Meeting Four: Participants’ Agenda

OPENING PRAYER

Gathering Prayer

Pause for a brief moment of quieting and then pray an adaptation of the first verses of A Prayer of Spiritual Longing.

All Loving God and Father, we long for you. We long for deeper meaning in our lives, for a wider love than we now experience. We yearn to know we belong and are connected to you and all creation.

Leader As we prepare to invite parishioners to the ministry of leading small Christian communities for the Longing for the Holy process, help us to discern well as we surface names of persons who hold the qualities that are necessary for facilitating small groups.

All Help us to form those who accept the invitation to lead so they can confidently encourage others to discover how to live more consciously and joyfully in your presence, and to channel the longing at the core of their being with deep, expanding hope. This we ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.

FAITH SHARING

Spirituality in a Christian Context:
A Heart for God and for Each Other

Lifting Our Hearts …

… in Song
Play Track 4 of the CD:
“E Haku i Ka Puʻu Wai (Weave One Heart).”

… in the Quiet
Pause for a moment of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

… in the Word
Read aloud 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

Take a few minutes to ponder a word, a phrase, a question, or a feeling that rises up in you. Reflect on this quietly; then share it aloud.

(Even if no one wishes to reflect aloud, permit sufficient time for silent reflection.)


Encountering Wisdom for Life

The Christian story is a love story of God’s overwhelming goodness. At its center is Jesus, the Christ, who shows us the way God loves and invites us to do the same. We are asked to “pray in secret” to cultivate a loving relationship with our good God in prayer and through the moral ordering of our lives. We are also asked to help bring about a just world in which all are able to share equitably.

Mellowness of Heart. The Christian life is not all prayer and sacrifice. We must let our lives be filled with those things that allow us to delight in the goodness of being alive. Gratitude is as essential to a holy life as are believing and doing the right things. If we are consumed by anger and bitterness, if we are wired, anxious, and workaholic, we may be too closed in on ourselves to be grateful and delight in the goodness God offers us.

When we trust enough in the God of love, we are more able to extend that love to all.

Mellowness also implies that we are flexible and forgiving, willing to let love be the compass that directs our relationships and our lives. Such a heart is a heart that has allowed God’s love to enter it and change its behavior.

Community. The Gospel clearly teaches that God calls us, not just as individuals, but as a community and that how we relate to each other is just as essential as how we relate to God. In Matthew 22:34-40, Jesus is shown summarizing the whole of the law, by declaring that the two great commandments, to love God and love one’s neighbor, can never be separated. We can really love God who is love only if we are concretely engaged with a living faith community. We do not fruitfully worship alone.

We are taught, nurtured, challenged, and supported in the spiritual life by all the levels of our faith community. The gathered worshiping Church, devout reception of the sacraments, the variety of small faith-sharing groups, individual relationships of spiritual care: all these are essential parts of our Christian journeys.

Sharing Our Faith

How can the role of small community leader help us build up the communal aspect of our Church?
PREPARING TO SELECT LEADERS OF SMALL COMMUNITIES

BREAK

STRATEGIES FOR INVITATION AND FORMATION OF SMALL COMMUNITY LEADERS

NEXT STEPS

CLOSING PRAYER

Prayers of Petition

Response  Lord, hear our prayer.

Concluding Prayer

Close with the following (final three verses of A Prayer of Spiritual Longing):

Leader  Let us pray.

All  May we embody the Christ life
in this our moment and place in history.
May the communion of saints surround us
and companion us on our journey.

May your Holy Spirit empower us to be holy
for the good of the world
and for your honor and glory.

We ask this through the risen Christ,
our brother and friend. Amen.