

5 CUPS OF WATER

WEEK 1

A Gift from God: Baptism as a Means of Grace

Led by Rev. Andi Voinovich, Associate Pastor, Downers Grove First United Methodist Church

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

- What does it mean to you that God offers grace even before a person can understand or recognize that God loves them?
- Where or when have you been surprised by God's grace in your life?
- Sacraments have a physical element that helps make this experience of grace tangible. Why do you think water is the element for baptism? What does it express or mean?
- When you think about baptism as an invitation, how do you personally accept that invitation in your own life?
- Who is a person in your life that exemplifies God's grace and how do they do this?

WEEK 2

Welcome: Incorporation into the Body of Christ

Led by Rev. Jeffry Bross, Aurora District Superintendent, Northern Illinois Conference

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

- Where have you been most welcomed in your life and what made that experience so welcoming?
- How has your experience with Christians and the United Methodist Church been around welcome and acceptance? What has been good? What could be better?
- How have you been intentionally welcoming to others to model the love of God?
- What was your favorite memory of any baptism? What happened that made it so special?
- What does it mean to you when you hear that you are picked first to be welcomed and loved into the family of Christ? What does it feel like to know that the Creator of the Universe knows you by name, calls you by name, and loves you by name?
- How are you better because of your relationship to a church family or a group of Christians? What bigger impact do you see the church doing because we are all in this together?

WEEK 3

Forgiveness Offered Fully and Freely

Led by Rev. Claude King, Senior Pastor, Downers Grove First United Methodist Church

Scripture: Acts 2:38-41

- Is baptism a critical part of your family's self-identification? Why or why not?
- If baptism was no longer offered, how would this impact your walk in faith as a believer of God?
- What would you say is an unforgivable act or way of thinking?
- Explain a time when you showed genuine forgiveness for someone who didn't even know you had forgiven them?
- Share the reasons why you feel that baptism and forgiveness have strengthened your relationship with God.

WEEK 4

New Life

Led by Rev. Kim Neace, Deacon, Wheatland Salem Church, Naperville & Oswego

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:17

- If you have been baptized, share your baptism and/or confirmation story with the group.
- What do you think of when you hear new life?
- Are there things that keep you from living into your baptism, living into new life? What are they?
- Who journeys with you or are your guides in living into this new life offered to you by Christ? What is it about them that serves as guidance?
- How will you move forward from today to live into your baptism?

WEEK 5

Holy Living

Led by Rev. Dr. Hannah Chong, Pastor, Community United Methodist Church, Naperville

Scripture: Matthew 28:9

- What personal and social holiness opportunities does your faith community offer? How are you engaged in these opportunities?
- What do you do to learn more about the Bible and our world? Do you prefer to learn alone, in a group, or both? What area do you feel you need to focus on this year?
- What fellowship (koinonia) opportunities do you have? What might need to be done to make fellowship an integral part of your life? Are there any lifestyle changes you need to make?
- Breaking bread was a central aspect of Jesus' ministry and in the early church. Look up a few New Testament narratives related to eating such as Mark 2:15-17, Matthew 9:10-13, Luke 22:7-23, John 21:1-14, and Acts 10:9-16. Which of such stories do you find most meaningful? How might you break bread today as a continuation of Jesus' radical practice of the open table?
- There are different ways to pray. What works best for you? How do you incorporate prayer in your daily life? When do you find it difficult to pray? What has been helpful to you in those times?
- Of the four spiritual practices of holy living among the early Christians as recorded in Acts 2:42 (learning, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer), to which practice(s) do you feel more drawn? Which practices do you find difficult?