

BREATHING UNDER WATER: WE JOURNEY TOGETHER

Step 5: Healing Happens in the Moment.

KEY IDEA: What is spoken in grace loses its power to harm.

As we move together into Step Five of *Breathing Under Water*, we deepen our understanding of confession and how accountability and grace can come together in transforming ways. We invite you to explore some of the thoughts raised during worship in your journal or around the table with family and friends. As always at Faith, we journey together, reaching out to one another as questions and challenges arise. If you are discussing this material with a young person, you will want to revise it as you see fit to make it age-appropriate.

Below are some questions to consider as we open our lives more fully to God:

1. When we keep silent, our burdens can become heavier and spirits grow weary. But when we speak truth, opportunities for change open. What have been some of your memorable experiences with apology and forgiveness? Which is harder for you? Why?
2. We cannot heal what we don't acknowledge. In your experience, what type of issues feel hard to admit or address – to other people or yourself? One of the consolations and joys of faith is that God meets us where we are and leads us toward wholeness. How might this knowledge make it easier to name the things in your life that need healing?
3. Father Richard Rohr writes, "God does not love us if we change. God loves us so that we can change." What does this statement mean to you in your faith journey?

God forgives and loves us – unconditionally. In fact, our faith teaches us that sin and failure when seen through eyes of faith, can become opportunities for transformation. This is true in our personal lives and in the culture around us. In your opinion, how does God's economy of grace affect the way you think about justice? How does your faith inform your understanding of the differences between retributive and restorative justice?



In 12-step programs, people often find that “admitting” their wrongs to themselves, God and one another, often builds encounters of trust and liberation. At some time during the week, visit the labyrinth in the courtyard at Faith UMC or find a short, quiet pathway. Pick up a stone and name your sin, walk into the labyrinth or down the path, thinking about how your actions affect you and

others. In the center, or halfway on your walk, in an act of confession, turn your sin over to God and release the stone. Walk forward, knowing your heart is lighter and that you are forgiven. If it feels right, share your experience with another person.



FROM AGE TO AGE: Sharing Intergenerationally

In discussing some of these heavy ideas of wrongdoing and apology with children, it is important to let them know that it is okay to feel sad, angry, confused or scared, and that among the family, truth-telling is better than keeping secrets.

A conversation might start with a shared conversation around a question like, "When was the last time you realized you did something wrong and how did you handle it?" Visually, you might want to explore the simple act of "turning around." Sometimes we're going in one direction and realize the need to be heading somewhere else. It's okay, and often a good thing, to just stop and turn around.



One of the most important tenets of the Christian faith is that God is love. When we turn to God, God forgives us. When we live like Jesus, we seek to forgive other people.



MAKING TIME FOR CLARITY AND CHANGE

In Greek, metanoia, means changing our worldview, literally turning around, and being repentant. It can involve reevaluating your life, values and direction. Acts of repentance can lead us to direct encounters with God. While it may seem extravagant, take an hour or an afternoon, or whatever extended period of time you can allow yourself, and sit in stillness in a spirit of contemplation and prayer. Let confession be the lens in which you consider your life.

What thoughts arise for you that might lead to growth and transformation?

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