



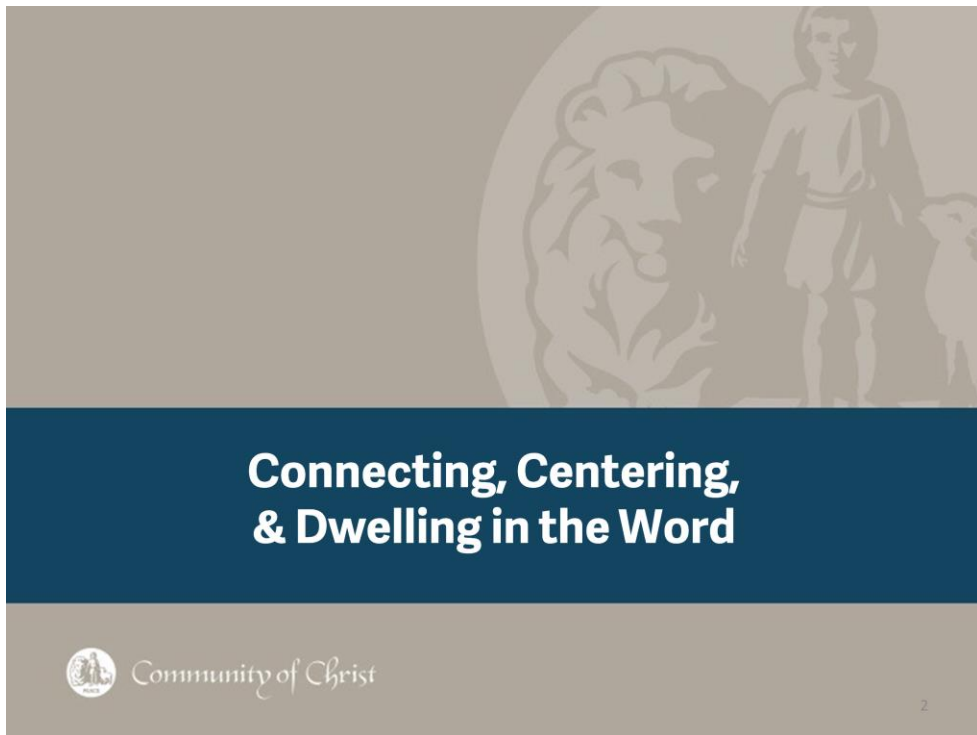
Community of Christ

## LCM Retreat 8

**"Living Into God's  
Unseen Future"**



Please have music or music video playing as people gather



## **Saturday Schedule**

**8:30 – 9:30 AM Connecting, Centering, Dwelling in the Word**

**9:30 – 9:45 AM Break**

#### Hebrews 11:8-10 and D&C 162:1

By an act of faith, Abraham said yes to God's call to travel to an unknown place that would become his home. When he left he had no idea where he was going. By an act of faith he lived in the country promised him, lived as a stranger camping in tents. Isaac and Jacob did the same, living under the same promise. Abraham did it by keeping his eye on an unseen city with real, eternal foundations—the City designed and built by God.

*Lift up your eyes and fix them on the place beyond the horizon to which you are sent. Journey in trust . . .*

**Welcome everyone and share your appreciation for their presence and ministry this weekend.**

**Begin with a song or two of gathering.**

**Ask someone in the group to open with prayer.**

**Reintroduce Dwelling in the Word – This practice is about how our lives connect with the God's unfolding story as revealed in scripture. Remember, what makes this practice significant is that we do it in community – not just any community but sacred community. The Spirit reveals new insights as we come together with open minds and open hearts. Listen carefully to one another.**

Lets now listen to the sacred text of scripture. After I read the text we will pause for a few moments of silent reflection.

#### **Hebrews 11:8-10**

**By an act of faith, Abraham said yes to God's call to travel to an unknown place that would become his home. When he left he had no idea where he was going. By an act of faith he lived in the country promised him, lived as a stranger camping in tents. Isaac and Jacob did the same, living under the same promise. Abraham did it by keeping his eye on an unseen city with real, eternal foundations—the City designed and built by God.**

#### **Doctrine and Covenants 162:1**

**Lift up your eyes and fix them on the place beyond the horizon to which you are sent. Journey in trust . . .**

## Dwelling in the Word Questions

- What unknown place is the Spirit prompting you to explore?
- What unknown place is the Spirit prompting us to explore?



### Share the following questions for table discussion:

- What unknown place is the Spirit prompting you to explore?
- What unknown place is the Spirit prompting us to explore?

You will have 15-20 minutes to discuss these questions and dwell in the scripture text at your table.

Hebrews 11:8-10 and D&C 162:1

By an act of faith, Abraham said yes to God's call to travel to an unknown place that would become his home. When he left he had no idea where he was going. By an act of faith he lived in the country promised him, lived as a stranger camping in tents. Isaac and Jacob did the same, living under the same promise. Abraham did it by keeping his eye on an unseen city with real, eternal foundations—the City designed and built by God.

*Lift up your eyes and fix them on the place beyond the horizon to which you are sent. Journey in trust . . .*

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**You are now invited to move to another table so you can share in this experience with some new friends. Lets move quickly to another table.**

We will now listen to these scriptures again. After I read the text we will pause for a moment of silent reflection.

### **Hebrews 11:8-10**

**By an act of faith, Abraham said yes to God's call to travel to an unknown place that would become his home. When he left he had no idea where he was going. By an act of faith he lived in the country promised him, lived as a stranger camping in tents. Isaac and Jacob did the same, living under the same promise. Abraham did it by keeping his eye on an unseen city with real, eternal foundations—the City designed and built by God.**

### **Doctrine and Covenants 162:1**

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## Dwelling in the Word Questions

- What unknown place is the Spirit prompting you to explore?
- What unknown place is the Spirit prompting us to explore?



**Share the following questions for table discussion:**

- **What unknown place is the Spirit prompting you to explore?**
- **What unknown place is the Spirit prompting us to explore?**

**You will have 15-20 minutes to discuss these questions at your table.**

After table group discussion invite everyone to come back together and focus on the following question:

***How were you blessed by the insight of someone else in this experience?***

***End with a prayer of gratitude for the Spirit's presence.***

***Take a quick Break 15 minutes***  
***9:30 – 9:45 am***



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**Take a quick break 15 minutes**

**9:30-9:45am                      Break**

**Next Session:**

**9:45 – 11:15 AM              Discovering a Bold New Vision of Life  
in the Spirit in Community**

**11:15 – 11:30 AM              Break**



## **Discovering a Bold New Vision of *Life in the Spirit* in Community**



Community of Christ

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**This Session:**

**Welcome people back.**





## Introductory Remarks:

**NOTE TO FACILITATOR:** It would be helpful to tie this to the following passages of Scripture – D&C 163:1, Hebrews 11:8-10 (also D&C 161:1a – a modern day Hebrews 11) Remind people:

- we live in a **time of transition** – this involves death and rebirth.
- We have talked about a large segment of the population we call “Spiritual but not Religious” but **what is the significance of this group?**
- In this session, we will discuss some of the spiritual yearnings of this group and the questions they evoke in us. **We will discover how there is a Spirit-led Convergence of our continuing journey (particularly in recent sections of the D&C) and what God is up to in culture.**

This is why **Spiritual Awakening** and living into a bold new vision of Life in the Spirit in Community is so essential to our future as a movement and world. **We are being called to be a part of what God is birthing in our midst.** This means making room – *God is doing a new thing, do you not perceive it?*

All of this is about how we live fully into our identity and calling as communities of Christ, new communal expressions of life in the Spirit for the healing of our world. This is an ongoing journey! This is about exploring our primary essential question:

- **How do we discern, embrace, and risk living fully into our identity and calling as Community of Christ in a changing world?**
- **Or, how are the two dimensions of our identity (sacred community and the living Christ) calling us to revision and experiment with how the gospel is lived out in relationship with others?**

The nature of this movement is invitational! We are not being called to encounter this for ourselves – the mission of God – “*Missio Dei*” is expanding, connecting, reconciling.

Our vision of Zion is about interdependence and connectedness! **Our congregations are being called to become radical expressions of invitation and hospitality that invite people into the space of exploration, connectedness, and growth.**

This is an urgent call in a defining moment in our world!

How is the gospel (i.e. relational impulse) of Jesus Christ seeking to be incarnate (be made real) in culturally relevant ways today?



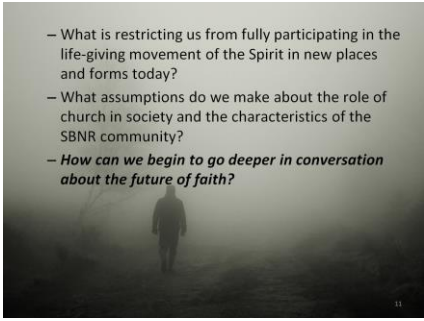
From Retreat 2 and Why LCM Video – we are **cultural interpreters of the gospel in our time.**

- We are **reintroducing** our culture to Jesus Christ and the Church.
- **The assumption here is that they have yet to meet either one of them due to past perceptions, cultural blinders, and biases.** The assumption we may also need to uncover is **our need to rediscover the living Christ** who heals and reconciles through redemptive relationships in sacred community (D&C 163:2)

Remember Doctrine and Covenants 162:2e – *“The Spirit of the Restoration is not locked in one moment of time but the call to every generation to witness to essential truths in its own language and form. Let the Spirit breathe.”*

Also remember David Bosch, “If we are going to take the incarnation seriously, the word must become flesh in every new context”.

And finally, from our Video Missio Dei – how does the video end?  
**“The word must become flesh!”**

- 
- What is restricting us from fully participating in the life-giving movement of the Spirit in new places and forms today?
  - What assumptions do we make about the role of church in society and the characteristics of the SBNR community?
  - *How can we begin to go deeper in conversation about the future of faith?*

Many of us have experienced grief of loss of familiar forms and also our own intimate connection to many who are part of the growing number of people no longer attending church - this includes our own children.

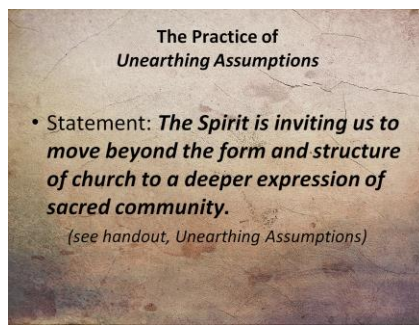
**Point out the image:** Whether these trends are exciting or disturbing to you, we are entering unfamiliar territory.

It can be difficult to imagine fully a new way of being and often we find ourselves stuck within our current modes of thinking. ***How can we begin to go deeper in conversation about the future of faith?***

***And as we go deeper into the conversation, HOW WILL WE SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER as we experience what will be loss, grief, excitement, unsettledness, and wonder? This will be one of the primary ways we live into our calling and identity as communities of Christ.***

***We must pay attention to how the unsettling pace of change is impacting us emotionally, spiritually, and even physically.***

(SBNR – Spiritual but not Religious)



Go over the handout page 13, **Unearthing Assumptions** together and lead the tables through the process, app. **30 minutes total**.

**Statement: The Spirit is inviting us to move beyond the form and structure of church to a deeper expression of sacred community** is the topic we will be exploring in Step 2. When you go home you can use this process to explore underlying assumptions about other questions, topics, or issues like:

- What is holding us back from extending Christ's invitation and hospitality to strangers?
- How do we live lives of invitation and hospitality individually and as congregations?
- How can worship lead us deeper into encounter with God and one another?

If we can begin to openly and honestly unearth and share our assumptions about a variety of topics and questions we can together move beyond our hesitation and fears and make room for the new thing God is seeking to do in us, through us, and around us!

Lets return to our Statement above: **The Spirit is inviting us to move beyond the form and structure of church to a deeper expression of sacred community.**

There are a number of assumptions we may have as we read this question such as:

- a. What is our definition and/or assumptions about church? When we think of church do we think of denomination, local congregation, gathered community, movement, new expression, etc.? What assumptions do we have about our specific image of the church.
- a. What does it mean to us that our local contexts for mission are changing? Do we accept this premise or do we have another set of assumptions that define our reality? If we do believe our local contexts for mission are changing how does this impact our view of the role of the church?

Continue leading the tables through the process on the handout.

**Save a little time at the end for large group reflection on the process.**

***Take a quick Break 15 minutes***  
***11:15- 11:30AM***

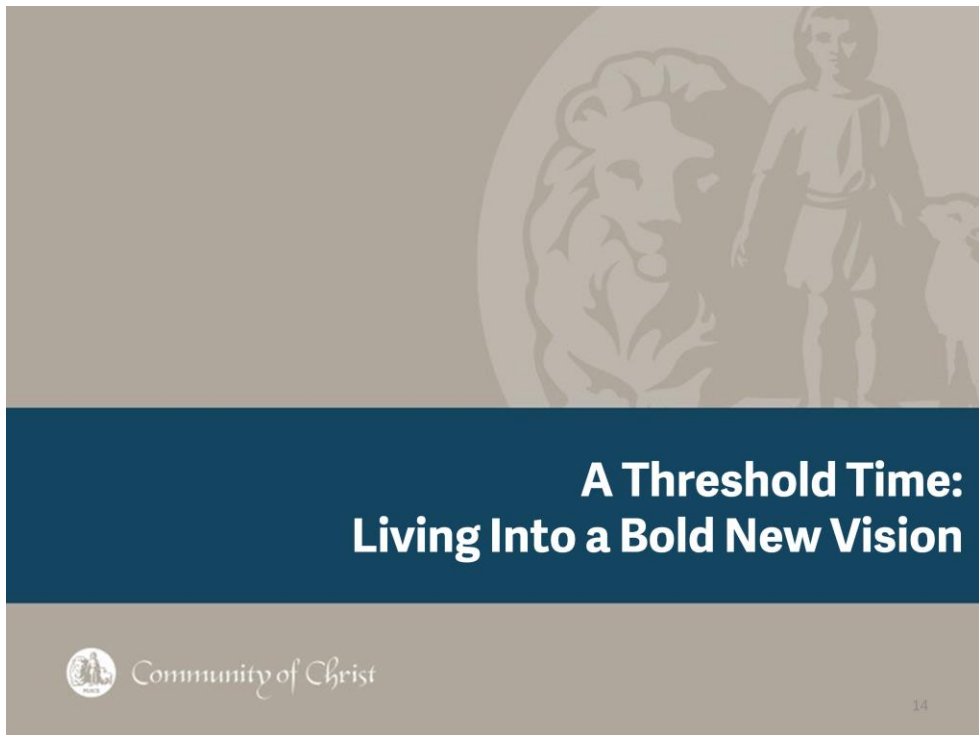


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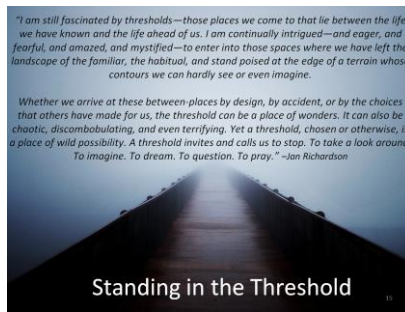
**Take a quick break 30 minutes**

**Schedule:**

<b>11:15 – 11:30 AM</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>11:30 – 12:15 PM</b>	<b>A Threshold Time: Living into a Bold New Vision of life in the Spirit in Community</b>
<b>12:15 – 12:45 PM</b>	<b>Lunch and Renewal</b>
<b>12:45 – 1:00 PM</b>	<b>Prayer for Peace</b>



**Welcome people back – maybe a song or video?**



## Lead Meditation

Begin by singing a few rounds of Alleluia. Before singing remind people that Alleluia means “God be praised”. We gather in the reality of “something not fully explainable but utterly transforming” that is always doing something new in our midst. What has become commonplace or even expected for us is still illusive for so many. So we begin with deep gratitude for the sending love of God that is nudging us across new thresholds of understanding and being in the world today.

Let us sing Alleluia.

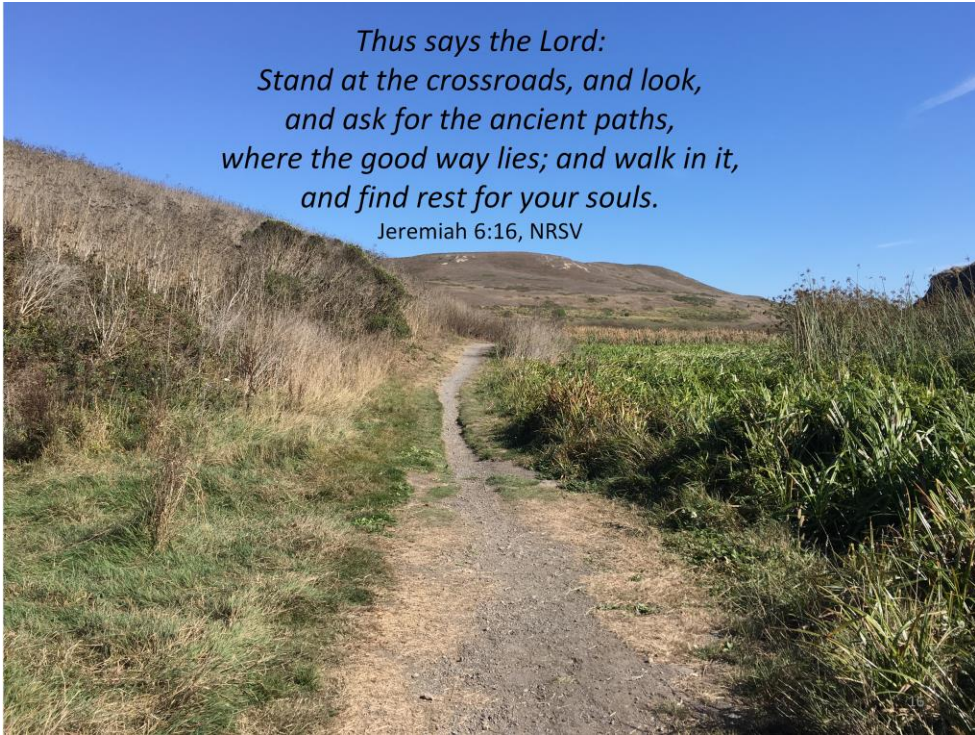
**Lets reflect quietly for a few moments as I read these words from Jan Richardson and Jeremiah on the following slide.**

***Explore how the Spirit is leading you gently to toward a new threshold of possibility.***

***On the back of the Schedule in you want to follow along***

*“I am still fascinated by thresholds—those places we come to that lie between the life we have known and the life ahead of us. I am continually intrigued—and eager, and fearful, and amazed, and mystified—to enter into those spaces where we have left the landscape of the familiar, the habitual, and stand poised at the edge of a terrain whose contours we can hardly see or even imagine. Whether we arrive at these between-places by design, by accident, or by the choices that others have made for us, the threshold can be a place of wonders. It can also be chaotic, discombobulating, and even terrifying. Yet a threshold, chosen or otherwise, is a place of wild possibility. A threshold invites and calls us to stop. To take a look around. To imagine. To dream. To question. To pray.” –Jan Richardson*





*Thus says the Lord:  
Stand at the crossroads, and look,  
and ask for the ancient paths,  
where the good way lies; and walk in it,  
and find rest for your souls.*

Jeremiah 6:16, NRSV

Read . . .

*Thus says the Lord:  
Stand at the crossroads, and look,  
and ask for the ancient paths,  
where the good way lies; and walk in it,  
and find rest for your souls.*

Jeremiah 6:16, NRSV



## Who are the “*spiritual but not religious*?”

### Terminology:

- “Spiritual but not religious” This increasingly common phrase is often used when people describe their own lack of religious affiliation.
- “None” No religious affiliation (also “unaffiliated”)
- “Done” Has left previous religious affiliation



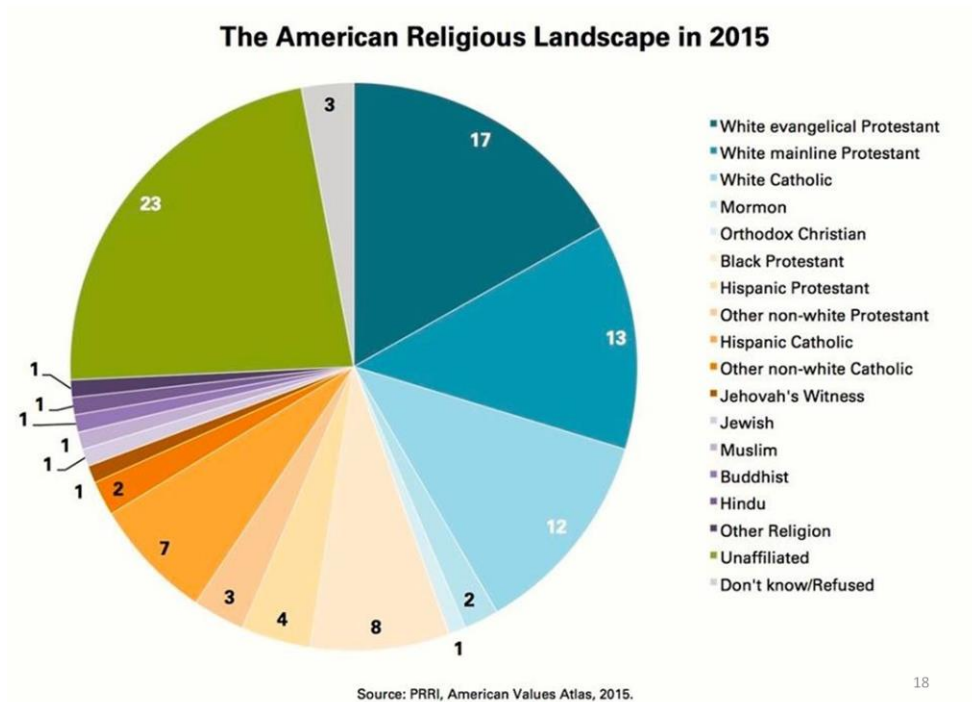
As we begin our conversation lets review some terms. Some of these terms you may recall from Diana Butler Bass’s Book Christianity after Religion:

### Terminology:

“Spiritual but not religious” This increasingly common phrase is often used when people describe their own lack of religious affiliation. Many in this group define themselves as having a spiritual life but have not connection with any form of organized religion.

“None” No religious affiliation (also “unaffiliated”)

“Done” Has left previous religious affiliation



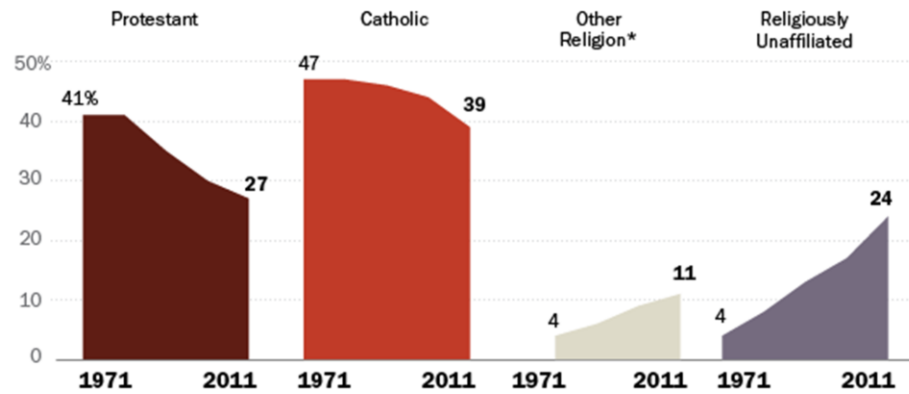
**Invite participants to see their handout, “SBNR in US and Canada” for the next three slides.**

Point out the growing number of “unaffiliated” in each graph. These numbers have risen significantly over the past 10 years. Though the national average in the U.S. is 23% (as of 2015), the number in some cities, especially along the West Coast, is much higher.

(Go through the next slides quickly, more as a reference point to remind us of contextual realities)

## Canada's Religious Composition, 1971-2011

% of Canadians who identify as ...



Sources: 1971-2001 Canada census; 2011 National Household Survey

\*Data for the "Other Religion" category in 1971 are not shown because the figure is not comparable with the figures for 1981-2011. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

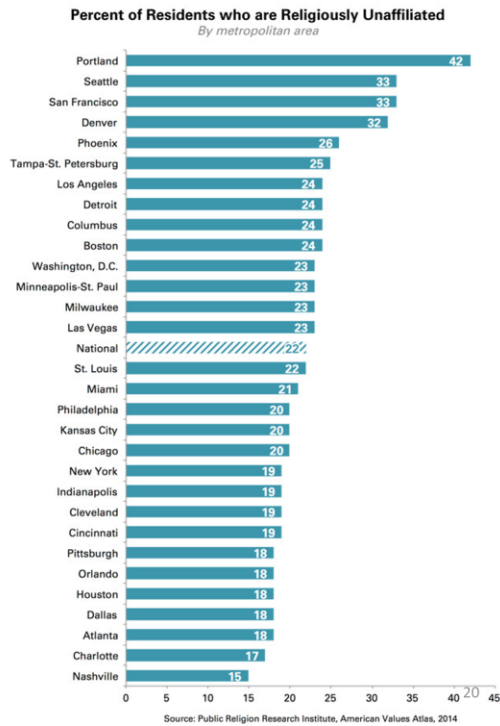
Invite Persons to review the data for Canada.

***Do not use if with a group that is only U.S.***

More Americans than ever are choosing to forgo formal religious attachments—the religiously unaffiliated make up [22 percent of the U.S. population overall—but the American Values Atlas shows that the religious landscape varies considerably state by state.](#)

Source:

<http://publicreligion.org/2015/03/how-religiously-unaffiliated-is-your-city/#.Vr5Z5oR7nbE>



More Americans than ever are choosing to forgo formal religious attachments.

Look at this chart from publicreligion.org that illustrates religiously unaffiliated by state.

## Americans Becoming More “Spiritual”

- Pew Research Center surveys consistently show that not all religious “nones” are nonbelievers. In fact, the majority of Americans without a religious affiliation say they believe in God.
- As a group, however, the “nones” are far less religiously observant than Americans who identify with a specific faith.
- The study also suggests that in some ways Americans are becoming more spiritual. About six-in-ten adults now say they regularly feel a deep sense of “spiritual peace and well-being,” up 7 percentage points since 2007.
- 46% of Americans say they experience a deep sense of “wonder about the universe” at least once a week, also up 7 points over the same period.

<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/11/03/u-s-public-becoming-less-religious/#less-religious-but-more-spiritual>

Pew Research Center surveys consistently show that not all religious “nones” are nonbelievers. **In fact, the majority of Americans without a religious affiliation say they believe in God.**

As a group, however, the “nones” are far less religiously observant than Americans who identify with a specific faith. And, as the “nones” have grown in size, they also have become even *less* observant than they were when the original Religious Landscape Study was conducted in 2007.

The study also suggests that in some ways Americans are becoming more spiritual.

About six-in-ten adults now say they regularly feel a deep sense of “spiritual peace and well-being,” up 7 percentage points since 2007.

46% of Americans say they experience a deep sense of “wonder about the universe” at least once a week, also up 7 points over the same period.

## Spirituality in Canada and U.S.

- The term “nones” is often used to describe people who answer a survey question about their religion by saying they have no religion, no particular religion, no religious preference or the like. It also includes atheists and agnostics.
- However, surveys in the U.S. and Canada find that most “nones” have some religious beliefs and practices. Two-thirds of U.S. “nones,” for example, say they believe in God.
- According to the 2011 Canadian General Social Survey, one-third (33%) of unaffiliated Canadians say that religious or spiritual beliefs are important to the way they live their lives. Therefore, the term “nones” should not be equated with “secular” or “non-religious.”

—<http://www.pewforum.org/2013/06/27/canadas-changing-religious-landscape/>

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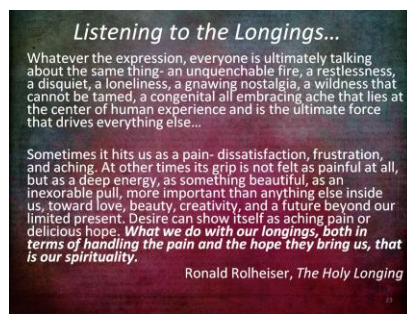
We have seen much of this data before, but it is important to get our bearings as we continue in our conversation this weekend.

**The interesting thing about these trends is that even though people self categorize as “unaffiliated,” the hunger for genuine spiritual encounter has not waned. In fact, it may be increasing.**

We remember Diana Butler Bass’ observation in *Christianity After Religion* that we may be in the midst of a **global spiritual awakening**.

**Pause here and invite people to turn to talk to a neighbor for 5 minutes on this question:**

**What might this data mean for us in the places we serve?(i.e. church neighborhood, our residential neighborhood, places of work, places of community gathering etc.)**



As we are trying to find our footing in a changing world, the ***experience of divine longing is something we all hold in common***, and a **place where we can meet each other** amid diverse spiritual journeys.

This is significant for us to remember as we think about how we connect with those who have walked away from the church.

**Read the following quote:**

Whatever the expression, everyone is ultimately talking about the same thing- an unquenchable fire, a restlessness, a disquiet, a loneliness, a gnawing nostalgia, a wildness that cannot be tamed, a congenital all embracing ache that lies at the center of human experience and is the ultimate force that drives everything else...

Sometimes it hits us as a pain- dissatisfaction, frustration, and aching. At other times its grip is not felt as painful at all, but as a deep energy, as something beautiful, as an inexorable pull, more important than anything else inside us, toward love, beauty, creativity, and a future beyond our limited present. Desire can show itself as aching pain or delicious hope. ***What we do with our longings, both in terms of handling the pain and the hope they bring us, that is our spirituality. –***

Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing*



Refer people to handout in packet: ***"Receive, Embody, and Share the Invitation to Christ's Peace" and Handout Envisioning the Threshold Space: Essential Questions***

**\*\*\*Spiritual Companionship\*\*\*** is about invitation to authentic relationship where people can hear their own longing for the Holy. The practice of Holy Curiosity is an example of a Missional practice that creates this kind of sacred relational space.

- This is not the traditional approach to Christianity – ***let me tell you what to think. IT IS RADICALLY DIFFERENT!***

Here are some important questions for us to continue to explore together


- Are we willing to individually "go there" and risk living into ***authentic and mutual relationships*** with others where we may have as much to receive as give?
- Remember from Doctrine and Covenants 164:9 – ***"When your willingness to live in sacred community as Christ's new creation exceeds your natural fear of spiritual and relational transformation you will become who you are called to be."*** This is calling us to a different place of receptivity to others and the Spirit.
- As we risk new and deeper relationships that create safe space to explore, where do we experience a disconnect with our "church" or "congregational" experience?
- How do we ***Embody*** spiritual companioning ***IN*** congregational life and new expressions of spiritual community?
- How do we ***intentionally*** create this space as we gather in sacred community? How does this look different than our current form and structure?

These questions are absolutely essential – this about creating ***relational sanctuaries in the midst of everyday relationships and times of gathering!*** This is the new language and form that will connect with the deepest yearnings of the human heart!

The Receive, Embody, and Share Booklets help us begin to explore this relational space in relationship with others.

We are invited to approach this threshold time with a spirit of companionship and curiosity, neither fully accepting nor fully embracing the current realities but seeking to understand them in deeper ways and seek avenues for faithful response.





You are invited to pay attention to your assumptions and agendas as we move through a time of just beginning to glimpse some of these emerging realities. . .

*How is the Spirit leading us to new thresholds of understanding that will enable us to live and convey the gospel in new language and form.*

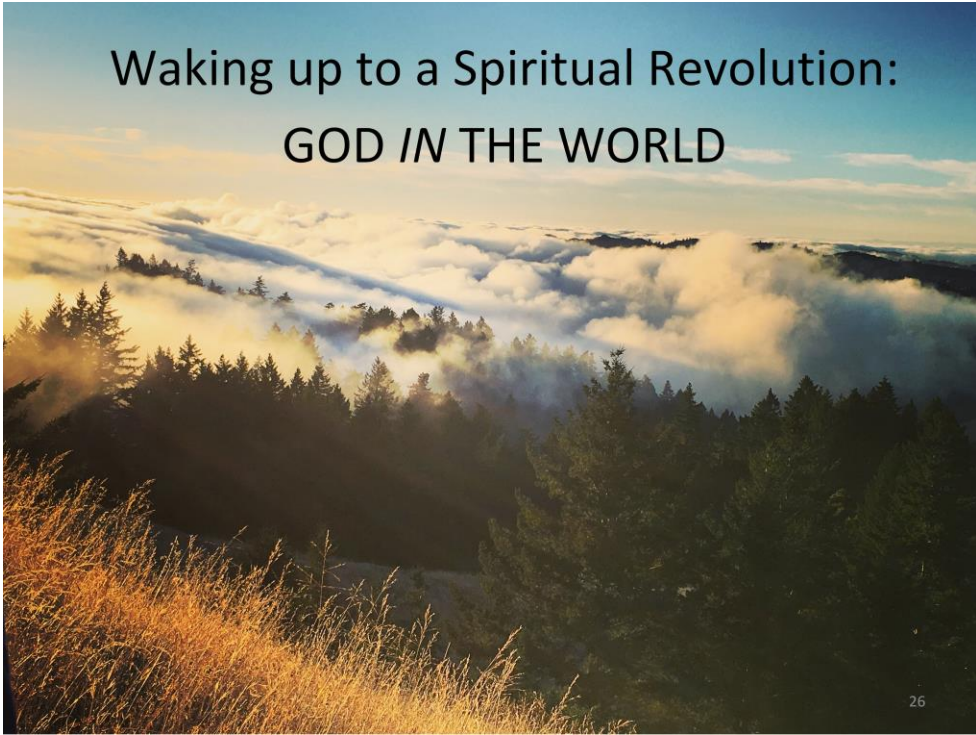
Author Linda Mercadante in her book, *Belief Without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual But Not Religious*, begins to notice that as institutional structures and beliefs are being discarded or rejected, new ways of seeing the world and defining our deepest values are emerging in their place.

What is it that is emerging? How can we adopt a posture of holy curiosity as we seek the Spirit in new places and forms?

We invite you to pay attention to your assumptions and agendas as we move through a time of just beginning to glimpse some of these emerging realities.

***How is the Spirit leading us to new thresholds of understanding that will enable us to live and convey the gospel in new language and form?***

## Waking up to a Spiritual Revolution: GOD *IN* THE WORLD



Diana Butler Bass's new book, *Grounded: Finding God in the World, A Spiritual Revolution*, also begins to explore this idea of what is emerging as people search for meaningful ways to connect with the Sacred.

**Invite people to listen deeply as we move through the next several slides which shape a core piece of insight from her book.**



## God Unmediated

“People who identify as “spiritual but not religious” or religiously unaffiliated use a **vocabulary of theological intimacy**, as do many who identify with more traditional faiths. Although some still worship a distant majesty and others deny divine existence, many millions of contemporary people **experience God as far more personal and accessible than ever before....**”

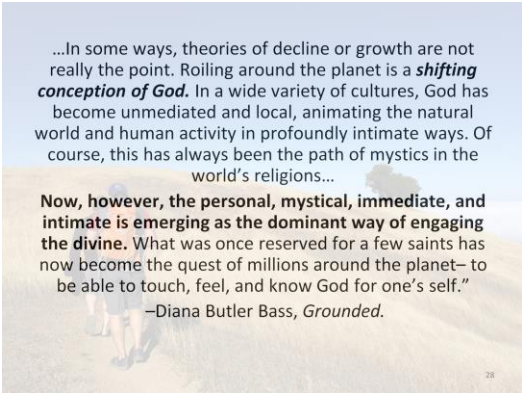
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**Note to Facilitator: This slide is connected with the next slide, so there is no need to stop here unless there is time.**

### **On Slide:**

#### God Unmediated

“People who identify as “spiritual but not religious” or religiously unaffiliated use a vocabulary of theological intimacy, as do many who identify with more traditional faiths. Although some still worship a distant majesty and others deny divine existence, many millions of contemporary people experience God as far more personal and accessible than ever before....”



...In some ways, theories of decline or growth are not really the point. Roiling around the planet is a **shifting conception of God**. In a wide variety of cultures, God has become unmediated and local, animating the natural world and human activity in profoundly intimate ways. Of course, this has always been the path of mystics in the world's religions...

Now, however, the personal, mystical, immediate, and intimate is emerging as the dominant way of engaging the divine. What was once reserved for a few saints has now become the quest of millions around the planet—to be able to touch, feel, and know God for one's self."

—Diana Butler Bass, *Grounded*.

This is a profound shift in the way we understand our relationship with the Divine.

If the church throughout history has been viewed as a place to mediate the relationship between God and persons, what is the role of the church when God becomes unmediated? What is the role of Christianity when people are encountering God in ways that don't rely on traditional doctrinal understandings?

**It isn't that people are giving up on encountering the sacred, but they are giving up the limits they have perceived as being restrictive for that encounter.**

As Diana Butler Bass states, it is not a new concept that we live in a God-permeated world, but often throughout history the primary image of God has been of a distant deity, often occupying a space other than this one.

**We petition God and worship God, but have not created much space in the church for the EXPERIENCE of or ENCOUNTER with the God who is intimate and immanent. This is one reason that people are turning to practices like meditation, yoga, and Spiritual Direction in record numbers while leaving institutional religion.**

Consider for a moment what images of God may be most prevalent in your congregation through the way you worship, pray, and experience life together.

How are we creating space for relational encounter versus dissemination of propositions and doctrine?

“It is about tracing the threads of the interconnected universe, about finding God in nature and in community and, in finding God, discovering that **we really are one**. The spiritual revolution is a protest movement against forms of religion that have lost the binding vision of peace, wisdom, and equanimity here on earth...”

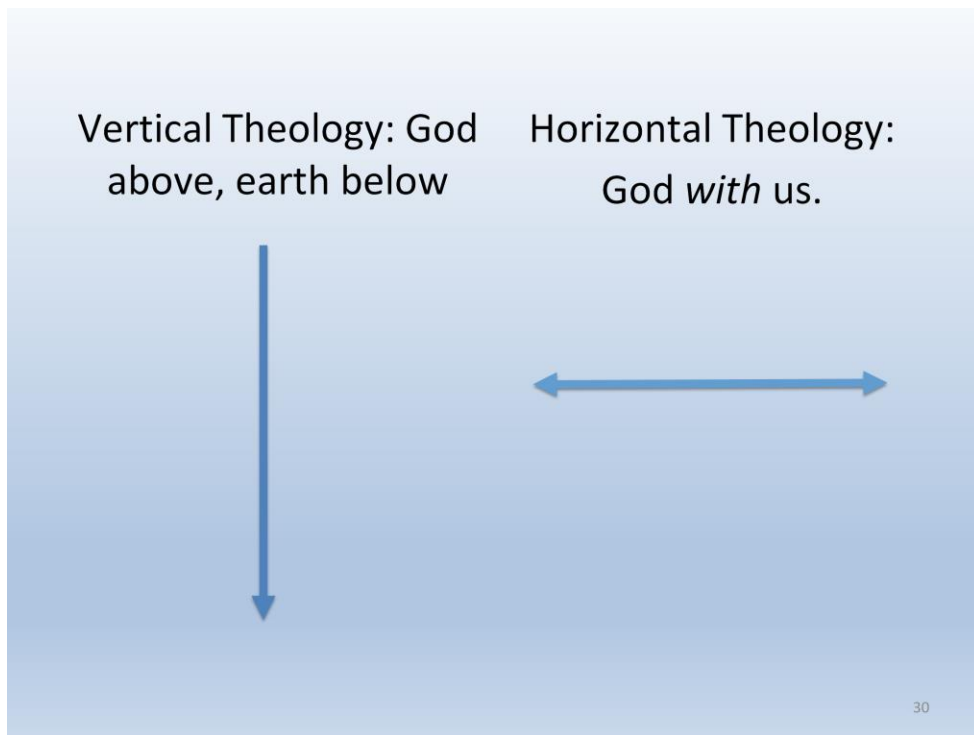
—Diana Butler Bass, *Grounded*



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—Diana Butler Bass, *Grounded*



**Note to Facilitator:** This slide is another way to demonstrate this shift in theological understanding.

Acknowledge that every metaphor has its limits, but this represents a seismic shift in our cultural consciousness!

How do our practices of worship and our language cultivate relational intimacy with God versus separation and relational distance?

Allow a few moments for reflection from the group.

# Insert Inoculating A Generation

- Insert Video,

## Inoculating a Generation from YouTube

31

Lets view a video that explores different ways we have viewed God.

Spend a few moments after the video asking for reflections on the video.



## Conversation- 20 minutes

How does a changing conception of God (*God unmediated and local*) impact how people relate in spiritual community?

How does this impact how *we* gather?

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Invite Table groups to share together about this question.

On Slide

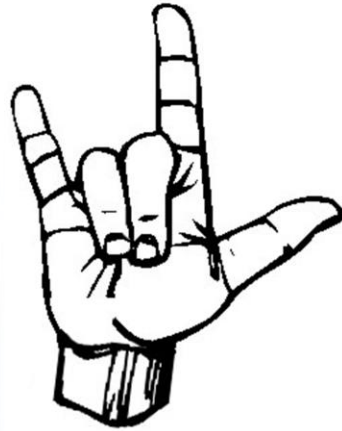
**How does a changing conception of God (God unmediated and local) impact how people relate in spiritual community?**



WHAT UNNOTICED or UNNAMED  
PRAYERS ARE HAPPENING IN THE  
WORLD AROUND YOU?



Lunch and Renewal 12:15-1:45 PM



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### **Schedule:**

12:15 – 1:45 PM      Lunch and Renewal

1:45 PM              Prayer for Peace

### **Next Session**

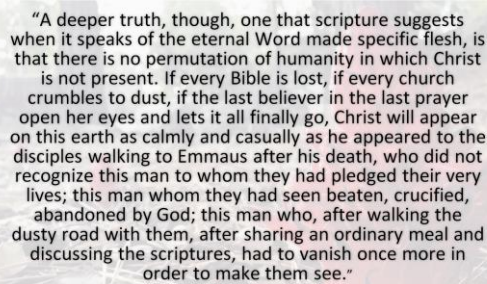
2:00 – 3:00 PM      Living into a Bold New Vision:  
Application and Discussion



**Invite people back with song or video**

**Schedule:**

2:00 – 3:00 PM	Living into a Bold New Vision: Application and Discussion
3:00 – 3:45 PM	Personal Reflection on the Journey
3:45 – 4:15 PM	Break



"A deeper truth, though, one that scripture suggests when it speaks of the eternal Word made specific flesh, is that there is no permutation of humanity in which Christ is not present. If every Bible is lost, if every church crumbles to dust, if the last believer in the last prayer open her eyes and lets it all finally go, Christ will appear on this earth as calmly and casually as he appeared to the disciples walking to Emmaus after his death, who did not recognize this man to whom they had pledged their very lives; this man whom they had seen beaten, crucified, abandoned by God; this man who, after walking the dusty road with them, after sharing an ordinary meal and discussing the scriptures, had to vanish once more in order to make them see."

—Christian Wiman,  
*My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer*

Begin this next session making reference to the Emmaus text and this quote by Christian Wiman.

Spirit is always seeking incarnation or *embodiment*. If God is the context of our being (local, unmediated, accessible, present), that means that everything we do, think, ask, say, feel, dream is happening IN that divine context. Our decline, uncertainty, and anxiety is happening IN God, as well as our desire, creativity, and experimentation. It also means that our future happens IN God and belongs to God. There is nowhere we can go, even as we stand on the threshold of the unknown, where God is not present. Romans 8 reminds us of this truth where Paul talks about life *in the Spirit*, and Psalm 139 – a moving description of God's saturation in every aspect of creation.

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

This is a foundational reality as we begin to prophetically imagine new ways of being in a changing world.



## ***Building Bridges of Meaning***

See Handout- *Common  
Spiritual Language: Listening  
at the Edge*

The key to evangelism is  
joyful, loving disciples who  
are constantly inviting others  
to come with them to *the  
source of true life.*

—Stephen M. Veazey

How can we talk with one another about what matters most? Refer participants to the ***Common Spiritual Language: Listening at the Edge*** handout.

Many are using the term “inter-spiritual” to talk about how we connect with one another when we have differing or no religious affiliation. Interfaith dialogue is useful and helpful, but often still keeps us in the realm of beliefs. Inter-spiritual refers to the process of getting beneath our belief systems to the experiences of encounter with divine reality that are at the heart of life.

**When does our religious language create barriers for people who do not share our vocabulary to express what is deepest within them?**

**We are not suggesting that we discard important words and phrases of our faith, but that we become more conscious of how we can translate the most significant concepts of the Christian journey in relatable language to build bridges of meaning today.**

This quote by Steve Veazey demonstrates a shift in our concept of evangelism. Notice it doesn’t say, “invite others to come with them to church.” How do we invite others to the *source of true life*?

*We are talking here about how we live and convey essential truths in new language and form (D&C 162:2e)*

A photograph of a stone spiral on a forest floor. The spiral is made of flat stones and leads to a small stream. The background is a dense forest with trees and foliage.

## Table Discussion

- How are we called to ***culturally interpret*** the gospel in our own time?
- How do we discover language that gets beneath the surface and invites others to the source of true life?

38

Invite table groups to spend some time with these questions after review the document “Common Spiritual Language” (**15 minutes**)

How are we called to ***culturally interpret*** the gospel in our own time?

How do we discover language that gets beneath the surface and invites others to the source of true life?

# Experimenting Into The Future!

How are communities of faith responding to the Spirit emerging in new places and forms in the world today?



39

Invite each table group to explore a new expression together by reading the handout and discussing the questions. (15-20 minutes)

At the end of this time, invite the groups to share significant reflections with the larger group. Since there are 4 examples, groups may be sharing from the same context.

## Thresholds: A Place of Wild Possibility!

What do you SEE emerging as you prophetically imagine the gospel becoming incarnate in new forms where you live?

- *This could be the future of the church in some places!*
- *Experimenting our way into the future: it is ok to fail!*



Invite the group to consider the new expressions they just heard about: What does this mean for the places they live and serve?

Encourage wild dreaming and to avoid strategizing at this point. Don't get caught on details or programming. Just allow space for the Spirit to breathe through our imaginations to help us begin to glimpse what is possible.

Invite larger group conversation for 15 minutes . . . **What do you see? What is God dreaming in you?**



## Closing Blessing

### **A Blessing Betwixt**

By Jan Richardson

*May you abide  
the places in between:  
the thresholds, the passages,  
the spaces of waiting  
and patience and preparing.  
May you give yourself  
to the mysteries  
that move us from what was*

*toward what is yet to be.  
May you know  
the company of the angels  
who come only  
to those betwixt  
and who love  
the liminal places  
and the treasures  
that they hold.*

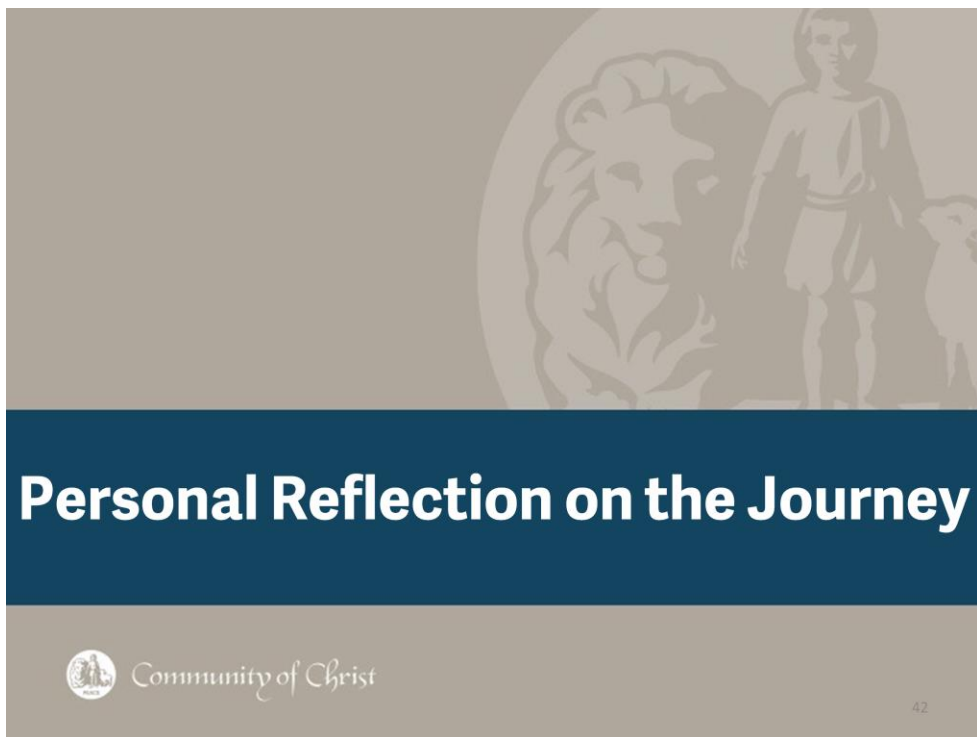
41

In many ways this conversation will feel incomplete because it is. We are in a place of “in-between”. This is not a new place. This has always been the essence of our journey of discipleship. God, where will your Spirit lead today, tomorrow, and the next?

May we become settled in our unsettledness as we together walk into the future with God.

May these words from Jan Richardson send us forth in blessing.

Read the closing reflection.



*Invite people back.*

**Schedule:**

**2:15 – 3:45 PM    Personal Reflection on the Journey**  
**3:45 – 4:15 PM    Break**

## Questions for Reflection

- *What has been most life giving for me and my congregation on this LCM journey?*
- *What has been most challenging for us to implement as a PLT?*

Schedule: 3:00-3:45 PM

Welcome participants back after the break.

In this session we will be exploring the following questions:

- What has been most life giving for me and my congregation on this LCM journey?
- ***What has been most challenging for us to implement as a PLT?***

We will begin by taking some time for personal reflection on this question. You will have **15 minutes** to consider this question and are free to go for a walk, find a nice spot outside for contemplation or remain here. We will observe silence during this time.

May the Spirit bless our time of reflection.

**See you back here at 3:20 p.m.**

### ***Table Group Discussion***

Discuss your challenge or opportunity and why you chose it.



44

You will have **20 minutes** to discuss your reflections. Choose one challenge that has been difficult for you as a PLT. This will become the challenge discussed at this table for the next several sessions. Each table will have a specific challenge and you will have opportunity to choose table discussions based on your interest in the topic.

Please write down your challenge with enough definition that those coming to share at your table in the next session will be able to discuss it.

End the session with each table revealing the challenge they chose.

**Make sure the challenge or issue is written on the tent card provided so everyone can see it when they come back from the break.**



Time for Dinner. Be back at 6:15 p.m.

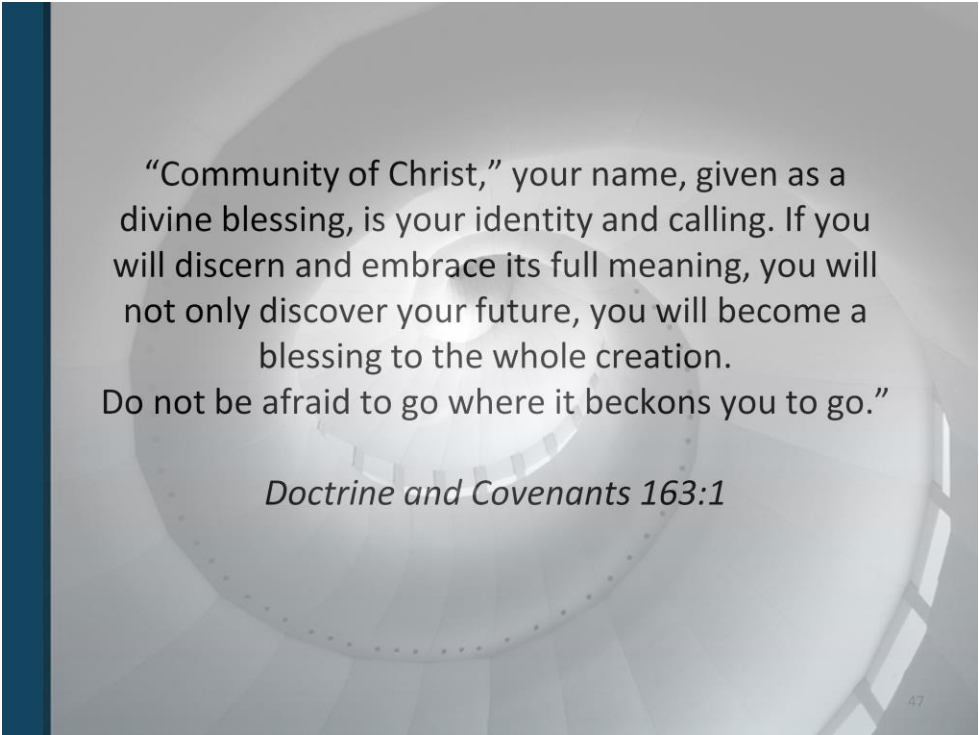
Schedule:

6:15 pm Open panel discussion

7:00 pm Looking ahead



**Welcome people back**



“Community of Christ,” your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling. If you will discern and embrace its full meaning, you will not only discover your future, you will become a blessing to the whole creation. Do not be afraid to go where it beckons you to go.”

*Doctrine and Covenants 163:1*

47 We begin our conversation about leadership by returning to Doctrine and Covenants 163:1. Let's pause for a moment and listen to the words of this passage.

Refer to Discovering our Future Handout page 16.

We are being called to live fully into our identity and calling as Community of Christ.

How we engage in conversation, development, consensus, disagree, manage conflict, and engage others in the process says a whole lot about who we are as Community of Christ.

We return to our essential question: How do we discern, embrace, and risk living fully into our identity and calling as Community of Christ in a changing world?

This question is absolutely essential because the Spirit is calling us to go somewhere we would not ordinarily go ourselves as leaders and congregations.

Mission and the Spirit are disruptive!! We must always understand our leadership in this context.

## Key Questions

- What aspects of Leading Congregations in Mission have been most life giving for you and your congregation?
- What are some stories from your congregation that bring you hope for the future?

48

Have groups or individual share from their small group conversations.

- What aspects of Leading Congregations in Mission have been most life giving for you and your congregation?
- What are some stories from your congregation that bring you hope for the future?



### Key Questions

- What aspects of Leading Congregations in Mission has been most challenging for you to implement? *(This can include questions you have about today's material)*

- What aspects of Leading Congregations in Mission has been most challenging for you to implement? *(This can include questions you have about today's material)*

## QUESTIONS?



50

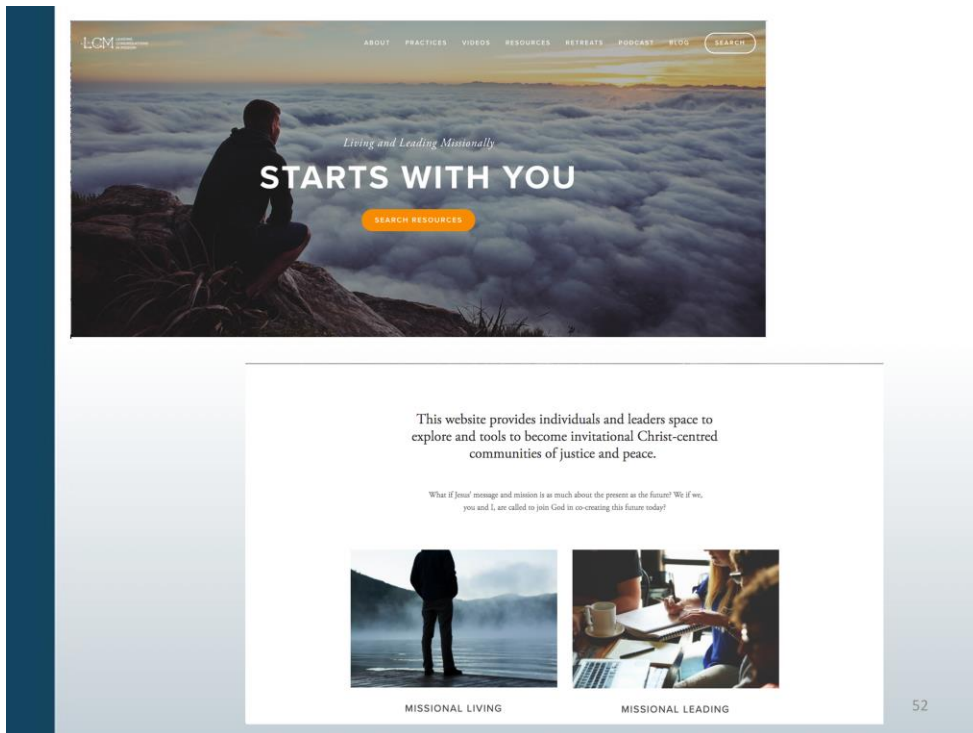
***If time, provide some time for additional questions.***



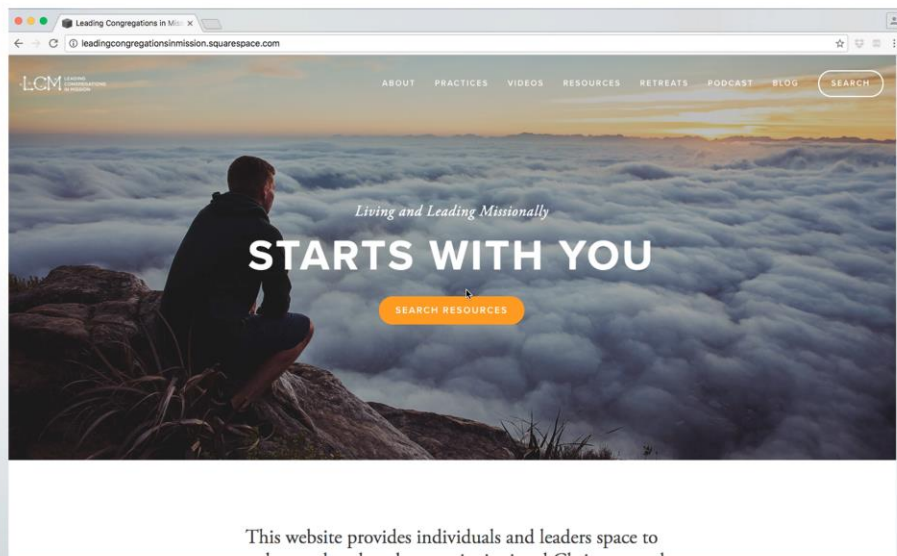
**Welcome people back.**

**Announce we are going to take just a few minutes to let you know we are redesigning our Missionalleaders.org website.**

**Josh Shipley will be our new webmaster, so let's take a look.**

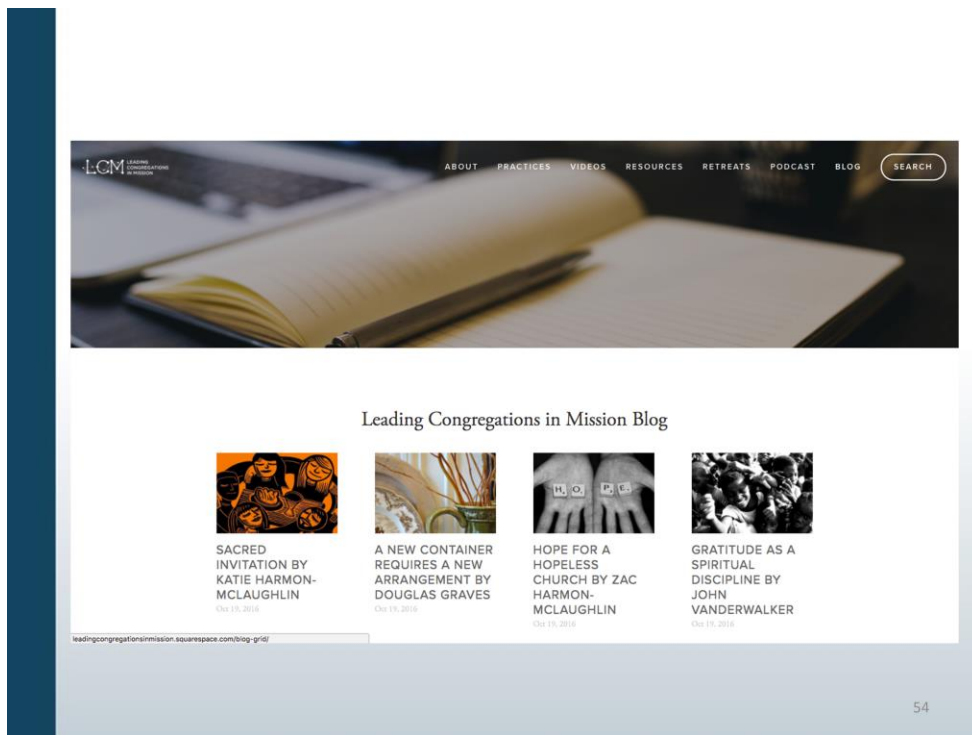


**A new look with some old and new favorites.**



**Let's take a tour!**

**Start video**



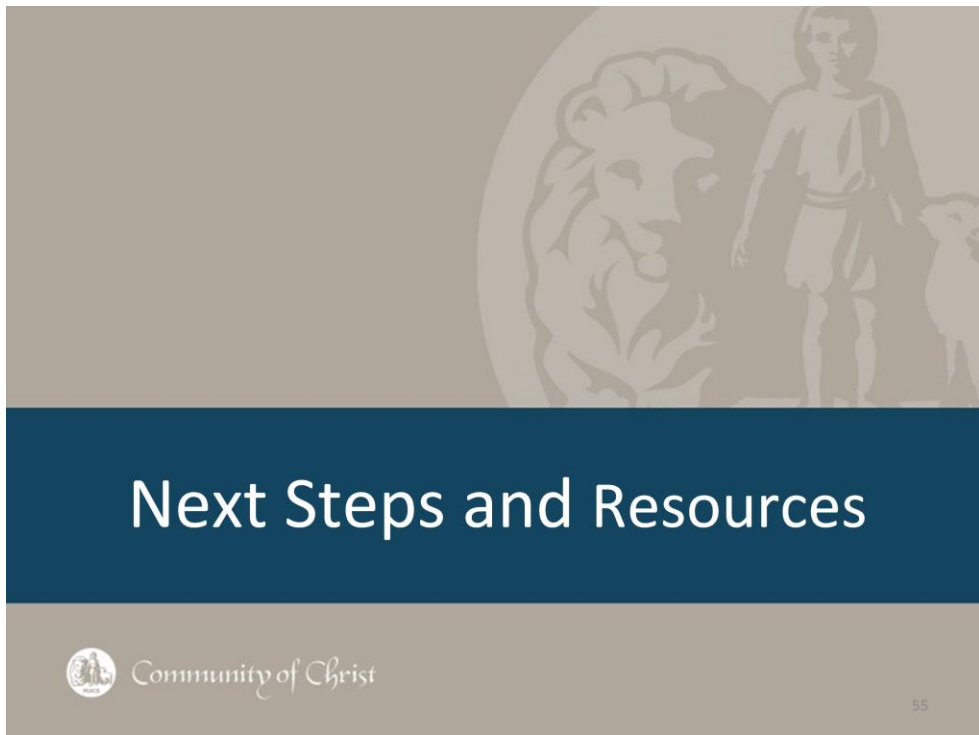
Expect our newly redesign site to up and running in the few months. We will still have the same name and URL address

[missionalleaders.org](http://missionalleaders.org)

We do need your help Rob Borkowski LCM coordinator will be lining up Blog writers, so if you are interested please Contact him at [rborkowski@cofchrist.org](mailto:rborkowski@cofchrist.org), or he may be call you in the near future. You all have a story to share.

We will let you know when we are up and running.

Remember the site is still live so visit often.



## **Next Steps and Resources**

### Resources From Retreat

- Receive, Embody, and Share the Invitation to Christ's Peace
- Receive, Embody, and Share the Invitation to Christ's Peace: Companion Study Guide
- Initial Steps: Leading a Congregation in Mission
- Shared Leadership Basics for Congregations
- The Practice of Unearthing Assumptions
- SBNR Statistics
- Building Bridges: Common Spiritual Language
- Envisioning the Threshold Space: Essential Questions

58

Walk through the resources provided at this retreat.

Specifically highlight the Receive, Embody, and Share resources. These resources were designed to help individuals, small groups, and congregations explore and live into our mission initiative "Invite People to Christ". These resources are about helping us re-vision how we invite the SBNR and others searching for meaning and connection.

Invitation is at the heart of living fully into our identity and calling as communities of Christ. Additional copies can be obtained by emailing Rob Borkowski at [rborkowski@cofchrist.org](mailto:rborkowski@cofchrist.org).

The Initial Steps Booklet can be a great review for PLTs and new members of your team. Additional copies of this are also available.

Since we don't have a budget anymore we will have to charge a nominal fee for copying and postage when you request copies of the booklets. It won't be more than a few dollars per booklet.



## Next Steps Discussion

- What are some ways you might engage your congregation in the conversation about the SBNR?
- How might you utilize the resources provided for that discussion?

57

We invested some considerable time yesterday exploring what is happening out there in the changing spiritual landscape.

What are some ways you might engage your congregation in the conversation?

How do you see yourselves using the materials provided to engage in conversations back home?

Note to Facilitator: Make sure you save time for additional study suggestions on next slide so you can transition to worship at 10:45 a.m.

## Further Study

- Belief without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but not Religious by Linda A. Mercadante
- Spiritual Friendship After Religion: Walking with People While the Rules are Changing by Joseph A Stewart-Sicking and Diana Butler Bass
- Grounded: Finding God in the World – A Spiritual Revolution by Diana Butler Bass
- Life Together in Christ: Experiencing Transformation in Community by Ruth Haley Barton

58

For further study suggest the following resources:

Belief without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but not Religious by Linda A. Mercadante

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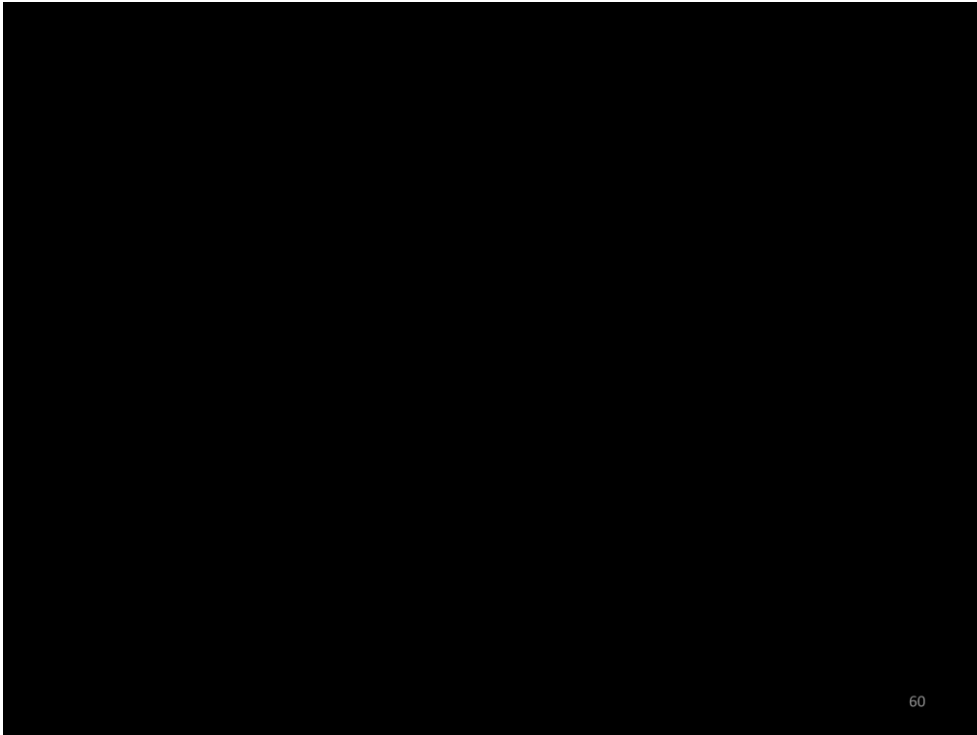
Grounded: Finding God in the World – A Spiritual Revolution by Diana Butler Bass

Life Together in Christ: Experiencing Transformation in Community by Ruth Haley Barton

## A Long Journey in the Same Direction



**Prepare for Worship**



Play video from GoFundMission