

## Meditation for Synod of the Covenant 7.24.20

### PROMISE OF COMMUNITY

***Then Jesus said to the Twelve, “Do you also want to go away?” But Simon Peter answered him, “Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” John 6:67-68***

We began our time together today by listening to and honoring words of wisdom and the commitment belonging to community. But first, we must remember that the land on which we gather is home to our many indigenous relatives – These are diverse communities of those who have never left, those who have joined us, those who call this their home. But Our ancestors still surround us. It is very good when Kindred live together.

As a Delaware-Nanticoke, it is my honor to welcome you with traditional greetings from my Algonquin ancestors, my other relatives we reverently call our Three Sisters: Corn, Beans, and Squash. These relatives still have much to teach us about what it means to be in community with each other, with the past and the future, with the earth and the sky. True commitment to community is not an emotion, it’s a quality that enables us to reach our goals. Here in this season of growth, the promise offered by these three is bound up in each generation of their seeds so that we may never forget, never be hungry or and never go without hope.

#### *Corn Welcomes You*

Corn is the firstborn and grows straight and stiff, its leafy ladder must grow tall quickly. Making a strong stem is her priority at first, because she needs to be there for the younger sister, the bean. Without corn’s support, beans would be an unruly tangle on the ground, but corn carries the bean up toward the sunlight. Corn is the supporting sister.

#### *Bean Welcomes You*

Bean grows on long vines, extending its touch until it finds what it is looking for- the corn stem, where she wraps herself around the corn in an upward spiral, pulling nitrogen from the air and bringing it to the soil so that all three sisters can benefit. Bean is the giving sister.

#### *Squash Welcomes You*

Meanwhile, squash, the late bloomer, steadily extends herself over the ground, moving away from the corn and beans, setting out broad rain diverting leaves, and as they grow wider, they shelter the base of the corn and the beans, keeping moisture in and other plants out. Squash is the protecting sister.

They say ‘Thank You’ for gathering here as community. We say ‘Thank You’ for gathering. And as community, we are taught, first, that we grow from seeds that remember, and next, to apologize for not listening to what you’ve taught us about how we are to care for each other, for failing to do all that which is good and right.

Sit still, and really listen today, listen for voices of compassion. Hear the stories of belonging, for healing the hurts of people disconnected, their fears and tears. Then join in prayer for our children and our children’s children, for their future and future churches to grow and thrive, being aware how much we belong to each other. We are so much better when we grow together, when we belong together. As Jesus asked - Would we really want them to leave? Where would they go? My prayer is that you’re already committed to this season of change, this season of growth, this season of new life.

Seasonal change becomes a balance between maintaining order and also allows for the creation of new growth, new materials, new ideas, new relationships – new ways to breathe and stretch. Change is powerful, it takes a strong heart to assert change while holding our place in the order of things. To experience being intimately connected with the cycles of planning, thinking, acting, reflecting, and resting.

I enjoy reading the lawn signs, and chalk messages churches have put out. One that stays with me on my morning walk says –*‘God keep guard over those who work or weep or watch this night.’* This small prayer ensures that we feel protected and experience belonging. We are blessed with relationships as we make our way in the world. Blessed because these relationships teach us how we should do what we do well. Our relatives accept our strengths and weaknesses – not simply as acts of family courtesy, and there may be some of those, but because it is necessary in order to learn what it is to be interdependent and to sustain our community, our living and working together as family, as the church, as community. This is a season of growing to honor what happens when we pay attention to the seeds of change that are planted.

Synod of the Covenant – as you work toward re-centering expectations on the gifts and diversity of your people, congregations and partners, lift up these words often exchanged between Jesus and those who needed to be healed – *Lord, if you will, you can make me whole. Jesus will reach out to you and say, I will. Be whole.*

Close: In thanksgiving for this place and time-and all who gather as this Synod of the Covenant and its 11 presbyteries. Cincinnati, Detroit, Eastminster, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Mackinac, Maumee Valley, Miami Valley, Muskingum Valley, Scioto Valley and Western Reserve.

Remember and Listen. Different and alike, we are all related.

What is your promise to this community? – to be the supporting one, the giving one or the protecting one. –Remember and Listen. The three sisters grow together, the harmony of the shape and interaction of every leaf, tendril, stalk and root still speaks to us. Respect one another, support one another, bring your gifts to the world and receive the gifts of others.

Plant seeds of courage to address wrongdoings and injustice as community. Sprout fruits of peace and reconciliation. Behave like spiritual being in memory of those giants of justice and victims injustice. Go now and remember who you are, and where you come from, who was here before you and what happened to them. May all of us respect the land upon which we live and walk now. Choose the path to share that knowledge and fulfill the promise of community for yourself and the dreams of the next generation.

We promise you are not alone You are Valued, You are Recognized, You are Necessary.