

How to Use this Devotional Section

Welcome to Global Young People's Convocation 2018. What a joy and delight to be serving and learning together during these next few days. The work that you are about to embark on is important and will help to shape the direction of our global United Methodist Church.

I have crafted this section of your guidebook for use in your small groups. The resources that you will find in the following pages are meant to help your group center your hearts, minds and souls prior to engaging in your work and discussions together. Some devotions utilize reading and reflecting on a biblical text together and others invite the group into a common prayer space, or to sing a well-known song. Either way, know that you are invited to use this resources as it will best fit your group and that there is always room for flexibility. My deepest prayer is that your hearts and minds would settle into a place to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, and that the Spirit would guide your conversations and work. May God use you here at GYPC to further the work of the Kingdom!

Blessings,

Rev. Molly Just, Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas, USA



Rev. Molly Just has served in ministry as the director of the Discipleship Program at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas for the last four years. She spends her days forming college students and shaping their life together around small group experiences and service opportunities. Molly holds a Master's of Divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary, is an ordained Elder in the UMC and is passionate about Wesleyan models of discipleship and equipping students to serve the church. Molly is married to Kyle and enjoys cooking, traveling and any good conversation over a hot cup of tea.

Wednesday, July 18, 2018

Small Group Starter

Read together:

Matthew 3:13-17 New International Version (NIV)

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Reflect together:

Baptism. It's a captivating mark of our identity and calling as disciples of Christ. My guess is that many of you are meeting each other for the very first time today. As we celebrate how GYPC brings together Methodist young people from different social, economic, cultural, political and even theological backgrounds, know that the core of who you are is the very same. The story of Jesus' baptism sets the foundation for this and highlights that our primary identity is one of belovedness. Each one of us has experienced this mark of calling in our own baptisms. We are first and foremost children of God. As you engage in fellowship, leadership and legislative forums together during these next few days let your conversations, learning and work come from this common place.

Thursday, July 19, 2018

Small Group Starter

Read together:

Philippians 2:1-11 New International Version (NIV)

2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ *Who, being in very nature^[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

⁷ *rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.*

⁸ *And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

⁹ *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,*

¹⁰ *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

¹¹ *and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

Reflect together:

Paul reminds the Philippians that unity includes having the same mind and love as Christ. Many scholars believe that Philippians 2:5-11 was a hymn of the early church. It's known as the "self-emptying prayer." Before you begin your work today, take a few minutes to silently meditate upon Philippians 2:5-11.

Thursday, July 19, 2018
Small Group Starter

Center Together by Praying the Wesley Covenant Prayer:

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to whatever you will, rank me with whom you will.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed for you or brought low for you
Let me be full, let me be empty
Let me have all things, let me have nothing
I freely and heartily yield all things to your pleasure and disposal
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
You are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

Reflection on the Wesley Covenant Prayer by Rev. Steve Manskar

“When we pray this prayer we remember that we are baptized. We renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of our sin. We accept the freedom and power God gives to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. We confess Jesus Christ as our Savior, trust wholeheartedly in his grace, and promise to serve him as Lord, in union with the church. And we renew our promise to live as faithful members of Christ’s church and serve as his representatives in the world. The covenant prayer describes missional life devoted to following Jesus and serving as Christ’s representative in the world he loves and is working to redeem. It tells us that being a Christian is more a way of life than a system of beliefs. *The covenant prayer describes the Jesus way of self-giving and self-emptying love.*”

(Source: Rev. Steve Manskar, “The Wesley Covenant Prayer and the Baptismal Covenant, 1 January 2018, <https://blog.umcdiscipleship.org/the-wesley-covenant-prayer-and-the-baptismal-covenant/>).

Thursday, July 19, 2018
Small Group Starter

Center Together by Singing (in your own languages) "Lord Prepare me to be a Sanctuary." Ask if someone from the group would be willing to start the song and invite all to join in.

*Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary
Pure and holy, tried and true
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living
Sanctuary for You*

*Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary
Pure and Holy, tried and true
With thanksgiving I'll be a living
Sanctuary for you*

*Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary
Pure and holy, tried and true
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living
Sanctuary for You*

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Thursday, July 19, 2018

Individual reflection

How has your prayer for the same mind and love as Christ affect your work today? How will you continue in the same attitude throughout the week? Share your thought and reflections with a friend as you feel led.

How do you feel the Lord is preparing you in this time and space? Meditate on your response by singing to yourself or in a group "Sanctuary."

Friday, July 20, 2018
Individual Reflection

Center yourself:

Take some time to meditate on the meaning of the United Methodist cross and flame. What does this symbol communicate about our church to the larger world? What does it say about our ministry together here?



A Challenge for the Day:

The Cross and Flame emblem is known all over the world and is a reminder of the way in which the Holy Spirit of God has empowered the church for ministry. It also reminds us of the story of Pentecost when thousands of witnesses were brought together by the power of the Holy Spirit. As you enjoy a day filled with exploration and excursions, take some travel time, or a small break to talk with someone from GYPC about the way that the Holy Spirit is moving in their life and in the lives of those around them.

Friday, July 20, 2018

Small Group Starter

Read together:

Luke 9:10-17 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁰When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida,¹¹ but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.

¹²Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.”

¹³He replied, “You give them something to eat.”

They answered, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.” ¹⁴(About five thousand men were there.)

But he said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.”¹⁵ The disciples did so, and everyone sat down. ¹⁶Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. ¹⁷They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

Reflect together:

There’s no better place to find commonality than around a dinner table. Have you ever thought of that? We all need to eat. There’s something strikingly human about that need. People often say that food is the “great connector.” My favorite part of this gospel story comes with the interaction between Jesus and the disciples. The short version goes something like this:

The Disciples: “Jesus, send this crowd away so they can tend to their own needs.”

Jesus: “It’s time for some discipleship training, you show them that they are a part of the Kingdom – give them something to eat.”

The Disciples: “Whaaaaaat?”

What if the crowds understood something that the disciples didn’t quite grasp yet? What if food isn’t the greatest connector in this story, but hunger is? What if Jesus’ invitation to his disciples, as it pertains to feeding the crowd, is actually a hunger invitation to depend more fully on him?

How has Christ invited you, both as an individual, but also as a community to depend more fully on him so far this week? What deep spiritual hunger is stirring in you as you seek to build the Kingdom with your work at GYPC?

More reflections from Luke’s gospel to be continued on Sunday...

Sunday, July 22, 2018

Small Group Starter

Reflect together:

Back to Luke's gospel and the feeding of the 5,000. One of the questions that I tend to ask myself when I read this story is "Why did Jesus stop at multiplication of the fishes and loaves?" If Jesus is going to do the miracle of multiplication, why not also do the miracle of delivery to each group of fifty that the disciples organized? Wouldn't it have been easier that way? And Jesus could have surely done it.

Instead, we get a glimpse into Jesus' leadership style. Remember his response to the disciples when they said "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging...?" Jesus' response was "You give them something to eat." Jesus' own ministry always involved others. It was his ethos. For the disciples, this is a training moment. Jesus did the multiplication, and the disciples were invited into this ministry moment through the delivery of bread and fish. Jesus was constantly teaching and showing others how to *go* and live missionally in the world, and why that matters.

The church's presence in the world is for the sake of others. How have you experienced that truth during your time at GYPC? How have you been inspired in your own discipleship this week? How does that impact your desire to love your neighbors even better?

Ending Together:

Prayer of St. Francis

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen."

Sunday, July 22, 2018
Individual reflection

As you've reflected on Jesus' and your own baptism this week continue reflecting by reading "A litany of the Person." Which line (s) capture your attention? How has your identity in Christ led you to your journey here?

A Litany of the Person

*image of God
born of God's breath
vessel of divine Love
after his likeness
dwelling of God
capacity for the infinite
eternally known
chosen of God
home of the Infinite Majesty
abiding in the Son
called from eternity
life in the Lord
temple of the Holy Spirit
branch of Christ
receptacle of the Most High
wellspring of Living Water
heir of the kingdom
the glory of God
abode of the Trinity.
God sings this litany
eternally in his Word.
This is who you are.*

-Anonymous Trappist Monk from the Abbey of Gethsemane