

CLEARING SPACE FOR GOD



A QUEER IN CHRIST CONVERSATION SERIES
LENT 2025



SAINT MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

WEEKLY CONVERSATIONS

SESSION 1: Taking Care of Yourself—*The whole armor of God*
EPHESIANS 6:10-18. March 3, 2025

SESSION 2: Being Smart and Strong—*Christ: the power and wisdom of God*
1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25 March 10, 2025

SESSION 3: Standing for Unity with Diversity—*All one in Christ Jesus*
GALATIANS 3:23-29 March 17, 2025

SESSION 4: Clearing Space for God—*Living Now the Kind of Life That Lasts*
JOHN 17:3 March 24, 2025

SESSION 5: The Plan in a Nutshell—*The Will of God in Christ Jesus*
1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-22 March 31, 2025

SESSION 6: When It All Comes Down To It—*What does God require of us?*
MICAH 6:6-8 April 7, 2024

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Participants in this conversatoin series are asked to abide by these Respectful Communication Guidelines.

RESPONSIBILITY

- ◆ Take responsibility for what you say and feel without blaming others.

EMPATHY

- ◆ Use empathetic listening.

SENSITIVE

- ◆ Be sensitive to differences in communication styles.

PONDER

- ◆ Ponder what you hear and feel before you speak.

EXAMINE

- ◆ Examine your own assumptions and perceptions

CONFIDENTIALITY

- ◆ Keep what is said in the group confidential.

TRUST

- ◆ Trust ambiguity, because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR DIGGING DEEPER

Following Jesus: Finding Our Way Home in an Age of Anxiety By Henri J. M. Nouwen; foreword by Richard Rohr; Convergent Books 2019.

The SBL Study Bible NRSVue (New Revised Standard Version updated edition); Harper One 2023.

Common English Bible (CEB); Abingdon Press 2011.

Simplifying the Soul: Lenten Practices to Renew Your Spirit; by Paula Huston; Ave Maria Press 2011.

Making Room: Soul-deep Satisfaction through Simple Living; by Kyle Kramer; Franciscan Media 2021.

WEEK 1: MARCH 3

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

The whole armor of God

SCRIPTURE *Ephesians 6:10-18*

FINALLY, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power; put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, for our struggle is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on the evil day and, having prevailed against everything, to stand firm. Stand, therefore, and belt your waist with truth and put on the breastplate of righteousness and lace up your sandals in preparation for the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. ♦

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What amazed, bothered, confused, or delighted you in this reading?
2. What are some faith habits or practices that help strengthen and protect you?
3. How will you be taking care of yourself this Lenten season?

CELEBRATING OUR QUEER GIFTS:

Commitment to truth

1. What are some examples of queer folks who have championed a commitment to truth? How do you recognize this quality as a queer gift?
2. When daily inundated with a flood of mass media / social media messages, how do you sort through it all? Do you limit or monitor your exposure? What's healthy for you?
3. How do you lean into and celebrate the truth of who you are?

NOTES

WEEK 2: MARCH 10

BEING SMART AND STRONG

Christ: the power and wisdom of God

SCRIPTURE 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

FOR the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength. ♦

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What amazed, bothered, confused, or delighted you in this reading?
2. Which images come to mind when you hear the words “wisdom” and “power”?
3. How does love and loving change you and change the world?

CELEBRATING OUR QUEER GIFTS:

Passionate energy

1. What does passionate energy mean to you? How do you understand or experience this gift?
2. What does the gift of passionate energy bring to our families and friends, our coworkers and community of faith?
3. How might you consider celebrating this dynamic queer gift?

NOTES

WEEK 3: MARCH 17

STANDING FOR UNITY WITH DIVERSITY

All one in Christ Jesus

SCRIPTURE *Galatians 3:23-29*

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be reckoned as righteous by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. ♦

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What amazed, bothered, confused, or delighted you in this reading?
2. Describe what it means to you to be a child of God?
3. How might these scripture verses enable you to imagine the world anew?

CELEBRATING OUR QUEER GIFTS:

Standing for unity with diversity

1. What does standing for unity with diversity mean to you? And how do you experience this as a queer gift?
2. If “Unity with Diversity” is one of the “creative tensions” (aspects of qualities that are held in tension; a philosophical paradox; not an “either / or”, but more of a “both and”), what helps you to hold these elements together?
3. How do you (or might you consider) celebrating this particular queer gift.

NOTES

WEEK 4: MARCH 24

CLEARING SPACE FOR GOD

Living now the kind of life that lasts

SCRIPTURE *John 17:3*

AND this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ♦

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What amazed, bothered, confused, or delighted you in this reading?
2. Think of the people you know well. How did you get to know them?
3. How do you make time for, clear space for God?

CELEBRATING OUR QUEER GIFTS:

Creativity

1. When you consider the treasury of Queer creativity—the contributions of queer artists, musicians, poets, (psalmists), and writers throughout history—what has this heritage meant to you?
2. Who are some of your favorite queer artists and why?
3. Is there a creative outlet that you have thought of exploring?

WEEK 5: MARCH 31

THE PLAN IN A NUTSHELL

The will of God in Christ Jesus

SCRIPTURE *1 Thessalonians 5:12-22*

BUT we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers and sisters, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. ♦

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What amazed, bothered, confused, or delighted you in these readings?
2. Does the “will of God”—as we have it laid out in this passage of scripture—feel restrictive or roomy to you? Is there enough guidance here? Or would you like more?
3. Given that “the plan” is more of an outline than a full on script, what does this mean for how we live or tell our own story?

CELEBRATING OUR QUEER GIFTS:

Joy in Beauty

1. Whether you’re more comfortable in the city, the suburb, or the country—how do you connect with nature in a meaningful way?
2. As queer people, we find beauty not only in the world around us, but also in each other. How do you notice and celebrate the beauty of others?
3. In the wider culture, beauty is often narrowly defined—limited to tastes or trends, and out of the range of quite a number of us. What are some of the ways that you see yourself as beautiful? How do you thank God for this beauty?

NOTES

WEEK 6: APRIL 7

WHEN IT ALL COMES DOWN TO IT

What does God require of us?

SCRIPTURE *Micah 6:6-8*

“**W**ITH what shall I come before the LORD
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”
He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God? ♦

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What amazed, bothered, confused, or delighted you in these readings?
2. What do you think religion means to the loudest voices who claim to speak for God today?
3. What's the "bottom line" for you?—What does God really want from you?

CELEBRATING OUR QUEER GIFTS:

Sacred Otherness

1. If God is holy, and holy means the Divine Other, then what does it mean to you that we are made in God's image? How do you understand or experience this?
2. Queer folk have a special gift in that we know what it is to be "other". How might we claim this as a true gift—a blessing—and not a curse?
3. Holy sacred others in conversation together—and together on this journey of faith—we have much to celebrate! During this Lenten time of clearing space for God, what have you noticed?—Obstacles cleared? Clutter removed? Space made? Time freed up?

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