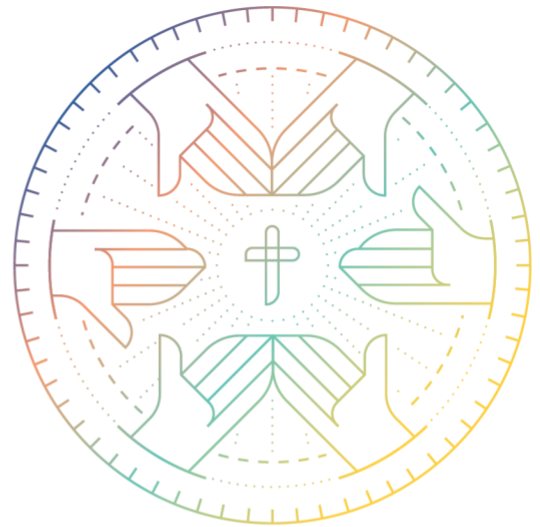


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## MEETING AGENDA

### ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

Have you heard an inspirational story lately? When was the last time someone inspired you? If so, share that story in brief with your group!

OR

Has God ever done the impossible in your life? Has he done something in your life that only He could do? Many of us have experienced God's power overwhelming our circumstances. Give God glory by briefly sharing what God has done in your life.

### INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

What stood out to you from this week's sermon?

Is Esther's story familiar to you? Is there something new you learned about Esther or the other characters in the story that you didn't previously know?

### INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

**Read Esther 3:1-6.** What stands out to you regarding Mordecai's offense toward Haman and Haman's response? What might be motivating Mordecai to refuse honor to Haman? What might be motivating Haman to respond as he does?

**HOST Guidance:** obviously, Haman's ego was huge. Haman wanted to see everyone bow before him, which made Mordecai's unwillingness a bigger offense than it needed to be. Haman saw himself as a King, which he wasn't. Haman's response doesn't fit the offense: "destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus." He must have had a great hatred for the Jews. Such a plot was not only evil, but way over Haman's authority. Mordecai, on the other hand, felt himself unable to bow or pay homage to Haman. Perhaps Mordecai knew of Haman's evil, haughty heart, and refused him any symbol of respect. It would

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appear that Mordecai paid homage to King Ahasuerus by alerting him to the plot against his life, while he had no such respect for Haman.

**Read Esther 4:12-16.** What do you learn about Mordecai from his advice and counsel to Esther in v.12-14? What do we learn about Esther from her response to Mordecai in v.15-16?

**HOST Guidance:** Mordecai was wise as well as wily. He was bold in his words to Esther. He challenged her to do the right thing and to consider how she might be used for a purpose far greater than she imagined. He trusted God wholeheartedly and challenged her to consider God's providence in her circumstances. Esther was a woman of respect and humility. She accepted Mordecai's counsel. She also was spiritually wise herself, knowing she needed help from God- she called the Jews to pray and fast. She accepted that the outcome was in God's hands and she trusted Him no matter what happened.

**Read Esther 8:1-7, 15-17.** After Haman's evil plot is revealed and Haman is put to death in Ch. 7, many blessings and benefits flow from the King to Esther, Mordecai and the Jews. God completely changed the fortunes of His people in Persia. What are those blessings and benefits? How many can you list?

**HOST Guidance:** Esther was given Haman's estate and the authority to set Mordecai in a position of great power and importance. Esther was also able to rescind Haman's decree against the Jewish people and insure their well-being. Mordecai went from sitting at the King's gate to sitting with the King in his palace. Mordecai wore the royal garments and received the affirmation of the people of Susa. The Jews "had light and gladness and joy and honor." God delivered his people and completely reversed their fortunes within Persia.

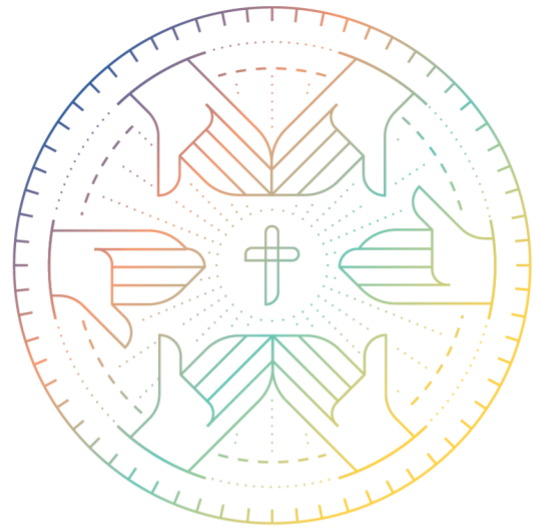
## APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

How would you describe this season that you are in? Can you imagine what it might mean for you to be in this season for "such a time as this"? What might that look like?

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What decision might God be leading you toward that simply awaits your willingness to accept? Is there a way your small group can be praying for you about that decision? Perhaps fasting one day this week for you?

David said that we might be overwhelmed with an “if (*your worst fear*), then (*consequences of your worst fear*)” possibility in our life. Is that true for you? Is there a fear in your life that is weighing you down?

- No matter the weight or the gravity of our fears, God outweighs those fears. God is bigger, weightier and more powerful than all our fears.

What’s one fear you can give to God today? One fear that you can trust to God so that fear does not drive your thoughts, your feelings or your behaviors?

## PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

*Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for showing us through Esther’s story that you are always at work in history and in circumstances. We are never alone. You can prepare and empower us for such a time as this. You can guide us in the big decisions that might have a dramatic impact in our lives or the lives of those around us. You can overcome our fears with the assurance that you are greater than anything that could be against us. Like Esther, we trust you with our lives. Amen.*