

**Faith Bible Study Guide**  
**For the Week of September 7, 2025**  
**Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**“Clay in the Fire: Shaped Costly for Love”**



**Be still [2 Minutes]:** As you hear these Centering Words, let us greet each other, greet the Holy Spirit, and begin with 1 minute of silence, breathing in the breath of God and allow the group to open themselves to the Holy Spirit today:

**CENTERING WORDS:** God knows us better than anyone and loves us more deeply than we can fathom. Even when we become less than God created us to be, God continues to love us and have faith in us.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Creator God, you have crafted us in your image and created us for greatness, as we share your love, justice, and compassion. Help us to live into this creation. Strengthen us, as we seek to answer your call. When we go astray, guide us back to your ways. When we fall apart, put us back together again. When we shrink in fear, lift our heads, that we may come to see your love and grace guiding us home. Amen.

**Be the Word:**

**Old Testament Lesson: Jeremiah 18:1-11**

Jeremiah received the LORD's word: 2 Go down to the potter's house, and I'll give you instructions about what to do there. 3 So I went down to the potter's house; he was working on the potter's wheel. 4 But the piece he was making was flawed while still in his hands, so the potter started on another, as seemed best to him. 5 Then the LORD's word came to me: 6 House of Israel, can't I deal with you like this potter, declares the LORD? Like clay in the potter's hand, so are you in mine, house of Israel! 7 At any time I may announce that I will dig up, pull down, and destroy a nation or kingdom; 8 but if that nation I warned turns from its evil, then I'll relent and not carry out the harm I intended for it. 9 At the same time, I may announce that I will build and plant a nation or kingdom; 10 but if that nation displeases and disobeys me, then I'll relent and not carry out the good I intended for it. 11 Now say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem: This is what the LORD says: I am a potter preparing a disaster for you; I'm working out a plan against you. So each one of you, turn from your evil ways; reform your ways and your actions.

**New Testament Lesson: Luke 14:25-33**

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus. Turning to them, he said, **26** "Whoever comes to me and doesn't hate father and mother, spouse and children, and brothers and sisters—yes, even one's own life—cannot be my disciple. **27** Whoever doesn't carry their own cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

**28** "If one of you wanted to build a tower, wouldn't you first sit down and calculate the cost, to determine whether you have enough money to complete it? **29** Otherwise, when you have laid the foundation but couldn't finish the tower, all who see it will begin to belittle you. **30** They will say, 'Here's the person who

began construction and couldn't complete it!' **31** Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down to consider whether his ten thousand soldiers could go up against the twenty thousand coming against him? **32** And if he didn't think he could win, he would send a representative to discuss terms of peace while his enemy was still a long way off. **33** In the same way, none of you who are unwilling to give up all of your possessions can be my disciple.

L: The word of God for all People.

P: **Thanks be to God.**

**Be present: [Being mindful of others and sharing time]**

1. Take a deep breath. How is it with your soul?
2. Where did you feel God's presence most clearly this week?
3. Where did you feel God's absence or silence?
4. If your life this week were a piece of clay, what stage would it be in: soft and being shaped, drying, in the fire, cracked, or strengthened?
5. What do you need from God, or from community, to be "well with your soul" this week?

**Be rooted: [Bible Study]**

Some Exegesis Notes on the Scriptures:

Jeremiah 18:1–11

- Historical Context: Jeremiah was called as a prophet during a time of national upheaval. Judah was under threat from Babylon. The people were turning away from God, and Jeremiah had the hard job of calling them back.
- Potter & Clay Image: In the Ancient Near East, pottery was essential for daily life — fragile, breakable, but also repairable. The image shows God as both artist and patient worker.
- Key Point: God does not discard marred clay — God reshapes. But fire is essential: the kiln transforms soft clay into something durable. Without it, it can't hold water (life).
- Message: Judgment isn't the end — it's part of reshaping. Hope and possibility remain when we return to God.

Luke 14:25–33

- Context: Jesus is addressing "large crowds" who are following him. He wants them to understand the seriousness of discipleship.
- Hard Sayings: "Hate father and mother..." is hyperbole (a Jewish rhetorical device). It emphasizes that discipleship requires ultimate loyalty to God, even above family and possessions.
- Cost of Discipleship: Jesus uses practical metaphors — building a tower, going to war — to show that following him is not casual but deliberate, sacrificial, and costly.
- Connection to Jeremiah: Just as clay must pass through fire to be useful, disciples must pass through sacrifice to be truly formed.

1. What image or story from this week's sermon resonates most with you today?
  - *Recap: In the sermon we heard about clay on the potter's wheel, Lahaina's fires, Pastor John's faithful presence, and mission as the kiln. Each image points to how God works through brokenness, fire, and costly love.*
  - **Which one sticks with you most right now, and why?**

2. Which Scripture spoke to you more this week?
  - *Jeremiah 18:1–11* shows God as the patient Potter, reshaping marred clay into something new — God does not discard us.
  - *Luke 14:25–33* gives us Jesus' stark words: discipleship costs something; it asks us to carry the cross and reorder our priorities.
  - **Which of these spoke most deeply to you this week — the tender shaping of Jeremiah, or the convicting challenge of Luke?**
3. How does the image of clay in God's hands challenge or comfort you?
  - *Recap: In the sermon we remembered that clay is fragile when it leaves the wheel. It only becomes durable through fire.*
  - **Does that truth comfort you — knowing God is always shaping? Or challenge you — knowing fire (testing, sacrifice) is necessary to be useful?**
4. Where do you see God reshaping you personally, or our church, in this season?
  - Just as Lahaina is slowly rebuilding out of ashes, and Pastor John remains with his people through the long, costly work, **where do you notice God reshaping your own life or our church community right now?**
5. Jesus says to “count the cost” of discipleship. What costs have you experienced in your own walk of faith? What costs do you resist?
  - *Jesus' examples — building a tower, going to war — remind us that discipleship isn't casual, it's deliberate and costly. In the sermon, we remembered that mission costs our time, our money, and our comfort — but it also produces resilience and hope.*
  - **Where have you felt the cost?**
  - **Where do you struggle to let go?**
- Mission as “the kiln” — in what ways have acts of service, giving, or prayer reshaped your faith?
  - *Recap: In the sermon we named MISSION not as an “extra” of the church, but as the very kiln that fires and strengthens us. Fundraising, friend-raising, stewardship, showing up, praying, traveling, and serving — all of these are costly but also transformative.*
  - **How has mission or prayer shaped your faith into something stronger, more resilient, or more useful?**

**Be transformed: [Faith in Action Challenge]:**

1. **Personal:** Identify one place in your life where you are resisting God's shaping. Pray this week to soften and yield like clay in God's hands.
2. **Community:** Think of one costly but faithful step you can take — whether giving, serving, or showing up — that strengthens our church to be a vessel of God's love.
3. **Global/Missional:** Consider how we can continue to walk alongside communities like Lahaina. Could you write a prayer, letter, or make a gift this week as an act of solidarity?
4. **Daily Practice:** Each morning, hold your hands open and pray: “God, shape me as your vessel today. Even if it costs, may I carry your love.”

## Prayers & Concerns / Announcements:



*We lift up prayers for all of God's  
Creation. Lord Hear our Prayers.*

### **continued prayers for Healing and Wholeness**

Alice Kajiya  
Alma Chang-Lum  
Alvena Fukuhara  
Amy Higa  
Anthony Anderson, Sr.  
Apolosi Lokotui  
Arthur Kobashi  
Audrey Goto  
Austin Maeda  
Barbara Tamura  
Betty Kobata  
Bill Morris  
Brian Okumura  
Cami Bruns  
Carolyn Hyatt  
Chic Miyake  
Christine Keim  
Claretta Foster  
Dan Segawa  
Danny Tokudomi  
Dan Yamashita  
Derek Troester  
Deron Tokishi

Diane & Destiny  
Ueda-Banda  
Dr. DoAnn Tsuneo  
Kaneko  
Dr. Nguyen  
Elaine Yoshida  
Eleanor Ngai  
Emi Hino  
Ernie Santiago  
Faith Tanaka  
Florence Nakakura  
Fred Oshiro  
Geri Shiraki  
Glenn and Millie  
Shimizu  
Grace Tochiara  
Grant Hanada  
Harriet Tateyama  
Haru Yasunaga  
Hisako Shohara  
Ingrid Peterson  
Irene Munesato  
Jack Honda  
Jayne Watanabe  
Jehiel Vinluan  
Jerry Osaka  
Joanne Sato

Jordan Sasaki  
Joye Barker  
Juliet Koyanagi  
Kaitlyn Sabedra  
Karlynn Fernandez  
Kay Saxton  
Kian Tehrani  
Kiki Hashimoto  
Rev. Kim  
Montenegro  
Kelsey DeGracia  
Kyle Ichikawa  
Larry Takumi  
Layne Nakasone  
Linda Jung  
Linda Sakurai  
Lori Conti  
Lucas Yniguez  
Marion Antoku  
Mary Jung  
Mary Marchand  
Mary Tamura  
Maxine Butcher  
Mutsuko Nishi

Nancy Matsushima  
Noah Miyagawa-Sue  
Oscar Philip Bland, Jr.  
Priscilla Kandel  
Raquel M. Martinez  
Richard Ueyuenten  
Ruth Hirata  
Ruth Taira  
Sandra Minjarez-  
Grange  
Steph Matsunaga  
Sue Hamada  
Sue Hasegawa  
Susan Mizuki  
Susan Slade  
Tam Kobayashi  
Tommy Sakaguchi  
Tseyli Mantooth  
Victoria DelaTorre  
Walker Wilkerson  
Wayne Shimizu  
Winnie Osaki  
Theresa Apicella  
Kraig Nakano

### **those in Community Living & Homecare**

Chic Miyake  
Doris Kato  
Emma Horiuchi  
Faith Tanaka  
Rev. Harry Fujimoto  
Irene & Tak Ryono  
Jane Kiyohara  
Marion Antoku  
Mary Jung  
Nobie Shiokari  
Ruth Hirata  
Sets Asano  
Sue Hasegawa

### **for our Worldwide Community**

### **for the Leadership of our Country and our Churches**

### **for the immigrants: migrants, refugees, asylees**

### **for our siblings in Christ who struggle and in need of God's care**

### **for those who live in through wars, unrest, and violence**

### **for those suffering and rebuilding after national disasters and man-made catastrophes**

### **for All Our Saints**

Keith Tokuhara and family, on the passing of his wife, Mary Sutton Tokuhara. A Celebration of Life is scheduled for October 4, 2025 at 2:00pm. RSVP with Church Office.

The Hirayama family, on the passing of Ted Hirayama. A Celebration of Life will be held for Ted on Sunday, October 5, 2025 at 2pm. Please contact the Church Office to RSVP.

Carol Hashiro and family, on the passing of her husband, Mike Hashiro (7/25/25). A Celebration of Life is scheduled for September 20, 2025 at 2:00pm. RSVP with Church Office.

Brian Uchida and family, on the passing of Florence Uchida (7/29/25). A Celebration of Life is scheduled for November 1, 2025 at 10:00am. RSVP with Church Office.

The Hirano family, on the passing of Helen Hirano. (8/10/25)

Carol Tondo and family, on the passing of her mother, Yoko Murakami (7/14/25).

Amanda Taketa-Mark and family, on the passing of her grandmother, Llynda Taketa (7/21/25).

The Kawamura family, on the passing of Bess Kawamura.

The Kato family, on the passing of Tak Kato.

The Akiyama family, on the passing of Masako Akiyama.

UPDATED 8.29.2025





## Continued Prayers for our Beloved Community

### special prayers

Prayers for God's presence and healing for **Kraig Nakano**, older brother of our former **Pastor Rev. Derek Nakano**, who has been diagnosed with cancer. The family only asks for your prayers and well wishes at this time. Please no calls or visits.

Also prayers for Tam Kobayashi, Lani Walker and Audrey Goto for healing and recovery following procedures (both past and upcoming).

### in celebration of

**Doris Shigihara** on receiving the Bishop's Award at Annual Conference. Doris will receive her recognition in person Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank on **DECEMBER 14, 2025!**

Chad is married!! **Chad Uemura and Natsuko Takito** married on September 4, 2025 in Hawai'i! Let us celebrate this couple and support them in their marriage and life together!



## Let Us Walk With You in Prayer, Celebration, and Care

Please let Clergy or our Church Office know so we can lift up prayers for you and your family. Whether you want to lift up exciting celebrations and milestones, but also so we can pray for healing and wholeness, or in the passing of loved ones so that we can show our care for you and those you love. Our Shepherd Ministry is also available to make house visits, phone calls, and send messages of encouragement.

\* Note change for Doris' Award, December 7, 2025

- Tam Surgery today (9/9)
- Audrey Goto recovery
- Scarlett Bone
- Diane Ueda-Banda (to monitor health, but relieved for now)
- Students starting the new school year (and preparing to start the new year)
- Kraig Nakano
- Tseyli Mantooth



FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# Marketplace

Saturday, September 27, 2025  
9 AM – 2 PM



Featuring our first *ReHome Goods* Sale! Recycled | Repurposed | Regifted Goods

FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH – 2115 WEST 182ND STREET, TORRANCE CA



## WHEN WE NEED IT

Drop-offs will be accepted the week of September 22–26.



**Monday – Friday**  
**10 am – 2 pm and 6:30 am – 8 pm**



PLEASE DO NOT DROP OFF ANYTHING BEFORE THIS WEEK,  
OR ON EVENT DAY.

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## WHAT WE NEED

- \* Collectibles: Sports cards, Pokeman cards, Beanie Babies, Hot Wheels, Bobble heads...
- \* Authentic designer items: purses, accessories...
- \* Asian dishes, dolls, kimonos
- \* Vintage and Antique goods
- \* Plants
- \* Sports equipment, tools
- \* Clean toys, puzzles, games
- \* Pots, pans, kitchen utensils
- \* Denim apparel, clothing "NWT"...

## WHAT WE DON'T NEED



- \* NO Stuffed animals
- \* NO Old clothes
- \* NO Broken appliances
- \* NO Large furniture
- \* NO Books
- \* NO Perfumes, lotions, soaps



## WHAT WE REALLY NEED

**YOU** to sign up for a workshift!

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### **And Know that He is God: Closing Prayer & Blessing**

Gracious Potter,

We place ourselves in your hands once again. Where we are cracked, reshape us.

Where we are soft, strengthen us. Where we resist, soften our hearts.

Through the fire of discipleship, make us vessels strong enough to carry your living water to a thirsty world.

Help us to count the cost, but also to rejoice in the gift of being shaped for your costly love.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.