



Living the Questions: Theme Packet

Each month, our church gathers around a common theme and practice to guide our reflection in worship, education, justice and small groups. This packet provides questions and excerpts to guide personal or group writing or discussion, and serves as the guide for our monthly Sharing Circles. For more info. contact Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer revluke@wbuuc.org or 651.426.2369

Gratitude: the practice of having enough November, 2013

QUESTIONS

What are you most grateful for right now, and why?
What does “having enough” mean to you?
What practices help you to express gratitude; for others, for life, for the earth, for the Sacred?

QUOTES

Simplify your life. You don't grow spiritual, you shrink spiritual.

- Dr. Steve Maraboli

Walk as if you are kissing the Earth with your feet.

- Thich Nhat Hạnh

If the only prayer you said was *thank you*, that would be enough.

- Meister Eckhart

POETRY/LYRICS

I am enough, I am not enough.
I am enough, I am not enough.
I give help when I can, there is help for me.
I am enough, I am not enough.

- Rev. Kelli Clement

Praise wet snow
 falling early.
Praise the shadow
 my neighbor's chimney casts on the tile roof
even this gray October day that should, they say, have been golden.
 Praise the invisible sun burning beyond
 the white cold sky, giving us
light and the chimney's shadow.
 Praise
god or the gods, the unknown,
that which imagined us, which stays our hand,
our murderous hand,
 and gives us still,
in the shadow of death,
 our daily life,
 and the dream still
of goodwill, of peace on earth.
Praise
flow and change, night and
the pulse of day.

- Denise Levertov, *Praise Wet Snow*

For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies,
for the love which from our birth over and around us lies:
(refrain) Source of all, to thee we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise.
For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony linking sense to sound and sight *(refrain)*
For the wonder of each hour, of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flower, sun and moon and stars of light *(refrain)*
For the joy of human care, sister, brother, parent, child,
for the kinship we all share, for all gentle thoughts and mild *(refrain)*

- *Singing the Living Tradition, "For the Beauty of the Earth" #21*

We know nothing until we know everything.
I have no object to defend
for all is of equal value
to me.
I cannot lose anything in this
place of abundance
I found.
If something my heart cherishes
is taken away,
I just say, "Lord, what
happened?"
And a hundred more appear.

- Saint Catherine of Sienna

I don't want you just to sit down at the table.
I don't want you just to eat, and be content.
I want you to walk out into the fields
where the water is shining, and the rice has risen.
I want you to stand there, far from the white tablecloth.
I want you to fill your hands with the mud, like a blessing.

- Mary Oliver, from *Rice*

READINGS & EXCERPTS

Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man [sic] has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify.

- Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

I thank You God for most this amazing
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any—lifted from the no
of all nothing—human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

- E.E. Cummings

...what is enough? This question may begin to challenge the way you see the world today. That's okay. When we choose to draw a line in every aspect of our lives, we choose what is enough. We are given the opportunity to define what is enough. There is great tension in walking this line of more or less, but this tension creates great opportunities. Living on less creates the potential to do much more for others. May we be known by the problems we solve. It all starts with one question that changes everything: what is enough?

- Jeff Shinabarger, from *More or Less: Choosing a Lifestyle of Excessive Generosity*