

**A Bible Study on the Gospel of Matthew
December 1, 7:00 p.m. in Room 6 and Zoom**

WEEK ELEVEN – “The Community of the Cross” (Matthew 18)

As Jesus’ ministry winds down, he begins preparing his disciples to carry on his mission beyond his death.

1. Does Jesus really answer the question, “who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” Why does he lift up children as an example?
2. What kind of “power” do children wield in the kingdoms of the earth? What kind of power do they wield in the kingdom of heaven?
3. How are children vulnerable? Is there a difference between the way they were vulnerable in Jesus’ time and the way they are vulnerable now?
4. What is a stumbling block? How does a person become a stumbling block to others?
5. Jesus said that if anyone becomes a stumbling block to “one of these little ones” it would be better if “a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.” What does this mean, and how is the image of drowning in “the depth of the sea” particularly disturbing for his audience?
6. Why do you think Jesus uses such harsh images to communicate his point? Do you think that Jesus believes that self-mutilation is okay?
7. According to Jesus, how should one live in order to avoid becoming a stumbling block?
8. What are the qualities of a shepherd? In his illustration about the 99 sheep and the 1, what is he saying about how we should care for one another?
9. How do you feel about Jesus’ plan for conflict resolution in vs 15-20? What appeals to you about this plan? What doesn’t?
10. Do you believe that it’s true that once you forgive someone 490 times, you can cut them off at 491?
11. What do you believe is the central message of Jesus’ parable about the king and the slaves? How does this work out in practical terms?