items from the green **"Four or More"** list each month – to help meet the increasing needs of those facing food insecurity. Items may be placed in the canvas carts in the foyer near the elevator and outside the church office.

The Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18:

- 11 to 1 pm, Drive-Thru Ashes (EAST entrance)**
- 5:30 to 6:45 pm, Pancake Party (Micah Center gym)**
- 7 pm, Ash Wednesday Worship (worship center)**

