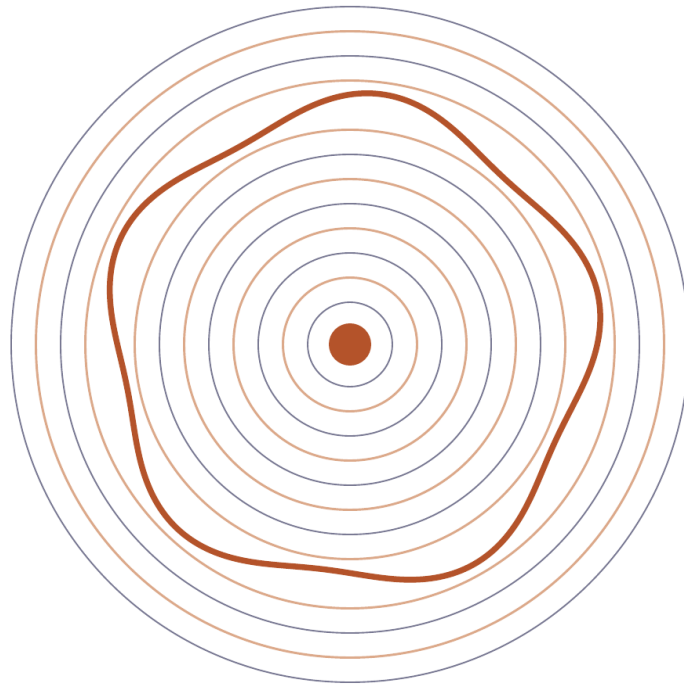




WEDNESDAY ONLINE BIBLE STUDY

The Pattern *and the* Potter

How God Reshapes What We Keep Repeating

SEPTEMBER 23 - NOVEMBER 11, 2026

WEDNESDAYS AT 6:30 PM

Rev. Dr. Eustacia Moffett Marshall

PASTOR / TEACHER



A WELCOME FROM PASTOR MARSHALL

Greetings!

In our previous *Metanoia* Bible study, we traveled through Mark's Gospel with a question: "How is Jesus inviting us beyond our old way of seeing?" We came to understand repentance as a change of mind led by the Holy Spirit—one that reshapes how we see God, ourselves, our neighbors, and the world through Jesus Christ.

But what happens when our eyes begin to open and an old response rises again? We may recognize the fear beneath a choice and still make that same choice. We may see a pattern in our family or a cycle in our community and struggle to break it. This is where *The Pattern and the Potter* begins. *Metanoia* invited us to see differently. Now we will focus on living differently. The Christ who opens our eyes also reshapes our lives.

Our first reading takes us to a potter's house. The vessel is marred while it is still in the potter's hand, and the potter keeps working.

Across six gatherings we will see how God reshapes us. We will consider that while our willpower may fail, God meets us in Christ with truth and mercy. God, through the power of the Holy Spirit,, interrupts the old patterns and calls us into new life.

My prayer is that the new sight Christ has given us will become a new way of living. May we trust the Potter's hands, tell the truth in love, and join God's work of reshaping what we keep repeating—for our own lives and for the flourishing of our neighbors.

Blessings,



Rev. Dr. Eustacia Moffett Marshall

Senior Pastor • New River Presbyterian Church

THE STUDY AT A GLANCE

Our Journey through the Potter's Hands

WEEK	DATE	SESSION	SCRIPTURE
1	SEP 23, 2026	Still on the Wheel <i>God Reworks</i>	Jeremiah 18:1–6
2	SEP 30, 2026	Why I Keep Doing This <i>God Rescues</i>	Romans 7:15–8:2
BREAK & REFLECT	OCT 7, 2026	On the Shelf	No group meeting
3	OCT 14, 2026	Same Song, Second Verse <i>God Redeems</i>	Genesis 12; Genesis 26; Exodus 20
4	OCT 21, 2026	Back at the Fire <i>God Restores</i>	John 18; John 21
BREAK & REFLECT	OCT 28, 2026	Before the Kiln	No group meeting
5	NOV 4, 2026	Here We Go Again <i>God Raises</i>	Judges 2; Judges 10
6	NOV 11, 2026	Sour Grapes No More <i>God Rewrites</i>	Jeremiah 31; Ezekiel 18

THE PATTERN WITHIN • WEEK 1 • SEPT 23, 2026

Still on the Wheel – God Reworks

Jeremiah 18:1-6

Lesson:

God reworks marred clay rather than throwing it away.

The Pattern in the Text:

Clay that keeps coming out marred.

Consider:

Jeremiah watches a potter remake a vessel that is spoiled while it is still in the potter's hand. In verses 7–11, God uses the image to call a nation to turn from its ways. The image offers hope, and it also asks a community to respond.

The Gospel (i.e. “Good News”) of Jesus Christ in View:

In Jesus Christ, God meets us in our brokenness and brings new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Being held by God never requires us to remain in a harmful situation.

Read and Discuss:

- The vessel was spoiled in the potter's hand. What does it mean that things went wrong while God was holding it?
- What are the ways people “jump off the wheel” through shame or isolation?
- Verses 7–11 apply the image to a nation. What patterns do communities repeat?

Week 1 - Reflect & Practice

The Potter at Work In Us

Apply:

Because God reworks rather than discards, I can stop writing myself off. What is marred in me is not final, and I do not have to step away from God through shame, quitting, or isolation.

When I catch myself saying “I will never change,” I can bring that very place to God and let a trusted person stand with me. I can also refuse to write off someone else.

Practice this Week:

Name one thing you have written off in yourself and hand it back to God in prayer.

Where have I written myself or someone else off?

What will I place back in God’s hands today?

Prayer

Potter God, keep Your hands on me. Where I have given up, give me hope. Where I need to turn, give me courage. Shape me by the mercy of Christ. Amen.

Why Do I Keep Doing This? – God Rescues

Romans 7:15-8:2

Lesson:

God rescues us from what willpower alone cannot break.

The Pattern in the Text:

The inner war between what I want and what I do.

Consider:

Paul puts words to the conflict between desire and action. His cry, “Who will rescue me?” is answered with thanksgiving to God through Jesus Christ. Romans 8 announces freedom from condemnation and life in the Spirit.

The Gospel (i.e. “Good News”) of Jesus Christ in View:

Christ’s saving work is the center of the passage: God does what willpower cannot accomplish. “No condemnation” is not a claim that harm does not matter. It gives us a place to tell the truth, receive grace, and seek change.

Read and Discuss:

- Which line in Romans 7 sounds most like your own voice?
- Why is willpower alone not enough to break a pattern?
- How does “no condemnation” change how honest you can be?

Week 2 – Reflect & Practice

The Potter at Work In Us

Apply:

Because there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus, I can tell the truth about a repeated response instead of hiding it. When I do what I did not want to do, I can name what happened, acknowledge its effect, receive Christ's mercy, and ask for help. Struggle does not have to be the end of my story.

Practice this Week:

Tell one trusted person about a pattern you are fighting. Ask for prayer, not a quick fix.

What response am I tempted to conceal because of shame?

Who is a trusted person I can ask to pray with me?

Prayer

Jesus Christ, thank You for meeting me in the struggle and freeing me from condemnation. Give me honesty, trustworthy companions, and life in Your Spirit. Amen.

BREAK AND REFLECT • OCTOBER 7, 2026 • NO GROUP MEETING
On the Shelf

Read slowly: Jeremiah 18:1–6 and Romans 7:24–8:2

Reflect

- What is one pattern in me that I have been afraid God has given up on?
- Where have I been resisting instead of letting God rescue me?
- What changes when I hear “no condemnation” spoken about this pattern?

Practice

Each evening, recall one moment when the pattern showed up. Without judging yourself, say, *“Potter, this is yours.”*

Prayer

Potter God, I am clay that keeps coming out marred. Thank you for not throwing me away. Keep your hands on me. Amen.

Bring back

Come to week 3 ready to ask: “Where did I learn this pattern?”

THE PATTERN BETWEEN US • WEEK 3 • OCT 14, 2026

Same Song, Second Verse – God Redeems

Genesis 12:10-20; 26: 6-11; Exodus 20:5-6

The Lesson:

God's steadfast love outlasts the patterns families pass down.

The Pattern in the Text:

Inherited family behavior. Abraham's lie becomes Isaac's lie.

Consider:

Abraham and Isaac each respond to fear by calling his wife his sister; Sarah and Rebekah bear the risk. Exodus names consequences that can reach generations while describing God's steadfast love as reaching to the thousandth generation.

The Gospel (i.e. "Good News") of Jesus Christ in View:

God's covenant faithfulness continues through an imperfect family, and the blessing of Abraham reaches others through Christ (Galatians 3:14). Grace does not erase the harm done to Sarah or Rebekah. It frees us to tell the truth about what we inherited and what we pass on.

Read and Discuss:

- Isaac repeats his father's lie almost word for word. Did he learn it, inherit it, or both?
- Consequences reach the third and fourth generation, and God's love reaches the thousandth. What does that difference tell us about God?
- What is one blessing and one burden that came through the people who raised or shaped you?

Week 3 – Reflect & Practice

The Potter at Work In Us

Apply:

Because God's love outlasts my family's patterns, I can name what I inherited without dishonoring where I came from. I can thank God for a blessing I received and decide not to repeat a response that causes harm. Whether I was adopted, raised in foster care, estranged, or unable to know parts of my family story, God's promise still meets me. I can choose what I pass on.

Practice this week

Trace one response back to where you learned it. Name one blessing you want to keep and one burden you do not want to pass on.

What blessing and burden came through the people who shaped me?

What will I keep, and what will I choose not to pass on?

Prayer

Covenant God, thank You for blessings handed down. Meet the wounds in my history with truth and mercy. Help me pass on what gives life in Christ. Amen.

THE PATTERN BETWEEN US • WEEK 4 • OCT 21, 2026

Back at the Fire – God Restores

John 18:15-27; 21:9 - 19

The Lesson:

God restores us by meeting us with love at the scene of the wound.

The Pattern in the Text:

Triggers: places and circumstances where an old response returns.

Consider:

Peter denies Jesus near a charcoal fire. After the resurrection, Jesus prepares breakfast at another charcoal fire and asks Peter three times about love, then entrusts him with care for the flock. John does not explain why Jesus chose the fire; its repetition invites us to notice what happens there.

The Gospel (i.e. “Good News”) of Jesus Christ in View:

The risen Jesus comes to Peter, feeds him, asks for his love, and gives him a calling. Restoration is Christ’s gift and includes responsibility to others: “Feed my sheep.” Returning to the fire never means returning to people who harmed you or entering an unsafe place.

Read and discuss

- Why might the charcoal fire matter in both scenes?
- Three denials and three questions: what is happening in that repetition?
- What are your “charcoal fires,” the situations where old patterns flare up? What support helps you stay safe?

Week 4 – Reflect & Practice

The Potter at Work In Us

Apply:

Because Jesus meets Peter at a charcoal fire, I can ask Christ to meet me when a familiar place or circumstance brings back an old response. I need not avoid every place where I once failed; I can pray, pause, and choose a faithful next step. Going back to the fire never means going back to people who harmed me or entering an unsafe place.

Practice this week

Notice one situation that brings an old response to the surface and pray, “Lord, meet me here.” Choose a safe next step.

What situation tends to bring an old response to the surface?

What safe next step can I take while asking Christ to meet me there?

Prayer

*Risen Jesus, you met Peter with breakfast, truth, and a calling.
Meet me where I struggle; restore my love and care for others.
Amen.*

BREAK AND REFLECT • OCTOBER 28, 2026 • NO GROUP MEETING
Before the Kiln

Read slowly: Exodus 20:5–6 and John 21:15–17

Reflect

- What did I inherit from my family, both blessing and burden?
- Who in the cloud of witnesses broke a pattern so I would not have to carry it?
- What was my “charcoal fire” this month, and how did God meet me there?
- What patterns do I see in my community and nation, not only in myself?

Practice

On All Saints Sunday (this Sunday), speak aloud the name of an ancestor or church mother or father, and name a blessing they passed down. Before the election on Tuesday, November 3, pray for Philadelphia by name.

Prayer

God of our ancestors, where their blessing reaches us, let it continue. Where their wounds reach us, let them heal in us. Amen.

Bring back

Come to Week 5 ready to ask: “What patterns do we repeat together?”

THE PATTERN BEYOND US • WEEK 5 • NOV 4, 2026

Here We Go Again – God Raises

Judges 2:11-19; 10:10-16

The Lesson:

God breaks in on cycles communities cannot break alone.

The Pattern in the Text:

Communal cycles - the Israelites again did what was evil.

Consider:

Judges recounts a recurring cycle of turning away, suffering, crying out, and deliverance. In Judges 10, the people confess and put away foreign gods. The narrative says God could no longer bear Israel's suffering. Deliverance addresses a people, not only an individual.

The Gospel (i.e. "Good News") of Jesus Christ in View:

The judges are not Jesus, and the cycles in this book have their own history. As Christians, we see in Jesus, God's deep compassion for people who are suffering and God's call to join the work of love and justice (Matthew 9:35–38). The church responds together.

Read and Discuss:

- Judges 10:16 says God could no longer bear Israel's suffering. What does that tell us about God?
- What cycles do you see in our city or nation?
- Where might God be calling this church to be part of a faithful response?

Week 5 – Reflect & Practice

The Potter at Work In Us

Apply:

Because God is moved by suffering and raises deliverers, I can cry out instead of going numb. I can listen to people affected by a recurring harm, pray with others, and take one concrete step for our community. I may be part of how God breaks a cycle. Communal patterns need communal responses.

Practice this Week:

Commit to one concrete act for the community this month. Share it with someone who can join or pray with you.

What recurring harm in our city have I become accustomed to seeing?

What concrete response can I take with another person this month?

Prayer

God who hears the cries of Your people, keep us from numbness. Show us where our neighbors suffer and give our church courage to respond together in Christ's love. Amen.

THE PATTERN BEYOND US • WEEK 6 • NOV 11, 2026

Sour Grapes No More – God Rewrites

Jeremiah 31:29-34; Ezekiel 18:1-4

The Lesson:

God writes a new pattern on the heart.

The Pattern in the Text:

Generational inheritance - “the children’s teeth are set on edge.”

Consider:

Jeremiah announces a new covenant with the houses of Israel and Judah, with God’s law written on their hearts. Ezekiel challenges the use of the sour grapes proverb to evade responsibility for one’s own life. God’s promise opens a future beyond inherited blame.

The Gospel (i.e. “Good News”) of Jesus Christ in View:

Jesus speaks of the new covenant at his table (Luke 22:20). In Christ, the Spirit writes on living hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3). Christians receive this promise without erasing the people to whom Jeremiah first spoke. God forms a people who know mercy and practice faithfulness.

Read and discuss

- What does it mean that God stops the “sour grapes” proverb from being used?
- What changes when the law is written on the heart rather than on stone?
- Looking back across the series, what has God reshaped in you and among us?

Week 6 – Reflect & Practice

The Potter at Work In Us

Apply:

Jeremiah's promise is more than a private wish to do better. God writes a new covenant on hearts and gathers a people who know God's mercy. In Christ, we practice that new life with one another and for our neighbors.

Since God writes a new pattern on my heart, I can become an ancestor who hands down something different. I can keep the blessing I received and let the harm I've inherited end with me. That means naming one harmful response I will not pass on and practicing one gift of love, truth, or faithfulness that others can receive.

Practice this Week:

Write one thing that stops with you and one blessing you will pass on.

What harmful pattern am I ready to stop passing on?

What blessing will I practice and pass on to others?

Prayer

God of the new covenant, write your love on our hearts. Let the harm we inherited end with us, and let the blessing of Christ reach generations to come. Potter God, thank you for not being finished with us. In Jesus Christ you rescue, restore, and make us new. Amen.