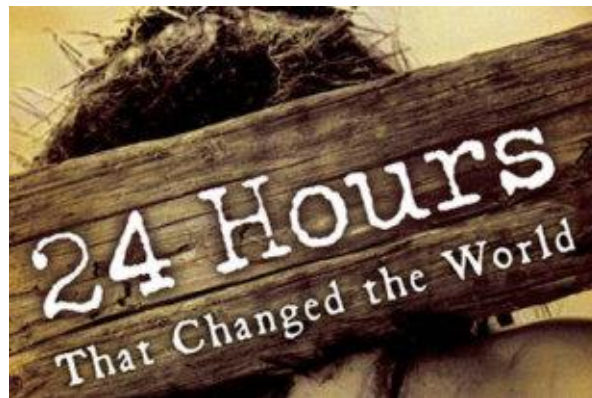
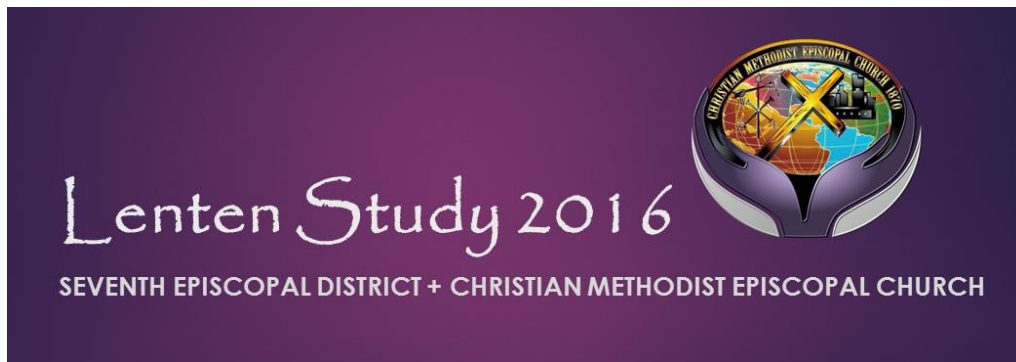


**Board of Evangelism
Seventh Episcopal District
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church**

presents



**Rev. Cynthia Johnson-Oliver, Director of Evangelism
Bishop James B. Walker, Presiding Prelate**

The Investment Factor: A Changed People, Changing the World"

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Announcing Lenten Study 2016

A few weeks ago, we announced that there will be an Episcopal District-wide Lenten Study for the Seventh Episcopal District of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. CME churches throughout the New York-Washington Region and Carolina Region are invited to participate by offering a church-wide Lenten study and sermon series based on the book, *24 Hours that Changed the World* by Adam Hamilton. This study includes a book, devotional, and DVD sessions filmed on location in the Holy Land. The study walks readers through the last 24 hours of Jesus' life, from the Last Supper to the Resurrection. Pastors are invited to offer a sermon series based on the book.

In addition, churches are encouraged to form Lenten small groups to meet weekly to discuss the sermon, book, and DVD, creating an atmosphere of fellowship and discipleship. If your church does not currently have a small group ministry, Lenten small groups are a great way to pilot the ministry and plant the seeds of a larger ministry of discipleship through small groups at your church. When the entire church is united in studying the same topic in worship, Sunday school, small groups, youth and young adult ministry, we will experience in a new way the synergy of the movement of the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of the Lenten Study and the purpose of small groups are to fulfill the biblical vision of discipleship, when early Christians met in house-churches and "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." The Lord "added to their numbers those who were being saved," demonstrating the power of discipleship and evangelism in small groups. The benefit of a regional and episcopal district-wide study is that we can prepare for this season together, sharing best practices and encouraging one another in this ministry.

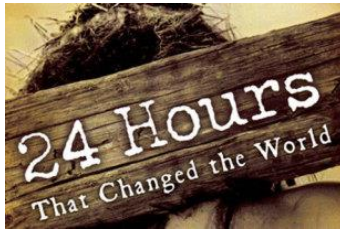
To this end, we will offer conference calls prior to Lent to consult and coach on forming small groups and to prepare to offer the Lenten Study in local churches. **Our first conference call is scheduled for Tuesday, January 12 at 8pm. Dial In Number: 712-770-4010. Access Code: 589788. RSVP: seventhforlent@yahoo.com.** In the meantime, this packet provides an overview of next steps you can take to prepare for Lenten Study 2016.

Special Note: *I would like to thank Bishop James B. Walker for the opportunity to serve as Regional and Episcopal District Director of Evangelism for the New York-Washington Region and the Seventh Episcopal District of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. I look forward to working with Bishop Walker, the Presiding Elders, clergy, and laity to grow together as disciples of Jesus Christ and to expand the kingdom of God. It is in this spirit that I offer this resource. Blessings!*

Countdown to Lenten Study 2016
24 Hours That Changed the World
Feb 14-March 27, 2016

<u>Task</u>	<u>Due</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Check</u>
Meet with clergy, staff, and key lay leaders	4-6 weeks before start	Jan 3–Jan 17	
Decide which components to use Worship/sermon series Adult Sunday school/small groups Youth groups Older children/younger children	4-6 weeks before start	Jan 3–Jan 17	
Complete promotion plan Newspaper/Radio/Television/ Social Media/Mailings/Postcards	4-5 weeks before start	Jan 10–Jan 17	
Seventh Episcopal District Evangelism conference calls	Tuesdays, 8pm	Jan 12, Jan 26, Feb 9	
Identify and train small group leaders	3-5 weeks before start	Jan 10–Jan 24	
Register online for Lenten Study 2016. Print copies of CME Lenten Guide	2-4 weeks before start	Jan 17–Jan 31	
Order resources	2-4 weeks before start	Jan 17–Jan 31	
Implement promotion plan Send press releases Post to social media Church newsletter/bulletin Hang posters/distribute flyers	2-4 weeks before start	Jan 17–Jan 31	
Distribute books to participants	1-3 weeks before start	Jan 24-Feb 7	
Small groups have introductory meetings	1 week before start	Week of Feb 7	
Lenten Sermon Series begins	First Sunday in Lent	Feb 14, 2016	

Lenten Study 2016



24 Hours That Changed the World

By Adam Hamilton

Walk with Jesus on his final day.
Sit beside him at the Last Supper.
Pray with him in Gethsemane.
Follow him to the cross.
Desert him. Deny him.
Experience the Resurrection.

CME churches throughout the Seventh Episcopal District will offer a seven-week study during the season of Lent: *24 Hours That Changed the World*. In the study, Adam Hamilton will guide you through the last 24 hours of Jesus' life. The study is designed to help you experience and understand the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection in a way you never have before.

Whether you are a long-time Christian or simply curious about the story of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, you are invited to join us on this inspiring journey. Participating churches will offer a sermon series along with small group discussion based on the book. Churches may choose from the following resources:

- *24 Hours That Changed the World*, a book by Adam Hamilton
- *24 Hours That Changed the World: 40 Days of Reflection*, a devotional (also available free online)
- *24 Hours That Changed the World: Video Journey*, a DVD with seven sessions filmed in the Holy Land, plus a leader guide
- *24 Hours That Changed the World*, youth edition
- *24 Hours That Changed the World*, edition for younger children
- *24 Hours That Changed the World*, edition for older children

The study is based on a sermon series given by Adam Hamilton, founding pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas. During the original series, the Church of the Resurrection dramatically increased the number of people attending worship. Thus, churches are encouraged to make to invite members of the surrounding community to participate. Churches are encouraged to form one or more new small groups to welcome visitors, and to ask members of the congregation to invite neighbors and friends. For more information, including video trailer, visit <http://www.adamhamilton.org/books/24-hours>.

Lenten Small Groups

What?

Small groups are comprised of 6 to 12 individuals who meet regularly to fellowship together and to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. Small groups build a sense of community, learning together, caring for one another, and serving together in mission or ministry. Lenten small groups are a great way to start a small group ministry. Many Lenten groups decide to continue throughout the year. Churches are invited to start a small group pilot ministry during this season of Lent. Coaching will be offered via conference call prior to Lent. After Lent, churches will evaluate and consider whether and how to continue the ministry.

Who?

- Identify a **point person** for small group ministry. Consider Clergy staff, Director of Evangelism, Director of Christian Education, Director of Adult Ministry, or anyone with a passion for this ministry.
- Identify and invite individuals, especially lay people, to serve as a **leader** or **co-leader** of a small group. Consider those who display spiritual leadership.
- For home-based groups, identify those who can **host** a small group in their home. This may or may not be the small group leader.
- Identify and invite worshippers to become small group **members**.
- Identify a **leader-in-training** for each small group. This person may eventually leave the group and start another group.
- Consider how best to include youth and young adults in the planning and implementing of a small group ministry.

When?

- Sunday School: Lenten Studies are a great way to strengthen adult Sunday school.
- Sunday afternoon: Consider a “lunch and learn” small group following the 11am service
- Weekdays: Lunch time during the work week or mid-morning for retirees
- Weekday Evenings: Invigorate Wednesday night studies or expand to other evenings

Where?

Consider piloting home-based small groups during Lent. Home-based groups are a great way to extend beyond the church building and to create a safe space for seekers and the unchurched. Small groups can also meet at church, work, coffee shop, diner, or other community location.

Lenten Small Groups cont'd

Why?

We were made to live in community. Our understanding of God is one of community (Trinity). Jesus modeled small group community with the twelve apostles. Moreover, the early church grew through the spread of small groups known as house churches (Acts 2:42-47). John Wesley also encouraged small groups, known as classes, for spiritual growth and accountability. Many growing churches continue to utilize small groups to build fellowship and Christian discipleship beyond that which can be achieved on Sunday morning during worship.

The purpose of small groups is to provide a place for learning, growing, caring, serving, and expanding the kingdom of God.

- **Learning** by studying the bible and other Christian teachings
 - “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42)
- **Growing** spiritually through a fellowship of believers
 - “Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another.” (Prov. 27:17)
- **Caring** for one another through difficult times
 - “Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Gal. 6:2)
- **Serving** together in mission and ministry
 - “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” (1 Peter 4:10)
- **Expanding** the kingdom of God
 - Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20a)

Spiritual Disciplines

Featuring Excerpts from CME Connectional Lent 2015

“iFast, iPray, We Grow” 40 Days of Change

In addition to the book study, Lenten Study 2016 will incorporate spiritual disciplines by focusing on certain spiritual practices throughout the week. We will incorporate spiritual practices introduced during the CME Lent 2015 “iFast, iPray, We Grow” 40 Days of Change.”

Meditation Mondays

During the season of Lent, begin the week with a special time of meditation and prayer. Take the time to meditate on how the Lenten study is growing your faith. Explore such practices as breath prayer, centering prayer, and gratitude. Incorporate journal writing to capture your prayers, plans, and spiritual goals for the week.

Witnessing Wednesdays

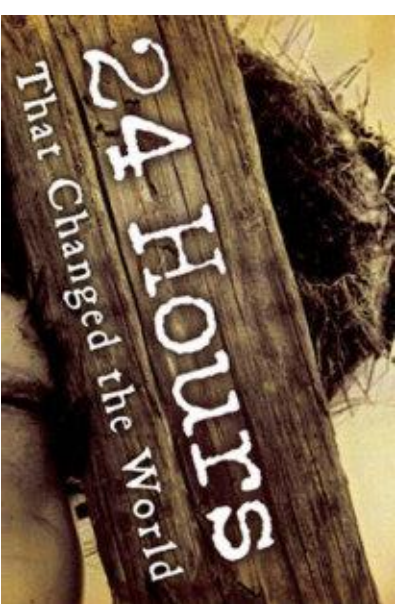
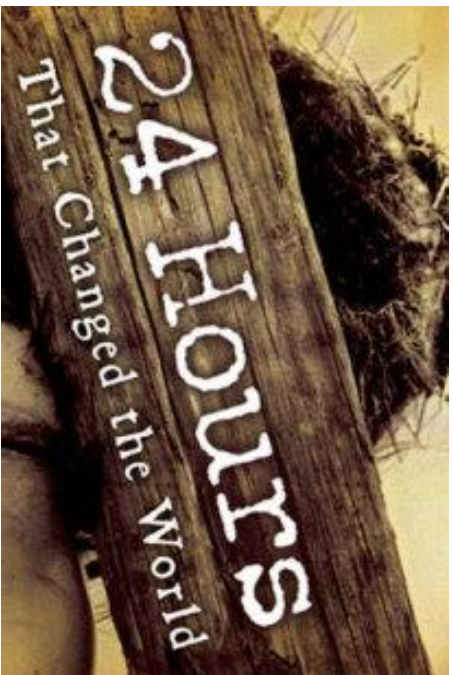
S.W.A.G. Introduced by Rev. Dr. Faith Allen, General Secretary of Evangelism and Mission, S.W.A.G. means “Sharing and Witnessing About God.” During the season of Lent, we will focus on inviting unchurched individuals into small groups and worship. On Wednesdays, we encourage individuals to prayerfully consider who they can call, visit, or invite to lunch for the purpose of sharing the faith. We look forward to hearing more about S.W.A.G. from Dr. Allen on one of our conference calls.

Excerpt from *iFast, iPray, We Grow* “Faith Sharing. We are calling pastors, local church leaders and members to renew our practice of sharing the faith with unchurched persons. The work of the local church has to do with Kingdom building and thus our call urges recommitting to faith sharing and disciple making even when an unchurched person chooses not to join our congregation.”

Fasting Fridays

Excerpt from *iFast, iPray, We Grow* “Lenten Fast: Choose Either

- The Wesleyan Fast: (after lunch each Thursday through Noon each Friday, liquids only, no solid food).
- The Meatless Fast: Every day of Lent, vegetables and products such as eggs and cheese
- All Lenten Fasts already in place in the local church, though they may differ from the Connectional Fast are accepted as a part of our connectional fast. Our purpose is to provide support to the efforts of the local church leadership.
- Persons with medical conditions or persons for whom fasting may not be healthy, please consult your Medical Doctor before fasting.
- Additionally, the iFast - We Grow fast calls for us to abstain from red meat, meats with high fat content, fried foods, alcohol and cigarettes”



Sample Bulletin Inserts

Church-Wide Lenten Study
Lenten Study begins Feb 7
Sermon Series begins Feb 14

CME Churches throughout the _____ Region and Seventh Episcopal District are uniting to study *24 Hours that Changed the World* by Adam Hamilton.

No single event in human history has received more attention than the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. In this study, Adam Hamilton will guide us through the last 24 hours of Jesus' life to help participants experience the significance of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection. Whether long-time Christians or simply curious about the events of Holy Week and Easter, join us as we walk through the events of this life-changing day.

This study includes a sermon series, DVD and book study, and small group discussion. Small groups are forming now. To lead or join a small group, contact

[Name, phone, e-mail]

Church-Wide Lenten Study
Lenten Study begins Feb 7
Sermon Series begins Feb 14

CME Churches throughout the _____ Region and Seventh Episcopal District are uniting to study *24 Hours that Changed the World* by Adam Hamilton

No single event in human history has received more attention than the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. In this study, Adam Hamilton will guide us through the last 24 hours of Jesus' life to help participants experience the significance of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection. Whether long-time Christians or simply curious about the events of Holy Week and Easter, join us as we walk through the events of this life-changing day.

This study includes a sermon series, DVD and book study, and small group discussion. You are invited to join one of the following small groups participating in this study.

[Examples]

Adult Sunday Class, Leader's Name, Time, Room
Men's Small Group, Leader's Name, Day, Time, Location
Young Adult Small Group, Leader's Name, Day, Time, Location

Sample Press Release

24 Hours That Changed the World

Church name
Address
City, State, ZIP
Telephone
E-mail

For Immediate Release

Subject: "24 Hours That Changed the World" Subject of Church-wide Study at [Church Name]

Beginning _____, join the people of [church name] as they embark on an important new study.

No single event in human history has received more attention than the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. In this study, Adam Hamilton guides us through the last 24 hours of Jesus' life. Each session is designed to help participants experience and understand the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection in a way they may never have before, whether they are long-time Christians or simply curious about the story of Christ.

This will be explored at [church name] beginning [date]. You are invited to join them as they explore the significance of this crucial time in Jesus' life.

This special event will include worship, sermons, and small-group studies that feature videos, Bible study, and discussion. The study, published by Abingdon Press, was developed by Adam Hamilton, pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas, and is intended for anyone who is interested in the Christian faith. The study includes resources for adults, youth, younger children, and older children.

[Church name] is located at [church address]. For more information, contact [name] at [telephone number] or [e-mail address].

Resources

1) CME Lenten Study 2016

- For updates, visit Seventh Episcopal District Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/seventhdistrictmec
- Presentations by Rev. Cynthia Johnson-Oliver,
www.cynthiajohnsonoliver.com/category/cme-lenten-study-2016

2) *24 Hours that Changed the World* by Adam Hamilton

- Available for purchase at www.christianbook.com, www.cokesbury.com, www.amazon.com, and other booksellers. For Lenten Study 2016, purchase one DVD for each small group and books for individual study. Leader guide is available as free download.
- Free resources, including devotional, posters, and video trailer at www.adamhamilton.org/books/24-hours

3) Training Small Group Leaders

- Bill Donahue, *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups* (Zondervan, 2012)
- Bill Donahue, *Equipping Life Changing Leaders* (Format: DVD) (Zondervan, 2012)

4) Forming a Small Group Ministry

- Bill Donahue, *Building a Life-Changing Small Group Ministry* (Zondervan, 2012)
- Steve Gladen, *Small Groups with Purpose* (Baker Books, 2013)

5) Free Small Group Articles and Resources

- “5 Steps to Small-Group Facilitator Success,” <http://www.umcom.org/learn/5-steps-to-small-group-facilitator-success>
- “Wesleyan Small Groups for Today,” <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/wesleys-small-group-model-for-today>
- <http://www.smallgroups.com/explore> - Note: This is a paid site. The articles in the “Explore” section are free