

## Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

## Exactly How Did I Get Here?

## Sermon Reflection Notes

The sermon invited us to think seriously about the question that often comes to us: How did we get here? We often ask ourselves this when we feel lost, but it also occurs to us when we feel incredibly blessed. We wonder how we got here because sometimes we want to avoid being where we are ever again and other times we'd like to replicate the experience to stay there. Rev. Kurt Schuermann brought this question to us on this first Sunday of Lent. Lent is a time to live into the invitation to a life as God's beloved sons and daughters.

As Rev. Schuermann suggested, we have to be willing to let go, to trust, to turn our whole lives over to the care of God. This idea has roots in the story of Bill Wilson, the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. But to live a life given to the care of God means to let go of our anxiety about "having enough;" it means to let go of exclusionary ideologies that fear "the other;" it means to let go of our need to have to be in control and to have answers. To live a life given to the care of God invites us to pause, to listen, to act. It means to repent (turn our face toward God). It means to believe (trust) the good news of the Gospel (the news that God loves us unconditionally and wants us to live into our baptismal identity). It means to pray to know God's will, and it means to pray for the strength to trust God's will.

## Scripture

Romans 5:6-8 (NRSVUE)

<sup>6</sup> For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

## Discussion Questions

1. On Ash Wednesday we may have heard the words “repent and believe the gospel.” What does it mean to repent? What does it mean to believe the gospel?
2. Write down one thing you would like to give in trust to God. (i.e. Anne Lamott’s God Box) Is this something you can or would like to share?
3. What does it mean to ask for help and why is it difficult to do so?
4. What kinds of things make accepting help more palatable?
5. Rev. Schuermann emphasized that “**Christ arrives right on time**” as stated in Romans 5. “**He didn’t, and doesn’t, wait for us to get ready.**” He presented himself for this sacrificial death when we were far too weak and rebellious to do anything to get ourselves ready. And even if we hadn’t been so weak, we wouldn’t have known what to do anyway. We can understand someone dying for a person worth dying for, and we can understand how someone good and noble could inspire us to selfless sacrifice. But God put his love on the line for us by offering his Son in the sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him.” (from The Message: Romans 5: 6-8)

What does this make you think about, particularly as we enter the season of Lent?

## Prayer

Self-giving God, call us to walk the road of newness—a new self, a new society, a new world, one neighbor at a time. May we have traveling mercies this Lenten season. Amen.

(From A Way Other Than Our Own by Walter Brueggemann)

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Christ died for us.*