

Hillsboro's GrateFall Retreat

October 23-25

Welcome to our 2020 virtual Fall Retreat! We're excited to spend time this weekend focusing on gratitude. If you have any questions during the weekend, reach out to Amy Dillon at amy@hpcnashville.org

Our schedule is as follows:

Friday, October 23rd

7pm - Zoom Kickoff Party (Zoom info below)

Saturday, October 24th

These sessions will be livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube

10am - The Theology of Gratitude

2pm - The Science of Gratitude

7pm - Evening Prayer and Reflection

Sunday, October 25th

10:30am - Worship Online

- 1pm - Closing Zoom Gathering (Zoom info below)
- 6pm - Drive-in Movie at Hillsboro

Zoom Info for Friday Evening and Sunday Afternoon

Joining Via Computer (preferred): If you plan on using a computer make sure and download the Zoom app for your computer. You can do so by clicking here [Windows](#) | [Mac](#)

A webcam on or attached to your computer is not required, but if you want to be seen and heard you'll want to use a computer that has one.

Joining Via Mobile or Tablet App (preferred): If you plan on using your phone (iPhone or Android) or your tablet (iPad or Android) you'll need to have the Zoom app installed and ready to go before the meeting.

You'll find direct links to those apps below or you can simply search for "Zoom Cloud Meetings" in your app store.

[Apple App Store](#) | [Google Play Store](#)

Joining Via Phone: If you plan on dialing in to the meetings all you have to have is a functioning, non-rotary phone.

Obviously there is no video with this option, but you'll be able to hear just fine.

Joining the Meeting (Friday @7pm & Sunday @1pm)

If you are already in the App on your phone or computer you can click the JOIN button and enter the meeting ID and passcode:

Meeting ID: 889 4419 7721

Passcode: 12345678

For those ***calling in on a phone*** dial this number (312) 626 6799.

You'll be asked to enter a meeting ID and passcode. It's the same ID and passcode that's listed above.

If you registered for the retreat, you should also have a direct link in your email to attend these meetings.

If you have any trouble connecting, please reach out to Amy Dillon at amy@hpcnashville.org.

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Saturday 10am Session // The Theology of Gratitude

During this morning's session we heard about the story of the 10 lepers healed by Jesus in Luke 17. During this personal reflection, you are invited to re-read the story and consider where you see yourself in the story using some guided questions. We encourage you to write down your answers so have paper and pen on hand. Your answers are only for you...they will not be shared with anyone.

Prayer Before Reading

Gracious God,
As children welcomed to your presence,
instill within us a sense of curiosity and wonder
as we hear once again your Word. Amen.

Luke 17:11-19 CEB

11 On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. **12** As he entered a village, ten men with skin diseases approached him. Keeping their distance from him, **13** they raised their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, show us mercy!"

14 When Jesus saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” As they left, they were cleansed. **15** One of them, when he saw that he had been healed, returned and praised God with a loud voice. **16** He fell on his face at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. **17** Jesus replied, “Weren’t ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? **18** No one returned to praise God except this foreigner?” **19** Then Jesus said to him, “Get up and go. Your faith has healed you.”

Into the Passage

Have on hand paper and pen as you work through the following questions. Take your time. Let your answers reveal themselves slowly. The goal is to dwell in the questions, not finish as quickly as possible.

1. Using your Holy Imagination place yourself in the passage.

- Where do you see yourself? Are you one of the lepers, the leper who returns, a disciple, in the crowd?
- What do you see, hear, smell, and feel? What are you thinking?
- How do you emotionally respond to this experience?

2. What do you think the lepers expected from Jesus?

- When we are feeling hopeless, what kind of prayers or requests do we ask of God?
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3. Luke notes that the lepers were healed as they went — in the process as they started to obey Jesus.

- When has obedience helped build your faith, and the outcome of your faith?
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4. One leper returns to thank Jesus. He was a double outsider — leper and Samaritan.

- When have you felt like you are outside the circle in some aspect of influence in some way?
- How did you respond?

5. Sit with the Samaritan leper for a few minutes.

- How does he show he is thankful?

- Think about people who you know that you would characterize as thankful or grateful, and those who show no gratitude. Take a few minutes to compare the two.
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6. What is Jesus' response to the thankful leper? And his question about the nine other lepers — why do you think they did not return?

- Why is so easy to not thank God for his blessings?
 - What blessing does Jesus give to the thankful leper?
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7. As you think about your own faith experience right now, for what are you most thankful? Take some time to talk to Jesus about your gratitude. Write these things down. What might God be saying in return?

We hope to see you at 2pm for our next session!

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Saturday 2pm Session // The Science of Gratitude

This session's information is based on the work of Dr. Robert A. Emmons. He is the world's leading scientific expert on gratitude. He is a professor of psychology at the University of California, Davis, and the founding editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. He is the author of the books *Thanks! How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier* and *Gratitude Works!: A 21-Day Program for Creating Emotional Prosperity*, among others.

Dr. Emmons outlines the following benefits of practicing gratitude based on his research:

Physical

- Stronger immune systems
- Less bothered by aches and pains
- Lower blood pressure
- Exercise more and take better care of their health
- Sleep longer and feel more refreshed upon waking

Psychological

- Higher levels of positive emotions
- Feelings of being more alert, alive, and awake
- More joy and pleasure
- More optimism and happiness

Social

- More helpful, generous, and compassionate
- More forgiving
- More outgoing
- Feel less lonely and isolated

Gratitude Practices

In today's session we listed the following gratitude practices:

1. Gratitude Journal (Our number one recommendation)
[Here is a list of possible journals.](#) These are great options, but a simple, inexpensive notebook would work just as well.
2. Writing a Letter of Thanks (more on this below)
3. Finding a Gratitude Friend - someone you can meet with virtually each week to share the things you're grateful for

- The website Positive Psychology has created a beautiful resource that includes many more gratitude practices, beneficial information about the study of gratitude, and a list of podcasts for further listening.

[You can access the article here.](#)

Gratitude Exercise

This afternoon you are invited to actually write a gratitude letter to someone and go the extra step of sharing your letter in a unique way. This is certainly an exercise in gratitude and also vulnerability. Expressing our thanks is such an integral part of a life of gratitude!

Directions:

Call to mind someone who did something for you for which you are extremely grateful but to whom you never expressed your deep gratitude. This could be a relative, friend, teacher,

or colleague. Try to pick someone who is still alive and could speak with you on the phone or online in the next week. It may be most helpful to select a person or act that you haven't thought about for a while—something that isn't always on your mind.

Now, write a letter to one of these people, guided by the following steps.

- Write as though you are addressing this person directly (“Dear _____”).
- Don't worry about perfect grammar or spelling.
- Describe in specific terms what this person did, why you are grateful to this person, and how this person's behavior affected your life. Try to be as concrete as possible.
- Describe what you are doing in your life now and how you often remember his or her efforts.
- Try to keep your letter to roughly one page (~300 words).

Next, you should try if at all possible to speak to this person on the phone or online this week:

- Plan a call or video chat with the recipient. Let that person know you have something special to share, but don't reveal the exact purpose of the talk.
- When you speak to them, let the person know that you are grateful to them and would like to read a letter expressing your gratitude; ask that they refrain from interrupting until you're done.
- Take your time reading the letter. While you read, pay attention to their reaction as well as your own.
- After you have read the letter, be receptive to their reaction and discuss your feelings together.
- Remember to send the copy of the letter to the person after your call/video.
- If a call/video is just not possible, write the letter anyway and place it in the mail.

If you choose to do this exercise (and we hope you do!), we'd love to hear how it goes. Share your story with us by contacting Amy Dillon at amy@hpcnashville.org.

We hope to see you this evening at 7pm for prayer and reflection!

Bonus Resources

- **The Theology of Gratitude: Human Expressions While Living in a Complex World** - This conference took place in April of 2020 and includes speakers like Diana Butler Bass. [They've made the conference available here.](#)
- [gratefulness.org](#) - Take some time to explore this site that they describe as an online sanctuary. It includes everything from digital gratitude cards you can email to an online gratitude journal.
- Here is the page from Positive Psychology one more time. It really is a treasure trove of wonderful resources! [You can access the article here.](#)

