

FAITH BEYOND BELIEF

*Reclaiming the Art
of Christian Practice*

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome

The Crossroads family believes Christianity is foremost about following in the example of Jesus by embodying the unconditional love of God, offering an unlimited welcome, and helping people live with an unwavering hope of transformation.

Our mission is to provide practical resources that help us experience the compassion, forgiveness, service and wisdom of Jesus. Imagine a person, a family, a community, a nation and a world experiencing

compassion, forgiveness, service and wisdom in their daily lives. Jesus not only imagined such a world, he gave his life for it and then invited others to do the same.

We take Jesus' invitation seriously and that is why we welcome all persons regardless of their race, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, or physical ability. In our eyes, everyone is a sacred member of God's family.

What You Have In Your Hands

What is included in this guide?

If someone asked you, "What does it mean to be a Christian?" or "What is the Church?" how would you respond? If an answer doesn't immediately come to mind, have no fear! Faith can often be a difficult thing to describe; either because it is too personal or too abstract an experience to communicate clearly.

It might be that before any of us can answer these questions we first have to answer a few others, such as:

- > What do I find compelling about Jesus?
- > Why do I go to church?
- > What is the gospel anyway?
- > Is being a Christian about what you believe? Or what you do? Or both?

In these six sessions are resources that will allow you to address some of these questions based on scripture and our shared tradition. While there is space for multiple perspectives, this guide emerges out of an abiding belief that faith extends beyond the mind.

Faith, more than just a belief, is the manifestation of God's love and grace in every aspect of our lives. Why should we settle for a faith that can be summed up in a creed or debated in a classroom, when we could partner with God in the ongoing transformation of the world? This is the faith we proclaim at Crossroads: a faith that encourages; a faith that nurtures intimacy with God; a faith that seeks to serve others in the

everyday moments of life. Because this embodied approach to faith is what we see played out in the life of Jesus and in the earliest days of the church.

This guide will help your family, your small group, or you individually reclaim the art of Christian practice. Keep in mind that some practices will come easier than others and that is okay. Try your best to remain open to new experiences and be quick to forgive yourself (and others) when you (or they) fall short of perfection. God promises to love us no matter what, and in this great promise we all can find great hope.

Organized around insights from the Gospel of John, this guide explores the central commitments of the Christian faith by inviting groups to:

- > Cultivate an honest and intelligent understanding of the Bible and of Christian tradition
- > Engage with discussion questions designed to stimulate personal and communal formation and growth
- > Nurture an awareness of the Spirit's movement in our community
- > Reclaim practices that help us live as agents of God's love, justice, and creativity in our everyday lives
- > Envision new practices and modes of worship for the 21st century

For whom is this guide designed?

This guide is for you! It contains all the tools necessary to create a life-changing learning community in any home, church, restaurant, or other welcoming space.

All you need to do is be open to learning and asking questions.

How to use this guide

First, find a small group of people who can commit to meeting on a regular basis — be it weekly, biweekly, or monthly. Set aside time to be present with each other and focus on the content and the questions raised by each session.

It's helpful to designate a facilitator for each week to guide the conversation. This person does not have to be trained; there is plenty of help in this guide for how to lead. They just need to be willing to keep the group focused on the material.

Remember that the questions posed in each session are for reflection; you don't have to rush through them or make sure you "answer" every one. This isn't a test or an assignment. Spend time with each other

and let the conversation go where it needs to go. If possible, try to create a balance between staying on topic and allowing space for the Spirit to lead your group if a particular topic or question leads to a long discussion. Perhaps most importantly, remember that what is shared should be kept confidential. For the conversation to go deeper everyone must feel safe to share their thoughts and feelings without fear of reprimand or gossip.

Finally, keep in mind that this guide is not the final word on any of these topics. You might find yourself disagreeing or questioning some of the material – that's great! If in the end you want to learn more, we have included a resource list for further study and reflection.

How is it arranged?

The guide is laid out in a series of six interactive lessons:

Session 1: Wherever You Go, That's Where God Is

How can we begin to see God in all things? Where does this understanding of God appear in the Bible? And how might this understanding give us hope?

Session 2: God Calls Us Friends

How does the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus teach us what it means to be a good friend? What does friendship have to do with following Jesus?

Session 3: The Grand Invitation

What characteristics made the early church a unique community? How might we reclaim these early practices now?

Session 4: The Old New Thing

What does the messiness of church history show us about God's ongoing work in the world?

Session 5: The Word in the Neighborhood

How does the unconditional love of God and the unlimited welcome of Jesus come alive in the places we live, work and play?

Session 6: What's God Up to Now?

Where does God want to lead us as a church, and you individually, moving forward? What is our role in the manifestation of God's dream for humanity?

Each of the six-sessions follows a similar pattern...

- › The lesson begins with a breath prayer to bring the group into a state of being prayerfully mindful. Then there is a scripture passage from John's gospel, which we've used to ground and guide the discussion for the week. We suggest one person from the group read it aloud slowly, followed by a second reading by a different group member, giving everyone time to digest and reflect on the reading. After the scripture passage is a section that offers some insights on the central topic of the lesson. This content names a few of the big questions the topic raises, and offers some basic commentary on the text that highlights the connections between the text and the week's theme. The facilitator, or someone else from your group, can choose to read this section aloud, or you read it silently together. Either way take time to read the description.

- › Next there are three or four questions for discussion. Don't feel like you have to answer every one, the idea is to provide fodder for group reflection and discussion.
- › The discussion questions are followed by another block of content that dives deeper into the topic of the week. This "going deeper" content often asks a provocative or challenging question raised by the week's topic. Take some time to discuss the question as a group.
- › Finally, each session concludes with the opportunity to put our faith into practice. There will be an Inward Practice – allowing you to reflect inwardly – a Together Practice – which gives you the chance to practice as a group – and an Outward practice – which gives you something to try during the week ahead. After the first week, the Inward practice will reflect back on the previous week, to give you a chance to see whether last week's Outward Practice was fruitful for you. In this way, the Inward, Together, and Outward practices are woven together throughout the 6 sessions.

Why John's gospel?

As you'll see, each session begins with a reading from John's gospel. Why John?

First of all, we wanted to stick with one story instead of pulling short verses out of context. This approach will give you the chance to really dwell in the language world and narrative of one particular New Testament author. If your group likes, they can commit to reading through the gospel throughout the six weeks of the study.

Another reason we chose John's gospel is that each book of the Bible emerges out of a particular community. The author of John is making some pretty big claims about God and about Jesus. Similarly, this guide emerges out of a particular community – Crossroads United Methodist Church. Throughout we're not just talking about "what happened" – in the history of the church, for example, or the founding of Crossroads – but rather asking, "Where do we see God in this?"

John's gospel presents some particular themes that

are going to become very important as we move through this guide. For example, John focuses on the incarnational nature of Jesus' ministry – i.e. the Word made Flesh. We're going to see how our own faith needs to "become flesh" in our homes and neighborhoods. John's gospel also focuses on the "abiding" of Jesus with the disciples – the faithfulness of staying with people and accompanying people on their life journeys.

Finally, John's gospel is at once very familiar (think of John 3:16) and at times very difficult to understand. Our hope is that by focusing on this Gospel you will gain new insights about who Jesus was and the kingdom he came to announce.

If you find yourself wanting to go deeper into these passages, we have created a series of short podcast episodes that contain more information about the historical and cultural backdrop of the text. To access these episodes, visit <https://soundcloud.com/david-hosey-1>, or download the *Fooling with Scripture Podcast* through iTunes.

- A BLESSING ON YOUR WAY -
 MAY THIS GUIDE INSPIRE YOU TO FALL MORE DEEPLY IN LOVE
 WITH CHRIST AND WITH THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU.
 MAY YOU BE ENCOURAGED BY THOSE WHO HAVE WALKED THIS PATH BEFORE YOU
 LAYING HOPE, LIKE BREADCRUMBS, TO MARK THE PATH HOME TO GOD.
 AND MAY YOU BE TRANSFORMED BY THE COMPASSION, FORGIVENESS,
 SERVICE AND WISDOM OF JESUS WHO SHOWED US THE WAY.

...

WHEREVER YOU GO, THAT'S WHERE GOD IS

“Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word nothing came into being.”

John 1:3

Breath Prayer

On a deep inward breath say to yourself:

WHEREVER I AM...

hold that for a few seconds.

On the outward breath say to yourself:

...THERE IS GOD.

Do that slowly three more times.

Scripture

Have one person from your group read this scripture aloud. Read it slowly so the words can sink in. So that you hear the scripture in more than just one voice, have a different person read it again slowly to the group.

John 1:1-5

“In the beginning was the Word
and the Word was with God
and the Word was God.

The Word was with God in the beginning.
Everything came into being through the Word,
and without the Word nothing came into being.

What came into being through the Word was life,
and the life was the light for all people.

The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.”

God in All Things

One of the most ancient questions of faith is how God reveals God's self to humans. Traditionally, Christians have understood God as revealed through creation and through Jesus, whom we know through the narratives of our scripture.

In today's reading from John's gospel, we hear an ancient hymn that claims Christ is mysteriously present in all things. If there is truth in this claim, then life cannot be divided into spiritual and non-spiritual spheres; all things are spiritual and all things have materiality. Therefore, we are called not to “do spiritual things” vs. “nonspiritual things”; rather, we are called to wake up to the reality that wherever you are, that's where God is.

**“YOU DON'T HAVE A SPIRITUAL LIFE;
YOU ARE A SPIRITUAL LIFE.”**

- Rob Bell -

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) When, if ever, have you had an experience that felt holy or sacred? What made the experience feel that way?
- 2) Is it easy or difficult for you to think of everything as spiritual? Why do you think this is?
- 3) How does thinking of God being present in *everything* affect how you think of *yourself*? What about the people in your life who make you angry or stress you out?
- 4) Are there times or situations where you tend to think of God as being absent? Why or why not?

Where is God when it hurts?

While it makes sense for many of us to think of God as being present in all things, what about times of tragedy and suffering? What about situations of violence and oppression, or natural disasters that kill people and destroy homes? If God is present in all things, is God present in *those* things?

What do you think? As a group, take some time to reflect upon and discuss this question: Where is God when it hurts?

There are no easy answers to the questions of suffering. In the Jewish and Christian traditions, we see multiple responses to the hurt of the world. The Hebrew prophets, folks like Jeremiah and Isaiah, cried out in protest against injustice and unfair treatment. The poetic prayers and songs of the book of Psalms contain many laments to God about the pain that the psalmists or their community experienced. And in Matthew 25, we read about Jesus identifying himself with those who are abused or rejected by society, saying: “When you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.”

“Narratives of a Vulnerable God”

But if God is present in all things, why turn to the scriptures to understand God? What is so special about these writings?

When we experience God as being distant or silent in the midst of our pain, the Bible can be an important testament to who God is and what God promises. The stories, poems, songs, and laments of our scriptures paint a complex picture of a God who does not stand distant from our world or from its sufferings, but rather is involved in and amongst us in the vulnerable solidarity of love. For this reason, biblical scholar William Placher refers to the Bible as “The narratives of a vulnerable God.”

In short, the stories contained in the Bible remind us that even while God may seem absent, when the worst happens God is in our midst, grieving alongside us.

“Like actors who put themselves into the script of a play, we shall read the Bible with personal involvement, realizing that it is not at textbook but a ‘letter from God with your personal address on it,’ as Soren Kierkegaard once put it.

We shall read it as a story that is not just about other people of long ago but that is about us in the places where we are living.

The language of the Bible, when it is truly heard, can be an event, a happening such as it was the biblical witnesses, like Moses, who first were addressed personally by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

– Bernhard Anderson -
The Unfolding Drama of the Bible

Inward Practice

Take one minute in silence to reflect inwardly on the previous week. Can you name one moment in which you experienced wonder, deep gratitude, and the presence of God?

Together Practice

If you feel comfortable doing so, share your moment with the group. As each person shares, listen deeply to the other person's story, without interrupting, making jokes, or commenting. This might feel a bit strange, but what we are doing is practicing a deep, holy listening with each other. We are sharing and listening to personal stories.

After each person shares his/her story leave a few seconds of silence between each person's sharing. This is a practice of holding and honoring what the person shared.

Outward Practice

Prolific author and Catholic priest, Henri Nouwen, once wrote:

*“There is a real tendency to think of the spiritual life as a life that will begin when we have certain feelings, think certain thoughts, or gain certain insights. The problem, however, is not how to make the spiritual life happen, but to see *where* it is actually happening. We work on the premise that God acts in this world and in the lives of individuals and communities. God is doing something right now. Chipping away and sculpting is taking place whether we are aware of it or not. Our task is to recognize that, indeed, it is God who is acting, and we are involved *already* in the spiritual life.”*

In the coming week, try to be mindful of experiences of gratitude and wonder — signs of God's Spirit at work in you! We encourage you to share these experiences with your family or friends over a meal, and to invite them to share as well.

Next week, when we gather again, we will share with each other how this practice impacted (or didn't impact) our week.

...

In the earliest days of the Methodist movement, small groups of people gathered together to “watch over each other in love.”

They checked in with each other each week by asking the question “How is it with your soul?”

This question leads us to consider the depth dimension of our lives together.

Each week, we will check-in to support each other through soulful practices and ponderings that we have had throughout the week.

We want to know “How is it with your soul?”

GOD CALLS US FRIENDS

“No one has greater love than to give up one’s life for one’s friends.”

John 15:13

Scripture

Have one person from your group read this scripture out loud. Read it slowly so that the words can sink in. So that you hear the scripture in more than just one voice have a different person also read it slowly to the group.

John 15:9-17

“As the Father loved me,
I too have loved you.

Remain in my love.

If you keep my commandments,
you will remain in my love,
just as I kept my Father’s commandments
and remain in his love.

I have said these things to you
so that my joy will be in you and
your joy will be complete.

This is my commandment:
love each other just as I have loved you.

No one has greater love
than to give up one’s life for one’s friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

I don’t call you servants any longer,
because servants don’t know
what their master is doing.

Instead, I call you friends,
because everything I heard from my Father
I have made known to you.

You didn’t choose me,
but I chose you and appointed you
so that you could go and produce fruit and
so that your fruit could last.

As a result, whatever you ask the Father in my name,
he will give you.

I give you these commandments so that you can love each
other.”

Breath Prayer

On a deep inward breath say to
yourself:

WHOMEVER I AM WITH...

hold that for a few seconds.

On the outward breath say to
yourself:

*...THEY ARE
MY NEIGHBOR.*

Do that slowly three more times.

**“THE FRIENDSHIP OF
JESUS UNITES HIS
FOLLOWERS
WITH HIMSELF,
AND WITH GOD
WHO SENT HIM,
IN AN
INDESTRUCTIBLE
BOND THAT IS
LIFE ITSELF.”**

- Sharon Ringe -

Friends Like Jesus

Last week, we talked about God present in all things. This week we're going to talk about a particular way that we come to know God – in Jesus.

The way Christians talk about Jesus has raised a lot of questions and controversies over the past 2,000 years. Is Jesus God? The son of God? Just a wise teacher? Did Jesus *have* to die? If so, *why*?

To make it even harder, a lot of the language we use to talk about Jesus can sound technical or “churchy” to a lot of people. We often use language to talk about Jesus that we don't use anywhere else in our lives. What is a Trinity anyway? What about a disciple? What's a messiah?

In today's text, we see Jesus use a much more familiar term to describe the way in which he interacts with his followers. He describes them as “friends.” The idea of friendship, which is one that we all know and value, gives us a lens to look at the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and how it relates to our own daily lives.

In this passage, Christ-like friendship is linked, first and foremost, to love. The type of love Jesus is talking about is the type that might lead one to “give up one's life for one's friends.” Often, when we read that text, we assume Jesus is talking about his death, which is a valid reading. But, the word in the original text actually means “set aside” or “appoint” – to see one's life as a gift to be shared with others, not as something to be hoarded. In other words, what if Jesus' life, death, and resurrection was God's attempt to embody the essence of friendship, loyalty, and love. In this case, “to give up one's life for one's friend” could also be understood as setting aside your desires in order to care for someone else.

It might be a bit strange to think about being friends with Jesus. But what would it mean if we came to understand our friendships as a spiritual practice? What would it mean to be a friend like Jesus?

If we see Jesus' life and ministry through the lens of friendship, we get a sense of what it looks like to be a Christ-like friend in everyday life. Jesus shares meals and conversations with people who are different than him. He listens to voices that are often silenced or ignored. He spends time in prayer and solitude in order to be able to serve and love his community. He practices solidarity with those who are hurting. In Jesus, we see the meaning of true friendship. And every day, we have the opportunity to follow that example.

In this lesson, we've used the term “spiritual practice” to refer to friendship. What is a spiritual practice? And what does it mean to have a “spiritual practice”?

Perhaps you practice a sport, or a musical instrument. Perhaps you or someone you know practices medicine, or practices a martial art.

A spiritual practice isn't something we do that is “more spiritual” than other things we do – rather, it's a way we hone our connection to the spiritual nature of the rest of our lives.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) What qualities do you look for in a friend? What do you think your best friend would say is the best thing about you?
- 2) Do you tend to think of your friendships as spiritual? Why or why not?
- 3) How does thinking about friendship as a spiritual practice change the way you think about your own friendships?
- 4) What are some of the challenges or problems with thinking about Jesus' ministry in terms of friendship?

Sent Like Jesus

In John's gospel, the resurrected Jesus appears to the disciples and says, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." And how is Jesus sent? As a friend Jesus is sent into villages, neighborhoods, places where people gather as an expression of God's love, standing in solidarity with the suffering of humanity; bringing together a community of love and friendship. So this week, let's think about some of the ways we might be sent in the same ways that Jesus is sent. How are we sent to be friends?

Inward Practice

Take one minute in silence to reflect inwardly on the previous week. In particular, last week's 'Outward Practice' challenge was to be mindful of experiences of gratitude and wonder, to share these experiences with your family and/or friends, and to invite them to share as well. How did this practice go for you over the past week?

Together Practice

If you feel comfortable doing so, share your moment with the group. As each person shares, listen deeply to the other person's story, without interrupting, making jokes, or commenting.

This might feel a bit strange, but what we are doing is practicing a deep, holy listening with each other. To facilitate this process, make sure to leave a few moments of silence between each person's sharing.

Outward Practice

Over the coming week, pay attention to how you engage people in conversation, especially your friends and family.

Do you tend to interrupt or offer advice? Does your mind wander? Pay attention to your natural inclinations and, if possible, record what you notice.

This exercise isn't intended to bring judgement, or make you feel bad when you miss the mark. Its intent is to help you practice friendship as Jesus did. Just as the friendship of Jesus changed lives then, so can our friendship change lives today. The one life that might be changed the most is our own.

Next week, when we gather again, we will share with each other how this practice impacted (or didn't impact) our week.

...

GOD INVITES US TO INVITE OTHERS

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’”

John 20:21

Breath Prayer

On a deep inward breath
say to yourself:

EVERYONE DESERVES...

hold that for a few seconds.

On the outward breath say to
yourself:

*...THE GIFT OF
GOD'S WELCOME.*

Do that slowly three more times.

Scripture

Have one person from your group read this scripture out loud. Read it slowly so that the words can sink in. So that you hear the scripture in more than just one voice have a different person also read it slowly to the group.

John 20:1-11

“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee.

Jesus’ mother was there,
and Jesus and his disciples
were also invited to the celebration.

When the wine ran out, Jesus’ mother said to him,
“They don’t have any wine.”

Jesus replied,
“Woman, what does that have to do with me?
My time hasn’t come yet.”

His mother told the servants,
“Do whatever he tells you.”

Nearby were six stone water jars used
for the Jewish cleansing ritual,
each able to hold about twenty or thirty gallons.

Jesus said to the servants,
“Fill the jars with water,”
and they filled them to the brim.

Then he told them, “Now draw some from them and take it
to the headwaiter,” and they did.

The headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine.
He didn’t know where it came from,
though the servants who had drawn the water knew.

The headwaiter called the groom and said,
“Everyone serves the good wine first.
They bring out the second-rate wine
only when the guests are drinking freely.
You kept the good wine until now.”

This was the first miraculous sign that Jesus did in Cana of
Galilee.

He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.”

A Community of Radical Hospitality

In today's passage, we're looking at a story from the gospel of John that gives us a rich understanding of how the early Christians understood hospitality. On the surface, this story about Jesus seems a bit strange – with all of the healing miracles and important teachings, why does the author of John's gospel take a pause to talk about a party where the wine is running out? But in this story, we see Jesus as both a receiver and a giver of hospitality.

Hospitality has always been at the heart of the Christian life. In Matthew 25 Jesus tells the disciples a story about sheep and goats. In the story, those who offered hospitality – food, water, clothes, and companionship – to the 'least of these' are surprised to find out that they have actually been serving Jesus. As it turns out, Jesus hides in the face of the stranger, especially the stranger in need. Therefore, without the practice of hospitality to the stranger, the Christian community cannot claim to be encountering Jesus in a truly meaningful way.

In recent years, hospitality has been reduced to maintaining the friendly disposition of a Wal-Mart greeter, but in the earliest days of the church hospitality meant much more. In the Bible hospitality is an embodied extension of the grace we receive from God. It is the unconditional welcome and acceptance of all people to God's table. This kind of welcome calls us beyond our comfort zones to love and serve the stranger; whoever that might be.

We see this throughout the Book of Acts, which tells the story of the earliest Christian communities – so early, in fact, that they are not even calling themselves "Christian" yet! The community was defined by living in the way of Jesus. They were known as "People of the Way", meaning they lived their lives in the ways of Jesus' radical hospitality for all people. They shared their resources and they included those who otherwise would have been excluded, particularly those whom society had pushed to the margins.

The radical hospitality of the early church needs to be reclaimed and reimaged by the church today. What are some of the ways that you can practice hospitality in your own life? How can our Christian community renew this ancient practice in our particular context?

Questions for Discussion

- 1) What images come to mind when you hear the word 'hospitality'?
- 2) How are these images different or similar to the radical hospitality of the early church?
- 3) When in your life have you offered or received hospitality that went beyond pleasantries?
- 4) What fears do you have about extending radical hospitality, particularly to the stranger?

"GOSPEL HOSPITALITY
IS GOD'S WELCOME,
A WELCOME THAT IS
DEEP AND WIDE.

GOD'S HOSPITALITY
IS GOD'S WELCOME
INTO A NEW WAY
OF SEEING
AND LIVING."

- Amy Oden -

Gospel Hospitality is God's Welcome

In her book *God's Welcome: Hospitality for a Gospel-Hungry World*, church historian Amy Oden highlights four different marks of gospel hospitality:

- > *Readiness* to be open and alert to the needs around us and expecting that we will be transformed by the encounter
- > *Risk* of discomfort and of unexpected change. The openness it requires means that you are not in control of the outcomes. There is the risk of offense by or of the stranger, judgment from the community, and of financial burden.
- > *Repentance* to see the world from the eyes of the stranger. In Oden's words, "When I see the world through the others' eyes, I cannot simply return to my old ways of seeing. This shift invariably leads to repentance, because I see the degree to which my own view had become the only view." (pg. 24) Such a change in view also changes the way we act and live both individually and as communities.
- > *Recognition* to see beyond appearances to the presence of God in each person. Recognizing the true person moves us beyond labels and categories and allows us to encounter the divine in each other.

As a group, take some time to reflect on and discuss this question:

What do you think of Oden's four marks of gospel hospitality? Without any judgment where do you see these marks in your own life and/or in the life of your community?

...

In the passage from John's gospel we read earlier, we see Jesus both receiving and offering hospitality. As is the case in many of the stories in our gospels, Jesus is a guest in the house of another. At the same time, Jesus (in this case, with the help of his mom!) is able to see the need for hospitality and acts to fill that need.

There is a mutuality to the miracle at Cana that speaks to the essence of gospel hospitality. Hospitality is both a giving and a receiving, a sharing in a deeper mystery of abundance and joy.

Inward Practice

Take one minute of silence to reflect inwardly on your week. In particular, last week's 'Outward Practice' challenge was to pay attention to how you engage people in conversation, especially your friends and family, and if possible record what you noticed. How did this practice go for you?

It's easy to think of hospitality as a giving away of things we own. But if we truly grasp what the scriptures tell us about creation, we understand that all we have – our wealth and possessions – does not truly belong to us.

"THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S AND ALL THAT IS IN IT!" DECLARES PSALM 24.

The early Christian community knew that they were responsible for fairly distributing the resources that God had given them so that no one would be without what they needed for abundant life.

Together Practice

If you feel comfortable doing so, share your moment with the group. As each person shares, listen deeply to the other person's story, without interrupting, making jokes, or commenting.

This might feel a bit strange, but what we are doing is practicing a deep, holy listening with each other. To facilitate this process, make sure to leave a few moments of silence between each person's sharing.

Outward Practice

This week, be attentive to how you can use your gifts, time, talent, resources or words to extend God's welcome to others. For example, consider asking someone who lives on the street to join you for lunch. Do you like to read books? Maybe contact your local elementary school and see how you can volunteer to read to students. The goal of this practice is make connections with people with whom you might not otherwise spend time.

Next week, when we gather again, we will share with each other how this practice impacted (or didn't impact) our week.

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GOD KEEPS DOING NEW THINGS

“Jesus asked Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?’
Simon replied, ‘Yes, Lord, you know I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’”

– John 21:15

Breath Prayer

*On a deep inward breath
say to yourself:*

GOD IS MAKING...

hold that for a few seconds.

*On the outward breath say to
yourself:*

...ALL THINGS NEW.

Do that slowly three more times.

Scripture

Have one person from your group read this scripture out loud. Read it slowly so that the words can sink in. So that you hear the scripture in more than just one voice have a different person also read it slowly to the group.

John 21:15-19

“When they finished eating,
Jesus asked Simon Peter,
“Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

Simon replied, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you.”

Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.”

Jesus asked a second time, “Simon son of John, do you love
me?”

Simon replied, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you.”

Jesus said to him, “Take care of my sheep.”

He asked a third time, “Simon son of John, do you love
me?”

Peter was sad that Jesus asked him a third time,
“Do you love me?”

He replied,
“Lord, you know everything; you know I love you.”

Jesus said to him,
“Feed my sheep.
I assure you that when you were younger
you tied your own belt
and walked around wherever you wanted.
When you grow old, you will stretch out your hands
and another will tie your belt
and lead you where you don’t want to go.”

He said this to show the kind of death
by which Peter would glorify God.

After saying this, Jesus said to Peter, “Follow me.””

Reckoning With History

From the earliest days of the Christian community, the church has been a flawed body of believers trying and sometimes failing to discern what God has called them to do and be.

How do we talk about difficult episodes in the church's past? How do we reckon with the embarrassing parts of our shared history?

It can sometimes be easy to deny painful history, but in today's world, it is more important than ever to face our past as we move into the future. This is particularly true because, for many people, this painful history is a major stumbling block to participation in Christian community. In the words of church historian Diana Butler Bass: "Jesus fascinates millions, but Christianity, the religion that began with Jesus, leaves countless people cold. What happened after Jesus—oppression, heresy trials, schisms, inquisitions, witch hunts, pogroms, and religious wars—witnesses to much human ambition and cruelty. The things people do in Jesus's name often contradict his teachings. From Constantine to Christendom to the Christian Right, 'after Jesus' can be remarkably depressing for thoughtful and sensitive souls. This dismal historical record surely was not what Jesus intended as he preached a merciful kingdom based on the transformative power of God's love." (*A People's History of Christianity*, pg. 1-2).

The God of Second Chances

In today's text from John's gospel, the newly resurrected Jesus repeatedly reminds Peter of what he is supposed to be about – i.e. caring for people who are in need. Jesus seems to be saying, "You said you loved me, but then you denied me. If you mean it this time, take care of my people." Essentially, he is offering Peter a second chance.

What Jesus tells Peter in this story can be read as a message to the church: Love Jesus? Then be about what Jesus was about. At some point or another we *will* fall short in our mission, but thankfully God is in the business of second chances.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) Do you tend to think of time in terms of progress – with things getting better as time goes on – or in terms of regress – with things getting worse?
- 2) Do you feel like you have a good sense of the history of the Church? Are there periods or figures you wish you knew more about?
- 3) When you think of what you do know of the history of Christianity, do you tend to think in negative or in positive terms? Why or why not?
- 4) Have you ever had a conversation with someone who asked you how you could be a Christian given the violence or errors of Christian history? How did you respond? In other words, apart from the fact you may have been born into a Christian family, why are you a Christian?

"The whole message of the Christian scripture is based in the idea of metanoia,

THE CHANGE OF HEART

that happens when we meet God face-to-face. Even a cursory knowledge of history reveals that Christianity is a religion about change. The Christian faith always changes — even when some of its adherents claim that it does not."

- Diana Butler Bass -

*Christianity for the Rest of Us:
How the Neighborhood Church
Is Transforming the Faith*

The Continuing Conversion of the Church

It can be just as easy to judge or sneer at the mistakes of the past, imagining that somehow, now, in the 21st century, we've finally gotten it right. But of course this isn't true. All of us – not just people of faith – continue to struggle to discern how best to create societies marked by justice, love, and cooperation.

Perhaps what is needed is a lens to look at our shared history, even the difficult parts, in a way that gives us insight for our contemporary lives.

The contemporary theologian Darrell Guder puts it this way: “The Holy Spirit began the conversion of the church at Pentecost and has continued that conversion throughout the pilgrimage of God’s people from the first century up to now. The conversion of the church will be the continuing work of God’s Spirit until God completes the good work begun in Jesus Christ.” (*The Continuing Conversion of the Church*, pg. 206)

This idea that Spirit is always converting the church – that is, always calling the church back to its mission and purpose in the world – gives us a helpful way to understand our shared Christian story. The Church is, and has always been, a flawed gathering of people, struggling to discern what God wants them to be and do, and sometimes failing. And God has always been about the task of calling the Church back to itself, working to transform the Church into a reflection of God’s love for the world.

THE GREAT EMERGENCE

In her book, *The Great Emergence*, Phyllis Tickle describes the various waves of reformation in church history as an every-500-years yard sale, in which the church decides what should be discarded and what is worth keeping. The church will keep some traditions and customs, while getting rid of others or re-imagining them for the present.

She calls this phenomenon “emergence,” and claims that today’s church is undergoing a new emergence.

Where do you see signs of a new emergence — a new ‘yard sale’— in today’s world?

Reformation, Renewal, Revival

What has the “continuing conversion of the church” that Darrell Guder refers to looked like throughout history? From its very beginning, the Christian community struggled with the tension between maintaining unity and being open to difference. Sometimes, this tension, combined with the rapid spread into new places, led to conflict and divisions.

In the 11th century, there was a split between the Eastern and Western churches – what we often refer to now as the Orthodox and Catholic churches. In the 15th and 16th centuries, splits occurred between what we now call the Catholic and Protestant churches.

And the Protestant churches have split and come back together in numerous ways, leading to the proliferation of denominations (30,000 different Protestant denominations) and sects that characterize the current religious landscape. But within these various divisions and expressions of Christian faith, God continues to call the church back to its purpose of being in the world.

Sometimes, this call took the shape of monastic movements, which often formed in response to a perception that the church had become too complacent, or too concerned with power and appearance, rather than with following Jesus -- a poor, wandering rabbi from a far corner of the Empire. Such movements called the Christian community back to the margins of society and to ministry with the poor and the outcast. Sometimes, this call took the shape of movements for revival and reformation.

During the Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries, some movements

for change left the Catholic Church, while others remained within it – but all of them insisting the Church needed to be faithful in the midst of a changing world.

In 18th century England, a revival movement led by two brothers, John and Charles Wesley, both Anglican priests, became known as the ‘Methodist’ movement. The Methodists focused on the way God’s grace could really transform people’s lives, and gathered together in small groups to share that transformation with each other. They shared together in the ‘means of grace’ – what today we often call ‘practices’ – by which God’s transformative love became real and concrete in their daily lives.

Eventually, this Methodist movement spread to what would become the United States of America. It is out of this tradition that our own community – Crossroads United Methodist Church – formed.

Of course, the continuing conversion of the church – God’s ongoing activity of calling the community back to its purpose – didn’t end with the Methodist movement. In the next two sessions, we’ll be asking ourselves where we see signs of God’s ever-new call on the Church today.

Inward Practice

This week we are going to try a very old spiritual practice called the Prayer of Examen. We have chosen this practice for two reasons: 1) It is a type of prayer that was popularized during one of the revivals that came up in this week’s session; and, 2) it is a practical way of listening to God’s continuing call on our daily lives.

As a group spend the next five minutes in a spirit of prayer. Have one of your group members read the following statements, leaving a long pause in between each to allow for adequate time to reflect.

- > Begin to quiet your mind and become aware of God’s presence.
- > Look back over the day, from the very first moment you woke up until now, through the lens of gratitude.
- > Pay attention to your feelings. What emotions came up for you today?
- > Choose one moment of gratitude from the day and focus on it. Express your gratitude to God.
- > Ask God to be present with you tomorrow.
- > Amen.

Together Practice

Take some time to share together about the experience of the Examen. Was it a helpful practice for you? Can you imagine incorporating it into your daily life?

Outward Practice

Over the coming week, try doing the Examen before you go to sleep each night. You might want to invite your family or friends into this practice with you.

The Examen is useful because it can help us see how we are changing for the better over time and reveal the ways we still need to grow.

Next week, when we gather again, we will share with each other how this practice impacted (or didn’t impact) our week.

...

THE WORD MOVED INTO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

“The Word became flesh and made his home among us.”

– John 1:14

Breath Prayer

On a deep inward breath
say to yourself:

I SEE CHRIST...

hold that for a few seconds.

On the outward breath say to
yourself:

...IN THE COMMON.

Do that slowly three more times.

Scripture

Have one person from your group read this scripture out loud. Read it slowly so that the words can sink in. So that you hear the scripture in more than just one voice have a different person also read it slowly to the group.

John 1:9-14

“The true light that shines on all people
was coming into the world.

The light was in the world,
and the world came into being through the light,
but the world didn’t recognize the light.

The light came to his own people,
and his own people didn’t welcome him.

But those who did welcome him,
those who believed in his name,
he authorized to become God’s children,
born not from blood
nor from human desire or passion,
but born from God.

The Word became flesh
and made his home among us.

We have seen his glory,
glory like that of a father’s only son,
full of grace and truth.”

The Word in the Neighborhood

“The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.” That’s how pastor and biblical translator Eugene Peterson renders verse 14 of the passage we just read together. Incarnation means that God is not only present *everywhere*, God is present *right here* – here in the very neighborhoods and communities where we live our daily lives.

The Methodist movement began among college students – John Wesley was a fellow at Oxford and Charles Wesley a student – and was always concerned with the practical ways in which their faith could be lived out. They visited prisoners, cared for children, and showed compassion for

those in need in their community. Their gatherings in small groups focused on checking in with each other about how they had lived out their faith since the last time they met.

As the movement grew, and expanded to what would become the United States, Methodists continued to focus on the “Word made flesh” in incarnate acts of faith. Not confined within church walls, Methodists preached in open fields and outside of coal mines, began frontier tent revivals, and were always on the lookout for how they could be of service in their communities.

Like any other movement, the Methodists also struggled to embody fully the call to extend radical hospitality. Early Methodists advocated for the abolition of the slave trade; later, the Methodist Church in the U.S. would split over the issue of slavery. Early Methodism was fueled by female leaders; later, the church would struggle with how to fully recognize women’s leadership.

In 1968, a modern American denomination – the United Methodist Church – was formed, with a commitment to racial inclusion and gender equality. Today, the United Methodist Church is wrestling with the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people of faith. As has been the case since the very first churches, God continues to call the United Methodist Church back to itself and to its mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) One of the marks of the Methodist movement was a focus on practical spirituality. What are some simple practices you can adopt to connect with God every day?
- 2) As was stated above, the early Methodists visited prisoners and advocated against slavery. Are there current issues of public policy or common good affecting our communities that your faith compels you to address?
- 3) The Methodist Church defines its mission as “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” What do you think transformation would look like for individuals and families in your area? How can ordinary people like us help our neighbors experience this transformation?

The Simple Way: When God Moved in to West Philly

In 1995, dozens of homeless families had moved into an abandoned Catholic church building in North Philadelphia. They were told by the Archdiocese that they had 48 hours to move out or they could be arrested. With nowhere to go the family’s hung a sign out the window of the building that read, “How can we worship a homeless man on Sunday, and ignore one on Monday?”

When the press caught wind of this, the families held their own press conference and announced that they had talked with the real “Owner” of

Our ministry to the larger community has come in many forms, including but not limited to:

DC FOOD & FELLOWSHIP

COMMUNITY TABLE OF LOUDOUN

GRACE MINISTRIES

ESL CLASSES

IMAGINE MEETUPS

LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL MISSION TRIPS

SALT AND LIGHT

"I LOOK UPON ALL THE
WORLD AS MY PARISH;
THUS FAR I MEAN,
THAT IN WHATEVER
PART OF IT I AM,

I JUDGE IT MEET,
RIGHT, AND MY
BOUNDEN DUTY TO
DECLARE UNTO ALL
THAT ARE WILLING
TO HEAR,
THE GLAD TIDINGS
OF SALVATION."

- John Wesley -
Journal Entry, June 11, 1739.

the building (the Lord Almighty!) and God said they could stay until they found somewhere else to go.

Before too long, a group of concerned college students from nearby Eastern University heard about what was going on and made a trip out meet with the families and see how they could help. According to the residents, the police were planning to raid the building either at night or when a majority of people were out looking for food and water during the day. They asked the students to camp out in the church with them overnight and act as look outs during the day – and that’s exactly what they did. In the end, the church relented and gifted the property to the families.

A few years after the takeover of the church ended, some of the students who had been a part of that movement pooled their money and bought 3234 Potter Street, where they lived and worshipped together in Christian community. Their presence in the neighborhood was inspired by the practices of the early church in the book of Acts, and the incarnation – reflected in our passage from John. In their words:

“For us, the Kingdom of God is not just something we hope for when we die but something we are trying to bring on earth as we live... in fact, we’re trying to bring God’s dream to North Philly...We like to emphasize both beliefs and practices, as Christians throughout history have seen that the Christian faith is both about what we believe (“orthodoxy” meaning right belief or doctrine) and how we live (“orthopraxis” meaning right practice or living).”

Over two decades later this small intentional community, now called *The Simple Way*, has been the hands and feet of Christ in their neighborhood. Residents paint murals on the sides of abandoned buildings, help kids with homework after school, share food, host neighborhood celebrations, pray together, and continue to work for justice in their city.

To learn more about the Simple Way, visit www.thesimpleway.org

Inward Practice:

As a group, take some time to reflect upon and discuss the questions posed in the previous section. Which question or identified need stood out to you the most? Why?

Together Practice:

Each week we will check in with each other as a group and share prayer concerns. This week, ask each member of the group to share about their experience of praying the Daily Examen, a practice from Ignatian spirituality, which we introduced last week.

Outward Practice:

Eugene Peterson paraphrases Romans 12:1 this way:

“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.”

This week your challenge is to identify ways you can celebrate what God is doing in your life and in the lives of the people around you. For instance, you could affirm the work of someone in your office, send a note to a distant relative to let them know you are thinking about them, or record what you are thankful for daily in a journal.

This practice is about learning to recognize and celebrate the ways God is already at work in our lives.

Next week, when we gather again, we will share with each other how this practice impacted (or didn’t impact) our week.

...

WHAT'S GOD UP TO NOW?

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.’
Then he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

– John 20:21-22

Breath Prayer

On a deep inward breath
say to yourself:

SPEAK LORD...

hold that for a few seconds.

On the outward breath say to
yourself:

*...FOR WE ARE
LISTENING.*

Do that slowly three more times.

Scripture

Have one person from your group read this scripture out loud. Read it slowly so that the words can sink in. Consider having a different person also read it slowly to the group so that you can hear the passage in multiple voices.

John 20:19-23

“It was still the first day of the week.

That evening,

while the disciples were behind closed doors
because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities,
Jesus came and stood among them.

He said, “Peace be with you.”

After he said this,

he showed them his hands and his side.

When the disciples saw the Lord,
they were filled with joy.

Jesus said to them again,

“Peace be with you.

As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.”

Then he breathed on them and said,

“Receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven;

if you don’t forgive them, they aren’t forgiven.”

A Fresh Breath of the Spirit

In this scene from John’s gospel, Jesus commissions his followers to continue the work he began during his time on earth. From here on out they will be his representative in the community, equipped to announce of the good news of the resurrection and transformation in their own lives and stories. They will become the hands, feet and presence of Jesus in their neighborhoods, communities and the world ...”As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.”

The promise of presence was the very breath of the Spirit within them as they revealed the way, truth and life of Jesus as a way of compassion, forgiveness, service and wisdom, welcoming all people with

God's unconditional love, unlimited welcome and unwavering hope of transformation.

Reclaiming the art of Christian practice is a transformative vision that is lived out every day through our stories and witness to the way of Jesus':

Compassion Forgiveness Service Wisdom

Listen to Pastor Dave's Sunday message on each of these four ways to be love with skin on by downloading the Sunday Podcasts at: <http://apple.co/2dwLtJi>

Rethink Church, By Dave Norman

At the front of the Crossroads sanctuary is a set of large windows. These windows serve as a reminder that the church exists not for itself, but for the world. Which is why for 27 years we have been about one thing: sharing the compassion of Jesus with all, one person, one family and one community at a time.

27 years ago our neighborhood consisted of 600 families made up of two groups of Christians – Roman Catholics and Protestants. It was 98% white and 2% black. There were lots of young families looking for ways to connect.

That was then, but today, our neighborhood is very, very different.

- > No longer are we a neighborhood of Christians and two ethnic groups, for now we are a mixing bowl of nationalities and religions.
- > We have grown from 600 households in the neighborhood to more than 29,000.
- > 83% of the people living in Loudoun County today are not regularly connected with a church or any other religious community.
- > It used to be against Little League rules to play baseball on Sundays. I know because I was a coach back then. Now every sport imaginable plays games on Sundays.
- > Regular Sunday morning worship attendance used to be 3-4 times a month and now on a national level it is 1-2 times a month.

Because our present context is so different from the past it requires us to take a different look at what it means for us to be a church family in the neighborhood right now, and in the next five years.

It is not just our neighborhood that has changed, the whole world is different and so The larger United Methodist Church encourages local churches to rethink what it means to be church in the neighborhood, not the old one, but the current one that surrounds the church building. You can learn more about this at www.rethinkchurch.org/beliefs-into-action

Here are some bullet points for the website:

- > We think the church is more than a place to go to Sunday Service.
- > We think it's important to live our faith both inside and outside the church walls, serving our neighbors and those around the world.
- > We think putting our beliefs into action can create systemic change and transform lives of others.

**"EVERY HUMAN
ACTIVITY CAN BE PUT
AT THE SERVICE OF THE
DIVINE AND OF LOVE.**

**WE SHOULD ALL
EXERCISE OUR GIFT TO
BUILD COMMUNITY."**

- Jean Vanier -
Community And Growth

THE CHURCH

Popular author and blogger, Rachel Held Evans, defines the Church as...

“... A MOMENT IN TIME WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD DRAWS NEAR, WHEN A MEAL, A STORY, A SONG, AN APOLOGY, AND EVEN A FAILURE IS MADE HOLY IN THE PRESENCE OF JESUS AMONG AND WITHIN US.”

How do you understand what it means to “be the Church”? How, if at all, has this understanding shaped the way you live out your faith?

- > Church doesn’t just happen when we’re sitting in the pew. Church happens when we reach out to those who are hungry, sick, or forgotten. When we work together to end disease and relieve suffering, when we stand together for justice and inclusion, and when we open our hearts to those who are struggling, that’s putting beliefs into action. That’s what it means to RETHINK CHURCH.

This also what it means to live with a faith that goes beyond belief to reclaim the art of Christian practice.

This is what God is up to now calling us to (from UMC.org):

OPEN OUR HEARTS

We believe that living a life inspired by God’s love compels us to offer help, hope, and healing to those looking for more meaning in their lives.

OPEN OUR MINDS

We believe God’s grace is available to all people, no matter where you’re from, what you look like, or who you love.

OPEN OUR DOORS

We believe in welcoming others into our lives, but also in taking action outside the walls of the church to serve our neighbors, next door and around the world.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) Which one of the bullet points above speaks most directly to you and why?
- 2) What does it mean to reclaim the art of Christian practice?
- 3) What do you think the biggest need is in your neighborhood?
- 4) How might you be the hands and feet of Jesus to meet that need?
- 5) What is your story of transformation?

Insiders, Outsiders, and Breaking Down the Dividing Wall

One of the most striking things about Jesus’ followers is how different they are from one another. Jesus called men, women, fisherman, tax collectors, prostitutes, and even his enemies to be a part of the new thing he was doing. What this reveals to us is that God shows no partiality — absolutely everyone has a role to play in the unfolding story of salvation. With this in mind we must always be asking ourselves: Who has yet to be invited?

One way to address this question is to simply look around; when we gather for worship, who is missing? Does everyone here look like us, think like us, or vote like us? If so, what can we do to create a welcoming community that better reflects the diversity of God’s people?

Inward Practice

As a group, take some time to reflect on and discuss the questions posed in the previous section. Which question or identified need stood out to you the most? Why?

Together Practice

Last week your group was asked to find ways of naming and celebrating the presence of God in their everyday lives. This week, ask each member of the group to recall what they did and how others responded.

Outward Practice

Take some time to reflect on how you have changed over the course of these sessions. Are you more compassionate, forgiving, serving and wise than you were before?

Use the survey below to help identify the specific ways you've grown by circling the number on each scale that best represents your personal agreement.

1 – Strongly disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neither agree or disagree

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly agree

My participation in the six-sessions of Faith Beyond Belief and by integrating spiritual practices in my everyday life I have been helped:

1. To deepen my personal relationship with God as an experience of unconditional love, welcome and hope in Jesus

1 2 3 4 5

2. Implement spiritual practices (prayer, meditation, scripture, reflections) to listen to God's Spirit and guidance within me and in the moments of my day

1 2 3 4 5

3. To receive the compassion and forgiveness of Christ in my mistakes, failings, personal suffering and struggle

1 2 3 4 5

4. To share the compassion and forgiveness of Christ in the mistakes, failings of others (family, community and world suffering)

1 2 3 4 5

5. To recognize my everyday life as the place to serve in the way of Jesus in all my relationships, responsibilities and tasks

1 2 3 4 5

Final Question: What do you see next for your journey inward, together and outward to help you live more fully into Jesus' compassion, forgiveness, service and wisdom?

RESOURCES

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CREATORS



David Finnegan-Hosey

Originally from Chestertown, MD, David currently serves as a Chaplain-In-Residence at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Before starting at Georgetown, he worked in campus ministries at American University and the University of Hawai'i Manoa. He holds a B.A. in International Studies from Washington College in Chestertown, M.D. and a M.Div from Wesley Theological Seminary in D.C. These days, you can find David working on his forthcoming book, recording a new episode for his podcast *Fooling With Scripture*, or hanging out with his wife and their adorable puppy, Penny Lane.

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Leigh Finnegan-Hosey

A native of South Florida, Leigh currently serves as a Chaplain-In-Residence at Georgetown University and as the Student Ministries Coordinator at Crossroads UMC. Before coming to Crossroads, Leigh earned a M.Div from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., and served as an intern with Church of the Common Table, an emerging congregation in Vienna, VA. Her favorite pastimes are hanging out with her family and exploring D.C.

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Dave Norman, Editor

As the founding pastor of Crossroads I am very excited about our future. For 27 years we have been about one thing - sharing the compassion, forgiveness, service and wisdom of Jesus with all, one person, family and community at a time.

Over these years I have been privileged to see the unconditional love of God and the unlimited welcome of Jesus lived out in thousands of people's lives both in the Crossroads family and beyond.

My goal is to keep sharing the unconditional love of God and the unlimited welcome of Jesus with whomever I am with. Sometimes that requires words, but most often it just requires me to have open ears, an open mind and an open heart.

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