

Online Gathering for Leaders – Sharing our Grief and our Hope with Those We Serve – April 1, 2020

My heart broke into a million pieces this past week. A long-time, beloved colleague of mine passed away after a decade-long battle with cancer.

I served with her for 16 years in a local congregation before I started my role with the church-wide office. She was the minister of music at this congregation – and one of the most Christ-centered people I have ever met. Much of how I know and experience God – especially in worship – has been shaped by my journey with her.

And now – in the midst of COVID-19 – we are shattered that we cannot come together as community to comfort one another in our grief or celebrate her life and service to God.

I have thought a lot about hearts breaking over the past few weeks. It is said that every person on the planet will be touched in some way by this virus. In my exercise time on the trail yesterday I talked with God about this. I pleaded with God about all of the brokenness and asked, “What should we do?”.

And, in the peace of my heart and in my mind’s eye God showed me a vision of a stained glass heart – little pieces – that when separate - represent brokenness – but when joined together create a beautiful mosaic with the light of Christ shining through.

That image carried me the rest of my run – and abides with me today.

And with that, I want to share a Word from Psalm 34: 17-18:

The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;
God delivers them from all their troubles.
¹⁸The LORD is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Likewise, hear the promises of God from the Prophet Isaiah – the 57th Chapter:

“I restore the crushed spirit of the humble
and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts.

I will heal them and I will lead them.
I will comfort those who mourn,
¹⁹ bringing words of praise to their lips.”

Let it be so, Lord Jesus. ~ Amen!

Today we welcome back Dr. Don Eisenhower – owner of Coaching at End of Life. Don is going to bring us back to the topic we explored last week – Sharing our Grief and our Hope. Today we will focus on what this looks as we engage with those we serve.

Deacon Tammy Devine – ELCA’s Coordinator of Stewardship and Discipleship Coaching - a word of blessing and pray us out:

Prayers of Boundless Compassion by Joyce Rupp

Examin of Consciousness:

Where have you experienced joy today?
Where was God in the midst of the joy?
Where have you struggled today?
Where was God in the midst of struggle?

Coaching Questions:

What might God be inviting you to do/be for just such a time as this?
What God-given gifts will you share?