



# THE RADIX PROJECT

*small groups / deep roots*

**PARTICIPANT BOOKLET**



SAINT MARK'S  
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL



# A LETTER FROM THE DEAN

I am so delighted you have signed on to participate in this communal effort, the name for which—**The Radix Project**—draws on the Latin word for “root,” which is radix. Jesus modeled small group relationship in his life and ministry, and the early Church was structured on small groups who worshipped, prayed and cared for one another. Those are our roots, and in our time, when so many pressures of modern life leave us feeling alone and isolated, Christian community offers us a tangible way of entering into relationships rooted in trust and mutuality.

The root word, radix, also gives rise to the oft-touted word we hear a lot these days—**radical**. A radical is not one who goes their separate way, doing their own thing. A radical is one who is so well-grounded with deep roots that they are able to stretch out to the fringes of existence and offer us all a different way of being in the world. Hence, these small groups are designed to help us engage the world in radically restorative ways. We won’t always agree how best to do that—politically, theologically, or culturally—but we care for one another, we pray for one another, and the blush of life is more full because of those relationships. Together, we find our way.

Please know of my prayers for YOU as you sign on to be part of the Radix Project at Saint Mark’s, for a season. Trust that it might be a transformative experience for you. Trust that God might be working through this to do infinitely more than we could ask or imagine. Trust. That’s the first step of small groups. I am, faithfully,

Your Brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve" with a small cross symbol above the end of the word.

The Very Reverend Steven L. Thomason  
Dean and Rector

## The Radix Project Planning Committee

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Please feel free to contact anyone from the Planning Committee if you have any questions or concerns along the way. Thank you for your participation!

# OVERVIEW FOR SMALL GROUPS

Small groups are designed to gather people of faith in settings that foster trust so that our relationships with God and one another are strengthened. When we meet each other for earnest conversation, sharing and prayer, we deepen the bonds of affection by which we learn how to love ourselves, each other and God more fully. In this way, small groups are intentional about providing space for prayerful support and accountability, guided by the One we know as Jesus the Christ.

For our purposes in the Radix Project, we have designed a process for guiding 6–10 people in their season together, designed as six 90-minute sessions, with two additional plenary gatherings in the weeks preceding and following the small group sessions. Each small group gathering is structured to open with prayer, to have time for check-in, scripture reading and reflection, sharing of stories, and check-out with prayer.

# SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

In addition to the six small group meetings (which will convene at various times on Sundays, Tuesdays or Wednesdays, beginning the week of January 12th), there are two plenary gatherings to which all who participate in the Radix Project small groups are invited. So the flow of the season looks like this:

## **OPENING PLENARY**

Wednesday, January 8, 2020,  
6:45–8 p.m. in Bloedel Hall  
(Optional dinner is served 6–6:30 p.m., \$7 per person)

*Our time will include some orientation to the Radix Project, and time for members of each group to connect with each other.*

- SESSION 1: BELONGING** . . . . . week of January 12, 2020
- SESSION 2: LISTEN** . . . . . week of January 19, 2020
- SESSION 3: HARDSHIP** . . . . . week of January 26, 2020
- SESSION 4: BELOVEDNESS** . . . . . week of February 2, 2020
- SESSION 5: LIVING STONES** . . . . . week of February 9, 2020
- SESSION 6: RADICAL INCLUSION/FINAL THINGS** week of February 16, 2020

## **CLOSING PLENARY**

Sunday, February 23, 2020  
10:10–10:50 a.m. in Bloedel Hall

*All who have participated in the Radix Project are encouraged to attend and share their observations about what worked well, what could be improved, and whether another iteration with different groups would be of interest, perhaps in the Easter Season.*

# ESTABLISH GROUP NORMS

In order to grow in trust, it is important for groups to agree to norms for their time together and revisit them periodically as needed. It is important that everyone agree to abide by the same expectations for their time together. Here are some aspects of relational group culture that all groups will want to discuss as they begin their work

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- ◆ What is allowed to be shared outside the group?
- ◆ What may be shared on social media?

## **RESPECT AND MUTUALITY**

- ◆ Let others finish without being interrupted.
- ◆ Resist the temptation to problem-solve.
- ◆ Mutual respect is essential.
- ◆ Give everyone a chance to speak.

## **LOGISTICS**

- ◆ What are expectations about beginning and ending on time?
- ◆ About sharing food, etc.?

## **TECHNOLOGY**

- ◆ What are expectations about phone use during meetings?
- ◆ Will they be turned off and placed in a basket? Silenced? Other?

## **ATTENDANCE**

- ◆ Be punctual.
- ◆ Commit to regular attendance and participation.

## **PREPARATION**

- ◆ What, if anything, are group members expected to do to prepare for their meetings?

## **COMMITMENT TO PRAYER**

- ◆ What are expectations that each group member commits to pray for the others daily during this time as a small group?

# FLOW OF THE SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

A key to the flourishing of small groups is some consistency week to week so folks will know what to expect. A group facilitator will encourage the group to stay on track, but everyone has a part in making that happen. Here is the suggested format for all Radix Project groups which are designed to meet for 90 minutes each week:

<b>GATHERING &amp; SNACKS/COFFEE/TEA . . . . .</b>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>OPEN IN PRAYER . . . . .</b>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>CHECK-IN . . . . .</b>	<b>.10 minutes</b>
(A question will serve as the prompt.)	
<b>SCRIPTURE REFLECTION . . . . .</b>	<b>.20 minutes</b>
<b>GROUP DISCUSSION . . . . .</b>	<b>.30 minutes</b>
<b>CHECK-OUT INCLUDING PRAYER REQUESTS . . . . .</b>	<b>.10 minutes</b>
<b>CLOSING PRAYER/WORSHIP . . . . .</b>	<b>.10 minutes</b>

# CHECK-OUT/CLOSING

This is an opportunity for each member of the group to reflect on the time together, articulating what they learned, and to ask the group to hold them in prayer with special intention. That intention may have arisen in the context of the meeting, or it could be that you are asking for prayers for some prevailing part of your life (e.g., my child has surgery next week, or I am retiring from work, etc.). The important thing is that the prayers of the group gather all those intentions up as the meeting comes to an end, AND that each person commits to holding those prayers through the week, until you meet again. Consider incorporating the closing prayers in some brief form of worship. Some examples could be:

- ◆ Daily Devotions, BCP, p. 137–140
- ◆ Compline, BCP, p. 127
- ◆ A brief hymn, chant, or Taizé prayer
- ◆ The group may choose to go around and allow each person to pray for the person sitting to their right, with the facilitator opening and closing.
- ◆ Alternatively, after the intentions are named, sit in silent prayer, centered on God's mercy and presence.

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# SCRIPTURE STUDY GUIDES

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# WEEK 1: BELONGING

*Isaiah 43:1b-3b:*

**T**HUS says the LORD,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.  
For I am the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. ♦

## **QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:**

1. What word or phrase stands out to you?
2. God assures the people of Israel that God is with them through the trials and tribulations of life. How was/is God present in challenging times for the people of Israel? How is God present for you in those hard times?
3. What does “redemption” mean to you? What do you imagine it means to God?



Saint Mark's Choir  
Camp tee-shirt, 2017

## NOTES

## WEEK 2: LISTEN

*1 Samuel 3:1-10*

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called, “Samuel! Samuel!” and he said, “Here I am!” and ran to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. The LORD called again, “Samuel!” Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived



*Samuel & Eli,*  
anonymous  
19<sup>th</sup>-century  
stained glass

that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” ♦

### QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

1. What word or phrase stands out to you?
2. Put yourself in Samuel’s place, lying quietly at night in the temple. How do you suppose it felt to hear his name being called repeatedly and then to learn it was not Eli?
3. Do you think it is important that Eli was part of this story? What would have been different if Samuel was alone?

## NOTES

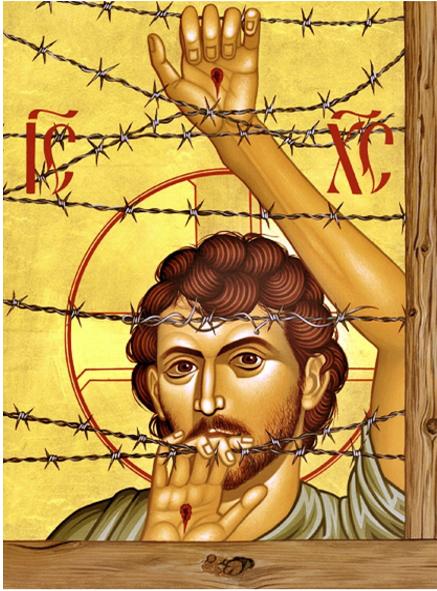
## WEEK 3: HARDSHIP

*Romans 8:35-37*

**W**HO will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ♦



*Christ of Maryknoll*  
(2002), by Br. Robert Lentz, OFM (b. 1946)

### **QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:**

1. What word or phrase stands out to you?
2. What jars you, or what phrases do you have questions about?
3. Paul says clearly that even in hardship, we are not separated from God. How might what Paul is saying here contrast with how the world made sense of difficult circumstances at the time? How does it contrast with how our world makes meaning of hardship today?

**NOTES**

## WEEK 4: BELOVEDNESS

*Psalm 139:1–14*

**O**LORD, you have searched me and known me.  
You know when I sit down and when I  
rise up; you discern my thoughts from far  
away.

You search out my path and my lying down,  
and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue,  
O LORD, you know it completely.

You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.

If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light around me become night,”  
even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.

For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and  
wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;  
that I know very well. ♦

### **QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:**

1. What word or phrase stands out to you?
2. This psalm is very personal. It’s not just that God created everything—God created ME. What does it mean to you to be “fearfully and wonderfully made?”
3. In the Old Testament civilizations, the gods were often thought to be hostile or indifferent to men and women—but the Psalmist knew the God who cared for each and every person. How would that worldview change things? How does it change things for our culture today?

## NOTES

# WEEK 5: LIVING STONES

*1 Peter 2: 4-5*

**C**OME to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ♦

## **QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:**

1. What word or phrase stands out to you?
2. Do you consider yourself "precious in God's sight?"
3. "Sacrifice" has several different meanings, but the etymological roots (*sacer*: holy and *facé*: to make) simply means to set something apart as special/holy. What does it mean for us today to make spiritual sacrifices?



photo by  
Kevin Johnson

## NOTES



*Christ the Redeemer* by sculptor Paul Landowski (1875–1961). Photo by ArturDiaSr, via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.

## WEEK 6: RADICAL INCLUSION/FINAL THINGS

*Revelation 22: 1–2, 16–17*

**T**HEN the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

“It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.”

And let everyone who hears say, “Come.”

And let everyone who is thirsty come.

Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift. ♦

### **QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:**

1. What word or phrase strikes you most and why?
2. This is the concluding image of the entire Bible, the last chapter of the last book, which speaks of a new creation. Did you know the Book of Revelation ended this way, in rather hopeful and beautiful terms? Why do you think this is so?
3. What implications does this scene have for us here today?

## NOTES

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