

From your Deacon...

Dear Congregation,

Last night, I had an experience I've not had in a very long time. A friend bought tickets to a Broadway show, an actual Broadway show, and we went to see "David Byrne's American Utopia". I had no idea what this was or what to expect. I was just glad to be out...with another human...surrounded by many more of them. This show was more of a concert, a "get up and dance at your seat" show. And yes, I will do a Covid test before I show up in church on Sunday.

David Byrne is the David Byrne of a rock group I've lived long enough to remember, Talking Heads. His engaging dialog, social commentary, and quirky manner segues into incredible performances by just a dozen musicians and dancers. It's all very minimalist – the set is made up of what looked like mesh curtains which just blended into the background, with performers entering and exiting the stage by parting them and walking through. Other than some light fixtures above, there was nothing else on stage except performers and musical instruments which were all attached to their bodies, traveling along as part of them. The performers were all dressed in simple grey suits. They were all barefoot.

The intent of all this bare simplicity, which was disclosed by David Byrne as the show unfolded, was to strip away everything except that which was needed, that which was important, the audience and the performers.

And you know what? It was enough. And I'm left wondering if it would have been enough two years ago. The past two years have indeed been life-changing, perspective-changing. I already knew that I missed being with people and simply being out and having a fun evening. Then there I was, doing just that, but with a new feeling of just how precious our life together is, a new longing for things to return – not to the old normal – but to a refreshed normal, with new appreciation for the simple life-giving joy of community.

Community rejoices together and mourns together. Our city mourns Officers Jason Rivera and Wilbert Mora. I can't help but juxtapose the joy I felt at the show last night with the cold and sad reality which is on my television screen right now as I write this letter, the funeral for Officer Rivera. But life will always hold joys and sorrows, as we're all aware. It's together, in community, that we need to embrace the joy and face the sadness and the struggles life brings. I think the isolation many of us have felt has made that point, I know it has for me.

I'm still quite a newcomer here at Incarnation. I've enjoyed meeting you but there are many I have not yet met in person. I look forward to the day we're all together worshipping, rejoicing, under the same roof, in community. In community, we can help one another through the hurts and challenges but let's remember that there will also be occasions to just get up and dance at your seat.

Deacon Denise

BEING CHRISTIAN SMALL GROUPS BEGIN THIS WEEK!

Have you ever asked yourself: *What does it mean to be a Christian?* Through the two thousand years of its history, and throughout diverse cultures and nationalities around the globe, the Christian faith has taken a variety of different forms. So what holds it all together? What are the things that make the various expressions of the Christian faith authentically "Christian."

In an accessible, elegant, and thought provoking book--simply titled, *Being Christian*--Rowan Williams--former Archbishop of Canterbury, and widely recognized as among the best theologians in the world--offers some reflections on the heart of Christian faith and practice. Highlighting four key features of the Christian

life--baptism, Bible, Eucharist, and prayer--Williams does his best in this book to describe the key features of the Christian life.

Beginning **THIS WEEK** our winter small groups will meet for four consecutive weeks to study the four chapters of this book. There are already three small groups to choose from:

- Tuesdays, 7:00-8:00 p.m. on Zoom (begins Feb. 1)
- Wednesdays, 4:00-5:00 p.m. on Zoom (begins Feb. 2)
- Thursdays, 7:00-8:00 p.m. in the Parish House (begins Feb. 3)

If you'd like to join us for this study, it's not too late! Email the Rev. Dr. Nate Lee at nlee@churchoftheincarnation.org to sign up.

THE PRAYERFUL PLIE

The Rev. Adrian Dannhauser is joining Faith on Pointe as a guest teacher for "The Prayerful Plié." This 6 week series blends ballet and spiritual direction. Each themed week pairs selected theological readings with a customized ballet class which concludes with a period of journaling and reflection, using movement from class as the basis for our conversation. "The Prayerful Plié" will be held on Zoom from **7:30 to 9:00 p.m. on Thursdays starting February 17**. Go to faithonpointe.com/classes to learn more and register.

HOW DO I JOIN?

To become a member of the Church of the Incarnation, you may transfer from another Episcopal parish or a Lutheran church. Or you may take our Spring Confirmation and Inquirers' Class, a five-week series that will help you explore the basics of Christian faith as experienced in the Episcopal tradition. **The next Confirmation and Inquirers' Class will begin Ash Wednesday, March 2, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

Our goal is to use a hybrid model so that participants may take the class in person or via Zoom. Contact the Rev. Adrian Dannhauser at adannhauser@churchoftheincarnation.org for more information.

EVERY WEEK AT INCARNATION

Sunday Bible Study: Bible Study is held in the Parish House on Sundays from 10:00 to 10:30 a.m. (Masks are required.) We generally follow the Yale Bible Study program, which offers course materials on select books of the Bible, deepened by insights from Yale Divinity School professors.

Sunday School for Children: During the 11:00 a.m. service, children ages 3 to 10 depart the service with their teachers for Sunday School in the Parish House. (Masks are required, and all teachers have been vaccinated.) They return before the end of worship. See our website, churchoftheincarnation.org, for more information on Children and Family Ministries.

Wednesday Holy Eucharist: Join us each Wednesday at 12:15 p.m. for this Rite I spoken service of Holy Eucharist, which includes a brief homily and organ music.

Thursday Candlelight Communion: Join us each Thursday at 6:15 p.m. for Candlelight Communion, a service of Holy Eucharist that incorporates chant and silence as well as elements of contemporary worship. This service is informal and contemplative, with music led by a Cantor and a brief reflection by one of the clergy. You can also stream this service on our YouTube channel, youtube.com/churchoftheincarnation.

Daily Office: Services of Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer and Compline are held via Zoom. To receive Zoom access information and view the weekly schedule, join our email distribution list by filling out the yellow Connect Card found in your pew.