



Reflecting on Our Relationships in Light of God's Love - Ourselves

*In order to be in healthy relationship with others, I had to first be in a healthy relationship with myself, the first, longest, and most important relationship of my life. And this would be the most revolutionary act of all. * -Rozella Haydée White*

Before we begin: We are using this Advent season to examine and mend our relationships with our neighbors, our families, ourselves, and God. This week let's think about how we treat ourselves. Mending our relationship with ourselves is a tough job indeed. Advent brings hope and courage to forgive and love ourselves.

Invocation

God, you want to have a loving relationship with us. You are right here in our midst. Hold us closely as we learn to love ourselves as you already love us. Open our minds and our emotions so we can hear what you want us to learn.

Confession

Oh God, you know us so well. You know that we frequently beat ourselves up worse than we would anyone else. We struggle with the idea that loving ourselves is selfish – not admitting that what you made is good – and we need to acknowledge that goodness in ourselves. Be patient with us, God, and help us to be kind to ourselves. Amen

Please listen to these verses as though they are speaking directly about you.

Isaiah 35:1-2, 4a

The wilderness and the dry land (*of my soul*) shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God." (NRSV)

Luke 1:46b-49a

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me. (NRSV)

Prayer: This week, instead of bowing our heads and folding our hands, let's sit up tall and straight, look straight ahead, and speak to the God who loves us just the way we are!

Leader: God, just as you created this wonderful earth, you created each of us wonderfully. Help us to truly appreciate the gift of our lives.

All: Our souls magnify the Lord!

Leader: Christ, you came to give us life abundantly. Help us to be a friend to our own selves. Give us the self-esteem that comes from knowing we are in relationship with you.

All: Our souls magnify the Lord!

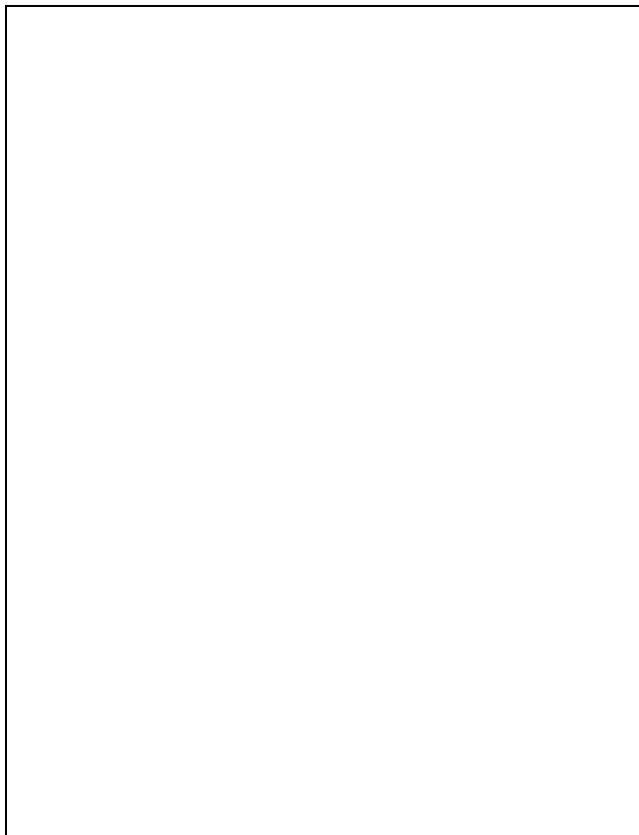
Leader: Spirit, inspire us to take good care of ourselves so we can be a blessing to others.

All: Our souls magnify the Lord! Amen

A time of silence

You are invited into a time of silence. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly. Listen for God.

This week we are writing about our relationships with ourselves as our spiritual practice. We can only love God and others as well as we can love ourselves. We are reflecting on that relationship in light of God's love. Look at the collage of faces. Find a face that reminds you of your own. Sit quietly as you think about your relationship with yourself. How is that relationship? How would you like it to be? Pray. Now write a short note (like a postcard or a tweet) to yourself. Be gentle, but firm.



A blessing

May we love God, our neighbors, and ourselves
with all the creativity of our minds,
the strength of our hearts,
the power of our bodies,
and the resilience of the Spirit. Amen

Sending: An Invitation to go deeper

Jesus came as a stranger to the world and he modeled radical self-love. He took time to learn about himself, which provides an invitation to us to do the same.

What do I love about myself? How do I affirm my love of self? What would give my own heart, soul, mind, and body a booster shot of love?



Advent 2019 Week 3

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