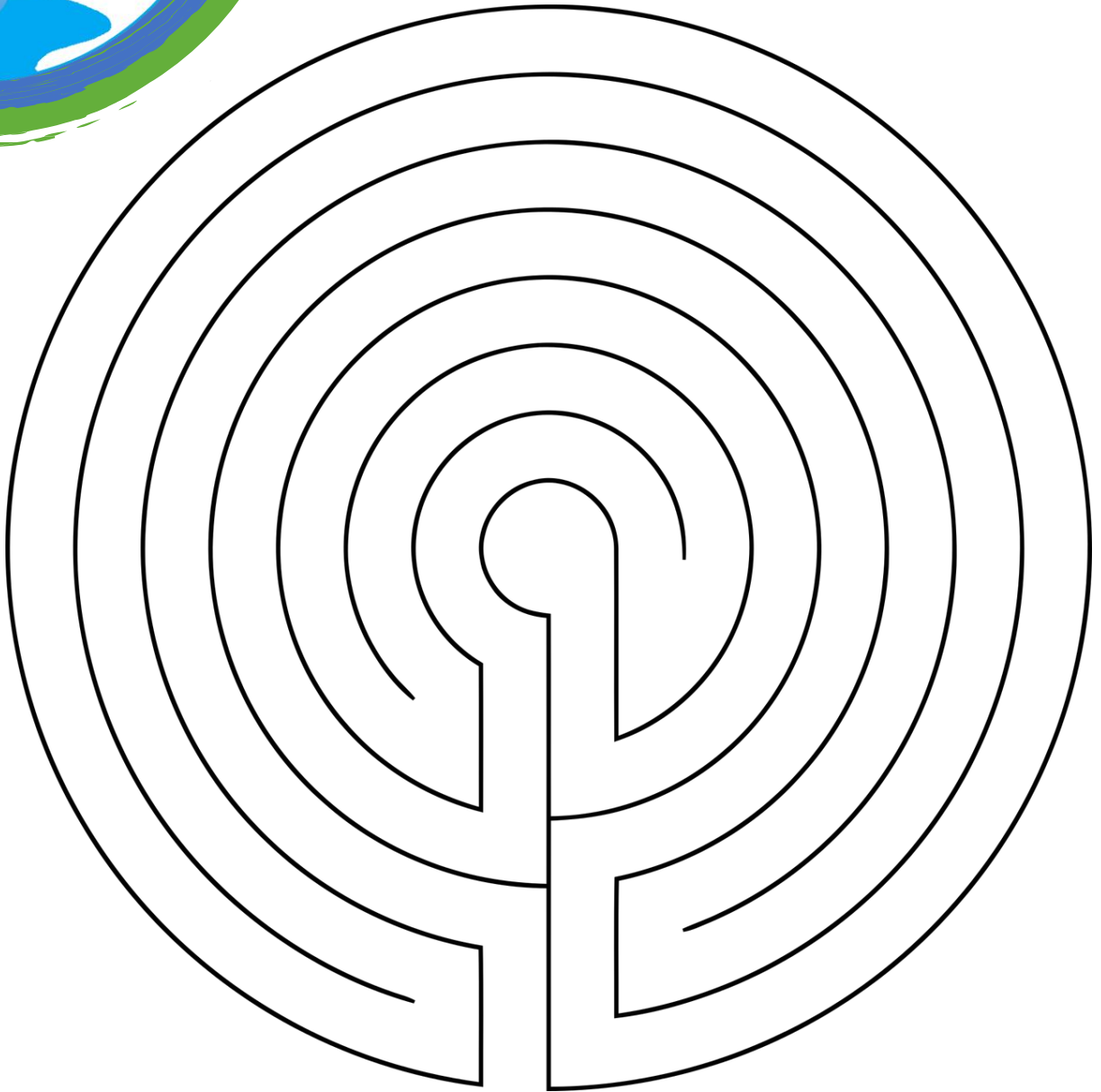




New Mission Statement Devotions

Devotion 4 - Traveling the Way of Jesus

Make copies of the finger labyrinth below for each participant. Invite participants to take some time to travel the labyrinth, resting in the center as they ask for peace, wisdom, guidance from Christ, and then traveling back out of the labyrinth. How does adding movement to a time of quiet centering help them focus?



Read each of the following Scripture passages slowly, inviting participants to pay attention to the word, phrases, images, and questions that arise within them as they hear these verses from the Bible. Pause after each reading, allowing time for people to share those words or phrases.



Central States Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

New Mission Statement Devotions



Scripture Readings

¹⁸As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. ²⁴So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. ²⁵And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

Matthew 4:18-25

¹After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ²He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' ⁶And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.'

Luke 10:1-11

²⁵I have said these things to you while I am still with you. ²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. ²⁸You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. ²⁹And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe. ³⁰I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; ³¹but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us be on our way.

John 14: 25-31



Central States Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

New Mission Statement Devotions



Reflection

In his classic book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer makes the distinction between “cheap” grace which is “grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate” and “costly grace.” “Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man (person their) his life, and it is grace because it gives a man (person) the only true life.”

Grace does not preclude a response or action on our part. It is because we are united with Christ in baptism, because God so loved the world to send the Son, because we are saved by grace

and filled with the Spirit, that we are invited, called, and empowered to travel the way of Jesus. Grace moves us from an existence focused on ourselves, our own needs, our own agendas, our own limited sphere to a journey, a path where we travel with Jesus out into the world that he came to redeem.

Traveling the way of Jesus is not just about where we are going, but how we go there, the paths, words, behaviors, perspectives, and actions we continually choose that reveal the way of Jesus. Traveling the way of Jesus is about recognizing and discerning the paths we are on, changing directions when we get off course, and moving forward even when it is challenging and even risky.

So often we think of faith as something (as in doctrines) that we believe in, something that requires some acts on our part such as going to church on Sunday and doing some charity work, but not necessarily as a “way of life” that impacts how we live each and every day, the causes we support, the way we treat people, how we spend our money (and not just the money we give away). If we think of faith as “traveling the way of Jesus” then we focus on what fuels our movement through life, being intentional with spiritual practices that fill us with God’s peace. We don’t wander aimlessly, following the next shiny thing, the familiar path of least resistance, but continually examine where we are and where our current path is likely to take us. When we get lost (which happens often) we recognize that and seek to get back on track. We pay attention to the who and what we encounter along the way, so that instead of experiencing people and situations as interruptions, they become opportunities for to encounter Jesus.

Traveling the way of Jesus is not like flying first class over the country. It is more like hiking up a mountain. We can get out of breath and wonder why we ever thought we could make it to the top! But the views are spectacular, our hiking companions help us along the way, and we discover we are so much more than we imagined.



Central States Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



New Mission Statement Devotions

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you hear as differences between the word “follow” and the word “travel?” Which word do you think better describes the journey of faith?
2. Where is the faith journey taking you, taking us, taking the world?
3. Describe times when you believe the church has gotten “lost” in traveling the way of Jesus. Are we on the right path now?
4. What are the biggest challenges in traveling the way the of Jesus?

Closing Prayer

O Holy Spirit, give us faith that will protect us from despair, from passions, and from vice;
Give us such love for God and all people as will blot out all hatred and bitterness;
Give us the hope that will deliver us from fear and faint-heartedness.
Amen

(Adapted from prayer by Dietrich Bonhoeffer)



Central States Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.