

## GMS Assembly Devotion Guide

### Devotion #1

#### Where does your courage come from?

A reading from Ezekiel, chapter 37:

*<sup>1</sup>The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup>He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. <sup>3</sup>He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." <sup>4</sup>Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>5</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup>I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."*

It took courage for Ezekiel to prophesy to the valley of dry bones, and he needed to trust in God's promises, that new life was possible. It takes courage to speak up when we may feel alone, misunderstood, or devalued by this church and the world around us. We are grateful for all who have found the courage to share their story, their pain, and their passion, and we believe that God's Spirit blows through them to enliven us all. We spoke with a number of leaders across the synod who are committed to the work of racial justice and full inclusion, and we asked them where their courage comes from. We will now hear some of their answers, and after we watch this video, we ask that you turn to someone sitting near you and we will give you several minutes to respond to these questions:

Which reflection in the video caught your attention? What gives you courage to work for a more just and inclusive church?

(Video: 5:57 in length)

Questions for conversation:

Which reflection in the video caught your attention? What gives you courage to work for a more just and inclusive church?

Let us pray. Holy God, your Spirit blows through our lives, giving us the courage to proclaim your truth by sharing our story. Help us to listen to one another, even when we don't understand, trusting that your will for each of us, as individuals, as congregations, and as communities, is to find new life in the power of your love. In your holy name we pray, Amen.

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### Devotion #2

#### What gives you hope?

A reading from the Book of Acts, chapter 2:

*'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover, my flesh will live in hope.*

On that first Pentecost, God's Spirit blew through the people and tongues of fire fell upon them, filling them with the courage they needed to embark on God's mission. That same Spirit also filled them with a vision of what the world could look like, a world in which all people everywhere, young and old, people of all races and languages and genders and identities were honored and respected and valued for who they were. We spoke with a number of leaders across the synod who are committed to the work of racial justice and full inclusion, and we asked them what gives them hope to continue in this work. We will now hear some of their answers, and after we watch this video, we ask that you turn to someone sitting near you and we will give you several minutes to respond to these questions:

Which reflection in the video caught your attention? What gives you hope in the work for a more just and inclusive church?

(Video: 5:23 in length)

Questions for conversation: Which reflection in the video caught your attention? What gives you hope in the work for a more just and inclusive church?

Let us pray. Holy and life-giving God, your Spirit continues to blow among us, filling us with courage, passion, and hope. Keep the vision of your beloved community, the vision of your will for all of creation, burning within us, that we might continue to speak, listen, work, and dream, so that all people everywhere may know the amazing love you have for each and every person. In your Holy and unsettling name we pray, Amen.