

Go and...!

Notes from 3/31/2022 Gathering on Zoom – 30 participants on screen

Planning Team: Pastor Judith Anderson, Pastor Jay Berry, Pastor Jill Collict, Pastor Maristela Freiberg, Pastor Danielle McCleary, Pastor Courtney Smith, Pastor Karen Strietelmeier, Vicar Missy Roberts, and Vicar Dianne Lewis

Theme: Go and Listen

Three great listening practices:

1. To God
2. To Each Other
3. To Our Neighbors

How can we become centers of deep listening, where God's presence is named and life-giving relationships are formed across all dimensions of diversity, both within and beyond the church?

- What does it mean to be active listeners and engage in other's narratives?
- How do we hear God against the noise of the world?
- We hear God only when we are willing to listen
- Listen to stories about what we long for as well as listening to the church community, neighbors, and community leaders helps our heart align with what God cares about most

A Prayer of Willingness to Listen by Rachel Wojo

Dear Father,
So often I come to you with lists and demands.
Like a tornado I spew them out as commands.
To the next task, I move on with my day
Completely missing what you might have to say.
The noise of the world clogs my ears
And clouds my mind with fog and fears.
I need you to clear my senses, O Lord!
Give me a heart in tune with your Word.
May I be ever eager to hear your voice;
May listening continually be my choice.
Amen

Dwelling in the Word: Acts 16:6-15

Breakout Rooms:

- What catches your attention in this passage?
- What are we hearing as a group through this passage?

Large Group Discussion:

- What might God be inviting us to through this passage?
- Where might the Spirit be sending us?

Comments from Large Group Discussion:

- First person narrative makes it more intimate
- City Gate to the River as a place of prayer
- Lydia “if you consider me a believer” why did people question this?
- Don’t make assumptions, keep an open mind
- Listen to women
- Put our listening ears on > putting our own view on things
- The disciples went to the place to pray and found women, Paul doesn’t stumble but just goes with what God presents
- Listen to the needs of community and fill them
- What are gathering places in our communities? Where are we invited to join?
- The Spirit didn’t allow the disciples to go where they shouldn’t, they broke all the society rules and just embraced it
 - o Power of listening and acting on the call of the Spirit
- We are called to be in or communities and in our streets
- The work of God is done by all of us; this passage calls us to one another
- Who is our community vs. who do we want to serve = this is the church of tomorrow
- Young people want to be active in the community
- When the Holy Spirit tells you to break the rules (sermon title for this passage from Bishop Dwayne Royster)

A Practice That Transforms Us: **One to One Story Sharing** from Bishop Dwayne D. Royster, Senior Pastor of Faith United Church of Christ in Washington, DC and Executive Director of POWER (Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild)

- If we want to grow, we need to do the work of one to one meetings
 - o Stop speaking and start listening
- Meet with every member, discover people, and build relationships and trust with guiding questions for healing and hope
- Get beyond the iceberg, dig at what is under the surface
 - o 90% of an iceberg cannot be seen above water
- Our conversations usually don’t get at what is deeper and what people are struggling with
- We need to dwell in the “below the surface” to make an impact
- Talk with people, not at them
 - o Acts passage: “spoke with the women” not at them!
- Younger folk: faith is not a duty, you need to meet them where they are
- Get to people’s hearts and meet them in that place
- The more 1-1 connections and relationships you have to your community, the better
- You cannot lead a congregation where you have never been
- The church has a stigma and lacks trust in the community, we have to build that back together 1-1 conversations are key to making that happen

Good questions are key to good conversation, here are some talking points/questions:

- How did your calling come about?
- What would the world look like in ten years if you could change it?
- What keeps you up at night?
- If things don’t change, what’s the outcome for you/your family?

- What part of your ministry are you passionate about?
- What's stopped you from doing something about this before?
- What would you do if money wasn't a barrier?
- What did you see on your morning commute that hurt your heart?

Good questions and good listening make all the difference

- Listen to the answers and ask questions based off what people say this shows you are listening and goes deeper

Bishop Royster and Rev. Danielle McCleary modeled a 1-1 conversation for us to watch

One to One Conversation Outline:

1. Greetings/Introduction
2. Intention
3. Story
4. Questions
5. Dialogue
6. Next Steps (who else can I talk to)
7. Follow Up (contact information)

Good 1-1 conversations are vulnerable and intentional, they are not scripted

- Share enough to create a safe and vulnerable space for the other person
- Stay with the person's story and experience, don't go into your own sharing

One to One's Build: Relationships, Power, Leadership, Agency, Results, The Story

Necessary ingredients include:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| - Listening | - Foundational stories |
| - Ask/invitation | - Affirmation |
| - Genuine interest | - Openness and safety |
| - Honest, curiosity | - Eye contact |
| - Human connection | - Empathy and understanding |
| - Honest self-disclosure | - Vulnerability |
| - Questions that seek courage | - Modeling transformation |
| - Risk taking | - Values |

Breakout Rooms: participants were divided into groups of two and encouraged to practice having 1-1 conversations with each other

- Many people came back saying they didn't have enough time to finish their conversation and are seeking ways outside of our monthly Go And meeting to talk with their partner!
- Feedback from breakout rooms: 1-1 conversations aren't as hard/scary as we think, just go and try. The more you do, the easier it gets

Resources

Books:

- Hearing Beyond the Words by Emma Justes
- Let Your Life Speak by Parker Palmer

For more information and deeper training on One to Ones
Charlene Walker: charlene@faithinnewjersey.org 973-444-7461
<https://faithinnewjersey.org/>

- Newsletter Subscription:
<https://faithinnewjersey.salsalabs.org/Updatingourcommunity/index.html>

See you on May 26th at 7:00 pm
Go and Share