

12 Steps@Trinity



The Issue of Freedom

January 21, 2021

Make use of what we offer...

...if not members of religious bodies we sometimes select and memorize a few sets of prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing. There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minister, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.

~Alcoholics Anonymous Pg. 87

To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all.

~Alcoholics Anonymous Pg. 46

12 Steps for All

1. We admitted that our lives had become unmanageable and uncontrollable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood that.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood that, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

12 Steps@Trinity

12-Step Spirituality is not a defined body of wisdom or particular collection of books and sayings. Indeed, the steps are rooted in a tradition much older and extending back millennia through the Judeo-Christian-Islamic religions. The Steps are now used by hundreds of different kinds of recovery groups and millions of people throughout the world. We could even say that 12-Step Spirituality is the combined knowledge and experience of all those who have used spiritual surrender and 12 Steps as a passage to recovery, and the things they have learned along the way. We are fortunate to include in our community many who have journeyed toward liberation with the 12 Steps and so we look to share what we have learned, as well as celebrate the presence of God in our midst.

12Steps@Trinity is offered as a worship experience rooted in the spiritual wisdom of the twelve-steps, which themselves are rooted in the ancient spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius.

A Centering Prayer

Let us pray together:

Gracious and eternal God,
so draw our hearts to you,
so guide our minds,
so fill our imaginations,
so control our wills,
that we may be wholly yours,
utterly dedicated to you;
and then use us, we pray,
as you will, and always to your glory
and the welfare of your people;
through Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

First Reading

We all struggle over the issue of freedom – how much we want; how much we are comfortable with; how able we are to accept other's freedom. We cannot grow and create unless free to do so; in fact, our progress will be proportional to the freedom we feel to breathe, to move, to live fully.

Control is the opposite of freedom. It steals the freedom of the controller as well as the one controlled. No one grows emotionally, intellectually, or spiritually if energy is being expended controlling. And yet, the human condition is such that we passively, if not willingly, practice the game of control with the many principal characters in our lives. It is a game no one wins. Even when we are seemingly in control we lose our freedom, too, when our attention is given over to the control of someone else.

No one is free until we are all free, and when free, we will find joy in our work, at home, and with friends. We, too, will discover the measure of joy we encourage others to experience.

The Promise
of a New Day

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.

Amen.

Second Reading

To use the past without being controlled by it – that is our responsibility to history. Because the past is irrecoverably vanished, it is sometimes tempting to forget it or to falsify it. But being true to ourselves means being true to our history.

Past cruelties can remain powerful in our lives – yet to take possession of our history means to free ourselves of bondage to past events. Nothing can ever change them. If we are to make the future good, we will learn what the past can teach us. But our freedom requires us to make choices based on the needs of the present, not the past.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.

Amen.

First Prayer

Let us pray together.

May I be happy.

May I be peaceful.

May I be free.

May my friends be happy.

May my friends be peaceful.

May my friends be free.

May my enemies be happy.

May my enemies be free.

May my enemies be peaceful.

May all beings be happy.

May all beings be peaceful.

May all beings be free.

Amen.

*I want somehow
to tell the story
of how the
dispossessed
become possessed
of their own
history without
losing sight,
without forgetting
the meaning or
the nature of their
journey.*

*Sherley Anne
Williams*

Third Reading

Everyone of us is haunted by fears of some measure. That we learn through pain and grow beyond our fears we can only appreciate in retrospect. During the moment of painful confrontation or the spell of overwhelming anxiety we learn only that we are feeling no joy, no peace, and probably no security. However, we must remember that no painful burden, be it immobilizing anxiety or a relationship in which we have become victimized, has "happened" to us without acceptance – no matter how passive. We are free to reject all burdens and all unhealthy conditions. That we do not relish our freedom from all pain is a fact of the human condition.

Looking anew at the struggles that confound us and accepting responsibility for them doesn't lessen them, perhaps, but it does restore our personal power. We are not powerless, worthless individuals at the mercy of our friends and coworkers. We are in partnership all the way, and any moment we each have the power to rewrite the terms of the contract.

The Promise
of a New Day

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.

Amen.

Second Prayer

Let us pray together.

**O God, turn your Spirit loose now,
and me with it,
that I may go to where the edge is
to face with you the shape of my mortality:
the inescapable struggle and loneliness and pain
which remind me
that I am less than god after all,
that you have made me with hard limits,
limits to my strength,
my knowledge,
my days.
Facing those limits, Lord,
grant me grace
to live to the limit
of being unflinchingly alive,
irrepressibly alive,
fully alive,
of experiencing every
fragile, miraculous, bloody, juicy, aching, beautiful ounce
of being a human being;**

— Ted Loder

*... the function
of freedom
is to free
somebody else.*

Tony Morrison

of doing my duty and a little more;
of loving the people around me, my friends and my enemies;
of humbling myself to take others seriously and delightedly;
of applying my heart to the wisdom of simplicity,
the freedom of honesty.

Amen.

Musical Interlude

Reflection

The reflection seeks to be evocative not prescriptive, so there is no expectation that you will agree with the homilist. Instead, allow the reflection to lead you into your own contemplation and feel free to follow your own inner voice rather than remaining focused on what the homilist is saying. Sometimes our journeys converge and sometimes they diverge. Enjoy!

*Freedom means
choosing your
burden.
Hephzibah
Menuhin*

Candle Lighting and Meditation

The meditation will be a brief period of quiet to allow us to center and quiet the mind. Please feel free to participate with whatever method you prefer.

Sharing Reflections

The Serenity Prayer

Let us pray together.

**God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference;
living one day at a time;
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it;
trusting that you will make all things right
if I surrender to your will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with you in the next. Amen.**

*Faith is taking
the first step
even when you
don't see the
whole staircase.*

*Martin Luther
King, Jr.*

The Peace

The earliest Christians shared a kiss or embrace as a sign of solidarity and reconciliation among those in spiritual community with one another. We continue that tradition with a common greeting:

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

*I am free today
to be who I want
to be. To grow or
not to grow. To
feel joy or pain.*

The Promise of a New Day

Financial Support

Your financial support is not only a practical necessity. It can also be a very meaningful symbolic gesture, expressing your gratitude for all the blessings in your life and your hope for health in the world.

While the church is not open, Trinity has made a commitment to keep staff on the payroll. Plus, all the Trinity services are available online, either with Zoom or Facebook live streaming.

You can [donate online here](#), text the word "give" to (716) 221-8580, or send a check to:
Trinity Episcopal Church
371 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14202

Thank you for your participation and contribution. Peace.

February 24, 7pm Trinity will host a Zoom appearance by Debby Irving, author of "Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race." Irving, who is white and was raised in upper middle class Massachusetts, writes plainly and clearly about her discoveries of how much she had benefited over the years because she was white and how she began to question her long-held assumptions about race and culture. Her book is eye opening, possibly life changing in its revelations about white privilege. We encourage you to read the book though it is not a requirement for her appearance. To register, click on [kindredgiving link](#).

We encourage you to purchase your book locally from [Talking Leaves](#). It is also available at the public library and at a number of online venues.



Tuesday, January 26, 2021 @ 7pm Tim Lane and Jeffrey Tooke will facilitate a podcast discussion group to discuss the most recent Way of Love podcast episode called "The Blessing of Mercy with Bryan Stevenson." In this episode, Bishop Curry talks with Bryan Stevenson – author, lawyer, and founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative – about what it means to remember, reorient, and renew an active faith in Jesus and his Way of Love.

This podcast episode is available here and anywhere that your favorite podcasts are available:

<https://media.episcopalchurch.org/podcasts/podcast/the-blessing-of-mercy-with-bryan-stevenson/>

Discussion questions for the evening are available here:

https://1drv.ms/b/s!Al-L5d_Lxgjchut5vp8xcu82kx1Q5A?e=y6NUfV

Use this zoom link for the discussion group on Tuesday, January 26 @ 7pm:

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81668634672?pwd=eTVJZXFoNzVYdHZvSHZONG1NUUowZz09>

Meeting ID: 816-6863-4672

Passcode: trintalk

If you are interested in joining the podcast discussion group or have questions about the group, please send an email to Jeffrey Tooke at jeffrey@bayharboradvisors.com to receive more information

12-Steps@7

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