



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

Retreat developed by Rev. Dr. Jane Patterson,
Communities of Calling Initiative Project Director

Retreat booklet designed by Jessie Bazan,
Communities of Calling Initiative Program Associate

Visit www.communitiesofcalling.org for more information & resources.

Treasure in Clay Jars Retreat



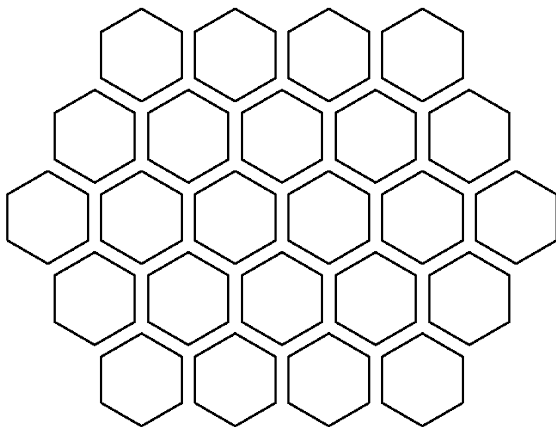
Evening Prayers & Preparation

(Need for all sessions: cup, candle, 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

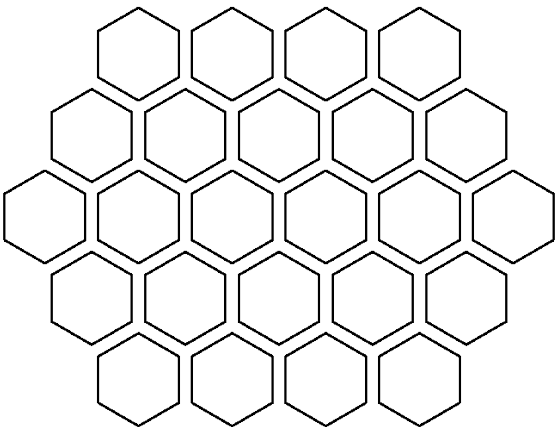
Sending Prayer

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.

Time of Reflection

Reflective Writing: See the material provided on the Communities of Calling Initiative website for reflection before the retreat. Don't try to respond to every question; just find a couple of questions that really resonate with your vocational issues and experiences right now, and use metaphors derived from the pottery-making process to evoke your stories. Writing or drawing your responses may be helpful for sharing them tomorrow morning.

**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

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)

Use the questions on the website to guide a discussion of your congregation's callings in relation to the metaphor of pottery-making. How does use of the metaphor shed light on your ministry this year? Plan a way to share highlights of your discussion with the full group in Session 3.

Breakout Rooms in Threes

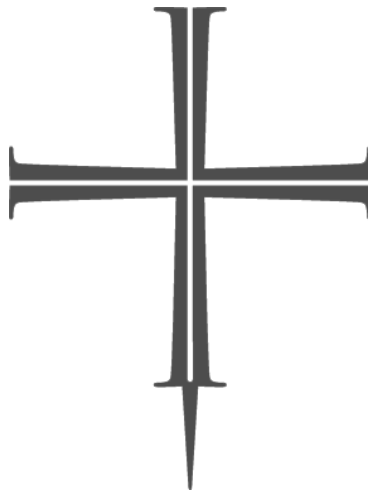
For 25 minutes, share a piece from your reflective writing relating some aspect of the pottery metaphor to your own callings. Each person shares for five+ minutes, the group reflects for five+ minutes on what patterns and differences they hear in the stories. How does the use of the metaphor help people move toward interpretation and discernment? How does the metaphor function theologically?

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.