

Covenant Group Session
October 2017
Follen Community Church, Lexington, MA

Mission

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CANDLE LIGHTING and OPENING WORDS: Here, in this circle of trust, we listen in silence, fully present. We open our minds and our hearts.

READING

Follen Church Mission Statement

Reach out and welcome all, experiencing difference as opportunity;

Pursue our spiritual path independently and in fellowship, sharing the quest for understanding, wonder, and meaning;

Commit to justice, service, and increased harmony with nature through thoughtful, compassionate, and courageous action;

Give generously of our time, talents and resources, energized by our contributions and grateful for those of others.

SILENCE

CHECK IN

1. Tell us about your experience with this month's spiritual practice, "Mission", which asked us to:

- consider what part(s) of Follen's mission statement feel easy, or hard
- consider what you might say if you were going to write your own personal mission statement

OR

2. What is lifting or draining your spirit?

OR

3. Are you now "on a mission" in your life? Were you at a different time of life and not now? Is being "on a mission" not for you?

SILENCE

MAIN READING

From "The Small, Happy Life," by David Brooks. NY Times, May 29, 2015

A few weeks ago, I asked readers to send in essays describing their purpose in life and how they found it. A few thousand submitted contributions... but one common theme surprised me.

I expected most contributors would follow the commencement-speech clichés of our high-achieving culture: dream big; set ambitious goals; try to change the world. In fact, a surprising number of people found their purpose by going the other way, by pursuing the small, happy life.

(One respondent, Elizabeth Young...) once heard the story of a man who was asked by a journalist to show his most precious possession. The man, Young wrote, "was proud and excited to show the journalist the gift he had been bequeathed- a banged up tin pot he kept carefully wrapped in cloth as though it was fragile. The journalist was confused. What made this dingy old pot so valuable? 'The message,' the friend replied. The message was 'we do not all have to shine.' This story resonated deeply. In that moment, I was able to relieve myself of the need to do something important, from which I would reap praise and be rewarded with fulfillment. My vision cleared."

Young continues, "I have always wanted to be effortlessly kind. I wanted to raise children who were kind." She notes that among those who survived the Nazi death camps, a predominant quality she noticed was generosity.

"Perhaps," she concludes, "the mission is not a mission at all. ... Everywhere there are tiny, seemingly inconsequential circumstances that, if explored, provide meaning and chances to be generous and kind."

Perhaps spiritual and emotional growth happens in microscopic increments.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Do you feel you have a purpose in life? If so, what is it? How did you find it?
2. How does spiritual and emotional growth happen for you? Microscopic increments? Macroscopic insights?
3. How did the Spiritual practice extend, deepen, or relate to the main reading?

AFFIRMATIONS

This is a time for the whole group to consider quietly what was experienced or spoken, to describe what might have shifted for you or someone else, or to express gratitude or appreciation for something that you or another person revealed or expressed. The purpose of this section is to reflect silently on what was moving or meaningful, and then to offer a single comment into the circle without further response or conversation.

CHECKOUT – Like/Wish/Wonder:

This is a time to consider the experience we have had together, and share gratitude, appreciation, concerns, or ideas. Try to start your sharing with “I like...” “I wish...” or “I wonder...”

CLOSING WORDS

People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

Maya Angelou

Until we meet again, let us go forth, sharing the gifts of Sacred Listening.
The light within me honors the light within you. Go in peace.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FOR NOVEMBER- Balance

Take a physical approach to this spiritual topic. Choose one or both of these activities: Balance on one foot for as long as you can- try to get to at least one minute. Or, balance a pencil or something small on the tip of a finger, for as long as you can, at least one minutes. What do you notice about the act of balancing? What do you think about while you seek balance? What does finding physical balance tell us about the art of finding spiritual balance?