

Follow Me: Remember and Be Thankful

January 10, 2021

Baptism of the Lord Sunday

Opening

Greet one another, agree on confidentiality, and agree to practice sacred listening as everyone shares from their own unique experiences and sacred stories.

Time of Centering

Get comfortable in your seat with your feet flat on the floor with your hands laying on your lap letting go of tension throughout your body. Take a couple of slow, deep, cleansing breaths. Relax your jaw, face, and shoulders. Take a few moments in silence to rest your mind and focus on your breath. It is the breath of God within you.

Bring to mind something you are grateful for and allow that gratitude to flow from your heart throughout your body as a prayer of blessing to God.

Take a few moments to briefly share your gratitude with the group.

Spiritual Practice

Lectio Divina means divine reading and is a spiritual practice using scriptures, poems, or quotes. Invite someone to read Mark 1:4-11 below out loud. Listen, using sacred/ Reflective listening, for a word or phrase that touches your heart or stands out for you.

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were

baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.

After a few minutes of quiet, invite someone else from the group to read the scripture out loud a second time. Invite a person from the group to read it a third time. Then, if you are comfortable, share with the group what emerged for you through the practice of Lectio Divina.

Discussion based on Sunday's Church at Home Message

The theme for Sunday's sermon was 'Remember your Baptism.'

Pastor Larry, speaking on the topic 'Remember your Baptism', Shared this quote by Bishop Will Willimon, "It is a way of living that keeps our eyes open for the descending doves of the Spirit. It is a choice that we can claim - to embrace the possibilities in front of us instead of the doubts within us. It is an opportunity to know that we are loved and claimed, and that whatever darkness is hiding away in our past or in our hearts need not define us anymore. It is a family we've entered into, who will run with us as we search for what we are looking for."

As a child, were you taught about the sacrament of baptism? What was your understanding then? Has it changed over time?

Quoting again from Pastor Larry's sermon, "Retired Bishop Will Willimon likes to say that "The Holy Spirit has been called 'the shy member of the Trinity.' You don't hear much about the Holy Spirit in mainline Protestant Christianity. That's a shame. But just because you have not heard of the Holy Spirit, does not mean

that the Holy Spirit doesn't exist and that it was not given to you. Remember your baptism and be thankful. Christ has not left you to your own devices. You don't have to be a Christian on your own. You have been given the gift that you need in order to persist in this faith."

As a child, were you taught about the Holy Spirit? If so, what were you taught, and how does that differ from your understanding the Holy Spirit now?

Quoting Pastor Larry again, "The tearing continues. The remaking continues. Our lives are constantly being taken apart and put back together. And whether we see it descending upon us like a dove or not, the Spirit is a constant companion throughout our lives. It is what inspires us to love and serve and learn and grow. It is what equips us to be a part of the body of Christ in unique and powerful ways. It is what tears us open to new ways of living, new ways of being."

If you have not considered the work of the Holy Spirit before, are you willing to do so?

Action Step

Having used the spiritual practice of Lectio Divina, and sharing stories of baptism, what action can you take this week that will move you towards appreciating the gift of your faith community? If you need extra support from your faith community, will you reach out to them? We build our faith and our witness of God's love through our spiritual practices. Does your full heart allow you to lend support by considering your gifts and graces as an offering to your family of faith?

Prayer

Lift the requests of the group members, as well as prayers that will assist you as you put your faith into action.

Crossroads' next book study on racial reconciliation is, "Be the Bridge" by Latasha Morrison. This 10-week study starts Tuesday, January 19th from 7:00-8:30pm. This study will be led by Crossroads leadership and will have large and small group interaction.

The book is available [here](#).

Please register [here](#). Contact [Deborah Michel](#) with any questions.

COVID-19 Limited Rent Assistance

Loudoun County government has established a limited rent assistance program for Loudoun County households economically impacted by COVID-19. Check [this link](#) for details.

Loudoun Cares

Through their Information & Referral Helpline, **Loudoun Cares** connects residents in need with local nonprofits and agencies that can assist with a variety of health and human services that include rent/utility assistance, food, clothing, medical/dental, housing, job services and more. If you are in need of assistance, call the helpline at 703-669-4636 or click [here](#) for their website.

Unemployment and Employment Resources

Loudoun Workforce Resource Center provides information about unemployment benefits or other work-related topics. Click [here](#) for their website.

Crossroads Jobs is a non-profit experienced in advising candidates who have challenges in securing employment. Counseling is available in English and Spanish. They will also assist those who need help filing for unemployment. All services are free. Click [here](#) for their website.

For additional resources, refer to the Hope in Action Newsletter. Kathy Mackrell edits and updates the information. It is a helpful resource for our members, friends and neighbors, who might not know where to turn when the need is urgent.