



# LENT 2025 WORKBOOK

CHOOSING UNITY:  
Sharing in a Community Experience  
of Spiritual Practice



**LENT**  
AT POINT LOMA CHURCH

# INTRODUCTION

From Ash Wednesday to Easter, our Church will focus on **shared experiences of Christian spiritual practice** based on the life of Jesus and historical representatives of faith. All those within or connected to our faith community are invited to join a home small group, online meeting, family group, or self-directed community over the 5-weeks of Lent that lead us to Easter Sunday.

Curated from Richard Foster’s book *Streams of Living Water*, six different Christian traditions and their associated spiritual practice will be reviewed in this workbook. Participants are encouraged to spend these next few weeks learning about and “trying on” the spiritual disciplines associated with each Christian faith tradition. The dates and six domains include:

March 5 (Ash Wednesday)	INCARNATIONAL: Sacraments
Week of March 9	CONTEMPLATIVE: Prayer & Meditation
Week of March 16	HOLINESS: Lifestyle
Week of March 23	EVANGELICAL: Word-Based
Week of March 30	SOCIAL JUSTICE: Compassion for Others
Week of April 6	CHARISMATIC: Giftedness

“Choosing unity” is the 2024-25 focus for Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church. So how can we practice choosing unity in our commitment to Christ in the 21st century? Isn’t one theological concept, tradition, or spiritual practice more important than another? And why are there so many denominations that have split off from each other? Are certain behaviors more spiritual than others? How can our spiritual journey be renewed? We hope that you will begin to respond to some of these questions as we spend our time together.

During Lent, we will use the weeks between Ash Wednesday and Easter to look afresh at our lives and the significant spiritual practices lived by Jesus. We will get clues as we look back in Christian history where we see evidence of other Christians articulating and living out a wide range of ways to be disciples. We will understand better how God’s Spirit has worked and continues to work **throughout the ages**. God brings a **range of ways** to stay in a relationship and all these ways can direct us to our

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### One True God.

When we study different spiritual traditions that lead us to our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, we are informed by a rich record of other saints who have come before us. For example, from the 13-century we find a Latin term, *regula vitae* (pronounced “ray-goo-lah vee-tay”), or the “Rule of Life.” This ancient Rule of Life was formally instituted for Christian hermits around 1243 but had its origins all the way back in history to 384 after Saint Augustine converted to Christ through the ministry of Ambrose in Milan, Italy (374-397AD). Augustine and some of his friends returned to his home in North Africa, gave away their possessions, and began a life of prayer and study of Scripture. Augustine helped us to see that spiritual practices can be linked to becoming intentional followers of Jesus. Many of the activities listed in the *regula vitae* continue today.

The practices we will explore are not a way to “earn” God’s love; we don’t have to DO anything to receive God’s grace. These practices help each of us to be “in the world but not of the world” (John 17:13-19) and to model a Jesus-inspired life for our families and communities. They help us in our choosing unity since ***we begin to appreciate the depth and variety of ways*** which God has touched those who wish to follow as disciples.

So, in the next several weeks, we are going to dig deeper into this idea of UNITY, even amid diverse traditions and practices, and to reflect on how we can express our intention to live a faith-centered daily life in more concrete and structured ways.

We will examine six different areas of spiritual tradition (participating in the Ash Wednesday service and for 5 weeks in a home/online/family/self-directed groups) by:

- Exploring how Jesus practiced or taught about a specific spiritual practice
- Inviting you to do some simple exercises to examine your current life rhythm within a particular Christian spiritual tradition
- Reading a bit about a Christian person in history who demonstrated that domain of spiritual discipline
- Selecting a way to practice that spiritual domain over the duration of one week and then sharing your experience with others

To adapt yourself to different rhythms of spiritual practice will require some changes, some fitting and some uncomfortable: perhaps greater closeness to Christ, perhaps more openness to growth and God's Spirit working in your life, and perhaps also the exposure of new weaknesses and struggles. God bless you on this journey.

To review, the six spiritual practice domains are:

INCARNATIONAL, CONTEMPLATIVE, HOLINESS, EVANGELICAL, SOCIAL JUSTICE, and CHARISMATIC.

## QUIZ

Match Spiritual Practice Tradition with a Denominational focus

*Answers on page 8*

### Spiritual Practice Traditions

Incarnational (Sacraments)  
Holiness (Lifestyle)  
Evangelical (Word-Based)  
Social Justice (Compassion  
for Others)  
Charismatic (Giftedness)  
Contemplative (Prayer &  
Meditation)

### Denominations (examples)

United Church of Christ/Mennonite  
Pentecostal  
Roman Catholic  
Methodist/Baptist  
Greek/Russian Orthodox  
Presbyterian/Reformed

## ROLES OF HOME-BASED HOSTS AND FACILITATORS

*(in home and online)*

The Lent curriculum is simple to use; small groups will be formed and facilitated by just about anyone with just a little bit of review and preparation. **We particularly hope that those NOT already involved in a small group or Bible Study will attend.** You can also use the curriculum on a family or self-directed basis (see below); however, we would like you to be accountable to another person about your attempts to practice these disciplines. **Everyone is invited to have a Bible and a pen** handy since reading Scripture and writing down reflections will be part of the activities. Feel free to place notes within the Lenten workbook.

If you are in a home-based small group, the host will be the person who opens their home to meet. Their job is to provide something to drink for the meetings and simple snacks for the first meeting. Hopefully, group

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members will take turns bringing snacks for the group after the first meeting. If you are meeting online, the host will start and facilitate the Zoom meetings.

For home-based or online groups, a facilitator will be assigned to organize the first meeting. However, we hope everyone in the group feels welcome to share the responsibility of being a facilitator, if they wish. **The facilitator needs to review the materials beforehand, help the group follow along each written lesson, ask some of the listed questions (and add other questions or comments, if you want), give opportunity for various persons in the group to respond, allow for the option of prayer requests to be shared and prayed for at the end of the meeting, and, most importantly, to be a timekeeper—beginning and ending the group in a timely fashion.** The facilitator encourages the group to be a safe place to share and learn.

Group members are also encouraged to bring a service donation\* each week. The donation can be for local or global work. The host or facilitator is also responsible to bring any donations brought by the participants back to the church. Please leave any donations at the church office.

**Suggested Structure of the 90-minute Small Group**  
*Feel free to adapt as needed*

10 minutes	Gathering, snacks & service donation*
10 minutes	Community exchange: Getting to Know Each Other
15 minutes	Opening and Review of previous week's Exercises
35 minutes	Reflection on a Spiritual Tradition The Practice in the life or teachings of Jesus Historical Example of the Spiritual Tradition
20 minutes	Selection of Spiritual Practice, sharing prayer requests and closing time of prayer

\*If they choose, each group can select a focus for their “service donation.” You can use a church supported project (e.g., food for New Day Urban Ministries) or pick your own.

## **FAMILY AND SELF-DIRECTED COMMUNITY GROUPS**

Since one of our goals is to have UNITY in our shared spiritual journey during Lent, we have also adapted the small and online group format for families and for those who would like to create a self-directed group (of at least 2 people) since they may not be able to participate regularly in the other group formats. Options include:

- Individual households or families with children can adapt the material to fit the developmental needs of their children. Using the materials in the “Lent Bag,” they can read a Bible story from the life of Jesus in each tradition, and then “try on” a selected spiritual practice together or throughout the week. Lent bags will be ready to pick up on Sunday, March 2. Our Directors of Children’s Ministry and Youth are offering a podcast for families with children and youth to explore these ideas and to support you in your hope to develop spiritual awareness and concrete spiritual practices within your family. You can find these podcasts on your favorite podcast platform by searching “Point Loma Church” or at [youtube.com/PointLomaChurchOnline](https://youtube.com/PointLomaChurchOnline)
- Two or more people can sign-up to be a self-directed community that reviews the Lenten curriculum workbook together at their own pace. The workbook can be done separately and then you can meet to discuss what you have learned and experienced.

We ask everyone to sign up online, so we know who is participating and we can get resources to you.

Since this is a workbook, feel free to use the spaces to write down your own thoughts, feelings, questions, and reactions.

## INTRODUCTORY READING

*At the beginning of each of the group meetings or self-directed times, read the following italics aloud:*

*From Ash Wednesday to Easter, I will focus on **spiritual practices shared by our faith community**. In small groups and individually, I commit to intentionally structure or rhythm my life with Jesus and in concert with the Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church's **Mission**: "Through authentic community, we will seek to Experience Jesus, Journey into Deeper Faith, Strengthen the Church, and Transform our World."*

*How might I follow Christ better in the 21st century by choosing unity?*

- I will look afresh to pattern my life around some of the significant spiritual practices lived by Jesus*
- I will get clues from other Christians as I look back in history*
- I will select a way to practice a spiritual tradition over the duration of one week and share my experiences with others to appreciate better how God works in our lives*

If in a group, the facilitator will then ask the group to pray in silence. After a few minutes, the facilitator will say **"God, bless our time together. AMEN."**

### Answers to Quiz on Page 5

Incarnational = Greek/Russian Orthodox

Contemplative = Roman Catholic

Holiness = Methodist/Baptist

Evangelical = Presbyterian/Reformed

Social Justice = United Church of Christ/Mennonite

Charismatic = Pentecostal

# LENT LESSON #1

*We encourage everyone to attend the Ash Wednesday Service in-person or online since this gathering is related to the INCARNATIONAL Tradition.*

Our first group meeting will be the week after the Ash Wednesday service. This first group will be structured a bit differently than the next 4 groups since we are covering two traditions instead of just one. Some timelines are suggested for each section for this first meeting.

Lesson #1 is a limited review of **INCARNATIONAL Tradition** and a brief exploration of the **CONTEMPLATIVE Tradition**.

## **GATHERING AND SNACKS**

*(10 minutes)*

## **COMMUNITY EXCHANGE**

*Getting to Know Each Other (10 minutes)*

Introduce yourself with your name. Describe one thing that you are personally responsible for during the week that you enjoy doing. What do you hope to get from being in this experience together?

## **OPENING AND REVIEW EXERCISES**

*(20 minutes)*

Everyone please read the **INTRODUCTORY READING** out loud found on page 8.

For Lesson 1, we will review the **INCARNATIONAL Tradition** in a very limited way before moving on to the main lesson on the **CONTEMPLATIVE Tradition**.

### **Questions for the Group:**

1. How many of you have attended this year or past years' Ash Wednesday service?
2. For those who chose to do this, what did it feel like to have ashes placed on your forehead?



## THE INCARNATIONAL TRADITION ASKS THE QUESTION:

*How can my life become a sacramental experience?*

The classic definition of a sacrament is “an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace.” Sacraments make grace tangible, revealing the presence and life of God in our material and physical world. (*Take a moment to **take a breath** and notice your body*).

Incarnation means “in-flesh” and has to do with connecting human bodies with the spiritual. For example, the imposition of ashes on the foreheads of Christians is an ancient Christian practice, going back at least to the 10th century; the Hebrews of the Old Testament used ashes in their grieving processes. Biblically, ashes are a symbol of purification and penitence and reminds us that we are mortal (see Numbers 19:9-10; j17-18; Hebrews 9:13-14).

Jesus is said to be the Incarnate God, meaning that Jesus is God in human flesh (John 1:14, 18). When we associate the life of Jesus with the sacraments, we tie the physical and the spiritual together. Sacraments become ritualized acts that help us better appreciate the life of Jesus. These sacraments also help to demonstrate what we need to recognize in our own lives.

### Questions for the Group:

1. What are the two sacraments in the Presbyterian Church USA?
2. Did you grow up in other Christian faith traditions that had more than two sacraments?
3. Why do you think we mainly do these rituals at church and not in our individual homes?

The PCUSA (Presbyterian Church USA) recognizes two sacraments:

- **Communion:** where broken bread and shared wine/juice is an invitation to participate in the brokenness of Christ crucified
- **Baptism:** where water makes visible the mercy of God cleansing us

Everything that exists is an outward and visible symbol of God’s loving grace, but we most often think of sacramental or incarnational life as practices done within our faith communities. This certainly makes sense since we practice important “rituals” in church that have significant

spiritual meaning. Christians have argued and divided over the *mechanics* of the sacraments—but we have always agreed that, however it happens, in some way these materials, this physical *stuff*, serves to make God present and real to us.

However, we also live within the INCARNATIONAL Tradition when we **physically** do things with spiritual meaning. For example, we might light the Advent Candle wreath with our children in our own homes, we might verbally ask for forgiveness from our partner while looking into their eyes when we have been harsh with them, or we might kneel by the side of our bed when we pray. (There are a few more ideas on page 49 of the workbook).

**Brief conversation for the group:** Besides taking communion, attending worship services or being baptized, are there particular “physical practices” that you sometimes do in your life that attempt to make the spiritual more visible or more present?

## **JESUS AND INCARNATIONAL OR SACRAMENTAL PRACTICE**

As we said above, Jesus is said to be the Incarnate God, meaning that Jesus is God in human flesh. Jesus also directed us toward continuing this INCARNATIONAL or Sacramental Tradition of Spiritual Practice.

Someone read Mark 14:12, 22-26

### **Questions for the Group:**

1. Identify some ritual practices that Jesus is demonstrating in these verses? (You can list some below.)
2. What might be some spiritual meanings behind the physical practices.

## Lesson #1

We will not review a historical figure or take a week to practice the INCARNATIONAL Tradition during this small group experience. Some of us have already had an experience of Sacramental practices through participating in the Ash Wednesday Service or witnessing a baptism at church.

### Group discussion:

1. Does anyone have final thoughts regarding the INCARNATIONAL Tradition that you would like to share with each other before we move on to the next Tradition?

## THE CONTEMPLATIVE TRADITION ASKS THE QUESTION:

*How will I pray and worship so I can be open to and immersed in God's presence? (30 minutes)*

The word contemplation had a specific meaning for the first 16 centuries of the Christian era. *Saint Gregory the Great* summed up this meaning at the end of the 6th century as "the knowledge of God that is impregnated with love." He referred to contemplation as "resting in God." It is not the suspension of all activity, but the reduction of many acts to a *single act in order to be in God's presence*. It is the opening of mind and heart - one's whole being - to God. Contemplative prayer is a process of interior transformation. It is a relationship initiated by God and leading, if one consents, to divine union.

We will review this Tradition by:

- Inviting you to reflect on this tradition in your own life
- Exploring how Jesus demonstrated or taught about specific spiritual practices
- Reviewing a Christian person in history who focused on that domain
- Selecting a way to practice that spiritual domain over the duration of one week and to share with others/reflect about your experience

## REFLECTION ON THE CONTEMPLATIVE TRADITION

### Questions for the group:

1. In your spiritual life, has your practice of attending worship services in-person changed over the years? If so, how?

**Question for silent consideration:** *(take a few moments to write if you want)*

1. How important is it for you to pray?
2. When do you find prayer difficult to practice and when do you find prayer easy to practice in your own life?

## **JESUS AND PRAYER, A KEY COMPONENT OF THE CONTEMPLATIVE TRADITION**

Facilitator: Have members read some of the following Scripture passages and talk about and list some of the specific ways Jesus talks about or demonstrates praying. What do you think motivated these times of prayer? What effect might prayer have?

- Mark 1:35-37
- Luke 5: 15-6
- Luke 22: 39-46
- Optional: Matthew 6:5-13

Jesus loved His Father and communicated with God often. He prayed for wisdom and guidance in his life. He prayed for others. Jesus directly taught the disciples to pray, so prayer is important to Jesus.

### **Questions for the group:**

1. Currently, what role does prayer/meditation play in experiencing a connection to God for you in your life?
2. Have there been times in your life that these practices have been more important?
3. What other experiences shape your relationship with God?

## HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF THE CONTEMPLATIVE TRADITION

The contemplative Tradition has rich historical figures who lived a life of prayer: the Desert Fathers & Mothers of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. Coptic Christians and Eastern Orthodox are rich examples. In the Middle Ages, St. Bernard of Clairvaux demonstrated the importance of simple devotion and prayer. Later European “mystics” such as Meister Eckhart became known. The author of *The Imitation of Christ* and the English mystics of the 14th century such as Julian of Norwich are found here. After the Reformation, the Carmelites of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John, the French school of spiritual writers, the Jesuits, the Benedictines, and modern Cistercians such as Thomas Merton added to the mix. *Centering Prayer* and *Lectio Divina* are practices associated with Contemplative practices. In contemporary times, the importance of meditation and health connect spiritual and physical realms more directly. (For example, Harold G. Koenig, MD at Duke University).

### Historical example: St. Thérèse of Lisieux (the Little Flower)

Thérèse was a cloistered Carmelite nun, born 1873 in Alençon, France, who from as early as age three had an intense longing for God. She grew up in a very loving and Catholic household and her faith development was greatly influenced by her parents and older sisters. She was accepted into a convent at age 15 and died 9 years later of tuberculosis. In her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, she emphasizes her intimate connection during prayer:

“But what I demand is love. I care now about one thing only – to love You, my Jesus! Great deeds are forbidden me, I cannot preach the Gospel nor shed my blood – but what does it matter? My brothers toil instead of me and I, a little child, well, I keep close by the throne of God and I love for those who fight. Love proves itself by deeds, so how am I to show my love? Well, I will scatter flowers, perfuming the Divine throne with their fragrance, and I’ll sweetly sing my hymn of love. Yes, my Beloved, that is how I will spend my short life. The only way I can prove my love is by scattering flowers and these flowers are every little sacrifice, every glance and word, and the doing of the least of actions for love. I wish both to suffer and to find joy through love” (p 156, *Image Books edition*).

There is also a tie to the INCARNATIONAL Tradition as she describes her first Communion experience:

“Oh how sweet the first kiss of Jesus was! It was a kiss of love. I knew that I was loved and I declared: ‘I love you and I give myself to you forever!’ ...on that day it was no longer a matter of gazing: it was a union. There were no longer two of us. Therese had disappeared like a drop of water in the depth of the ocean. Only Jesus remained....” (Image Books, page 52).

**Reflective question:**

1. Have you ever had a time of felt, deep intimacy with God? When and where did this happen? If not, can you describe any longing for a connection with the Transcendent or does this question make no sense to you?

**Group question:**

1. What helps you slow down and connect with the Transcendent?

## **SELECTING A CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE, CLOSING DISCUSSION AND PRAYER** (20 minutes)

This week you are asked to select a CONTEMPLATIVE Spiritual Practice. It may help to think in specific terms about what your prayer might look like and the reasons for praying. Maybe it won't be helpful to decide how long you will devote to meditating. You might consider when and where you will you pray so that you can be in God's presence? Will you include a memorized prayer, working in your flower garden, or silence? Will you journal your prayers or meditations and read them later? Will you use music to help you pray or work to turn off the sound around you to be able to focus just on God? Try to imagine a *new rhythm* that you might be able to incorporate this week. You can find a few suggestions on page 49

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of this curriculum and, also, a *Daily Examen* for you to use on page 48.

*Have the group spend a few minutes in silence and then discuss a possible way that the CONTEMPLATIVE Tradition might be attempted this next week. Note there is room below to write down ideas and a list of ideas below and at the end of this booklet.*

Facilitator or group read aloud:

What is the overall goal in pursuing spiritual practices?

To journey deeper into our faith in Christ by choosing unity.

Group #1 included the review of two traditions, so there probably won't be an opportunity for sharing prayer requests. You may want to discuss and decide what type of "donation" you might want to bring as a group, if you haven't discussed this yet. Affirm when and where the next meeting will be held, if anyone will bring snacks, and who will facilitate the next group if you are sharing this task. The Facilitator can close in a brief prayer.

**For Your Notes and Thoughts**

# LENT LESSON #2

## THE HOLINESS TRADITION & PRACTICES

*Review of CONTEMPLATIVE Tradition*

**Suggested Structure of the 90-minute Small Group**

*Feel free to adapt as needed*

10 minutes	Gathering, snacks & service donation
10 minutes	Community exchange: Getting to Know Each Other
15 minutes	Opening and Review of previous week's Exercises
35 minutes	Reflection on a Spiritual Tradition The Practice in the life or teachings of Jesus Historical Example of the Spiritual Tradition
20 minutes	Selection of Spiritual Practice, sharing prayer requests and closing time of prayer

## COMMUNITY EXCHANGE

*Getting to Know Each Other*

Introduce yourself with your name. Describe one person in your life that has positively influenced you. Describe one positive and one negative trait that you learned from your own family growing up.

## OPENING AND REVIEW EXERCISES

Everyone please read the INTRODUCTORY READING out loud found on page 8.

In this group we will review our experience of attempting the CONTEMPLATIVE Tradition of Spiritual Practice and learn about the HOLINESS Tradition of Spiritual Practice.

Facilitator: Ask the group members to share their experiences of doing CONTEMPLATIVE spiritual practices this past week. What did they notice about their relationship to God, to themselves and to others? What was difficult and what worked for them? What might you do differently if you



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tried to work on the CONTEMPLATIVE practice again? (After about 10-15 minutes of honest conversation, then transition to the next Spiritual Discipline)

### THE HOLINESS TRADITION ASKS THE QUESTION:

*How do I intend to cultivate habits of holy living, and learn to resist temptation?*

Often the “tone” of Holiness talk is negative, so it may be worthwhile to shift this tone to make positive statements as a change in our rhythm of living. Living a holy life is not a list of actions to avoid. This is not the place to detail your vices and secret sins, together with a resolution to abstain from them. Holy living has to do with *moving toward* a meaning-filled life where God is defining how you are living.

One of the key disciplines in the holiness tradition is *self-awareness and setting limits*. These ways of spiritual living seek to take seriously the practices of fasting, silence, solitude, submission, and service— anything that requires us to set aside our own appetites, desires, and will in favor of God or other persons.

The other crucial discipline we need to consider within the holiness tradition is *confession*. A period of honest self-examination, leading to a time of confession (whether to God or a gracious fellow Christian) helps us put our sins into perspective. Reflection helps us to understand how deeply we have wounded ourselves, others, and God. But, mercifully, we also discover the immeasurable love and forgiveness of God who sets our sins “as far as the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:12).

We will review this Tradition by:

- Inviting you to reflect on this tradition in your own life
- Exploring how Jesus demonstrated or taught about specific spiritual practices
- Reviewing a Christian person in history who focused on that domain
- Selecting a way to practice that spiritual domain over the duration of one week and to share with others/reflect about your experience

## REFLECTION ON THE HOLINESS TRADITION

**Individual reflection:** *(take a few moments to write if you want)*

1. Has there ever been a time when you decided to “give up” something to better your life? What were your motives in doing this?

**Group questions:**

1. During church each Sunday in the Order of Worship, we regularly have a time for Confession of Sin and a Declaration of Forgiveness. How significant is this part of the worship service for you when you come to church?
2. How easy or hard is it for you to ask for forgiveness from someone? Give an example.
3. Has anyone ever gone to a “silent retreat” or done a “fast for the poor” or given up something for Lent? What, if anything, did these practices teach you about yourself? Discuss.

## JESUS ON HOLINESS

In Matthew 5-7 (The Sermon on the Mount), Jesus offers many important teachings about how to live our lives according to a new ethic of God's Kingdom. He even challenges his followers to a high standard, comparing their “righteousness” to the religious leaders of the day. Most probably felt overwhelmed when they heard Jesus' words.

Have someone read Matt 5:48.

**Group question:**

1. What do you think Jesus means by the words “be perfect?” Discuss.

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Possibly a better modern-day translation for the word perfect in 5:48 (Greek word *telios*) is *mature or whole*. The word has to do with showing evidence of a solid ethical character, relating to others as God relates to them. Most of these characteristics require emotional, behavioral, and relational maturity and integration of self.

Now notice the word “therefore” introducing Matt 5:48. If there is a *therefore*, begin to consider what it is “*there for?*” Review together Matt 5:21-48 and find some ways where Jesus is wanting us to “mature” in our relationship with others.

You have heard	with	I say to you
Verse 21		
Do not murder		Anyone who is angry....
Verse 27		
Do not commit adultery		Anyone who looks with lust....
Verse 33		
Do not break an oath		Yes be Yes; No be No....

**Group questions:**

1. Have there been areas of your life that have, in a sense, become more holy over the years? How did these changes come about?
2. Have there been particular moments in your own life where you believe that God was pleased with you? Was there a situation when you felt like you were the kind of person that God wanted you to be?

**A HISTORICAL FIGURE AND HOLINESS**

Although some of the historical particulars are open to debate, Athanasius wrote about an early Christian saint and aesthetic, Saint Antony, who lived in Egypt in approximately 270 AD. He came from a well-to-do family, but when his parents died when he was 20, he gave up his inherited possessions and turned to a simple life. From age 35-55 he lived in solitude and later he led a monastic group devoted to a holy life. His life was shaped by self-reflection, integrated into intentional relationships.

Thus conducting himself, Antony was beloved by all. He

subjected himself in sincerity to the good men whom he visited, and learned thoroughly where each surpassed him in zeal and discipline. He observed the graciousness of one; the unceasing prayer of another; he took knowledge of another's freedom from anger and another's loving-kindness; he gave heed to one as he watched, to another as he studied; one he admired for his endurance, another for his fasting and sleeping on the ground; the meekness of one and the long-suffering of another he watched with care, while he took note of the piety towards Christ and the mutual love which animated all. Thus filled, he returned to his own place of discipline, and henceforth would strive to unite the qualities of each, and was eager to show in himself the virtues of all. With others of the same age he had no rivalry; save this only, that he should not be second to them in higher things. And this he did so as to hurt the feelings of nobody, but made them rejoice over him. So all they of that village and the good men in whose intimacy he was, when they saw that he was a man of this sort, used to call him God-beloved. And some welcomed him as a son, others as a brother. Antony the Great (attributed), in *On the Character of Men. The Philokalia*, (1981) tr. GEH Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware, (Faber & Faber).

### **Group questions:**

1. Saint Antony took the best qualities that he saw in other Christians and "tried them on for himself." Does this sound like a Christian practice to attempt to be holy or a bit strange to you? Discuss.

## **SELECTING A HOLINESS PRACTICE AND CLOSING PRAYERS**

Holiness practices can be "big" or "small." Consider simplifying your life in some way as a means to honor God in your life. Or think of a specific way where you can be "perfect," that is, take a step closer to the person that God wants you to be this week. Abstaining from certain activities or adding more silence are aspects of this spiritual tradition. You can find a few suggestions on page 48 and, also, a *Daily Examen* for you to use on page 48.

*Have the group spend a few minutes in silence and then discuss a way that the HOLINESS Tradition might be attempted this next week.*

## **Lesson #2**

Facilitator or group read aloud:

What is the overall goal in pursuing spiritual practices?

To journey deeper into our faith in Christ by choosing unity.

If there is time, share any requests for prayer from the group and save a few minutes at the end of the group to pray together. Affirm when and where the next meeting will be held, if anyone will bring snacks and who will facilitate the next group if you are sharing this task.

**For Your Notes and Thoughts**

# LENT LESSON #3

## EVANGELICAL TRADITION & PRACTICES

*Review of HOLINESS Tradition*

**Suggested Structure of the 90-minute Small Group**

*Feel free to adapt as needed*

10 minutes	Gathering, snacks & service donation
10 minutes	Community exchange: Getting to Know Each Other
15 minutes	Opening and Review of previous week's Exercises
35 minutes	Reflection on a Spiritual Tradition The Practice in the life or teachings of Jesus Historical Example of the Spiritual Tradition
20 minutes	Selection of Spiritual Practice, sharing prayer requests and closing time of prayer

## COMMUNITY EXCHANGE

*Getting to Know Each Other*

Introduce yourself with your name. Describe a book or movie or song that you have read or seen or heard that has positively impacted you (can be past or present). What about the book, movie or song particularly affected you and why?

## OPENING AND REVIEW EXERCISES

Everyone please read the INTRODUCTORY READING out loud found on page 8.

In this group we will review our experience of attempting the HOLINESS Tradition of Spiritual Practice and learn about the EVANGELICAL (*Word-Based*) Tradition of Spiritual Practice.

Facilitator: Ask the group members to share their experiences of doing HOLINESS Spiritual practices this past week. What did they notice about their relationship to God, to themselves and to others? (After about

### Lesson #3

10-15 minutes of honest conversation, transition to the next Spiritual Discipline.)

## THE EVANGELICAL TRADITION ASKS THE QUESTION:

*How am I allowing the voice of God to speak to me,  
and through me?*

Most reformed Protestant churches emphasize this Tradition including Presbyterians. The evangelical tradition emphasizes the **Word of God**, that is the reading, studying, and preaching of the Bible.

If you look afresh at the word, you might be able to see two parts:

EV comes from the Greek word meaning *good*.

ANGEL comes from the Greek word that means *messenger*.

Sound familiar? Good news. The Evangelical Tradition emphasizes the story of God spoken by those who have witnessed God's work. These words, stories and teachings are found in the books of the Old and New Testament. Actually the word Bible means *book* and the Jewish people were known as the "people of the book."

The Word of God is central to the evangelical tradition and the focus of these words is Jesus. John 1:1; 14 reads "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." The meanings of the Word of God (i.e. Jesus, Scripture) are central in this spiritual tradition.

We will review this Tradition by:

- Inviting you to reflect on this tradition in your own life
- Exploring how Jesus demonstrated or taught about specific spiritual practices
- Reviewing a Christian person in history who focused on that domain
- Selecting a way to practice that spiritual domain over the duration of one week and to share with others/reflect about your experience

## REFLECTION ON THE EVANGELICAL TRADITION

Group questions:

1. How do you define the word Evangelical?

2. When you usually hear the word evangelical, what associations do you make with it?
3. What place does Bible reading hold in your life?
4. When you hear a sermon, how important is it to you that the message is directly linked to a Bible reading?

**Individual reflection:** *(take a few moments to write if you want)*

1. How much of the Bible have you read?
2. What would you say is your level of understanding?  
☐ low                      ☐ moderate                      ☐ high
3. Would you call yourself as student of Scripture?

## JESUS ON SCRIPTURE:

### *The EVANGELICAL or Word-Based Tradition*

During the time of Jesus, religiously-devout Jewish boys were trained in the Jewish Scripture, or Tanakh, an acronym that is based on the initial Hebrew letters of each of the text's three parts—Ta-Na-Kh:

<b>Ta</b>	or Torah meaning Instruction The first 5 books of the Bible, or the Five books of Moses or Mosaic Law
<b>Na</b>	or Navi'im means Prophets Any writings that have to do with the prophets
<b>Kh</b>	or Ketuvim means Writings (a group of books) History books (Ezra, Chronicles, Nehemiah) Wisdom books (Job, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs) Poetry books (Psalms, Lamentation, Song of Solomon) Other books (Ruth, Esther, Daniel)

When you read the gospels, every so often you will read the words of Jesus that show this organization as Jesus refers to the Scripture. For



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example, read Luke 16:16-17 or Luke 24:27. Jesus used the words ‘the Law & the prophets’ (or Torah and Naviim) to explain a point he was making about the Greatest Commandment (Matt. 22:40).

Jesus used direct quotations from Scripture often in his ministry and begins his ministry in Nazareth and Capernaum\* reading and interpreting Scripture in the synagogue (Jewish house of worship). Jesus had a high regard for Scripture.

To get a sense for Jesus’s reliance on Scripture in his teachings, review a few of the following passages in the gospel of Matthew.

- During the temptation experience (4: 4, 7, 10).
- To explain the purpose of His coming (9:13; 10:36).
- To explain the ministry of John the Baptist (11:10).
- To explain God’s requirements (12:7).
- To understand the response of some people who heard Him (13:14-15).
- In answer to questions asked Him (19:18-19; 22:37, 39).
- Showing an OT Scripture that needs to be fulfilled (21:5; 26:31).
- Reminding people of unfulfilled prophecies (24:15; 24:29).
- To explain a point while He was being arrested (26:54).
- To express His emotions on the cross (27:47).

Jesus also was a student of Scripture as he references characters and places in his teaching. Reading also from Matthew.

Moses (19:8), David (22:43), Abel (23:35), Zechariah (23:35), Daniel (24:15), Noah (24:37), Gomorrah (10:15), Sodom (10:15; 11:23-24)

### Group questions:

1. How do you think Jesus came to his understanding of Hebrew Scripture?
2. What are ways that help you to learn the Bible?

\*Capernaum is right on the Sea of Galilee and was the headquarters for Jesus’ ministry. The ruins of the Capernaum synagogue can be seen on Holy Land tours today.

## LIFE OF A HISTORICAL FIGURE AND EVANGELICAL TRADITION

William Tyndale (1494 – 1536) was a 16th century scholar and translator who became a leading figure in the Protestant Reformation towards the end of his life. He was influenced by the works of Erasmus (who updated a translation of the New Testament so it was available in Europe) and Martin Luther. Tyndale was the first to translate considerable parts of the Bible into English for a public, lay readership. While a number of partial and complete translations had been made from the seventh century onward, particularly during the 14th century, Tyndale's was the first English translation to draw directly from the original Hebrew and Greek languages and the first to take advantage of the printing press, which allowed for its wide distribution. Tyndale's version provided a major foundation for the King James Version of the Bible. Ultimately, Tyndale was tried for heresy and burned at the stake. Tyndale Press honors the legacy of this Word-based Christian innovator.

Let's read some of Tyndale's writing:

Evangelion (that we call the gospel) is a Greek word; and signifieth good, merry, glad and joyful tidings, that maketh a man's heart glad, and maketh him sing, dance and leap for joy: as when David had killed Goliath the giant, came glad tidings unto the Jews, that their fearful and cruel enemy was slain, and they delivered out of all danger; for gladness whereof, they sung, danced, and were joyful. In like manner is the Evangelion of God (which we call gospel, and the New Testament joyful tidings; and as some say, a good hearing) published by the apostles throughout all the world, of Christ the right David; how that he hath fought with sin, with death and the devil, and overcome them; whereby all men that were in bondage to sin, wounded with death, overcome of the devil, are without their own merits or deservings, loosed, justified, restored to life and saved, brought to liberty and reconciled unto the favour of God, and set at one with him again; which tiding as many as believe laud, praise and thank God, are glad, sing and dance for you.

This Evangelion or gospel (that is to say, such joyful tidings) is called the New Testament; because that as a man, when he shall die, appointest his goods to be dealt and distributed after his death among them which he nameth to be his

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heirs; even so Christ before his death commanded and appointed that such Evangelion, gospel, or tidings should be declared throughout all the world, and therewith to give unto all that repent, and believe, all his goods; that is to say, his life, wherewith he swallowed and devoured up death; his righteousness, wherewith he banished sin; his salvation, wherewith he overcame eternal damnation. Now can the wretched man (that knoweth himself to be wrapped in sin, and in danger to death and hell) hear no more joyous a thing, than such glad and comfortable tidings of Christ; so that he cannot but be glad and laugh from the low bottom of his heart, if he believe that the tidings are true.

*William Tyndale "A Pathway into the Holy Scripture" (1525) in The Work of William Tyndale, ed. G.E. Duffield (Sutton Courtenay Press 1964)*

### Group questions:

1. According to this passage from Tyndale, what are some beliefs that are "good" in the "good news" that brings joy to people?
2. If you were to identify some of what is "good" about the "good news," what would you say?

## SELECTING AN EVANGELICAL (WORD-BASED) PRACTICE AND CLOSING PRAYERS

A very important part of this spiritual discipline, of course, is reading the Bible. Remember, sheer volume of consumption is not the aim. It would be far better to spend five minutes soaking in a single verse from the Psalms than to spend two hours mowing through Deuteronomy and walking away feeling we had accomplished something. What might be a small way to engage in learning about the voice of God to you through reading the Scripture?

It may also be helpful to think about the words we use as part of this Tradition. What words are common for us to say in our everyday life? How do the words we use in our jobs, our homes and in our minds reflect our relationship with God? We may want to take inventory of our language during this next week as a spiritual practice. You can find a

few suggestions for Word-based practices on page 49 and, also, a *Daily Examen* on page 48.

Have the group spend a few minutes in silence and then discuss a way that the EVANGELICAL Tradition might be attempted this next week.

Facilitator or group read aloud:

What is the overall goal in pursuing spiritual practices?

To journey deeper into our faith in Christ by choosing unity.

**Group questions:**

1. We have reviewed several traditions so far, any reflections so far?

If there is time, share any requests for prayer from the group and save a few minutes at the end of the group to pray together. Affirm when and where the next meeting will be held, if anyone will bring snacks and who will facilitate the next group if you are sharing this task

**For Your Notes and Thoughts**

# LENT LESSON #4

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE TRADITION & PRACTICES**

*Review of EVANGELICAL Tradition*

**Suggested Structure of the 90-minute Small Group**

*Feel free to adapt as needed*

10 minutes	Gathering, snacks & service donation
10 minutes	Community exchange: Getting to Know Each Other
15 minutes	Opening and Review of previous week's Exercises
35 minutes	Reflection on a Spiritual Tradition The Practice in the life or teachings of Jesus Historical Example of the Spiritual Tradition
20 minutes	Selection of Spiritual Practice, sharing prayer requests and closing time of prayer

## **COMMUNITY EXCHANGE**

*Getting to Know Each Other*

Introduce yourself with your name. Describe if you have done any faith-based work in another culture or if you have travelled to another country. What did you learn from these experiences? If you have not done this, have others in your family or friendship network done faith-based anywhere in the world? What stories did you hear?

## **OPENING AND REVIEW EXERCISES**

Everyone please read the INTRODUCTORY READING out loud found on page 8.

In this group we will review our experience of attempting the EVANGELICAL Tradition of Spiritual Practice and learn about the SOCIAL JUSTICE Tradition of Spiritual Practice.

Facilitator: Ask the group members to share their experiences of doing EVANGELICAL Spiritual practices this past week. What did they notice

about their relationship to God, to themselves and to others? (After a few minutes, transition to the next Spiritual Discipline)

### **THE SOCIAL JUSTICE TRADITION ASKS THE QUESTIONS:**

*How can I “act justly and love mercy” (Micah 6:8), or how can my life contribute to the health of my society and world?*

Social justice is a term probably coined by a Jesuit, Luigi Taparelli, in the 1800s based on the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, a medieval Christian theologian. Central to this term is the concept that all human beings have worth no matter who they are. Each person has dignity and each person needs to be valued. In particular, those who are poor or marginalized in society must be cared for and recognized. A Judeo-Christian understanding challenges those who have been blessed to become a blessing to others, particular to those who are struggling in life.

There are a myriad of ways of expressing God’s compassion for this broken world in our own lives. For some, this will mean involvement in a political party or group; for others, work with a non-profit or development agency, whether paid or voluntary; and for still others, a connection with local community initiatives: soup kitchens, playgroups, or counseling services.

This spiritual tradition also drives us to consider lifestyle issues: will I embrace habits of using less resources or consider my impact on the global climate, or commit to purchasing fair trade food? In this spiritual discipline we will be invited to see how our life is tied to the larger world around us.

We will review this Tradition by:

- Inviting you to reflect on this tradition in your own life
- Exploring how Jesus demonstrated or taught about specific spiritual practices
- Reviewing a Christian person in history who focused on that domain
- Selecting a way to practice that spiritual domain over the duration of one week and to share with others/reflect about your experience

## **PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE SOCIAL JUSTICE TRADITION**

### **Group questions:**

1. If you grew up in some sort of religious faith, how much did this experience emphasize a social component to living out your beliefs? That is, how much of an emphasis was there on the world outside the faith community?
2. How might you distinguish social justice ideas from political ideas or are they the same?
3. When you hear the word justice, what do you think of? Share your ideas.

### **Individual reflection:**

1. If you were to divide up your own spiritual life into percentages and you were to put these percentages into 2 categories, personal (about me) and social (about others), what percentages would be in each category? It's more complicated than these two categories; just try to separate them out.

## **THE LIFE OF JESUS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Read Luke 4:14-21. Interestingly, Jesus is quoting from Isaiah in the text in Luke. This event happens very early in Jesus ministry and is sometimes referred to as Jesus' mission statement or inaugural address.

### **Group questions:**

1. What do you think Jesus means by "today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing?"
2. Did Jesus seem to live out some of the job description in Isaiah? How?

The biographies of Jesus, even those not done by Christians, depict him repeatedly reaching out to those at the bottom of the social pyramid—poor people, women, Samaritans, lepers, children, prostitutes, and tax

collectors. Jesus was also eager to accept people who had status, but he made it clear that all, regardless of social position, needed to repent. Sometimes in the process of repenting, people needed to change their lifestyle too. For example, Jesus invited the rich young man to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor (Luke 18:18-30, Mark 10:17-31).

Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount about reaching out to persons who were often marginalized in his society and the list is not that different from our culture today. This idea of reaching out to care for these persons is tied closely to the Biblical idea of “righteousness” or being in the right kind of relationship with God and the right kind of relationship with others.

Read Matthew 5:1-11.

### **Group questions:**

1. As you read each verse, try to offer a 21st century example of those Jesus might be referring to in each section? For example, in verse 5:3 who might be a 21st century of a person or persons who are “poor in spirit”? (e.g., maybe someone who feels depressed and hopeless)

### **List Matthew 5 Blessed are**

### **Modern Day Example**

*Verse 5:3*

The poor in spirit  
someone depressed

Someone depressed

*Verse 5:4*

Those who mourn

*Verse 5:5*

The meek

*Verse 5:6*

Those who hunger and thirst  
for righteousness

*Verse 5:7*

The merciful



### List Matthew 5 Blessed are

### Modern Day Example

*Verse 5:8*

The pure in heart

*Verse 5:9*

The peacemakers

*Verse 5:10*

Those persecuted for  
righteousness

### Individual reflection:

1. Do you identify with any particular “blessed” statements in these verses?

## LIFE OF HISTORICAL FIGURE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier is a practical theologian who has used her gifts as a church educator, theology professor, and academic dean. Currently she is the coordinator of relations for theological entities at the Association of Hispanic Theological Education. She’s written on immigration, Latina evangélica theology, and participatory action, among other topics. She writes from her places as Latina educator, mother, grandmother, wife, and minister. Read some of her thoughts about justice below (from a 2020 *Sojourners* magazine blog on Christian leaders during the second year of the Pandemic).

### Could you share your vision for growing justice in a specific area this year?

Growing justice in the area of poverty involves getting information out to people about how poverty is structured intentionally by those with power which, at times, includes our theologies. Our strategies for community organizing and advocacy and for the continued work of caring for one another right now must work together. We must be relentless in our resistance and finding ways for persons to live with

dignity. We must work together from many different sides.

**Why are women's voices so important right now, especially as we enter year two of the pandemic?**

Women's voices have always brought perspective, wisdom, compassion, and passion that makes us like the water that erodes the rocks in its way. Water does not destroy in order to create change; it erodes, making new use of the matter. It's also important to open up spaces and listen to women's voices because when women speak, they come into their own power. There are many young women whose voices are the release of the power of resurrection in our midst.

**Group questions:**

1. What social justice issues concern you? Have you found ways to step into addressing these concerns? Explain.

**SELECTING A SOCIAL JUSTICE PRACTICE AND  
CLOSING PRAYERS**

This tradition encourages you to personally address injustice in our broken world. This tradition encourages you to share your resources with those who do not have as many resources. This tradition encourages you to simplify your life in order to have more to offer to others. You can find a few suggestions on page 49 of the curriculum.

Have the group spend a few minutes in silence and then discuss a way that the SOCIAL JUSTICE Tradition might be attempted this next week.

Facilitator or group reads aloud: What is overall goal in pursuing spiritual practices? To journey deeper into our faith in Christ by CHOOSING UNITY.

If there is time, share any requests for prayer from the group and save a few minutes at the end of the group to pray together. Affirm when and where the next meeting will be held, if anyone will bring snacks, and who will facilitate the next group if you are sharing the task.

For Your Notes and Thoughts

# LENT LESSON #5

## CHARISMATIC TRADITION & PRACTICES CLOSING OUR TIME TOGETHER

*Review of SOCIAL JUSTICE Tradition*

**Suggested Structure of the 90-minute Small Group**

*Feel free to adapt as needed*

10 minutes	Gathering, snacks & service donation
10 minutes	Community exchange: Getting to Know Each Other
15 minutes	Opening and Review of previous week's Exercises
35 minutes	Reflection on a Spiritual Tradition The Practice in the life or teachings of Jesus Historical Example of the Spiritual Tradition
20 minutes	Selection of Spiritual Practice and Closing reflections

## COMMUNITY EXCHANGE

*Getting to Know Each Other*

Introduce yourself with your name. Describe a time in your life when you believe God may have been using you to help someone or when someone reached out to you and you thought it may have been the hand of God helping you.

## OPENING AND REVIEW EXERCISES

Everyone please read the INTRODUCTORY READING out loud found on page 8.

In this group we will review our experience of attempting the SOCIAL JUSTICE Tradition of Spiritual Practice and learn about the CHARISMATIC Tradition of Spiritual Practice.

Facilitator: Ask the group members to share their experiences of doing SOCIAL JUSTICE Spiritual practices this past week. What did they notice

## Lesson #5

about their relationship to God, to themselves and to others? (After a few minutes, transition to the next Spiritual Discipline)

### THE CHARISMATIC TRADITION ASKS THE QUESTION:

*How can I allow the Holy Spirit to minister through me?*

The word *Charismatic* stems from the Greek word, *χαρις*, which sounds like *karis* and means gift or grace. The Holy Spirit gives each Christian the gift of grace to share with others. These gifts of grace are also known as *spiritual gifts*. Some Christian denominations emphasize specific spiritual gifts as indicators of the charismatic tradition (e.g., healing or speaking in tongues) as well as strong emotional expression. However, a Biblical understanding embraces a wide range of activities as the work of God's Spirit.

But before we can minister to anyone well, we must first understand ourselves. We can then commit ourselves to another's well being. Paul reminds us "to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7). So before we can start offering our *spiritual gifts* to others, we must offer *ourselves* to *God's service*. We will need to be clear about what we are willing to do and not to do, where we are gifted and where others are gifted. It's not a competition since all these abilities are a gift from God.

We will review this Tradition by:

- Inviting you to reflect on this tradition in your own life
- Exploring how Jesus demonstrated or taught about specific spiritual practices
- Reviewing a Christian person in history who focused on that domain
- Selecting a way to practice that spiritual domain over the duration of one week and to share with others/reflect about your experience

## PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE CHARISMATIC TRADITION

### Group questions:

1. Do you have any immediate associations with the Charismatic tradition? Where do these associations come from? Have any of these ideas changed over time?
2. Presbyterians are less known for being "emotional" in their faith and tend to emphasize education and

knowledge instead. Where do emotions fit within spiritual development?

3. What do you think it means that each Christian is “spiritually gifted”? Have you experienced anyone at Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church or other churches as “spiritually gifted”? Describe an example other than a pastor.

**Individual reflection** (take a few moments to write if you want):

1. As you think about your understanding of God in your life, do you have any sense of being spiritually gifted in a particular way? If so, can you recall a time or situation when you have shared this gift with another? What was the outcome?

## THE LIFE OF JESUS AND THE SPIRIT (CHARISMATIC TRADITION)

Jesus appeared to have several key times in his life where he particularly experienced a particularly vivid presence of the Holy Spirit.

Read Luke 3:21-22; 4:14-15; 10:21-24.

In chapter 3 we have Jesus’ baptism; in chapter 4 we see him in the aftermath of the temptation in the wilderness; and, in chapter 10, Jesus is in the full stride of his teaching ministry and the return of his sent-out disciples who have experienced the power of healing others.

**Group questions:**

1. Try to put yourself into Jesus’ skin during these times in his life. What do you think he was feeling and thinking during these experiences?

## Lesson #5

Jesus also seems to teach that the ministry of the Holy Spirit was going to change after his life on earth.

Someone read John 16: 5-14.

In verse 7, we have reference to the Helper and in verse 13, the Spirit of truth. The Greek word means intercessor, consoler, advocate, or comforter. The image here is of one who is right next to you, leaning towards you, and within very close proximity.

Finally, it appears that in later Biblical passages, the early church begins to understand better some of the ways the Holy Spirit is working within its community. Read and review I Corinthians 12:1-7. Recall how this book has been a focus of our sermon series recently.

### Group questions:

1. What is Paul getting at in this passage of I Corinthians?
2. Do we still see some of the listed spiritual gifts operating within our church communities?
3. Have you ever completed a spiritual gifts inventory to better define your own spiritual gifts? Did this inventory help you define more clearly how God might be using your abilities?

## LIFE OF HISTORICAL FIGURE AND CHARISMATIC TRADITION

We don't usually think about Martin Luther (1485-1546, Catholic priest, German theologian, protestant reformer) as being a charismatic. However, Luther's words help us to understand how spiritual gifts might function. Listen to his words:

Therefore, if we recognize the great and precious things which are given use, as Paul says in Romans 5:5, our hearts will be filled by the Holy Spirit with the love which makes us free, joyful, almighty workers and conquerors overall tribulations, servants of our neighbors, and yet lords of all. For those who do not recognize the gifts bestowed upon them through Christ, however, Christ has been born in vain; they go their way with their works and shall never come to taste or feel those things. Just as our neighbor is in need and

lacks that in which we abound, so we were in need before God and lacked his mercy. Hence, as our heavenly Father has in Christ freely come to our aid, we also ought freely to help our neighbor through our body and its works, and each one should become as it were a Christ to the other that we may be Christs to one another and Christ may be the same in all, that is, that we may be truly Christians.

Who then can comprehend the riches and the glory of the Christian life? It can do all things and has things and lacks nothing. It is lord over sin, death and hell, and yet at the same time it serves, ministers to, and benefits all. But alas in our day this life is unknown throughout the world. It is neither preached about nor sought after; we are altogether ignorant of our own name and do not know why we are Christians or bear the name of Christians. Surely, we are named after Christ, not because he is absent from us, but because he dwells in us, that is, because we believe in him and are Christs one to another and do to our neighbors as Christ does to us. Martin Luther, *Treatise on Christian Liberty* 1961 in Dillenberger in Martin Luther: Selections from his writing. (*Doubleday*).

### Group questions:

1. Martin Luther speaks to at least two contexts in which Christians can be Christs to one another—(1) in the church community, and (2) to the larger world. Do you think that spiritual gifts operate in both contexts or just within the church community?
2. Is there a difference between a spiritual gift and a natural talent or are these the same? (Pastor Karla talked about this in a sermon in the last few months). Discuss.

## SELECTING A CHARISMATIC PRACTICE AND CLOSING OF THE GROUP

We might explore this tradition more specifically by asking: Do I understand that I have spiritual gifts and know what they are? How will I show my commitment to the Christian community to which God has called me? How might I share the gifts that I currently have within my life circumstances right now? How might the larger world be changed for



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good when I bring my energy and abilities to meet these needs?

We sometimes find appropriate ways of expressing the gifts God has given us when we match them to particular situations and then get feedback from others about what we have done. You can find a few suggestions on page 49.

Have the group spend a few minutes in silence and then discuss a way that the CHARISMATIC Tradition might be attempted in the future.

**NOTE for Facilitator:** In the spirit of the CHARISMATIC Tradition where each person is called by God in a unique way, let the group know that there are FINAL THOUGHTS and other exercises at the end of this curriculum to develop their own, unique commitment to an updated Spiritual Discipline rhythm for their life. No need to do this now, just encourage the group members to continue with what they have learned and to use the workbook if it has been helpful.

**Since this is the last meeting,** affirm what you got out of meeting in the group that was helpful. Identify and discuss if there have been any experiences of journeying deeper into faith, experiencing Jesus differently, strengthening the church community and/or participating in the transformation of our world? Ask the group if there is a renewed sense of UNITY by studying a variety of ways to step into spiritual practice? Ask if any have changed their viewpoints by sharing experiences. Thank the host and facilitator(s) or your self-directed community for this experience.

Facilitator or group reads aloud: What is overall goal in pursuing spiritual practices? To journey deeper into our faith in Christ by CHOOSING UNITY.

For Your Notes and Thoughts

# FINAL THOUGHTS

## WHAT A PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE RHYTHM MIGHT LOOK LIKE *(an example)*

If my overall goal in pursuing spiritual practices is to be a follower of Jesus in the 21st century who is CHOOSING UNITY, I commit to following these life rhythms:

### INCARNATIONAL

I will participate in a community worship service regularly, even if I am away from my home church. I will participate the celebration of Communion several times a year.

### CONTEMPLATIVE

I will pray when I first wake up in the morning and before I go to sleep each night. I will make a silent, walking retreat once every year (to bring incarnational and contemplative together.)

### HOLINESS

I will fast for a meal one day every other week and give the money I save to a project for unhoused people. I will journal in response to several questions from a Daily Examen and share some of my struggles and successes with another person.

### EVANGELICAL

I will study a book in the Bible several times a week and read at least two Christian books a year.

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

I will practice simplicity and give to an underserved community regularly. I will find new ways to practice hospitality.

### CHARISMATIC

I will develop a clearer understanding of my spiritual gifts and attempt to offer my gifts in a new way each year.

## **YOUR OWN PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE RHYTHM**

If my overall goal in pursuing spiritual practices is to be a follower of Jesus in the 21st century who is CHOOSING UNITY, I commit to following these life rhythms:

**INCARNATIONAL**

**CONTEMPLATIVE**

**HOLINESS**

**EVANGELICAL**

**SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**CHARISMATIC**

## RHYTHM OF LIFE WORKSHEET

How do I use the 168 hours available to me each week?

Reflect on the last two or three weeks and estimate the amount of time you spent each on the following activities to get an idea of the Rhythm/Rule of your life.

Getting up and dressed	_____ hrs/wk	1 hr=0.06%
Meal preparation	_____ hrs/wk	2 hr=1.2%
Eating	_____ hrs/wk	3 hr= 1.8%
Grocery shopping	_____ hrs/wk	4 hr= 2.4%
Commuting to/from work	_____ hrs/wk	5 hr= 3.0%
Work or other responsibilities	_____ hrs/wk	6 hr= 3.6%
Chores	_____ hrs/wk	7 hr= 4.2%
Seeing the doctor or dentist	_____ hrs/wk	8 hr= 4.8%
Getting ready for bed	_____ hrs/wk	9 hr= 5.4%
Sleeping	_____ hrs/wk	10 hr=6.0%

---

<b>Sub-total of above hours</b>	_____ hrs/wk
<b>Total hours in a week</b>	<b>168 hrs/wk</b>
<b>Sub-total from above</b>	_____ hrs/wk
<b>Remaining discretionary hours</b>	_____ hrs/wk

---

Attend worship services	_____ hrs/wk
Bible study/ small groups	_____ hrs/wk
Personal spiritual activities	_____ hrs/wk
Other spiritual formation activity	_____ hrs/wk
<b>Sub-total spiritual formation</b>	_____ hrs/wk

---

Watching TV/movies	_____ hrs/wk
Internet activity	_____ hrs/wk
Sports/Exercise	_____ hrs/wk
Reading	_____ hrs/wk
Shopping other than groceries	_____ hrs/wk
Socializing with friends	_____ hrs/wk
Hobbies	_____ hrs/wk
Community/Social Service	_____ hrs/wk
Other (list)	_____ hrs/wk
<b>Sub-Total Other Activities</b>	_____ hrs/wk

## **REFLECTIONS ON RHYTHM OF LIFE WORKSHEET**

As you look at how you spend your time, does it appear to be in balance?

Describe any changes you believe are necessary to improve your spiritual, emotional, mental, social, or physical well-being.

## DAILY EXAMEN

We encourage you to use this Examen (or some questions in it) each day (as an internal, prayerful, self-reflection):

- For what moment today am I most grateful?
- For what moment today am I least grateful?
- When did I give and receive the most love today?
- When did I give and receive the least love today?
- When did I feel most alive today?
- When did I most feel life draining out of me?
- When today did I have the greatest sense of belonging to myself, others, God, and the Universe?
- When did I have the least sense of belonging to myself, others, God, and the Universe?
- When was I happiest today? What was today's high point?
- When was I saddest? What was today's low point?

## **POSSIBLE PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH EACH SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE**

### **INCARNATIONAL (Sacraments)**

- Attend Ash Wednesday or other Holy week services.
- Select a piece of art to display that connects you to God.
- Select or play a piece music that connects you to God.

### **CONTEMPLATIVE (Prayer & Meditation)**

- Pray the same short prayer throughout the day.
- Set aside an entire hour sometime during the week to be free of distraction and listen for God's voice. Write down what you experience.
- Do a walking meditation outside and notice the beauty that God created. Practice gratitude to God every few steps for what you notice; also, be silent and listen for the Creator's response to you.

### **HOLINESS (Lifestyle)**

- Cultivate integrity in your speech, being honest and simple in your words.
- Take a Sabbath...a time to renew without the general distractions of cell phone, TV or the Internet.
- Write out a confession. Ask forgiveness from someone.

### **EVANGELICAL (Word-Based)**

- Write out a favorite Scripture verse on an index card or cell phone note and put it somewhere you frequently view throughout the day.
- Each day try to tell someone about a tiny part of your faith experience--what you see, feel, believe or pray for.
- Select a section of the Bible that you have never read very well: a chapter, a Book and read and re-read throughout the week. Do some reference research on that section of the Bible (e.g. read a Commentary or Bible study guide).



## **POSSIBLE PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH EACH SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE (CONTINUED)**

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE (Compassion for Others)**

- Help someone in need that you would not ordinarily help.
- With compassion, address some type of injustice. You could write a letter or e-mail or do something hands-on.
- Spend time in a volunteer ministry this week that helps the poor—food kitchen, food bank, after-school program.

### **CHARISMATIC (Giftedness)**

- Search the Scripture to discover or re-discover your spiritual gifts (read I Corinthians 12-14).
- Take an on-line spiritual gifts inventory and match what you find with a ministry at church.
- Seek counsel of others concerning your role in the Church and where you could use your gifts.

## A NOTE ABOUT THIS STUDY

Claudia Grauf-Grounds developed this curriculum in collaboration with the Redmond Presbyterian Adult Spiritual Formation Commission in 2011 and adapted it for Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church in 2025. Please direct any concerns to her: [drclaudiagg@gmail.com](mailto:drclaudiagg@gmail.com)

Materials are adapted from several sources particularly RENOVARE including their developing Explorations series. Smith & Graybeal's resource, *A Spiritual Formation Workbook: Small Group Resources for Nurturing Christian Growth*, was used as a model for this curriculum.

Renovare.org as well as the books by Magill and McGreal, *Christian Spirituality* and Ward and Wild, *The Westminster Collection of Christian Meditations* and other internet sources.



# Point Loma Church



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