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Materials needed for the course

Journal

Bibles

Other resources will be identified but not required

Final paper for course

After we have had our class discussion on each session, take a moment to process your highs and lows of the conversation. What stood out for you? How has this shaped your initial thought's? Any other thoughts you may have?

Collectively, these segments/writings will need to be sent to me by midnight Nov. 13th.

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SPIRITUALITY - Overview

- 1) Introduction – Beginning thoughts
- 2) How Do We Understand the Spirit?
- 3) Exploring Our Character
- 4) Lutheran Perspective – exploring Luther's Small Catechism
- 5) Who Am I?
 - exploration of your spiritual gifts (spiritual gifts inventory)
 - _ explanation of spiritual gifts & how they can be used to build the Kingdom
 - God's Spirit equips us to serve faithfully using the gifts we have to build the Kingdom
- 6) Who Are my Siblings?
- 7) Worship through Music

Session One Combines (1) Introduction (2) How Do We Understand the Spirit?
Please review the #1 & 2 videos prior to class and be prepared to answer the following questions and discuss.

Beginning Thoughts to ponder and discuss ...

- 1) When you hear the words Spirit, Spiritual or Spirituality, what does that mean to you?
- 2) Are there positive, negative responses and why?
- 3) Does your response invoke comfort? Confusion? Joy? No response?
- 4) What if anything have you heard the Spirit to be?
- 5) Is 'spirit' a religious word? Or not? Why?
- 6) What other thoughts might come to your mind when you hear 'Spirit'?
- 7) Are the Holy Spirit and spirituality connected?

Definition: Spirituality means relating to the spirit or inner self, often referring to a search for meaning, purpose, and connection to something larger than oneself.

Session two Please review the #3 video prior to class and be prepared to answer the following questions and discuss

Exploring Builds our Character ...

1) **Genesis 1:26-31** – image of God – we were created and born of God.

+What is your 'image' of God?

+How do you visualize The Creator?

+What are some of His characteristics? +Do you communicate with Him?

How? Response?

Below are just a couple verses to give us confidence in approaching God.

1b) **Approaching God** - to know him and build a relationship with him.

James 4:8 – Come Near to God and he will come near to you.

Hebrews 4:16 – Let us approach God's throne of Grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

+How would you describe Grace? Mercy?

Jeremiah 29:13 – You will seek me and find me ...

Matthew 11:28 – Come to me all you who are weary and heavy burdened, and I will give you rest.

Isaiah 55:6 – Seek the Lord while he may be found; Call on him while he is near.

John 4:24 – God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.

Session three Please review the #4 video prior to class and be prepared to answer the following questions and discuss

The Lutheran Perspective

The character and availability of God's presence is shown to us throughout the Word. - -

+Do any of these verses resonate with you? Why? Others? . God, the Father, is the head of the Triune God

2) Who is God – **Genesis 1:1 – Revelation** speaks of God and His character

3) **Meeting the Triune God** via Luther's Small Catechism – The Apostle's Creed (Pocket edition/Augsburg Fortress)

(part A) Defines and Describes God. ***I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. What is this OR What Does this mean? – I believe that God has created me together with all that exists. God has given me and still preserves my body and soul; eyes, ears and all my limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties.***

- *In addition, God daily and abundantly provides shoes and clothing, food and drink, house and farm, spouse and children, fields, livestock, and all property – along with all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life. God protects me against all danger and shields and preserves me from all evil. And all this is done out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all!! **For all of this I owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true.***

(part b) Jesus, Son of God – **I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead.**

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. -

What Does this mean? – *I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father in eternity, and also a true human being, born of the virgin Mary, IS my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned human being. He has purchased and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. He has done all this in order that I may belong to him, live under him in his righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.*

Session four Please review the #5 video prior to class and be prepared to answer the following questions and discuss

Who Am I

(part b1) – Other names of Jesus via his characteristic ‘behaviors’ - **Son of God, Son of Man, Mary’s baby, Anointed One, Savior, Holy One, Messiah, Protector, Almighty, Advocate, Friend, Brother, Alpha & Omega, I Am ...** **How might you describe Jesus?? How has he been related to you in different eras of your life?**

Exercise – draw a timeline and on the bottom and in increments, write numbers indicating your age. Go back as far as you can remember when you first heard the name of Jesus. ADD above the line anything important that was going on in your life at the time i.e. a move, married, graduation, birth, death, job ... good times and difficult times as well> How did you survive these moments? Did you see or recognize God in any of those incidents?

(part b2) – **What is your name? What is your naming story? If you were to look up your name, what does it mean? Is your name, personality and life in balance with what your name means? Look in a mirror and tell that person who you are – surface? – beneath the mirror image, who’s there?**

Genesis 2:7 – God formed

Psalms 139 God formed

We meet the Holy Spirit via Luther's Small Catechism – I believe in the Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost), the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen – **what does this mean?** – I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel (Word), enlighten me with his gifts, made me holy, and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common faith. Daily in this Christian church the Holy Spirit abundantly forgives all sins - - mine and those of all believers. On this last day the Holy Spirit will raise me and all the dead and will give to me and all believers in Christ eternal life. – **This is most certainly true.**

+Isaiah 61:1-2 – God's gift to us – The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all those who mourn. (NIV translation)

+Luke 4: 17-21 – God's gift to us – The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (RSV translation)

Joel 2:28-29 – God's Spirit Poured Out – And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants. In those days, I will pour out my spirit.

Exodus 19:1-19 – Then Moses told the words of the people to the Lord. And the Lord said to Moses, Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments and be ready by the third day; for on the third

day the Lord will come upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. And you shall set bounds for the people round about, saying, 'Take heed that you do not go up into the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death; no hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live. When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain. Moses went to the people and consecrated the people and washed their garment. Do not go near a woman. 17) Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. Mt Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the mountain quaked greatly. 19) the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, God answered in thunder. The Lord came down to Mt. Sinai; called Moses to the top of the mountain and Moses went up. 21) The Lord said to Moses, Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the Lord to gaze and many of them perish. Let the priest who come near to the Lord consecrate themselves, lest the Lord break out upon them. 23) And Moses said to the Lord, "The people cannot come up to Mt Sinai; for thou thyself didst charge us saying, "Set bounds about the mountain and consecrate it." 24) And The Lord said to him, "Go down and come up bring Aaron with you; but do not let the priest and the people break through to come up to me Lord, lest the break out against them." 25) So Moses went down to the people and told them to be consecrate themselves.

Psalm 139; 7-14 - New International Version

⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast.

¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me

and the light become night around me,"

¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you;

the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

Acts 2: 1-18 - New International Version

2 This is what the Lord says:

"For three sins of Moab,
even for four, I will not relent.

Because he burned to ashes
the bones of Edom's king,

² I will send fire on Moab
that will consume the fortresses of Kerioth.^[a]

Moab will go down in great tumult
amid war cries and the blast of the trumpet.

³ I will destroy her ruler
and kill all her officials with him,"
says the Lord.

⁴ This is what the Lord says:

"For three sins of Judah,
even for four, I will not relent.

Because they have rejected the law of the Lord
and have not kept his decrees,
because they have been led astray by false gods,^[b]
the gods^[c] their ancestors followed,

⁵ I will send fire on Judah
that will consume the fortresses of Jerusalem."

Judgment on Israel

⁶ This is what the Lord says:

"For three sins of Israel,
even for four, I will not relent.

They sell the innocent for silver,
and the needy for a pair of sandals.

⁷ They trample on the heads of the poor
as on the dust of the ground
and deny justice to the oppressed.
Father and son use the same girl
and so profane my holy name.

⁸ They lie down beside every altar
on garments taken in pledge.
In the house of their god
they drink wine taken as fines.

⁹ “Yet I destroyed the Amorites before them,
though they were tall as the cedars
and strong as the oaks.
I destroyed their fruit above
and their roots below.

¹⁰ I brought you up out of Egypt
and led you forty years in the wilderness
to give you the land of the Amorites.

¹¹ “I also raised up prophets from among your children
and Nazirites from among your youths.
Is this not true, people of Israel?”
declares the Lord.

¹² “But you made the Nazirites drink wine
and commanded the prophets not to prophesy.

¹³ “Now then, I will crush you
as a cart crushes when loaded with grain.

¹⁴ The swift will not escape,
the strong will not muster their strength,
and the warrior will not save his life.

¹⁵ The archer will not stand his ground,
the fleet-footed soldier will not get away,
and the horseman will not save his life.

¹⁶ Even the bravest warriors
will flee naked on that day,”
declares the Lord.

John 4:7-26 - New International Version

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.^[a])

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

¹¹ “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

¹³ Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

¹⁶ He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

¹⁷ “I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband.¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

¹⁹ “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

²¹ “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

The Disciples Rejoin Jesus

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people,

Acts 2 – The day of Pentecost - Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all ^[a]with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them ^[b]divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

- **NOTE the Suttle differences as to how the stories are told as we meet the Spirit in action. At times it was given for a specific task then taken away. The day of Pentecost the Spirit descended to all and today is active within the life of believers.**

(part C1) – What and how do you explain who the Holy Spirit is in YOUR life?

If the Holy Spirit calls us toward Jesus, to walk with Jesus – in what ways has he called you? Were you equipped? Afraid? Confident? Unknowing? Other thoughts and experiences?

- **The Spirit invites us to learn more of Jesus, - in what possible ways?**
Prayer, devotions, meditation, through nature appreciation, Bible study (personal/group), journaling/writing, silence, discernment, community (needs, relationships, ...),
- **Fruits of the Spirit – Galatians 5:16ff – Life by the Spirit**
- ¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh^[a]; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”^[b] ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.
- ¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever^[c] you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

- ¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- ²² **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.** ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

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Consider listening to – (song) When the Spirit of the Lord by Fred Hammond. Can be found on google/ YouTube–

What images are stirred up in you? Feelings? How does the song move you? Can you replace YOUR name with David's? Who/what might people see in you that the Spirit has produced? Do you praise like David?

What are some facts about (King) David's life? **David was from the tribe of Judah (1Chroncles) He was Ruth/Boaz grandson (1Chronocles 2;12) He was the youngest of 7 sons (IChron2;13-14, 1Samuel 16:10-11. David was from Bethlehem (Luke references 2:4. He was God's anointed one. Chosen in his time to lead and save his people, the Israelites. (1 Samuel 16:1) He was a shepherd. (1Samuel 16,17). Musician (1Sameul 10:1-6,, 16:14) David was a giant slayer(1Samuel 17:8-11, 17:23-27) He was a warrior (18:5) Israel's greatest king (2Samuel 2:4) He was an adulterer with Bathsheba and plotted to have her husband killed (2Sam11;27) He was a man after God's own heart (1Sam 13:14) because of his obedience. He lived around 1,000 bc. Possible 8 wives. ((overviewBible.com 116 facts about King David Overview Bible))**

Looking at David's story briefly, his ups and downs, bad decisions, he was still beloved by God, like us, and is called for (a) specific purpose.

How has God, through his Spirit, prepared you for who you are today? What is your story? Share as Spirit moves.

What obstacles can a praise song like this renew your trust or faith in people, systems, God? Have you ever doubted God's love because of your past?

What Gifts do I bring to the Table?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS/INVENTORY - God through the Holy Spirit has given each of us 'gifts' to share with each other. These gifts are embedded in us and are enhanced through the gift of God as we use them for his glory. – Have you ever wondered *what your gifts* of the Spirit might be and how the gift(s) might be used to build the Kingdom of God? – **Spiritual Gifts inventory** – are a way to see how you've been living your purpose, and you may also find some 'surprises', thinking 'Oh, I didn't know that was a gift from God'!

There are several **Spiritual Gift Inventory's** that can be found on line and are also self-corrected, giving you a sense of your embedded spiritual gifts.

Giftstest.com – is the test I investigated and took for myself. There were 66 different questions to answer. The test is designed to be taken quickly during a single setting, and typically takes 5 minutes to complete. Being open and honest are the keys to finding out your gift/skills set. I take an inventory every few yews, especially if I 'feel' a shift happening in my life. (**UMMM could it be the Holy Spirit stirring from within?**) It's like the Spirit is alerting me that it may be homing in on a particular gift for a particular time. This also helps me to say 'NO' if I'm asked to do something outside of my skill set/spiritual gifts..

PONDER: What are some of the Gifts of the Spirit? How are they described?

ADMINISTRATION is the divine strength or ability to organize multiple tasks and groups of people to accomplish tasks. Luke 14:28-30; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Corinthians 12:28

APOSTLESHIP is the divine strength or ability to pioneer new churches and ministries through planting, overseeing and training. Acts 15:22-35; 1 Corinthians 12:28; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Galatians 2:7-10; Ephesians 4:11-14

CRAFTSMANSHIP – the ability to plan, build and work with your hands in construction environments to accomplish multiple ministry applications. Exodus 30:22, 31:3-11; 2 Chronicles 34:9-13; Acts 18:2-3

DISCERNMENT – divine strength or ability to spiritually identify falsehood, right from wrong motives and the spiritual forces at work in situations. Matthew 16: 21-23; Acts 5:1-11, 16:16-18, 1 Corinthians 12:10; 1John 4:1-6

EVANGELISM – the gift to help non-Christians take the necessary steps to becoming a born-again Christian: helping to spread the Gospel to others. Acts 8:5-6, 8:26-40; 14:21, 21:8; Ephesians 4:11-14

EXHORTATION – the gift to strengthen, comfort or urge others to action through the written or spoken word and Biblical truth. – Acts 14:22; Romans 12:8; 1Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:24-25

FAITH – ability to believe in God for unseen supernatural results in all areas of life. – Acts 11:22-24; Romans 4:18-21; 1 Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 11

GIVING – THE ABILITY to produce wealth and to give tithes and offerings for the purpose of advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. – Mark 12:41-44; Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7, 9:2-7

HEALING – acts on the ability to act as an intermediary in faith, prayer, and by the laying on of hands for the healing of physical, mental and spiritual sickness. – Acts 3:1-10; 9:32-35, 28:7-10; 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28

HELPER – the ability to work in a supportive role for the accomplishment of tasks in ministry with the ability to often see the need before others do. – Mark 15: 40-41; Acts 9:36; Romans 16: 1-2; 1 Corinthians 12:28

HOSPITALITY – the ability to create warm, welcoming environments for others in places such as your home, office work or church. – Acts 16:14-15, Romans 12:13, 16:23; Hebrews 13:1-2; 1 Peter 4:9

INTERCESSION – to stand in the gap in prayer for someone, or someplace believing in profound results. – Hebrews 7:25; Colossians 1:9-12, 4:12-13; James 5:14-16

KNOWLEDGE – the gift to bring truth to a situation by supernatural revelation. This is often accompanied by a word from God – Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:8; Colossians 2:2-3

LEADERSHIP – the ability to influence people at their level while directing them to the big picture, vision or idea. – Romans 12:8; 1 Timothy 3:1-13, 5:17; Hebrews 13:17

MERCY – to feel empathy and to care for those who are hurting in any way. Matthew 9:35-36; Mark 9:41; Romans 12:8; 1 Thess. 5:14

MIRACLES – THE ABILITY TO ALTER THE NATURAL OUTCOMES OF LIFE IN A SUPERNATURAL WAY THROUGH PRAYER, FAITH, AND DIVINE DIRECTION – Acts 9:36-42; 19:11-12, 20:7-12; Romans 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28

PASTOR/SHEPARD – the gift to care for the personal needs of others by nurturing and mending/tending to their issues. – John 10:1-18; Ephesians 4: 11-14; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 1 Peter 5: 1-3

PROPHECY – STRENGTH AND ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE GOD’S TRUTH AND HEART IN A WAY THAT CALLS PEOPLE TO A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. Acts 2:37-40, 7:51-53, 26:24-29; 1Corinthians 14:1-4; 1 Thess.1:5

SERVICE – to do small to large tasks working for the overall good for the body of Christ. - Acts 6:1-7; Romans 12:7; Galatians 6:10; 1 Timothy 1:16-18; Titus 3:14

TEACHING – the ability to study and learn from scripture primarily to bring understanding and depth to other Christians. – Acts 18:24-28, 20:20-21; 1Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-14

SPEAKING/INTERPRETATION (of) TONGUES – the ability TO PRAY in a heavenly language to encourage your spirit and to commune with God. The gift of tongued is often accompanied by interpretation and should be used appropriately. – Acts 2: 1-13; 1 Corinthians 12:20, 14:1-14

(WORDS OF) WISDOM - the ability to understand and to bring clarity to situations and circumstances. – Acts 6:3, 10; 1 Corinthians 2:6-13, 12:8

Share your results. Are there any surprises? – What are you doing already, that matches with your spiritual gifts?

PV”S top 5 spiritual gifts are:

Exhortation – comfort or urge others to action through written/spoken word and truth

Mercy - - able to feel empathy and to care for those who are hurting in any way.

Pastor/Shepherd – to care for the needs of others; nurturer in life issues.

Teaching – study and learn from Scripture to teach others and bring understanding

Hospitality – creates a warm, welcoming space for others.

I believe I am living into my purpose. - - Explain/discuss/my story

Session five Please review the #6 video prior to class and be prepared to answer the following questions and discuss

Who are my sibling’s

Honoring and Respecting our Neighbor’s

(faith, spiritual beliefs, culture, ideas)

Ponder/Discuss: - Who are my ELCA community & Siblings?

+Who are others in our/your worshipping community?

+What does your congregation look like?

+How are People of Color (POC) welcomed into your community?

+Have you ever visited an ELCA or another congregation where you were the minority?

+Minority as a different ethnic group?

+Or minority as a worshiper and the flow of service was different?

+How did it feel?

+What did you experience?

+What was comfortable?

- +Uncomfortable?**
- +What did you learn?**
- +Have you ever wondered if a Person of Color (POC), in your church is being spiritually fed?**
- +What does being spiritually fed mean to you?**
- +What 'feds' you within your worship space?**

The Ev. Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) during its formation in 1988, was very conscience of having all voices involved within the ELCA to be heard. These are the ethnic desks that are part of the ELCA, WHICH HAS EXPANDED SINCE THE INCEPTIONS being CONSCIENCE OF INCLUSIVENESS.

- +Have they/we upheld their vision?**
- +What more can be done?**
- + How does prejudice keep us from fully accepting other people?**
- +How do you view the make-up of the ELCA?**

These are the specific 'diverse cultural experiences' that are part of the ELCA

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- +Multicultural Ministries Oversight Committee
- +Alaska Native – Declaration to American Indian Alaska National People
- +Asian – Pacific Islander (AAPI)
- +African Descent (African American, Afro-Caribbean, African National)
- +Native/American Indian – Indigenous Ministries/Tribal Relations
- +Arab & Middle Eastern
- +Latino/Hispanic Ministries
- +European

Ponder: and Discuss:

- +What is your CALL story as to being a member of the ELCA (Lutheran Church)?**
- +Is your ethnic and cultural background represented in the ELCA? Your local congregation? Your ethnicity?**
- +How does that shape who you are and how you feel about worship?**

+What does your worship look like in reference to your cultural/ethnic background?

+ Is it spiritually fulfilling? What could change? Or be added to have a multi-cultural experience?

+How is African spirituality different from Christianity?

African spirituality encompasses diverse indigenous traditions with communal practices, an emphasis on ancestral veneration, and oral transmission of knowledge, while Christianity is a monotheistic religion centered on the Bible, with a singular, ultimate God and Jesus Christ as the sole mediator. Key differences include the role of ancestors (mediators in African traditions vs. forbidden intercessors in Christianity), the structure of the divine (hierarchies of spirits vs. a single God), and the nature of spiritual transmission (oral vs. written scripture). (AI Overview)

RESOURCES to Ponder and to understand our siblings in Christ.:

+THE SPIRITUALITY OF AFRICAN PEOPLES (THE SEARCH FOR A COMMON MORAL DISCOURSE), by Peter Paris, IS A BOOK WRITTEN FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS TO FIND CULTURAL ROOTEDNESS AND FOR EUROPEAN-AMERICANS TO FIND HEALING FOR A HUGE RIFT IN UNDERSTANDING.

+A Black Theology of Liberation by James Cone (fwd by Peter Paris)

+ This Far By Faith – African American Lutheran hymnal. (Augsburg)

+Black Liturgies book – prayers, poems, and meditations for staying human by Cole Arthur Riley

+The Black Presence in the Bible – several authors identify historical information within the Bible (Amazon)

+Black Bible Chronicles – a survival for the streets BY: PK McCary (Amazon) (Ebay)

+Multicultural Ministries information – ELCA.ORG – has information regarding each cultural background

+Truth and Healing Movement – ELCA.org – Hispanic Ministries

+A Call of Confession Reflection and Healing – ELCA.org – Hispanic Ministries

+Latinx Lutheran Leadership Initiative – ELCA.org – Hispanic Ministries

+Latino Ministries Strategy – ELCA.org – Hispanic Ministries

+ September 15 – October 15 is Hispanic Heritage Month

- + February is Black History Month
- +ASIAN AM. AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH – May
- +Alaska Native Heritage Center – located in Anchorage, Alaska

Session six Please review #7 video prior to class and be prepared to answer the following questions and discuss

Worship through Music

Worship and Music - is a part of spiritual fulfillment for each of us...

+Be Still and know that I Am God ...

+Psalm 46:1 – God is reminding us that HE is God. The Hebrew definition of ‘Be still’ means to ‘cease striving’ and to let go or surrender.

+ In Mark 4:39, Jesus calms the storm – He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be Still”, Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. “Be Still”, or hush/shhhh - - **We too need to take heed. All is in his hands and within his power to calm, even us.

Ponder: Discuss

+What do you wish to give complete control to Jesus today??

Ponder and Discuss:

Worship allows us to also appreciate & savor the artist, creators, writers, musicians, as God has gifted them to enhance our understanding and enjoyment of our spiritual selves

A Reading - Psalm 150 (NIV) – Praise the Lord

Praise God in his sanctuary, praise him in his mighty heavens

Praise him for his acts of power: praise him for his surpassing greatness.

Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre,

Praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe,

Praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord.

Music in worship (church) as well as outside church (homes, cars, while shopping, sitting, while with others) ... feeds us spiritually. **Music** is an integral part of connection, for all people/ethnic communities, to God and worship (Psalm 150) - It is prayer, lament, praise, worship, ... It 'grabs us' by the mere melodic (a sweet or agreeable succession of sounds, a rhythmic succession of tunes and tones put together with words to bring glory to God and solace/comfort/consolation in a time of distress or sadness, to us, the listener.

Music or hymns are written to sing and bring praises to God, and understanding to us, are many. They tell stories. They are prayers with (collective) voices. Music crosses all cultural and ethnic spaces. We may not know the language but, we can feel the stirring of the Spirit within us – being pleased, filled and happy.

Simple Prayer Song _ (hum and meditate on the words) Spirit of the Living God – by David Iverson

Spirit of the Living God
Fall afresh on me,
Spirit of the Living God
Fall afresh on me,
Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me -OR- melt me, mold me, fill me, use me
Spirit of the Living God
Fall afresh on me

Question - + When you say “I like that song!” – what drew you?
+ the above is simple yet powerful. How do you view the song?

Be Still to Ponder:

+Choose a favorite song. Find a safe space to imagine that song as it plays in your head; hear and listen to the song.

+If you have the words of that song, read them WITH the music or after to understand what and how and why it's affecting you – this way – right now

+Be aware of your feelings. Breathe. Listen. Put yourself in the song OR if you need healing, just absorb the music's words, affirmations, questions, doubts, you came into the space with ...

+Be free in your feelings; tears, smiles, humming, dancing, swaying, out pouring of the love you are receiving

+What are some other songs that you hear that move your spirit?

Some of your choices may or may not be heard in church worship, but from Gospel singers (radio) – yet(!) that's still worship/feeding your spirit.

Question - +What images, feelings do you have when you hear the song(s)??

+Where did you go? Describe the space.

Some songs to ponder: (pray the words) – fill your spirit

_____ These songs' can be found on You tube, to hear, in your hymnal or are printed to read/pray, online.

Blessed Assurance

AMAZING GRACE

My House is built on nothing less

Precious Lord, Take my Hand

Jesus Loves Me!

Here I Am Lord

We've Come This Far by Faith

In My Life Lord, Be Glorified

A Mighty Fortress

How Great Thou Art

Breathe into Me Oh Lord ... Fred Hammond

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

O Lord, Hear my Prayer – Taize

I Love You Lord

We Are One in the Spirit, we are One in the Lord

Holy, Holy, Holy

The Lord's Prayer

++OOOOH this list of suggestions can go on forever! Add to it and as you do, remember Music and singing is a form of prayer to God; and He meets our spirits to hug us, save, preserve us, love us, acknowledge us - - for where we are and with what we have and are going through.

Words of Meditation and Benediction/Blessing

You aren't likely to be sent out under the will of God to do startling, impossible things. You are likely to be sent out to do the quiet, unspectacular things that matter, precisely where you are and with what you have.

Go out into the world in peace. Have courage. Hold fast to what is good. Return no one evil for evil, but strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the suffering. Honor and serve all people rejoicing in the power of God. And may Almighty God, the creator of us all, bless and keep you. Amen.