

Go And... Dream

August 15, 2024 Minutes

Number of Participants: 18 as of 7:10 pm

Welcome and Opening Prayer: Rev. Menzi Nkambule

Dwelling in the Word: Rev. Menzi Nkambule

- Luke 22:14-23
- What stands out in this scripture? What image or phrase stands out in your mind?
 - Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table - it's such a different image in my head rather than the formal, regal, authoritative stance one might envision
 - My body, my blood
 - The order of the actions - we are so used to getting the bread first and then the drink, but Jesus starts off with the cup (in Luke's version)
 - Vs. 15 - you get a sense of Jesus' emotions "he said to them, I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," sets tone for urgency
 - Jesus will not partake until the Kingdom of God comes - time and mystery, what is it that will be fulfilled and when?
 - Do this in remembrance of me
- What is surprising to you? What questions do you have about the text? What is God inviting you to do?
 - The cup is poured out for you
 - Jesus is saying these things - what is going through the minds of the apostles as they hear Jesus speaking. What was happening in their minds and bodies during this experience?
 - Vs. 23: the disciples asked one another, why not ask Jesus?
 - For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined
 - Jesus is already calling out and yet the disciples (Judas) still goes through with it even though in this moment, Jesus tells him he knows
 - Did Judas have a moment of doubt or hesitation?

Dreaming in the Upper Room: Rev. Joe Graumann

Discussion commenced in a large group around the following questions.

- What would you do if you had one week to live?
 - Participants were invited to write down their answers for themselves and keep the note in a place where they can revisit it. Optional sharing resulted in the following ideas:
 - Go to the beach
 - Spending time telling people I love them and am grateful for them
 - Spend time with family and impart any final wisdom, requests, etc.
 - Do something special with family to create a final memory
 - Make amends or receive/give forgiveness where needed
 - Themes: community, faith, fun, forgiveness, love, care

So often churches close when they feel like there is no energy and no alternative. Discussion continued with the following questions:

- What would your church do if you would close in one year?
 - Develop a legacy plan of giving
 - Planning or celebrating an anniversary
 - Collaborate with other churches so the children and members can start building relationships with a new community
 - Selling belongings and feeding the neighborhood
 - Live out the best version of God's love in the community
 - Plan a big thank you party to God
 - Focus on community and food - living into the history of the congregation and the things they love to do in as extravagant a way as possible
 - Develop a plan for giving back to the church, community, and wider church to make sure ministry continues
 - Remind the congregation the church is bigger than the walls
- Themes: outreach, generosity, relationships, food, fun,

Is it really all that different from what Jesus did?

Dreaming and Experimenting: Rev. Maristela Freiberg

- What are the biggest dreams in our hearts and minds?
- Dreaming and experimenting is about trying new things and moving from a season of listening to a season of action focusing on the questions of why, who, and how
- Faith+Lead from Luther Seminary can help us understand experimentation
 - See powerpoint for more details on the experiment and outcome: Why Jesus
 - Identify, ask, offer, return
 - Attend a baseball game as a spiritual practice
 - Builds community, shows support for someone in your congregation, experience God's presence in someone else's daily life
 - God is at work in these places and looking for God there can help us expand our imagination about how God is at work in the neighborhood
- How do you design a good experiment?
 - Name what you want to learn - how is this based on listening?
 - Describe the steps you will take in the experiment
 - Create a feedback loop
- Learnings and Outcomes
 - Reflecting on experiments
 - Learning from failure
 - Discovering new energy
 - Uncovering God's vision

Break out room discussions: what are your dreams for your congregation? Think about the why, who, and how. In the large group we reconvened to share:

Wrap/Up Homework: Rev. Courtney Smith Westerlund

- Homework: Think about one idea you want to plan out for 90 days to see what that could look like
 - Just be willing to bring it and plan around it, you can always change it!
 - If you don't have an idea, a focus can work too (faith formation, fellowship, etc.)
- Go and... Practice - loving dialogue September 19th at 7:00 pm with Pastor Serena Rice
- Go and... Plan October 17th at 7:00 pm
 - Bring your homework assignment and let's get planning
 - If you have questions about the homework and 90 day plan, please reach out and let's work together!

Closing: Rev. Danielle McCleary

- Come and experience a dream Pastor Danielle is putting into practice on September 14th with a screening of the film 1946: mistranslation that shifted a culture
 - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1946-film-screening-and-qa-tickets-976962961517?aff=oddtcreator>

The poster features a colorful background with a purple-to-pink gradient. At the top left, a gold ribbon says 'FREE'. The title 'Film Screening' is in black, with a film reel icon to its right. The year '1946' is written in large, bold red letters. Below it, the subtitle 'THE MISTRANSLATION THAT SHIFTED CULTURE' is in smaller red letters. The event details are listed in black text: 'Date: September 14th, 2024', 'Time: 4:00 PM - 6:30 PM', and 'Location: First Lutheran Church, 153 Park Street, Montclair, NJ 07042'. A red button with 'SCAN HERE!' and a QR code are on the right. At the bottom, logos for St. Paul Lutheran Church, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Holy Trinity, Spectrum, and First Lutheran Church of Montclair are displayed.

Go And Planning Team:

- Rev. Maristela Freiberg, Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to Bishop
- Rev. Courtney Smith Westerlund, Messiah Oakland
- Rev. Danielle McCleary, St. Matthew Secaucus
- Lois Parrett, Abiding Presence Ewing, and NJ Synod Staff
- Rev. Judy Anderson, St. Thomas Brick
- Rev. Dianne Lewis, Trinity Jersey City
- Rev. Menzi Nkambule, St. Matthew Jersey City
- Rev. Joe Graumann, St. Stephen Woodbury
- Rev. Jill Collict, Faith Hillsborough