

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Week 1: Our Vision

1. What stood out to you from the message this past Sunday? Was there anything that seemed timely or relevant to you? Was there anything that made you uncomfortable or with which you disagreed?
2. Our mission (purpose) is to be a community of hope and transformation dedicated to following Jesus. Share how hopeful or not you feel for yourself and for the world. What kind of transformation do you want to see in yourself and the world?
3. Read Matthew 3:10-13 and Matthew 4:12-17. How are John the Baptist's and Jesus' words similar, and how are they different? In what ways are they hopeful? In what ways do they cause discomfort?
4. Read our vision statement (see below). In what ways does this inspire you? In what ways does it make you feel uncomfortable? What are some new ways in which you feel challenged to respond to this vision of the future?
5. Our vision is to be a community "where everyone belongs". Share about your own sense of belonging and any current barriers you experience. What are some ways we could all contribute as a community to a greater sense of belonging for others?
6. Read the passage below from Matthew 10:5-8 (The Message)

Jesus sent his twelve harvest hands out with this charge: "Don't begin by traveling to some far-off place to convert unbelievers. And don't try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighborhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here. Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously.

What do you think being "sent" in this passage looks like in our time and space? A more literal translation of "You have been treated generously, so live generously" is "Freely you have received; freely give." In what ways do you think you need to receive more, and in what ways do you think you need to give more? Is this giving and receiving in balance in your life as a follower of Jesus? How might you restore any imbalance?

Practice for the week: Be the Change

In the message this week, we reflected on several personal challenges for us all to make our vision a reality in our world:

- Nurture belonging
- Live as an agent of love, peace, and hope
- Let your life speak

- Embrace discomfort

Take some time this week to reflect on how you could personally respond to these challenges. Consider the following and then prayerfully write down some action steps that you can commit to:

- What do you need to do?
- What is holding you back?
- How could you overcome this resistance?
- To whom do you need to reach out for support and encouragement?

Our Vision

Imagine a community that dares to dream of heaven on Earth; a diverse community where everyone is welcomed and respected and their journey cherished; a community where everyone belongs and looks out for the concerns of others, so no one feels alone.

Imagine a community of peace and safety where it's possible to shelter from the frenzied pace of life in order to slow down and explore the mystery and meaning of our existence; where we can take time to address the roots of our anxieties and pain; a place of hope where we can find help and healing and the power to change, no matter how desperate our situation.

Imagine a community of people devoted to following Jesus together, learning to live like him and helping one another grow in their relationship with God; where we are gradually transformed to become better people who enjoy life to the full and who can also deal with adversity well, learning to grow through failure and suffering.

Imagine that community scattered throughout the region working as agents of love, peace, and hope wherever they are; serving our neighbors and pursuing justice with the oppressed and underserved.

Imagine a community of people who live simply and ethically, who share their land and resources with their neighbors; a community that treasures the Earth and reaches out beyond national, cultural, and political barriers to offer friendship and practical support.

Imagine a community of people who make the world a better place.