

Month of Mission Focus

Preaching Guide and Daily Readings.

Following the proposal of the Mission and Discipleship Committee, the General Assembly agreed that October 2014 would be a "Month of Mission." This is an attempt to develop a healthy understanding of "Mission" in our congregations. The idea is that Preachers are invited to use the series of sermon outlines below that explore various facets of Mission.

Alongside the preaching series, there is a set of daily readings could be given to congregants so that they would be reading passages that relate to the church's mission in their daily devotion. The hope is that a large part of the denomination will be moving in the same direction with a wonderful focus on Mission.

1. Preaching Framework for October.

The life of Philip the Evangelist provides a very helpful lens through which we can look at Mission. In Philip's ministry we see the fulfilment of the ripple-like spread of the gospel that Jesus predicted in Acts 1:8 (Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and ends of the earth)

Philip's story covers the whole spectrum of Mission: Service (distributing food); the transformation of the community in Samaria; one-on-one evangelism; and leaving a legacy. It also covers Mission near and far.

1. **Sunday 5 October** - Philip, a deacon, serving food. (**Acts 6:1-7**)
(Not Philip the Disciple, but Philip the Deacon)
 - Mission is often service to the poor.
 - Explore Philip's character.
 - The importance of service and social outreach. Extend this into your community.
 - Mission starts on our doorstep
 - This simple act of orderly administration resulted in church growth and priests converting
 - The gospel is about *Service*.
2. **Sunday 12 October** - Philip, evangelist to the Samaritans (**Acts 8:4-25**)
 - Mission is about crossing (racial and other) divides.
 - Understand the brokenness between Jew and Samaritan.
 - See how Philip (Greek name) is a bridge-builder.
 - How the Spirit empowers his work.
 - How he confronts those who try to abuse power (Simon)
 - How Philip allowed Peter and John to provide guidance and stability (not a lone-ranger)
 - Peter and John, inspired by Philip, preach in all the Samaritan towns on the way home.
 - The gospel is also about *Transforming a Community*.
3. **Sunday 19 October** - Philip, influencing Ethiopia. (**Acts 8:26-40**)
 - How Philip, prompted by the Spirit, influences the Ethiopian Official .
 - (Mission to the ends of the earth.)
 - The role of the Holy Spirit's prompting.
 - Philip's courage and willingness to do crazy things (like run next to a chariot!)
 - His technique of asking a question and starting where the Eunuch was.
 - His knowledge of the Scriptures and the emphasis of the *Good News* about Jesus.
 - The gospel is also about *One-to-One Evangelism*.
4. **Sunday 26 October** - Philip, reaching the next generation. (**Acts 21:8** and **Psalms 78:1-7**)
 - Paul visits him (this suggests that Philip still has influence)
 - He has passed his faith on to his children – his daughters are prophetesses.
 - Luke speaks of them as though they are well known and respected
 - Reaching the next generation is vital (look at Ps.78:1-7) (Get practical as to how we do this)
 - Be flexible: while Philip is an Evangelist, his daughters are Prophets.
 - The gospel is also about *leaving a lasting legacy*.

2. Daily Readings: One for each day of October (Short Version)

The Gospel as Service

1. Jesus set the ultimate example: (John 13:3-5,14-15)
2. Jesus uses physical healing as the opportunity to heal the whole person: (Luke 8:44-48)
3. Peter and John use healing to earn the right to testify: (Acts 3:6-10)
4. Doing good is part of how God shows the incomparable riches of His grace: (Eph.2:6-10)
5. Feeding people and doing it with excellence can bring others in: (Acts 6:1-7)
6. If we're following Jesus then who are the poor, the blind and the prisoners near us? (Luke 4:18-19)
7. We can't escape the very practical aspect of these verses: (Matthew 25:32-40)

The Gospel as Transformation:

8. The Gospel makes new people out of us: (2Corinthians 5:17-20)
9. The Thessalonians were transformed by the Gospel: (1 Thessalonians 1:4-10)
10. The Church in Antioch bore fruit. They were called "Christians" (Little Christs): (Acts 11:19-26)
11. This is what a new life looks like: (Col 3:1-17)
12. Changed lives: Samaria, Philip and the disciples:(Acts 8:4-17)
13. God can transform our fears and doubts: (2 Timothy 1:7-9)
14. It's about living a new life: (Rom 12:1-5)

It's still one-to-one and one-by-one:

15. It's recognising Jesus who came into our world as light in the darkness: (John 1:10-14)
16. It remains a decision that everyone must make: (John 3:3-8)
17. Salvation is not something to be earned, but received by faith. (Romans 10:5-13)
18. And we can participate in sharing this good news: (Romans 10:14-15)
19. The beautiful moment of conversion: (Acts 8:34-38)
20. Paul's unquenchable desire for the salvation of others: (Acts 26:22-29)
21. Evangelism is one beggar telling another where he found bread: (1 John 1:1-3)

We must pass it on to the next generation:

22. Look at how faith was passed on from one generation to the next: (2 Timothy 1:5-6)
23. Joshua reminds us of the stakes: (Joshua 24:14-15)
24. Timothy had a mom and grandmother who taught him Scripture: (2 Tim 3:14-15)
25. For your kids: Love God, talk about Him and surround yourself with reminders: (Deut 6:4-9)
26. Think about the next generation: (Psalm 78:4-7)
27. Children! Be open and teachable! (Proverbs 1:7-9)
28. God would like to bless our families: (Isaiah 44:3-5)

And Finally:

29. Our Commanding Officer's Final Instructions: (Matthew 28:18-20)
30. We have the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the task: (Acts 1:8)
31. We're called to be salt and light for the glory of God: (Matthew 5:13-16)

Full Scripture Readings on the next pages....

3. Daily Readings: One for each day of October

The Gospel as Service

1. Jesus set the ultimate example: (John 13:3-5,14-15)
Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him... 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.
2. Jesus uses physical healing as the opportunity to heal the whole person: (Luke 8:44-48)
She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. 45 "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." 46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me." 47 Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48 Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."
3. Peter and John use healing to earn the right to testify: (Acts 3:6-10)
Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." 7 Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. 8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. 9 When all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.
4. Doing good is part of how God shows the incomparable riches of His grace: (Eph.2:6-10)
And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
5. Feeding people and doing it with excellence can bring others in: (Acts 6:1-7)
In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So 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. 3 Brothers, 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 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." 5 This 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. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. 7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.
6. If we're following Jesus then who are the poor, the blind and the prisoners near us? (Luke 4:18-19)
"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
7. We can't escape the very practical aspect of these verses: (Matthew 25:32-40)
All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38

When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

The Gospel as Transformation:

8. The Gospel makes new people out of us: (2Corinthians 5:17-20)

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

9. The Thessalonians were transformed by the Gospel: (1 Thessalonians 1:4-10)

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. 6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7 And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia--your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, 9 for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

10. The Church in Antioch bore fruit. They were called "Christians" (Little Christs): (Acts 11:19-26)

Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. 21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. 22 News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. 24 He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. 25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. *The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.*

11. This is what a new life looks like: (Col 3:1-17) Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

12. Changed lives: Samaria, Philip and the disciples:(Acts 8:4-17)

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. 5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. 6 When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. 7 With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. 8 So there was great joy in that city.

9 Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, 10 and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is the divine power known as the Great Power." 11 They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic. 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw. 14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

13. God can transform our fears and doubts: (2 Timothy 1:7-9)

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. 8 So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

14. It's about living a new life: (Rom 12:1-5)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. 3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. 4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

It's still one-to-one and one-by-one:

15. It's recognising Jesus who came into our world as light in the darkness: (John 1:10-14)

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

16. It remains a decision that everyone must make: (John 3:3-8)

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." 4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" 5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

17. Salvation is not something to be earned, but received by faith. (Romans 10:5-13)

Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them." 6 But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "or 'Who will descend into the deep?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: 9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

18. And we can participate in sharing this good news: (Romans 10:14-15)

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And

how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

19. The beautiful moment of conversion: (Acts 8:34-38)

The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. 36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

20. Paul's unquenchable desire for the salvation of others: (Acts 26:22-29)

But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen-- 23 that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles." 24 At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane." 25 "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. 26 The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do." 28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" 29 Paul replied, "Short time or long--I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

21. Evangelism is one beggar telling another where he found bread: (1 John 1:1-3)

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

We must pass it on to the next generation:

22. Look at how faith was passed on from one generation to the next: (2 Timothy 1:5-6)

I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

23. Joshua reminds us of the stakes: (Joshua 24:14-15)

"Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15 But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

24. Timothy had a mom and grandmother who taught him Scripture: (2 Tim 3:14-15)

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

25. For your kids: Love God, talk about Him and surround yourself with reminders: (Deut 6:4-9)

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

26. Think about the next generation: (Psalm 78:4-7)

We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. 5 He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, 6 so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born,

and they in turn would tell their children. 7 Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.

27. Children! Be open and teachable! (Proverbs 1:7-9)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. 8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. 9 They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

28. God would like to bless our families: (Isaiah 44:3-5)

For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.
4 They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams.
5 One will say, 'I belong to the LORD'; another will call himself by the name of Jacob;
still another will write on his hand, 'The LORD's,' and will take the name Israel.

And Finally:

29. Our Commanding Officer's Final Instructions: (Matthew 28:18-20)

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

30. We have the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the task: (Acts 1:8)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

31. We're called to be salt and light for the glory of God: (Matthew 5:13-16)

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."