



Baptized to Flourish

Evangelism and Discipleship
on the Way of Love

A Living Hope Greeting

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice,^[a] even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, ⁷ so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Although you have not seen^[b] him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1: 3-9





Plant the seed



Help it Grow



Share the Bounty

Plant



Share



Grow



Let's start at what we often think of as going backwards...



What is the bounty we are called to share?

Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?

Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

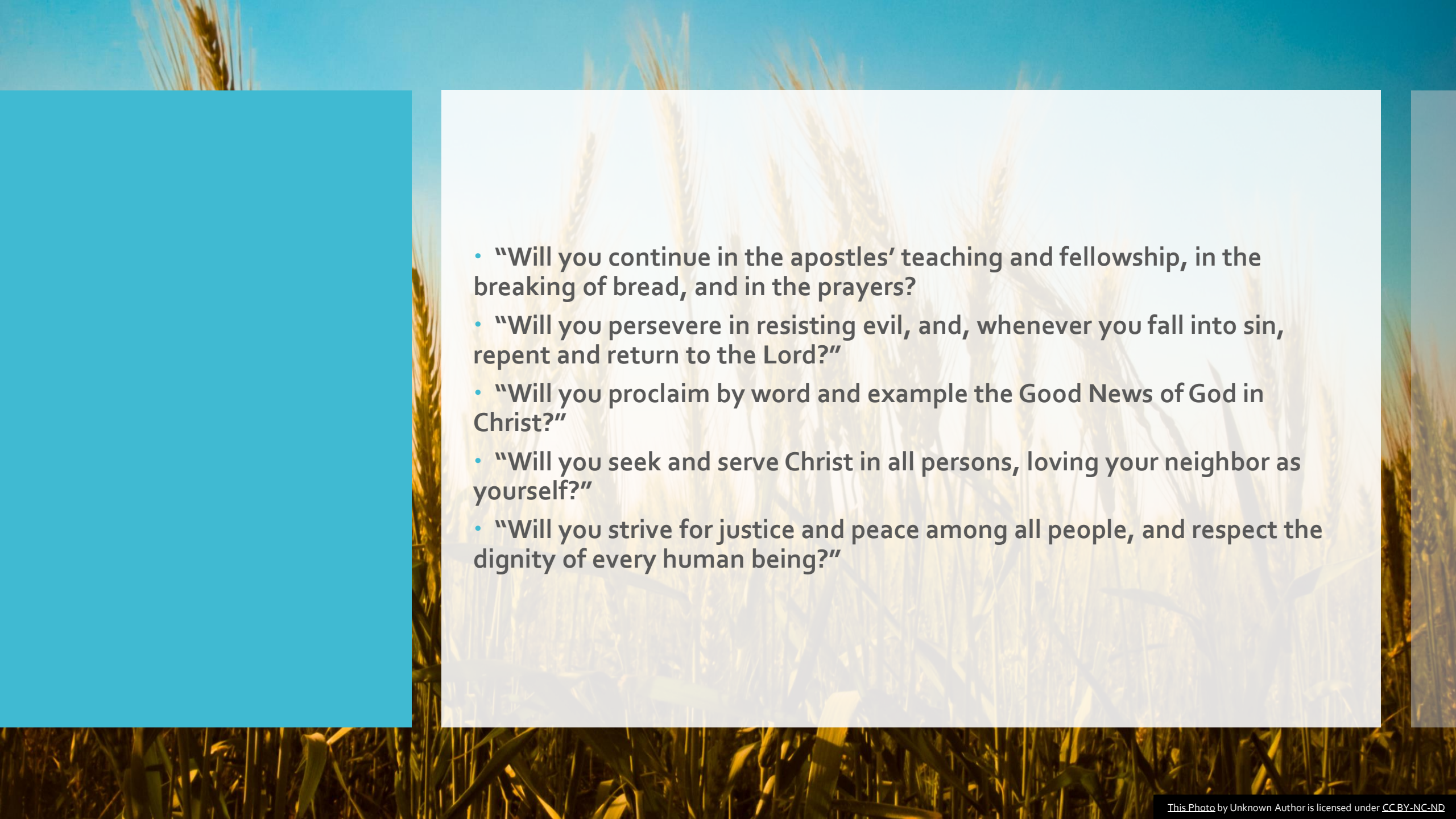
Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?

Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?

A photograph of a garden with a yellow text box overlay. The garden features a large, dark, mulched area in the foreground, with several blue-handled shovels and a wooden handle stuck into the ground. In the background, there are green plants, a person in a plaid shirt, and a person in a blue shirt. The text "Let's start with our Baptism." is written in white on the yellow box.

Let's start with our
Baptism.

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- “Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?”
 - “Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?”
 - “Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?”
 - “Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?”
 - “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?”

Think of life in Christ, through the Episcopal lens, as a CSA Basket.
Here is what you get:

1. New life (turning from selfishness and fear, to love and hope)
2. Meaning (life is not a long march of perfunctory task in a dog-eat-dog world)
3. Belovedness (you are loved and wanted just as you are, simply because you are, not because of what you do.)
4. Community and fellowship (often around a table)
5. A connection to the Divine
6. Unlimited do-overs and bottomless forgiveness
7. Good News of great love that you can are free to share with others
8. Love for your neighbors and the ability to see the divine in others
9. Dignity of self, and the ability to honor the dignity of all others
10. A passion for justice and peace
11. God's help at all times.



LOVING
LIBERATING
LIFE GIVING
the Jesus Movement



What was in the "CSA Basket" that brought you to faith? (Why are you a Christian?)

Or - what is in the basket that keeps feeding and nourishing you now? (Why are you an Episcopalian?)



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How do we grow?

The Role of Discipleship



So, before bounty comes growth.

We must grow things in order to harvest and share them.

We cannot share what we don't have.

And this is where DISCIPLESIP comes in.



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What do we mean by discipleship?

Disciple: One who follows a discipline and structure designed for ultimate liberation.

All disciplines, of any long standing, share this common goal: That the practice becomes like second nature.

In other words,

To live and move and have your being in...



From Soul Fire Farm, where they disciple folk around sustainable agriculture, natural building, spiritual activism, health, and environmental justice.

- We have forgotten that we belong to God, to all of creation, and to ourselves.
- Discipleship helps us remember, and then grow.
- It takes us from apathy or despair, to life and action.
- It bears fruit and it is regenerative.
- If we are intentional about practicing.



THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Summary of spiritual inventory findings of RenewalWorks: A Ministry of Forward Movement



DATA FROM 2013-2017

200 RENEWALWORKS CONGREGATIONS

12,000 EPISCOPALIANS

47% OF THESE CHURCHES HAVE 101-250 PARISHIONERS

54% OF RESPONDENTS HAVE ATTENDED THEIR CHURCH 10+ YEARS

THREE PRIMARY CHURCH ARCHETYPES



Troubled: Restless and hungry for greater spiritual growth.

Extroverted: Committed to service, mission, and outreach; limited correlation between service and spiritual beliefs.

Complacent: Low expectations of transformation, and resistance to change and challenge.

WHAT WE HEAR BY THE NUMBERS



60% want the church to help them develop a relationship with God in Christ.

Only **42%** are extremely satisfied or very satisfied with the way their church helps them develop a relationship with Jesus Christ.

57% percent want to be challenged to grow and take next steps spiritually.

Only **38%** felt they were extremely or very satisfied with how the church challenged them to grow and take next steps.

Only **14%** of the 12,000 respondents say they reflect on scripture daily.

42% have never met with members of their church clergy individually, and **48%** have never talked with a spiritual mentor.

WHERE ARE WE SPIRITUALLY? THE FOUR STAGES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

EXPLORING → GROWING → DEEPENING → CENTERED

Affirmed belief in God, though not sure what faith claims they would make about Christ. Generally, faith is not significant in their day-to-day life.

They are committed to the Christian faith but still have many questions and have not developed a personal relationship with God in Christ.

Transition to value a personal relationship with God over their church membership. They feel close to Christ and depend on him daily for guidance.

A personal relationship with God in Christ is the most important relationship in their lives, but that doesn't mean their spiritual journey is over.

18%

55%

23%

4%

72%

Consider themselves to be at an early, less mature stage of spiritual growth. Parishioners that fall into the first two stages are highly dependent on the church—and specifically the clergy—to help teach, guide and mentor.

FOUR CATALYSTS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

1. Engagement with scripture
2. Transforming power of the Eucharist
3. A deeper prayer life
4. The heart of the leader

RenewalWorks™
A Ministry of Forward Movement

Download the full report:

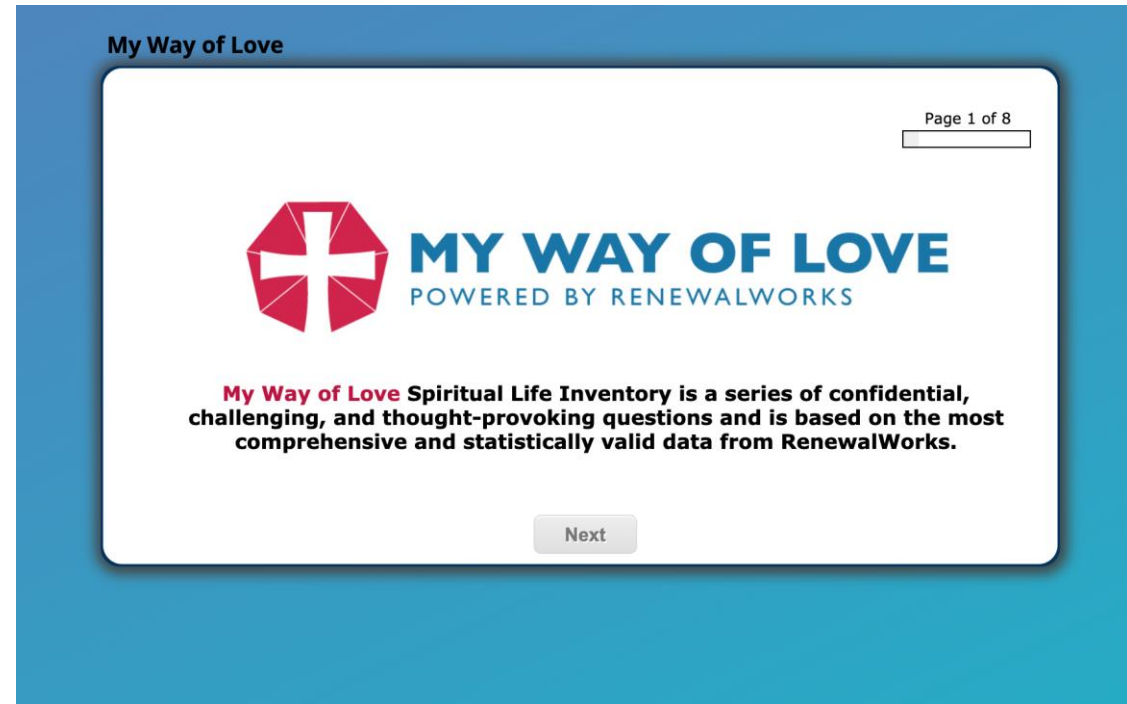
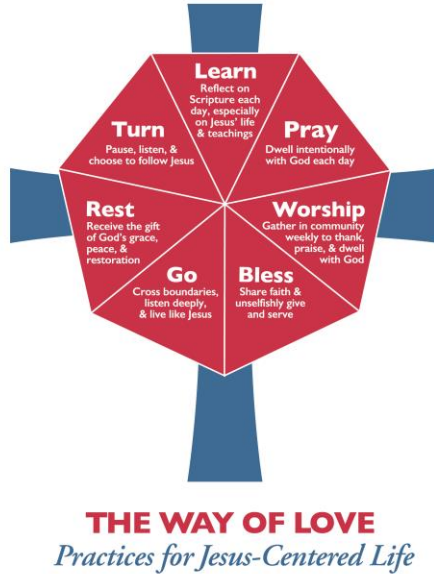
**RenewalWorks:
What We're Learning**

www.RenewalWorks.org

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So how do I practice?



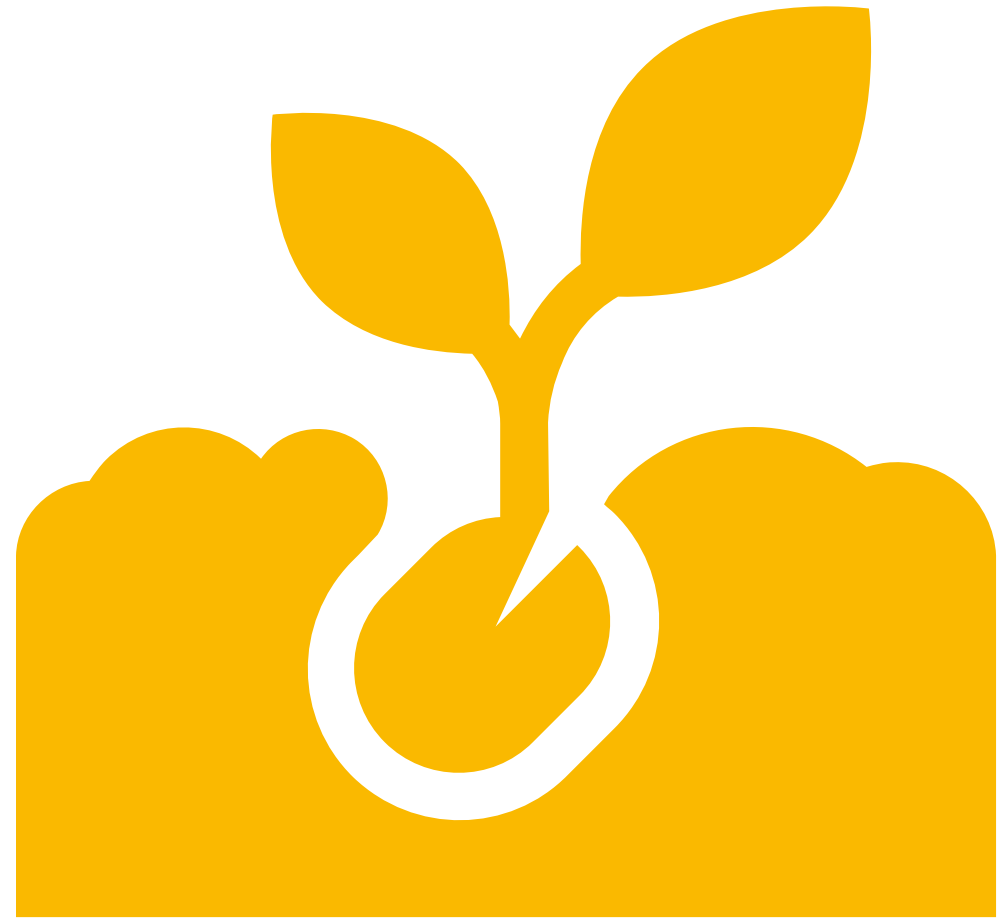
Bible Study –There is a great method that was introduced by the African Delegation to the Lambeth Conference in 1998. It is known by both names: “Lambeth” and “African.” It is rooted in the ancient method of praying the scriptures, known as Lectio Divina, or “Holy Reading.”

Follow the Way of Love – From Small Groups to Books, to a personal “spiritual fitness” email, there are many tools to help you begin following these 7 practices.

Study the Outline of Our Faith (the Catechism) - in a Small Group or with a friend. It is wonderful way to reconnect with the larger “why” .

Planting the Seed

Sharing the GOOD NEWS.



A close-up photograph of a person's legs and feet as they plant a small, young tree into a hole in the ground. The person is wearing dark blue socks and white sneakers with red and blue accents. Their hands, wearing grey work gloves, are visible near the base of the tree. The ground is dark brown soil, and there is green grass around the hole. The background is slightly blurred, showing more grass and the legs of another person in blue jeans.

• In the Baptismal Covenant, we promise to “proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ”.

• (Book of Common Prayer, 305).

As Episcopalians we have generally done a good job at the Example part.

It's the Word part where we need to grow.



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Episcopal Evangelism is not..

Heavy-handed, guilt-based, or manipulative

A tool for use to get more people as converts, church members, or pledging units

Results-based

A fad

Formulaic

Something that requires the light of other faiths to dim in order for our light to shine

Episcopal Evangelism is...

Rooted in scripture

Part of our baptismal identity

A spiritual practice

Unique to each individual and faith community

A way to embody the very life and practice of Jesus in the world (active); and be filled with the Spirit and formed ever more into the likeness of Christ (receptive).

It's a joyful sharing of what you know to be good news and deep truth, and a celebration of how you see God at work in others' lives and in the world.

Evangelism happens when we **seek, name, and celebrate** Jesus' loving presence in our stories, in the stories of our neighbors, and our communities, and then invite everyone to MORE of that goodness.

But it takes practice.

We need to practice sharing our stories, and inviting folks to share theirs.

(And the more we practice discipleship the more stories we have to share, the more ways we can hear the stories of others.)



So, how do we talk
about God?



We start with
our stories.

1. Seek

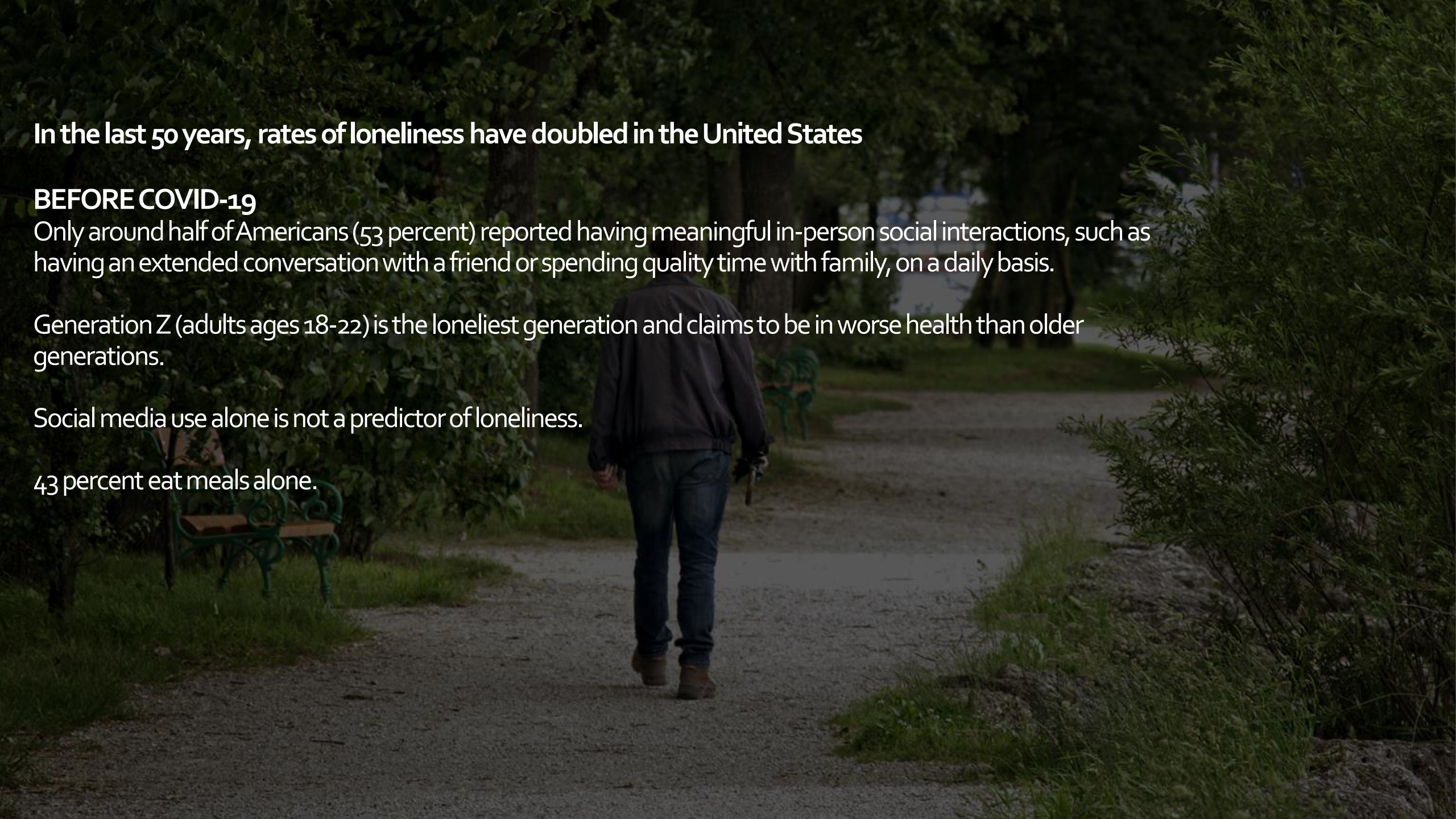
2. Name

3. Celebrate

So, who
do we
invite?



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A person is walking away from the camera down a gravel path in a park. The path is flanked by lush green trees and bushes. To the left, there is a green metal park bench. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn. The overall mood is solitary and contemplative.

In the last 50 years, rates of loneliness have doubled in the United States

BEFORE COVID-19

Only around half of Americans (53 percent) reported having meaningful in-person social interactions, such as having an extended conversation with a friend or spending quality time with family, on a daily basis.

Generation Z (adults ages 18-22) is the loneliest generation and claims to be in worse health than older generations.

Social media use alone is not a predictor of loneliness.

43 percent eat meals alone.

It is not good
for humans to
be alone.

Genesis 2:8



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Everyone wants to be wanted.

Everyone likes being welcomed.

Everyone is seeking kindness.

Everyone is waiting on some sort of good news.



Who in your mission field is desperate for Good News?

What are the unique gifts that your church has been gifted with?
How will you use it to speak the Good News?

What is the Good News your congregation needs to hear? Who in your mission field speaks that language?

What do you need to do to prepare?



Invitation matters



When did an invitation matter in your life?

Who in your community is waiting to hear Good News?

Who is waiting to be invited?

To a picnic? A conversation? On a walk?
To a bible study?



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A story about
pie.





Plant the seed



Help it Grow



Share the Bounty