

12 Steps@Trinity



Doubt, Confusion, Despair

April 29, 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.

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

All of us at some time have reached a spiritual dead end. We feel alone, that life is cruel and pointless. We can find no reason for what is happening to us or our loved ones, and we can find no comfort. And when we turn to God, we hear no response. Do we conclude there is no Divine comfort?

When clouds have covered the sky for days, do we believe there is no sun? Like clouds, alienation from God is a temporary condition. And maybe God's apparent silences have a purpose.

It may not occur to us in times of despair that God has not deserted us; we have deserted God. As taken from the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, "It is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong *with us*."

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.

Amen.

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.

In God's Care

*There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds.
Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

Second Reading

Confusion can be a gift from God. Looking back on instances when I felt desperately in need of an immediate solution, I can see that often I was not ready to act. When I became fully ready, the information I needed was there for the taking.

Courage
to Change

When I know too much about my options, I tend to use the information only to drive myself crazy. That is why today, when I am feeling confused, I try to consider it grace. It may not yet be time for me to act.

I think that dealing with confusion can be like cooking. If the bread isn't done, I don't take it out of the oven and insist it is time to eat. I let it finish baking. If a clear solution to a problem hasn't shown itself yet, I can trust that it will appear when the time is right.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.

Amen.

First Prayer

Let us pray together.

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself,

**and the fact that I think that I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.**

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

**And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.**

**Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be
lost and in the shadow of death.**

I will not fear, for you are ever with me,

and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Amen.

— *Thomas Merton*

*Love is the
only sane and
satisfactory
answer to the
problem of
human existence.*
— *Erich Fromm*

Third Reading

I often struggle to know what is my will and what is God's. I feel serenity slipping from me while a war is waged within my mind and loud voices urge me to take one path or another. Doubt is an unavoidable companion of spiritual seeking. I don't have an instruction book, so I must continue to explore and challenge my perceptions. I know that when I feel a desperate urge to act, it is usually my will that is pushing, and when I feel a calm certainty, it is usually God's. But much of the time, I don't have such a clear indication. What then? Sometimes I wait for clarity or try to listen more closely for guidance; I may share my confusion and ask for the wisdom of others; or I may just make a choice, take an action, and see what happens. More will be revealed when the time is right, no matter what choice I make. Since I have turned my will and my life over to God, any choice I make can be used to carry out His will.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.

Amen.

Fourth Reading

None of us are strangers to feeling hopeless – perhaps it was last year, or maybe last week. Hopelessness was with us often before we turned to this recovery program for help.

It's not unusual for us to sometimes feel we can't handle the changes and stress in our life. Fortunately, with the help we give and receive from others, we are coming to believe that God never gives us more than we can handle. The situation isn't hopeless when we turn to trusted friends and our Higher Power for direction and understanding.

The paradox is that hopeless feelings can trigger a far better relationship with our Higher Power. And the more significant that relationship is to us, the more peaceful every day promises to be. Through practicing turning to God for direction, we discover a serenity we have never known and an attitude of hope.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.

Amen.

Courage
to Change

In God's Care

*Mystery is not
the absence of
meaning, but
the presence of
more meaning
than we can
comprehend.
— Eugene
Peterson*

— Michael
Leunig, A
Common Prayer

Second Prayer

Let us pray together.

**We pray for the fragile ecology of the
heart and the mind. The sense of meaning
So finely assembled and balanced
and so easily overturned.**

**The careful, ongoing
construction of LOVE.**

**As painful and exhausting
as the struggle for truth
and as easily abandoned.**

**Hard fought and won
are the shifting sands of this sacred ground,
this ecology.**

**Easy to desecrate and difficult to defend,
this vulnerable joy, this exposed faith,
this precious order.**

This sanity.

We shall be careful.

**With others and
with ourselves.**

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!

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

*I will thank my
Higher Power
for whatever
I experience
today, even if
I feel troubled
or confused. I
know that every
experience can
offer me a gift.
All I have to
do is be willing
to look at my
situation in the
light of gratitude.*

**Courage to
Change**

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.**

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.**

Today I will remember that uncertainty is not a fault but an opportunity. Everything I do and everything that crosses my path – people, situations, ideas – all have the potential to contribute to my growth and understanding. Just for today, I don't have to know what that contribution will be. Courage to Change

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.

12-Steps@7

Trinity Episcopal Church • 371 Delaware Avenue • Buffalo, New York 14202

The Rev. Matthew Lincoln • mcolin@trinitybuffalo.org

www.TrinityBuffalo.org • (716) 852-8314