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Log in information and the worship bulletin for worship can be found on our website on the “Worship online and in person” page

February helpers

Clean—Aaron and Kathryn Nygren

Lectors—Fick

Communion Assistant—Merlin

Ushers—Charlie Rine/Gail Otto

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GOOD THINGS FROM ZION

February 2022



Life as an Ordinary Monk

Christian monastic communities have existed for centuries. In the 3rd and 4th century, men and women who became known as the desert fathers and mothers (abbas and ammas) left the cities and villages of the Roman Empire and moved to the desert in northern Africa. After the conversion of the Empire to Christianity, they believed Christian faith had become weak and tainted by the comforts and power of empire.

Many lived as hermits, but they still formed loose communities which eventually became the framework for the monastic communities...the abbeys, monasteries and convents as we know them now. What the communities are called and the exact shape of their organization varies from order to order. But celibacy, living in a community separated from the secular world, and a rule of life that structures their daily lives are typical characteristics. They also typically have a particular calling to a certain kind of work or action.

The Celtic world also developed monastic communities centered in their own spirituality. However, they were much less focused on a particular building. In a sense, they experienced the natural world as a sort of monastery and saw all lives as sacred, not just those called to live in such communities. Celibacy was also less of a thing. But many still have a community and a rule of life that structures their days.

Over the last several decades, a new movement has taken root in the world of monasticism. It's often called the New Monasticism. It has features more like that of Celtic monasticism, but really is its own thing. It basically involves living a more contemplative and simple life in the ordinary world of work, family, and community.

Some new monastics live in communal settings. Others live in traditional and non-traditional families. Other monastic communities are scattered throughout the world and connect online. The Northumbria Community of Scotland is one. The Iona Community, also of Scotland, has an abbey on the island of Iona, but they have associates throughout the world.

I find myself being drawn to many of the aspects of monasticism, particularly the new monasticism and the ones steeped in Celtic spirituality. The rhythm of life associated with monasticism seems very grounding to me, especially in the midst of the craziness of life. And Celtic spirituality's appreciation of God's presence in the natural world and in other people seems to me to be a way forward from lots of what's wrong now.

I likely will never become a formal part of any monastic community. But I am drawn to the practices and the rhythm. The other day I watched a video from the Northumbria community. The presenter lifted up the basic daily practices for monastics, including those trying to live in a more centered way in their everyday lives.

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They're listed below with some ideas for observing them when you're not a formal part of a monastic community.

Worship – monastic communities, whether living under one roof or not, follow some sort of daily communal worship/prayer. I've incorporated the Iona Community's interactive daily morning prayer service into my routine – you can find it at this link: [Iona Morning Prayer](#). If you just google that, you'll also find it. There are a variety of books and websites that offer written versions of morning prayer. Our own hymnal has a morning prayer service. Or you can make up your own thing with a little music, prayers for yourself, and prayers for others.

Work – most of us have jobs or houses to take care of. Sometimes our work is a form of prayer. And work which uses the hands – creative work or manual work such as garden or house-work – can often be very grounding. Whatever work you do, practice mindfulness. Focus on each task and imagine how it serves God or God's world.

Inner work – This is the contemplative work. Centering prayer, breath prayer, meditation, journaling, lectio divina, etc. Most monastics and lots of other people also have a spiritual director – someone to whom you can open up and wrestle with your own demons and discern what the Spirit is up to in your life. I've met with a spiritual director monthly for over 20 years.

Study – Bible study, other faith or spiritual reading, study groups with others. This also includes study of nature, study of a particular issue that seems to particularly grab you, or just learning something new about the world.

Solitude – We live in a noisy, overconnected world. Taking some time to be alone, especially in nature, can be tremendously healing and refreshing.

Community – But community is also important. Conversations with the people you live with, calling up a friend, attending worship or other events at church, or participating in community activities are all options.

Lent is coming soon. I'm working on the plan now that I think will include some fun and interesting ways to be just a little bit monk-ish in our own world.

Christ's peace,

Pastor Kris

Brief recap of Annual Meeting actions:

2021 Finances—Income \$42,805 and expenses \$50,791. Nearly \$10,000 were spent on technology and capital upgrades—kitchen floor and concrete ramp.

Budget passed—3% raise for Pastor Kris but the Zion/Bethlehem split has changed to 47.5%/52.5% reflecting the change in Pastor's time. Total expenses budgeted \$46,870.

No council terms were up so council remains the same.

Carol Mintzmeyer and Megan Patent-Nygren will be Synod Assembly delegates

Calendar

For at least the next couple of weeks, we will continue to offer a Zoom option for worship. Worship is also available on YouTube Live. Check the worship page on our website for the links: [zionithaca.org](#)

February 6	9:00 am—Worship with Holy Communion. Sunday school gathering after worship
February 9	7:00 pm—Confirmation
February 13	8:00 am—Council 9:00 am—Worship
February 16	7:00 pm—confirmation
February 20	9:00 am—Worship
February 27	9:00 am—Worship

Looking Ahead—Lent

Lent is just around the corner. Ash Wednesday is March 2. Worship with Imposition of Ashes will be at 6:30 pm at Zion and 8:00 pm at Bethlehem.

If Covid comes down and stays down, we will plan our first normal Lent Midweek services since Lent 2019! We will start at Zion on March 9 and alternate from there. I'm working on the plans for this and I'm excited about it! There will be more info to come.

Money

Our income last year was better than estimated on our 2021 budget. That's fantastic, especially considering that we didn't worship in person for the first three months. And we have a more than healthy reserve. But with the split for pastoral salary coming closer to evenly divided, based on my time, we will continue to spend more than we take in at the current rate. If you are able to increase your giving a little, it will help avoid repeatedly dipping into reserves.