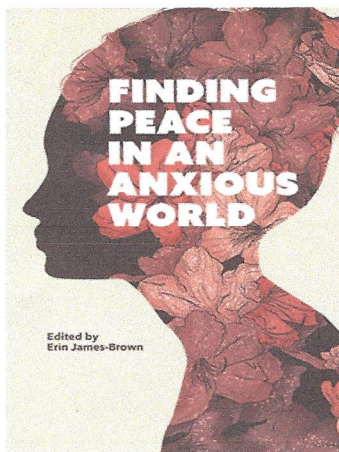


SESSION 2: ACCEPTANCE

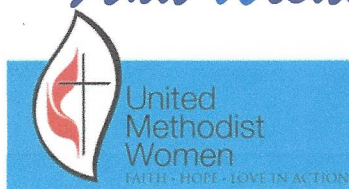


“It Is Well with My Soul,” *The United Methodist Hymnal*, no. 377
Credit: Words by Horatio G. Spafford, 1873. Music by Philip P. Bliss, 1876. Public domain.
Musician: Catherine Ritch

1

The Serenity Prayer

*God, grant me the Serenity
To Accept the things I cannot change...
Courage to change the things I can,
And Wisdom to know the difference.*



2

Session 2: *ACCEPTANCE*

- Explore acceptance as a way to peace
- Consider that acceptance comes from a profound sense of trust in God's ability to work for good
- Reaffirm that trusting God's power prevents anxiety from wielding control over your life
- Introduce calming practices
 - The Welcoming Prayer
 - Corporate singing as a form of spiritual discipline



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3

SESSION 2: ACCEPTANCE

Constant God, you who never change, morning through night, season upon season, from time before and after, help us who are always being called to be transformed and become more like you. Help us to be infused with your light so that we can be points of light in and for this this world. Amen.

("Called to Be Transformed in God's Likeness," by Ruth Willis of the Rocky Mountain Conference UMW, *United Methodist Women Bible*, 18)



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4

It is Well With My Soul

1. When peace like a river
Attendeth my way
When sorrows like sea billows role,
Whatever my lot,
Thou has taught me to say
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Chorus:

It is well, (it is well)
With my soul (with my soul);
It is well, it is well with my soul!

2. Though Satan should buffet,
Though trials should come,
Let this blessed assurance control:
That Christ has regarded
My helpless estate
And hath shed his own blood
For my soul,

Chorus

3. My sin, o the bliss
Of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross
And I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord,
O My soul!

Chorus:

4. And Lord, haste the day
When my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound
And the Lord shall descend.
Even so, it is well with my soul.

Chorus



Image: Glory Dharmaraj



“It Is Well with My Soul,” *The United Methodist Hymnal*, no. 377

Credit: Words by Horatio G. Spafford, 1873. Music by Philip P. Bliss, 1876. Public domain
Musician: Catherine Ritch

5

PB9

Möbius Strip Movement: Back-and-forth reading act

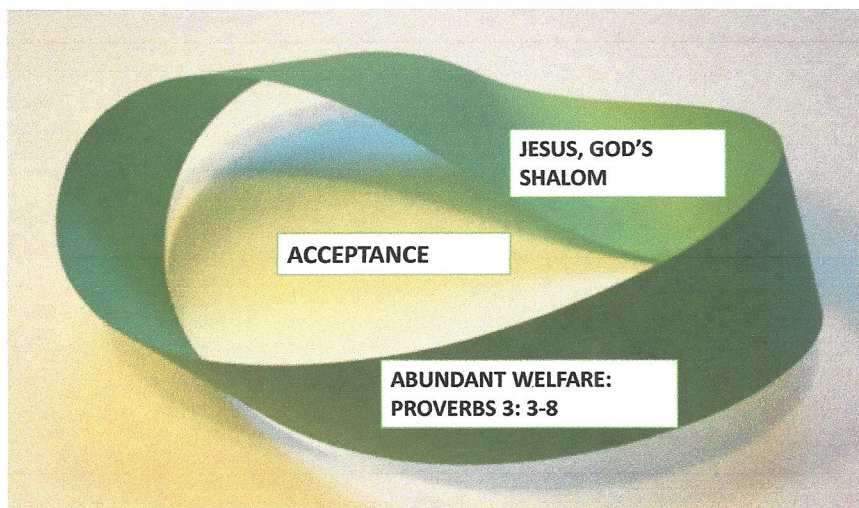


Image: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Möbius_strip.jpg; Content: Glory Dharmaraj

6

PROVERBS 3:3-8

Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.

⁴ So you will find favor and good repute
in the sight of God and of people.

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

⁸ It will be a healing for your flesh
and a refreshment for your body.



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“Written on the Tablet of Your Heart”

- Reflect on what you just read or heard in Proverbs 3:3-8.
- This verse reminds us of the *Shema*, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, where the Hebrews were told to “Keep these words...in your heart. Recite them to your children...”
- Do you have any part of Proverbs 3:3-8 “written on your heart?” If so, what is it, and why? (Silent reflection)



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8

What is Acceptance?

- Acknowledging that there are things we cannot change!
- Allows us to see ourselves, others and the world as they really are, not as we wish they were
- *“The Gift of Imperfection”* by Brené Brown
- Accepting Our Limitations: Learning to Trust God



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9

What is Acceptance?

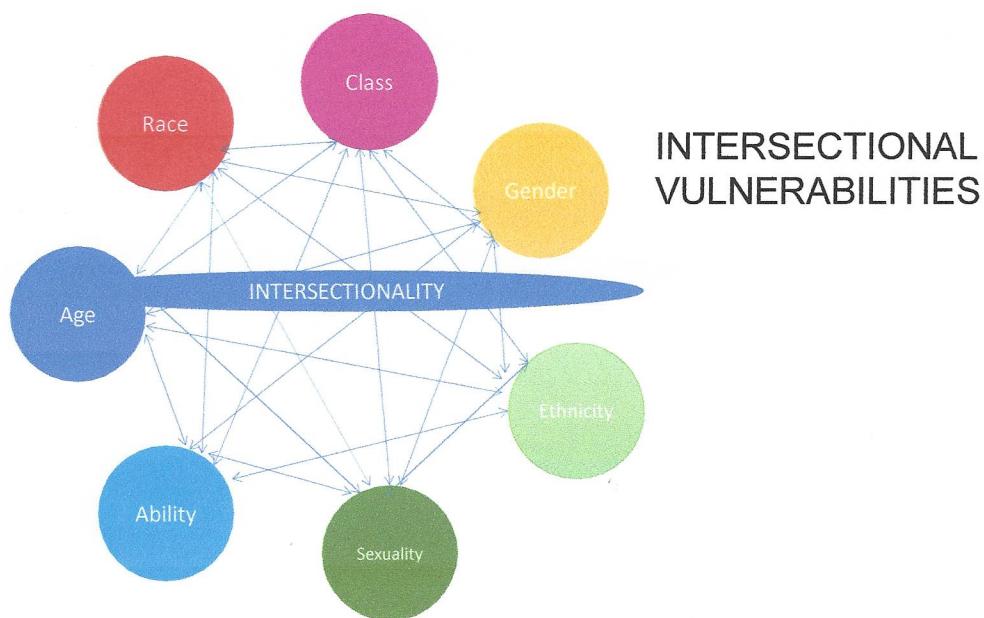
- Understanding some new concepts
 - ❖ **Social Location:** The groups people belong to because of their place or position in history and society.
 - ❖ **Intersectional Vulnerabilities:** different identities, needs, priorities and capacities we have, which are not always static, and which can shift and change over time
 - ❖ **Trauma-Informed Jesus:** God Incarnate was fully divine and yet fully human; suffered human trauma



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PB4



11

Acceptance (continued)

- Consider the following questions:
 - Each breakout group will be given a quote to discuss about acceptance.
 - What does this quote say to you?
 - Do you agree or disagree with the premise? Why or why not?



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Discuss your quote in your breakout groups for about 10 minutes.

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Session 2: What Is Acceptance? Handout



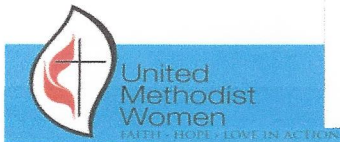
1. “Many people think that acceptance is a passive, doormat stance. . . . But, acceptance is much deeper and more spiritually active than a stance of resignation. Acceptance allows us to see the world, ourselves, and our loved ones as they really are” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 36).

2. “The prayer cannot begin with ourselves and our ability to control things. That is a self-centered prayer. The first step has to be about serenity and acceptance. These two actions ground us in the idea that something bigger—God, God’s creation, and God’s sovereignty—is at play” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 35).

3. “There are reasons why many people have rejected the practice of this kind of acceptance in their spiritual lives. For one, it can be very hard to give up control of a situation that we desperately want to turn out differently. Another significant reason is that this line of reasoning has been used to excuse harm after harm in the name of God” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 37).

4. “Acceptance can be an extraordinary gift for several reasons. First, it is actually quite impossible to change everything that we cannot accept. Accepting the things we cannot change releases us from the anxiety of living in a false reality” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 39).

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PB8

What is Christian acceptance?

Mark 14:32-36

³² They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ³⁴ "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

³⁵ Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ "Abba, [Ⓜ] Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Image: Glory Dharmaraj

14

PB7

The Christian Way of Acceptance

- Takes the burden off us and frees us for new possibilities
- Removes the opportunity for us to make things worse!
- Is not easy!
 - Can reveal tender (painful) places in our minds and souls
 - Calls for us to turn to God, not rely on our own understanding
 - Calls for really discerning things we can't change, and things we should
- Quote from Ajahn Chah
 - "...If you let go completely, you will have complete peace."



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PB6

Accepting Our Limitations: Trusting God

- We are not the center of the universe! Only God is the center.
- Accepting our limits allows us to rest in God who holds all things
- When we unclench our fists, we release our anxiety
- We transform our relationships when we accept others as they are, rather than as we wish they were.
- Allows us to reorder our priorities; move from contemplation to action
- Allows us to see God's miraculous creation and to live peacefully in it



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PB6

Spiritual Practice: The Welcoming Prayer

- “This is the spiritual practice of welcoming the now, whatever it may be, so that our heart will be more attentive and more able to accept whatever comes into our lives on this journey we are on with God.” (text, p. 46)
- It can be practiced anywhere, anytime, anyplace
- See if you can find and accept God’s presence in all things.
- See how it changes your life.
- Follow 3 steps to center one’s emotional and prayer life (p. 47)



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PB6

The Welcoming Prayer (continued)

1. Focus, feel, sink in.

Become aware of what is happening in your body and soul.
Sink in to truly allow and accept what you are feeling and experiencing, without judgement or attempting to change it.
Notice deeply, and with God.



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The Welcoming Prayer

(continued)

2. Welcome and Name

Whatever you find, welcome it with words spoken or unspoken, even if it's something you find challenging. "Welcome fear" or "Welcome pain" or "Welcome confusion" would all be fitting words of welcome. Fit it to whatever truth you are experiencing at the moment.



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The Welcoming Prayer

(continued)

3. Let Go and Let God

Once you have felt, welcomed and named the experience you are having, begin to release it in whatever ways possible. Release yourself physically and emotionally. It can also help to use words of release to ease yourself out of the prayer experience. Some recommendations include, "I let go of the desire for security, affection, control," and "I let go of the desire to change what I am experiencing."



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Spiritual Practice: Corporate Singing

- This is so familiar we may not see it as a spiritual practice.
- It provides us a physical activity to refocus our minds away from our anxiety, while also affirming an uplifting gospel or spiritual message.
- It allows us a comforting sense of community.



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Closing Prayer

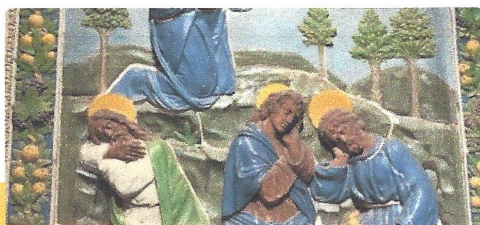
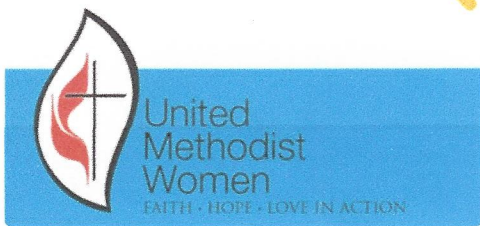
- Eternal God, grant peace us peace in this anxious world. May we trust in you with all of our hearts, and may you bring us insight and refreshment. Help us to practice Christian acceptance of the things we cannot change, and give us the courage to take action when we are called to act. Your ways are ways of righteousness, justice and equity. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.



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PB6



I'VE GOT PEACE LIKE A RIVER

1. I've got peace like a river,
 I've got peace like a river,
 I've got peace like a river in my soul.
 I've got peace like a river,
 I've got peace like a river,
 I've got peace like a river in my soul.

2. I've got joy like a fountain....

3. I've got love like an ocean....



"I've Got Peace Like a River," *The Faith We Sing*, no. 2145
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 Musician: Catherine Ritch