

Stewardship/Discipleship Program

2024

The Church of the Holy Comforter

Richmond, Virginia

Sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and Marked as
Christ's Own Forever

The Rev. Dr. Hilary Borbón Smith

Stewardship/Discipleship Program 2024, the 1st Baptismal Vow
October 27, 2024

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers?

I will, with God's help.

Discussion/Journaling Questions

In what way is this baptismal vow for you as an individual, and how is it about the Christian community?

What part of “the apostles’ teaching” is meaningful to you? Another way to think about this is, what part of our spiritual practices or Church traditions are meaningful to you?

What does “fellowship” mean to you? How do you benefit from our HoCo community and other Christian communities? Who benefits because you participate in Christian community?

When we break bread together during our worship services, how does that feel to you, or what are you thinking, or what connections do you sense? What is it like for you to break bread with others in general, not necessarily in church?

What sort of prayers touch you, and have a meaning for you? For you, what is the difference (if any) between praying on your own and praying with others?

Has there been a time when “continuing” in all that is mentioned in this baptismal vow has been difficult?

Stewardship/Discipleship Program 2024, the 2nd Baptismal Vow
November 3, 2024

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever
you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

I will, with God's help.

Discussion/Journaling Questions

In what way is this baptismal vow for you as an individual, and how is it about the Christian community?

What does it mean to “persevere?”

When you hear the word “evil,” what comes to mind?

How do you resist evil?

Does the phrase “fall into sin” speak to your experience of personal and or communal sin? So often people have focused and do focus on personal sin without considering the sinful systems that lead us down the wrong road. How do we resist evil systems and structures, such as racism or the abuse and misuse of creation?

Repenting means turning around and choosing the way of God, which is also an honoring of self and relationships. When have you made a change that felt like repentance?

God is always with us. Nothing we do can change God’s love for us and faithfulness to us. Still, repenting can feel like or be thought of as “returning to the Lord.” Imagine God’s joy, like that in the story of the Prodigal Son, as God sees you coming, embraces you, and throws a party to celebrate your return.

Stewardship/Discipleship Program 2024, the 3rd Baptismal Vow
November 10, 2024

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good
News of God in Christ?
I will, with God's help.

Discussion/Journaling Questions

In what way is this baptismal vow for you as an individual, and how is it about the Christian community?

For you, what is the “Good News of God in Christ?”

What does the word, “proclaim” bring up for you?

St. Francis is credited with saying, “Proclaim the Gospel at all times, and if you must, use words.” Many in the Episcopal Church are more comfortable proclaiming the Good News by example than by word. Is that true for you? Do you think it is possible to talk about our faith in a way that is not proselytizing (pushing our faith on others)? If so, how?

How have you proclaimed the Good News of God in Christ by word? Another way to think about this could be: how do you use your words to honor God and share a word of grace with others?

How do you proclaim the Good News by example? Have you ever thought of yourself, your life, being an example of justice, freedom, and peace? Imagine God, who knows you so well, thanking you for being an example.

How do you support the Church, and particularly HoCo, so that as a community, we can share the Good News? Supporting our church financially is both practical (keeping the lights on) and spiritual (sharing the grace of God through HoCo). How do you feel about supporting the mission of the Church financially? How do you support our ministries with your time, energy, and talent? Imagine God thanking you for the support you give.

Stewardship/Discipleship Program 2024, the 4th Baptismal Vow
November 17, 2024

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving
your neighbor as yourself?

I will, with God's help.

Discussion/Journaling Questions

In what way is this baptismal vow for you as an individual, and how is it about the Christian community?

For you, what does it mean to “seek,” and what does it mean to “serve?”

Jesus said, “When you do it to the least of these, you do it to me.” Do you think this is what it means to “serve Christ in all persons?” What can it mean to look at someone and know that Christ dwells within them?

Jesus asks, “Who is your neighbor?” How do you answer that question? Do you feel more equipped to help some of your neighbors more than others? If you were to help one neighbor this week, what would that look like?

What can mean to love your neighbor as yourself? How does your answer impact your actions? Did it have anything to do with how you voted in our recent election? How do you love your neighbor by supporting the ministries of our church?

The question asks will you love your neighbor as you love yourself. Many people struggle with loving themselves. In the context of this vow, loving ourselves and being able to love others is linked. Does that seem valid to you?

How do you love yourself, take care of yourself, and honor yourself? Using your imagination, in a conversation with God, as you imagine God, open your heart to hearing how much God loves you and wants to care for you, and wants to help you care for yourself.

Stewardship/Discipleship Program 2024, the 5th Baptismal Vow
November 24, 2024

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

I will, with God's help.

Discussion/Journaling Questions

In what way is this baptismal vow for you as an individual, and how is it about the Christian community?

When you hear the word “justice,” what does that mean to you? What is the first thing that you think?

What are your top three justice issues? How does HoCo help you to address these justice issues? How do you as an individual address justice issues?

What does it mean to “strive” for justice for all people? Do you get energy thinking about striving or does it seem like a lot to do?

What would Richmond, our metro-region, Virginia, and the world look like if there were peace among all people?

How are you striving for peace?

What does respecting “the dignity of every human being” mean to you; and what are the implications, knowing that every person has dignity?