



encounter **LENT**

A 40-Day Journey

Devotional: 13- 19 March 2022

40+Days_+A+Lent+Encounter+Booklet.pdf

WHAT IS DISCERNMENT AND WHAT ARE THESE SPIRITS?

ACTS 2:14 - 42

Discernment: What is it? “Discernment unmasks the lie of temptation, whose object appears to be good, a ‘delight to the eyes’ and desirable, when in reality its fruit is death.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, §2847)

Another book is opened: the book of life. We pass from thoughts to reality. To the extent that we are humble and faithful, we discover in contemplation the movements that stir the heart and we are able to discern them. It is a question of acting truthfully in order to come into the light a most important question: “Lord, what do you want me to do?”

“Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1a, RSV).

The Bad Spirit/False Spirit/Enemy - False spirit are ‘false’ because much of the work of spiritual direction is uncovering the lies or—even more frequently—the twisted truths upon which our subconscious operated as he or she negotiates a difficult aspect of life. Ignatius says that the false spirit brings ‘fallacious reasonings, discernments, and continual deceptions.

The Good Spirit - The ‘good spirit’ certainly indicates, above all, God in his direct actions in the human heart... angels, who, by God’s design, serve as instruments of his love for his children and the manifold influences for good that surround us in the world and in the communion of the saints.

Lies or twisted truths come from one of three places (or a combination thereof): the world, the flesh, or the devil.

Discernment: How do I do it?

First, I become aware of “the different movements which are caused in the soul”. These movements are: (1) thoughts, (2) feelings, and (3) desires. How do I become aware of these movements? Meditation is a prayerful quest of engaging thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. Its goal is to make our own faith the subject considered, by confronting it with the reality of our own life.

Come to understand these movements. Are these stirrings indeed spiritual experience, that is, do they affect my life of faith, hope, and love and my following of God’s will? If they do, then discernment of spirits is indeed necessary. In this case, do they bear the signs of God or not? When, through reflection, I have found sufficiently clear answers to these questions and can name the spiritual experience as of God or not of God, I have accomplished the second step of Discernment of Spirits: I understand this spiritual experience.”

Lastly, take action (accept or reject). Everything in discernment of spirits is directed toward action: toward firmly accepting what is of God and equally firmly rejecting what is not.

We talk a lot about sharing our faith with others here at Fifth Ave. United Methodist Church. But have you ever gotten into a situation where you had the chance to share the gospel and you froze because you felt like you didn't know what to do? Can you think back to the last time a friend or family member brought up something about Christianity or the Bible and you thought, "What a great opportunity!" as it sailed right past you? In this week's devotion, look at how the Apostle Peter shared the gospel as an example of how we can share the gospel with others so that we don't miss these opportunities.

Acts is a historical record, which means everything in it is "descriptive" and not necessarily "prescriptive." In other words, it describes what happens but that doesn't mean we have to copy that in our own lives, or that it is the typical pattern for believers. As we review Peter's example, know this is only one way to share the gospel. There are other options. For example, Peter doesn't use a personal story when sharing, but if we were to flip to Acts 26, we would see the Apostle Paul sharing his testimony. Read Acts 2:14-41 I and list the seven steps for sharing the gospel with others.

- What type of objections have you encountered when sharing about your Christian faith? How did you handle the objections? If you could go back and do anything differently, would you?
- Why is it important to engage with difficult questions and not brush them aside?
- Do you have any Scripture passages you recommend sharing when presenting the gospel?
- Why do we need the Holy Spirit to anoint or fill us in a special way to share the gospel effectively with others? What does the Holy Spirit need to be doing in them to prepare them for the gospel?
- Why is it so hard to address sin with those around us? What do most people think of the concept of sin? How might you be able to communicate the idea that someone is indeed sinful in a way that is sweet even if it is somewhat offensive?
- Who is Jesus to you? What does it mean that he is Lord and Savior?
- Who do you want to pray to come to know Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior?

DAY 9 | Thursday of the First Week of Lent

Read Acts 2:14 - 42 ... Read the passage again ... Notice what stands out to you ... Read the part which stood out to you a third time. Our passage today was a longer one. Jot down what struck you, so that you can come back to it later.

DAY 10 | Friday of the First Week of Lent

The word "Gospel" literally means good news! It is the word which the ancient roman emperors would use when proclaiming a victory to the people. Return to Acts 2:14 - 42. Read the passage again. Which lines strike you as good news? Write them down and think about what this good news could mean for your life.

DAY 11 | Saturday of the First Week of Lent

Peter's first sermon can be found in Acts 2. Open your Bible to 1 Peter and read chapter 2:19 - 25. Read the passage a second time. Focus on verse 24. Jesus loves me. Jesus suffered for me. Jesus died for me. He died because of my sins. Remember this good news. What sins do I need to repent today so as to better receive this good news?

DAY 12 | Second Sunday of Lent

What do you want? Why have you chosen to take this 40-day journey? How do you want to be different on Easter than you are today? Remember your answer from the beginning of our 40 days. Facing our sin is difficult. Repentance is hard work. Read 2 Corinthians 7:9 - 11 and be encouraged today. Read the passage a second and a third time. Notice what strikes you. Say to God what's on your mind. Take two minutes (or more) in silence, then write down what you think God might be saying to you.

DAY 13 | Monday of the Second Week of Lent

How do you feel today? Repentance is hard work. What's tempting you to put prayer aside? What's tempting you to slack off in your Lenten disciplines? Be honest about how you feel. Say to God what's on your mind. Take two minutes (or more) in silence, then write down what you think God might be saying to you. Read Romans 8:31 - 39. Let these words from God bring you hope and encouragement today.

DAY 14 | Tuesday of the Second Week of Lent

What do you want? Why have you chosen to take this 40-day journey? How do you want to be different on Easter than you are today? Remember your answer from the beginning of our 40 days. Read Romans 8:31 - 39. Read the passage a second time. After reading the passage a third time, reflect on your thoughts, feelings, and desires. Say to God what's on your mind. Take two minutes (or more) in silence, then write down what you think God might be saying to you.

Day 15 | Wednesday of the Second Week of Lent

Flip back through your notes from the past week. What stood out to you from your prayer? Where does it seem like God has spoken? Remember that experience. Go back there. Ask God if He wants to take you deeper or if He wants to gift you with another insight.

Prayer: Loving God, there is so much darkness in my life and I hide from you. Take my hand and lead me out of the shadows of my fear. Help me to change my heart. Bring me to your truth and help me to respond to your generous love. Let me recognize the fullness of your love which will fill my life. Free me from the darkness in my heart. Amen.

With God as our Leader, may we be prepared to live another year under His guidance.

How can we pray for you today?

- We extend our deepest and passionate condolences to Mr. John Abuya and Family on the passing of his beloved bride and our precious Sister, Ms. Sandy Abuya on 1 March 2022. Visitation will be held on Thursday, March 10 at the Harder Funeral Home from 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM. The funeral will be Friday, March 11 at Calvary Lutheran Church, 1750 North Calhoun Road; visitation 10:00 AM until time of service at 11:00 AM.; Rev. David Abuya officiating. Interment following at Wisconsin Memorial Park. Card of love and support can be sent to: Mr. John Abuya, 328 East Washington Street, #1, Slinger, WI 53086.
- Thank you for your support and care of the family of Mr. Ted Meilahn on 7 March 2022 as we remembered him in love. Fair Winds and Following Seas, dear Shipmate.
- We ask for your continued prayers of healing and restoration for Rev. Jean Bartlett after brain surgery to remove a brain tumor. We're also praying for Rev. Jon Bartlett for strength and courage. Cards and emails of comfort, healing and care can be sent to: Rev. Jean and Rev. Jon Bartlett, 813 Seymour Street, Waupun, WI 53963. Email address: bihojon@gmail.com
- We send our caring and loving prayers to Mr. Brett Barnett as he heals from shoulder surgery. Mr. Brett has become an irreplaceable member of our Trustee Team. His leadership and maintenance skills as been priceless during the much need upkeep of our church building. Dear Lord, your Word

speaks promises of healing and restoration and we thank you for the miracles you still perform today. Today we claim those promises over Mr. Brett. We believe in the healing power of faith and prayer and ask you to begin your mighty work in the life of our dear Brother. Cards and notes can be mailed to: Mr. Brett and Mary Barnett, 932 Hillcrest Street, West Bend, WI 53095.

- Mr. Robert and Ms. Nancy Whitson. Mr. Robert is still in rehabilitation; Ms. Nancy is now at home. Please send your cards of healing and encouragement to: Mr. Robert and Ms. Nancy Whitson, 922 Hickory Street, West Bend, WI 53095.
- Prayers of healing and comfort are warmly and lovingly extended to Ms. Bev Vogel who broke her left wrist. Living Lord, your love has held Ms. Bev and kept her through this pain and suffering. Now may your hope and healing lead her quickly to a place of restoration. And we love Ms. Bev so much more! Correspondence can be mailed to: Ms. Bev Vogel, 125 Cedar Ridge Drive, #S143, West Bend, WI 53095.
- Mr. William (Bill) & Mrs. Ginger Hornung would love to hear from you! Cards or notes of encouragement or “just thinking of you” can be mailed to: W194N16744 Eagle Dr. Room 3, Jackson, WI 53037
- Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, continued prayers for healing and strength as she continues to struggle with illness. You can send emails of prayers and support to: alankempf33@gmail.com; or cards and notes to Ms. Janice Liepert-Kempf, 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073; phone number: 920.838.1830.
- Ms. Annie Griffin, Aunt of Pastor Clarissa (Bro. Martin), had her left leg amputated at the knee on 18 January 2022. Your prayers of hope and support has been a blessed comfort. Cards and notes for promises of healing, restoration and encouragement and can be mailed to: Ms. Annie Griffin, 1122 Hutchinson Ferry Road, Bainbridge, GA 39819
- Fifth Avenue UMC’s Laity, Accountable Leadership Board ALB). To God be the glory, great things He has done! We have entered into a period of prayer and discernment as a person has stepped forward for the ALB Chair position. Join us as we pray for this servant-leader. Lord in your mercy, please hear our prayer.
- Ms. Linda Green, sister of Ms. Debra Matthies, needs our prayers for strength and courage as her cancer has returned. Cards and notes to let Ms. Linda know we are present in this journey can be mailed to: Ms. Linda Green, c/o Ms. Debra Matthies, 1466 North 12th Avenue, West Bend, WI 53090.
- Bro. Bob Krell, prayers for strength and healing. Please mail cards and notes of prayer and encouragement to: Bro. Bob Krell, 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090
- Mr. Len McGinnis, Jr., cards and notes of support, cheer and well wishes for Mr. Len and Ms. Shelia McGinnis can be mailed to: 1230 Vogt Drive, West Bend, WI 53095
- Ms. Trisha Funke, daughter of Mr. Ralph & Ms. Bonnie Hensel. Cards of encouragement and prayers for continued healing and diagnosis can be sent to her parents: Mr. Ralph & Ms. Bonnie Hensel, 629 Highland View Drive, West Bend WI 53095
- Mr. Roger Sacia, is requesting prayers for healing; Mrs. Nobi Sacia words of encouragement and prayers for healing. Mr. Roger and Ms. Nobi have permanently relocated to Madison with their daughter. Their new address is: 1626 Jefferson Street, Madison WI 53711
- Mr. Phil Heimerl, son-in-law of Mike & Fay Lewis. He was just diagnosed with ALS.

God of Love, through this Lenten journey, purify my desires to serve you. Free me from any temptations to judge others, to place myself above others. Please let me surrender even my impatience with others, that with your love and your grace, I might be less and less absorbed with myself, and more and more full of the desire to follow you, in laying down my life according to your example. Amen.

Your humble Pastor & Servant Leaders,

Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin