



THE LiVE PROJECT
living into vocational engagement

Called to Be Human: Introducing the LiVE Project's 2026-2027

What does it mean to be human?

Adrienne Marie Brown's book, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, notes nine principles:

1. Small is good, small is all. (The large is a reflection of the small.)
2. Change is constant. (Be like water.)
3. There is always enough time for the right work.
4. **There is a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it.**
5. Never a failure, always a lesson.
6. Trust the People. (If you trust the people, they become trustworthy.)
7. Move at the speed of trust. Focus on critical connections more than critical mass; build the resilience by building the relationships.
8. Less prep, more presence.
9. What you pay attention to grows.

Principle four has me thinking, what is the conversation we, as church, at this moment, need to be having? This year's LiVE Project theme is an answer to this: **Called to be Human**. What kind of people does our world need us to show up as in light of our life in Jesus?

Amid all the challenges, disagreements, polarities, fears and anxieties, the Spirit is calling the church to show up and wrestle with this question, and in ways that speak to the dignity of being human. This comes alongside a world, as we know, that is challenging that.

So, we're thrilled to introduce "**Called to Be Human**," as the theme guiding our entire LiVE Project program year. Across four retreats and two online courses, we'll explore what it means to live fully into our humanity in light of our Christian faith, our motivations and presuppositions, our affections and desires, our freedom, our consciousness, our conscience.

Why this theme, and why now? Because so much of our world, so many of the systems of our world, are, in fact, undermining our dignity as humans. The economic, political and even technological as AI and digital cultures, are dividing our attention and intentions to live with and for one another.

We ourselves are tempted to pick a side, a brand, a single story, and stick to it. But anyone who has actually paused to notice our life in Christ is so much more expansive. We are wonderfully, and beautifully made, as the Psalmist recalls.

There's a passage from *Inviting the Mystic, Supporting the Prophet*, by Katherine Dyckman and Patrick Carroll, that has been sitting with us as we've built this year's programming, and we want to share it with you:



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It is as if each human person constitutes a committee constantly sitting to decide life's questions and the behavior desired in a given situation. This committee has many members within, each voicing a particular slant—our fears, feelings, dreams, and hopes, our history and relationships, our memory, our various sub-personalities, and our reason. Hopefully, the chairperson of that committee is reason, deeply influenced and guided by affectivity.

Isn't that a wonderful image? A committee, constantly in session, full of competing voices, fear and hope, memory and dream, reason and feeling, all trying to have their say. And the goal isn't to silence any of them, but to listen well enough that a good chairperson (reason, guided by love) can help the whole gathering move toward a decision, a way of being in the world, that's actually *whole*.

The quote goes on:

Descriptively the task of a human person appears to become more and more integrated, whole, "together," within that on-going meeting. All the voices need to be heard and listened to. Ultimately, at their best, people make choices that chart the direction and, over time, develop the person. Since his ability and responsibility to choose is at the heart of human motivation, the spiritual director aids another to reach a harmonious decision from this complex and fascinating committee.

That's the heart of what we mean by **"Called to Be Human."** Not a call to have it all figured out. Not a call to quiet the noisy parts of ourselves. But a call to the ongoing, sacred work of listening, to every voice at the table, so that, choice by choice, we become more integrated, more whole, more truly *ourselves* in Christ.

This year's retreats and courses puts in conversation various members of that inner committee: our desires, our freedom, our conscience, our imagination, our history. We'll ask what it looks like that God is in these, in our community conversations, and with curiosity rather than judgment.

The truth is none of us chairs that committee alone. We are being led in the Spirit to wonder with more expansive imaginations, with our heads and hearts. We do it in relationship, with God, with each other, and with the communities we're called to serve.

We can't wait to gather alongside you this year, to wonder together about this timely and important and necessary question, who is God calling us, in not challenging us, to be?

Peace, Pastor David
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