



Listening, Praying & Discerning

We are coming together to open our hearts, minds and spirits – to allow God’s Spirit to speak to us and through us. **How is God calling Westminster United Church at this time?** The journey of discovery depends as much on us being personally transformed as it does on the congregation being transformed together. We continue on our journey in this season of prayer...

Week 3: Prayer of Acceptance

A kernel of wisdom from the world of personal transformation is this: “The feelings we resist, we entrench.” When we resist our feelings of pain, sorrow or anxiety, we tend to make them stronger. It is when we accept our feelings exactly as they are that they lose their power over us and we can chart a different or more confident way forward. (This is good advice also in this time of COVID-19). Similarly, when we deny our congregation’s current reality or regard our current reality with judgement, it can cause us either to long for the “good old days” or to seek someone to blame for our situation. Consider the following saying: “We change because God loves us, not in order to win God’s love.” Said somewhat differently: “The church will change because we love it, not to win our love.” During this week, focus on accepting and loving the congregation – in all of its manifestations – exactly as it is right now.

“Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ Then the angel departed from her.”

Luke 1:38

PRAY

This week try to spend anywhere from 2 to 20 minutes per day in intentional, contemplative prayer. Repeat or hum the psalmist words as a way of entering into prayer “Be Still and Know”:

- Sit comfortably
- Decide how long you wish to be in silence—2 min, 5 min, working your way up gradually to 10, 15 or 20 minutes—you may wish to set a timer.
- State your intention (to be fully present to God); ask for God’s help.
- Breathe in. Breathe out. Focus on your breathing while you enter a time of silence.
- Your mind will wander! Be gracious and do not judge yourself! A wandering mind is a gift—it gives you multiple opportunities to practice returning to God.
- When your mind wanders, focus on your breath, or use a word or very short prayer to return to God. “Be Still and Know” “God, I give this time to you” or “Trust” or “Peace.”



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- Your mind will bring up all manner of things, from grocery lists to old wounds to great insights. Accept and release all of these. If it is of value, it will still be there for you when you leave your time of silence. The goal is to practice returning to God.
- At the end of your time of prayer, give thanks to God for being with you. Breathe deeply and close your time of silence.

(Note: For a helpful prayer app, please see the following:

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/centering-prayer-mobile-app>)

REFLECT

Outside of this time of prayer, when you meet with your small group or are reflecting on your own, consider the following questions:

1. What are you being invited to accept about Westminster United?
2. What shifts within you as you practice accepting Westminster United as it is?
3. *As you reflect on the overarching questions for WUC (noted below) what do you notice God saying?*

Overarching questions that Westminster United Church is asking:

- *God, what type of world are you seeking to call forth?*
- *What are you (God) asking us to let go of? What are you asking us to take on?*
- *How do we nurture a deeper relationship with you?*
- *What practical next steps are we invited to take as a congregation?*

Notes:



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