**GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER NIGHT**

**OCTOBER 3, 2018**

**6:30**

**Greeting (WARREN)**

Welcome, logistics of table arrangements, coloring sheets, etc.

Reminder of the themes –

1. called by God in multiple ways
2. called to be followers of Jesus
3. called as we are
4. called from people, places, and situations

**6:35**

**Hymn (MATTHEW)**

**God of Generations**

NICAEA 12.12.12.10 ("Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!")

God of generations, we are all your children;  
To your church we bring our gifts, our worship and our song.  
Young and old we follow, hand in hand together:  
In your great love, together we are strong.

Christ, you welcomed children, called us to be like them,  
And received a boy's small gift to feed a hungry crowd.  
In our church's children, may we see you working:  
More than "our future"! They are faithful now.

Spirit, freely moving, giving youth a vision,  
By your grace young Jeremiah heard your loving call;  
Mary was a young one when she learned her mission:  
Through faithful youth, you offer truth to all.

God of men and women, Helper on our journey,  
You have called us in our faith to grow and to mature.  
May we keep on learning, worshiping and praying,  
That each new day, we'll serve you all the more.

Abraham and Sarah trusted in your promise:  
Age was no condition when you gave them work to do.  
Old and young we follow, hand in hand together;  
At every age, Lord, we belong to you.

**6:39**

**A Litany of Thanksgiving[[1]](#footnote-1)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Michaela: | Please join me in this prayer of thanksgiving. Your responses will be on the screen.  *[silently count to three, slowly]*  Give thanks to the Lord who is good. |
| ALL: | *God’s love is everlasting.* |
|  |  |
| Michaela: | Come, let us praise God joyfully. |
| ALL: | *Let us come to God with thanksgiving.* |
|  |  |
| Michaela: | For the good world:  For things great and small, beautiful and awesome. |
| ALL: | *Thank you, God.* |
|  |  |
| Michaela: | For work to do and strength to work |
| ALL: | *Thank you, God.* |
|  |  |
| Michaela: | For family;  For living together and eating together. |
| ALL: | *Thank you, God.* |
|  |  |
| Michaela: | For children;  For their energy and curiosity. |
| ALL: | *Thank you, God.* |
|  |  |
| LUKE: | For the young;  For their dreams and high hopes. |
| ALL: | *Thank you, God.* |
|  |  |
| LUKE: | For growing up and growing old;  For wisdom deepened by experience. |
| ALL: | *Thank you, God.* |
|  |  |
| LUKE: | For your help in times of doubt and sorrow; |
| ALL: | *Thank you, God.* |
|  |  |
| LUKE: | For the church into which we have been called;  For our life together in the Lord. |
| ALL: | *We praise you, God.* |
|  |  |
| LUKE: | For your Holy Spirit,  Who guides our steps and brings us gifts of faith and love. |
| ALL: | *We praise you, God.* |
|  |  |
| LUKE: | Above all, O God, for your Son Jesus Christ,  Who lived and died and lives again;  For our hope in him;  And for the joy of serving him. |
| ALL: | *We thank and praise you, Eternal God,*  *For all your goodness to us.* |
|  |  |
| LUKE: | Give thanks to the Lord, who is good! |
| ALL: | *God’s love is everlasting!* |
|  |  |

**6:42**

**SHELBY’S SONG. Brett or Natalie, can you introduce Shelby?**

**6:47**

**Introduction to Scripture and questions for reflection (WARREN)**

**Scripture – Mark 1:18-20 (NIV)**

**[Garrett then Will]**

**16**As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.**17**“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” **18**At once they left their nets and followed him.

**19**When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. **20**Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Reflection – I wonder where you see calling in this passage? I wonder who is called? I wonder to what are they called? I wonder if there is a calling here for Zebedee? If so, what is it? I wonder how our callings are connected to one another? I wonder how our callings impact the callings of others, particularly people in a different generation?

**6:52**

**Prayer [Jacob]**

Will you pray with me?

From the highway and from the skies,

from the office and from the streets,

from the jail and from the classroom,

from the kitchen and from the garage,

from the bank and from the gym,

from the table and from the font

a voice beckons. . . .

May we hear, and may we follow.

(Williams, *Worship and Daily Life*, p. 18)

**6:53**

**Interview Tyler**

**[TYLER, BRETT, CRISTI]**

**7:08**

**Introduction of Ignatian Examen and Group Exercise of Examen, a Prayerful Review of the Day**

**[NATALIE]**

Natalie gives a brief background on the Ignatian Examen

(<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen> has a good and brief background).

As we pray the Examen on a daily basis, we become attuned to God’s presence, direction, and callings in our lives. Tonight, we’re going to practice a simple version of the Examen, based on the sharing of “Highs and Lows” from the day. This can be practiced at meal times, or at a time of family prayer at the end of the day.

Invite the tables to break into groups of 3 or 4 with multiple generations represented. Larger groups may not be able to complete the exercise in the time allotted.

Invite the groups to follow this process (will also be on screen)

1. One person names the highs and lows of his/her day.
2. After that person names the highs and lows of the day, another person in the group says a prayer for that person, thanking God for the highs and asking God to help that person with the lows. The prayer doesn’t need to be long or eloquent. Simple prayers are best here.
3. Every group member gets a turn to share the highs and lows of their day, and every group member gets a turn to say a prayer for another person.
4. After everyone has had an opportunity to share and pray, an optional question would be to look forward to tomorrow and share briefly what our hopes are for the day.
5. Close with The Lord’s Prayer

**7:28**

Closing Prayer **[WARREN]**

Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St. Francis. On that day there is often a special blessing of the animals, and a remembrance of Francis’ witness for peace. Rev. James Howell, pastor at Myers Park UMC in Charlotte, NC offered these reflections on a prayer by St. Francis. Howell writes:

If you ask me about "the prayer of St. Francis," I don't go to those famous words, "Make me an instrument of your peace" - but instead I think of the prayer we know Francis prayed repeatedly, day after day, many times each day, for years, wrestling with God wanted from him, and pressing on to continue to find fresh ways to serve God.

Pray these words with me - or I should say with Francis:

**Most high, glorious God,**

**enlighten the darkness of my heart**

**and give me, Lord,**

**correct faith,**

**firm hope,**

**perfect love,**

**wisdom and perception,**

**that I may do**

**what is truly your most holy will.**

There's so much in this prayer that is moving, thoughtful, wise and transformative. He begins with the highest possible view of God, an intense, awed appreciation for God's might, grandeur, and majesty. Then, asking for light, recognizing and confessing that his heart is dark. This needn't mean he's a terrible, tawdry person. Rather, we all are like someone whose power has gone off during the night, feeling our way around, needing a lantern in the soul to get through the next few hours.

And then has asks God for quite a few gifts - but nothing self-indulgent, no wishing for things or even an easier, healthier life. Instead he asks for faith - and not more faith but a correct faith. Our faith can be wrong-headed or obtuse. He wants a faith that is genuine trust in God, and a readiness to do whatever is required of him by God.

He asks for firm hope, that his hope isn't in himself or the promises of the world, but only in God. He asks for perfect charity, or love. It's never perfect, but my goal is that my love (not my romantic love but my compassion and acting lovingly toward all others) moves toward perfection.

Francis asks for wisdom. Pray daily for wisdom. It takes time... And he prays for perception. He wants to see, to see deeply, to see what God sees, to see himself, others, and the world from God's perspective.

Francis's goal in all this praying is how he plans to use these gifts he believes God will give: that I may do your most holy will. We might wonder about God's will, or debate it in our minds. Francis simply wanted to do God's will. That's my longing every day.

Pray this prayer of St. Francis again - and maybe again later today, and maybe all week long.

**Most high, glorious God,**

**enlighten the darkness of my heart**

**and give me, Lord,**

**correct faith,**

**firm hope,**

**perfect love,**

**wisdom and perception,**

**that I may do**

**what is truly your most holy will.**

1. Adapted from Presbyterian Church (USA), *Book of Common Worship*, 792-93. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)