

From Boxing Ring to Baptismal Font



(Presented at the Together in Mission event held in the Greater Milwaukee Synod ELCA on 2/12/22 by Pastor Libby Howe, Congregational Support Coordinator for Peace and Justice Ministries with Wisconsin Council of Churches)

Workshop Description:

The politics of our time have pulled Christians of all stripes into toxic, adversarial relationships. Instead of living as siblings in Christ, united in baptism, we have believed the lie that the only way to discuss politics and act for justice is to win the argument and demonize the other side. The alternative is to avoid it altogether, and sadly, many do. But both approaches are unfaithful, destroy communities and families, and do nothing to create a more just world. Come to this workshop to help reframe and reorient our discourse and actions in a way that reflects both the gentle compassion and the courageous boldness of Jesus.

The Foundational Assumption: We WANT to follow JESUS...So we need to study and emulate and spend time with him and his friends.

“In my view, Jesus changed lives because he was able to change the way people imagined their lives. He dared them to imagine the stranger as neighbor, the child as teacher, the enemy as mirror, the deity as loving father. He helped them imagine lepers, women, and Roman centurions as exemplars of faith. He asked them to imagine that the most important person at the table was the waiter, and that the end of the line was the place to be. At the moment I cannot think of a single story he told that was not intended to change the way his listeners imagined the world.” *(Barbara Brown Taylor, in an interview with Isaac Anderson for Issue 97 of Image Journal)*

(Affirmation of Baptism, Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p. 236)

You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

- to live among God’s faithful people
- to hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s supper
- to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed
- to serve all people following the example of Jesus
- to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

People of God, do you promise to support these siblings and pray for them in their life in Christ?

We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

What does it mean to be baptized?

IDENTITY

COMMUNITY

PURPOSE/MISSION