

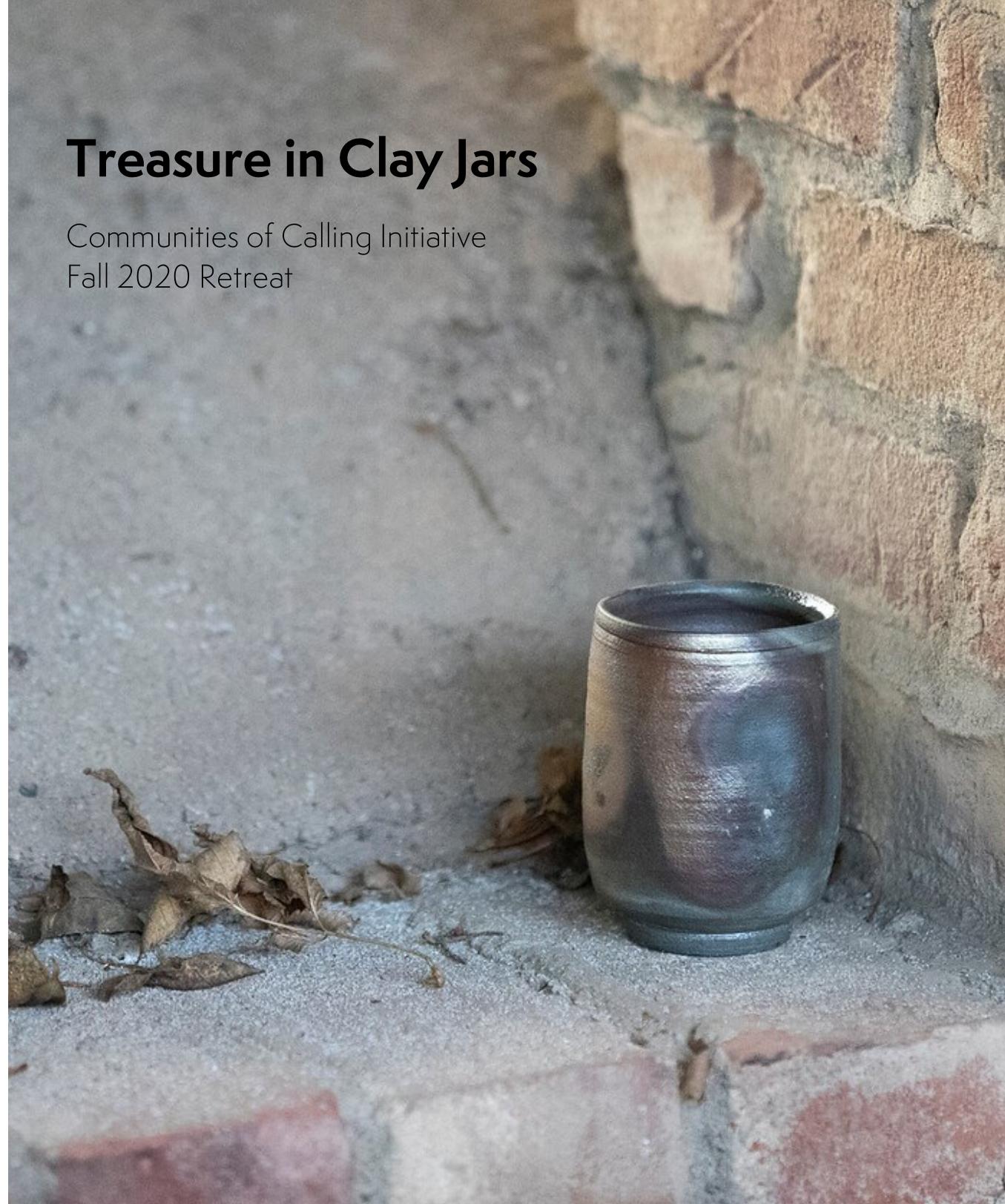


Booklet prepared by Rev. Dr. Jane Patterson  
Booklet designed by Jessie Bazan

Cover photo by Nate Jorgensen  
during the fifteenth firing of the Johanna Kiln  
October 26, 2019

# Treasure in Clay Jars

Communities of Calling Initiative  
Fall 2020 Retreat



## Sunday Evening Prayers & Preparation

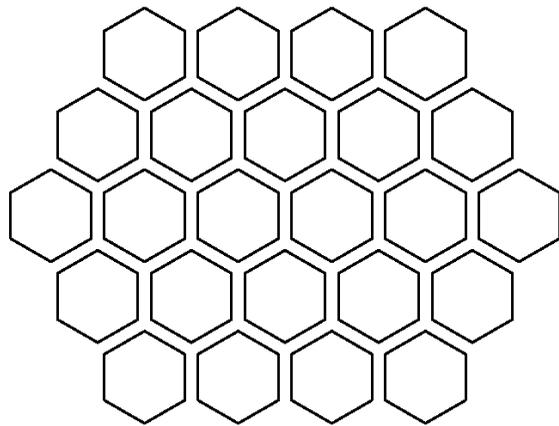
(Need for all sessions: cup, candle.

Optional: the book *Forty Years On* and a snack)

### Candle-lighting (or other small lamp, battery candle, etc.)

I light this light  
in the name of God who creates life,  
in the name of the Savior who loves life,  
in the name of the Spirit who is the fire of life.

*(Be still and aware of God's presence within and around; you may want to listen to Hilary Hahn playing "Mercy," by Max Richter: <https://youtu.be/6tacddJKKSw>)*



## Gathered Prayers of the People (in chat function)

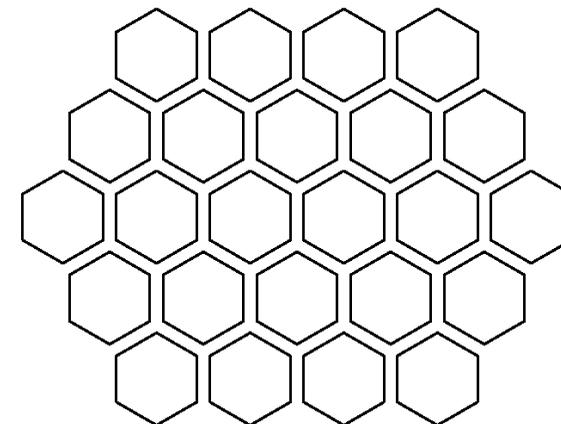
### Sending Prayer

For all that God can do within us,  
For all that God can do without us,  
*Thanks be to God.*

For all in whom Christ lived before us,  
For all in whom Christ lives besides us,  
*Thanks be to God.*

For all the Spirit wants to bring us,  
For where the Spirit wants to send us,  
*Thanks be to God. Amen.*

Christ is our peace. Go forth in the peace of Christ.



## Closing Reading and Prayers

Sirach 38:25, 29-32, 34a, edited for this reflection

How can one become wise, who handles the things of this world?

So it is with the potter sitting at their work  
turning the wheel with their feet;  
always deeply concerned over their products,  
producing them in quantity.

Molding the clay with their arm,  
making it pliable with their feet;  
setting their heart to finish the glazing,  
taking care in firing the kiln.

All such artisans rely on their hands,  
and all are skillful in their own work.  
Without them no city can be inhabited,  
and wherever they live, they will not go hungry.

They maintain the fabric of the world.

## Lectio Divina: 2 Corinthians 4:6-12

It is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness,"  
who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge  
of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this  
extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed;  
perplexed, but not driven to despair;  
persecuted, but not forsaken;  
struck down, but not destroyed;  
always carrying in the body the death of Jesus,  
so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.

For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake,  
so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.

**Read the passage through** several times, and allow whatever the Spirit wants to  
give you simply to arise in your mind. This is a complex passage, with lots of room  
for you to find your way with it.

## **Visio Divina**

Find a picture that speaks to you from the book you were sent, *Forty Years On: Richard Bresnahan and Artists of the St. John's Pottery*.

What stories does that image pull from your own life and experience?  
Is there a biblical passage that also speaks to your insight?

The cup you were sent might also be a powerful means for *visio divina*.

## **Monday Session III: Called to Maintain the Fabric of the World**

### **A Prayer for Generosity**

*From A New Zealand Prayer Book*

Jesus,  
receive our love and worship.  
Show us how to give you what we have,  
for nothing is too big or small  
for us to offer, or for you to use. *Amen.*

### **Offering of insights from Session 2**

## **Time of Reflection**

*Reflective Writing:* The four video interviews with Richard Bresnahan (Potter, Clay, Fire, User) offer a wealth of imagery for considering our own vocations. Think back over the last year. What was a vocationally significant experience for you? How might you use the inter-related elements of the potter, the clay, the fire, and the user to tell your story? Write out your story in relation to the pottery process, or make some notes or drawings that will help you share it with a small group on Monday morning.

## **Monday Session II: The Potter and Congregational Discernment**

### **Gathering prayer:**

*Adapted from A New Zealand Prayer Book, p.632*

Holy and eternal God,  
give us such trust in your sure purpose,  
that we measure our lives  
not by what we have done or failed to do,  
but only by our faithfulness to you,  
and by the light of your love for us. *Amen.*

### **Reflection in Congregational Teams (50 minutes)**

Reflect on your congregation's significant vocational experiences in the last year, in light of the interaction of the elements of pottery-making (potter, clay, fire, user). How does the metaphor shed light on your project for this year? Plan a way to share highlights of your discussion with the full group in Session 3. When you have finished, offer a prayer or blessing and simply close your breakout room and exit the meeting.

## **Breakout Rooms in Threes**

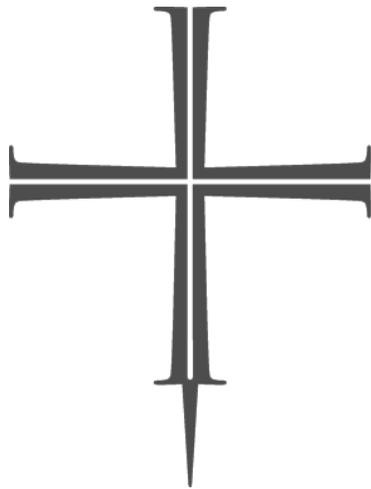
For 25 minutes, share a piece from your reflective writing, relating some aspect of the pottery metaphor to a significant vocational experience in the last year. Each person shares for five+ minutes. Then the group reflects for five+ minutes on how they hear God showing up in the stories.

For 20 minutes, gather patterns, anomalies in the reflections.

## Scriptural Response & Closing Prayer

“Go, stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life!”  
(Acts 5:20, said by an angel to the apostles after their release from prison).

Holy God, grant us the beginning of wisdom,  
and love to cast out every fear:  
that we may grow more brave,  
more ready to hear,  
more ready to obey,  
that we may proclaim in word and deed  
“the whole message about this life.”  
*Amen.*



## Monday Session I: The Potter and Individual Discernment

Need to have: cup, candle, retreat booklet, (bread to snack on!)

**Check-in at beginning:** a word to describe your emotional, mental, physical state right now (curious, tired, excited, scattered, focused..)  
Make an offering of our present state.

### Gathering Prayer (Howard Thurman)

Lord, open unto me.

Open unto me: light for my darkness.  
Open unto me: courage for my fear.  
Open unto me: hope for my despair.  
Open unto me: peace for my turmoil.  
Open unto me: joy for my sorrow.  
Open unto me: strength for my weakness.  
Open unto me: wisdom for my confusion.  
Open unto me: forgiveness for my sins.  
Open unto me: love for my hates.  
Open unto me: your Self for my self.

Lord, Lord, open unto me.

*Amen.*