

Devotional
for the
Sister Parish Delegation

Danville, California and San Antonio, Cunen, Guatemala
November 4-15, 2024

You are invited to use this devotional to follow along with our friends who are traveling to Guatemala to be in community with our hermanamiento (sisters and brothers) there. You might want to set aside a time each day to read and reflect, light a candle, and say a prayer. We wish Trish, Linda and Bill safe travels and look forward to connecting with them on Zoom during their visit and hearing about their experiences when they return.

Itinerary

November 4	Travel to Guatemala
November 5	Cultural exploration in Antigua; travel to to Guatemala City
November 6	Orientation, Embassy visit in Guatemala City
November 7	Learning opportunities - visit to UPAVIM
November 8	Travel to Chichicastenango; Southern Encounter activities with Sister Parish Open Delegation church members from El Salvador and Guatemala
November 9	Southern Encounter activities in Chontala and Chichicastenango
November 10	Southern Encounter activities in Chichicastenango and Nebaj
November 11	Travel to Rio San Juan, Aguacatan; activities with San Antonio's community members at Rio San Juan; travel to San Antonio, Cunen. Meet host families.
November 12	Activities with host families. Zoom call with Danville Congregational Church at 12:30pm PST
November 13	Farewell and travel to Guatemala City
November 14	Learning opportunities in Guatemala City - Politics, History, Culture
November 15	Travel home to US

Delegation Members

Trish Moosbrugger
Linda Reeve
Bill Williams

Support Team

Bette Felton
Amy Furber-Dobson
John Klassen
Bob Kovach
Kim Michaud
Rev. Todd Atkins-Whitley
The DCC Congregation

Monday, November 4 - Travel to Guatemala

Jeremiah 6:16 (NRSVUE)

Thus says the Lord:
Stand at the crossroads and look,
and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way lies; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls.

Excerpt from the blessing "For the Traveler" by John O'Donohue

When you travel,
A new silence
Goes with you,
And if you listen,
You will hear
What your heart would
Love to say.

A journey can become a sacred thing.
Make sure, before you go,
To bless your going forth,
To free your heart of ballast
So that the compass of your soul
Might direct you towards
The territories of spirit
Where you will discover
More of your hidden life;
And the urgencies
That deserve to claim you.

May you travel in an awakened way,
Gathered wisely into your inner ground;
That you may not waste the invitations
Which wait along the way to transform you.

Reflection: I wonder what you are being called to do or to be today.

Tuesday, November 5 - Cultural exploration in Antigua; travel to Guatemala City

Matthew 13:31-32 (NRSVUE)

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

On the Long Drive by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

In the cottonwood tree
beside the road
sat the red-tailed hawk
on a barren branch,
utterly still,
and though they are common,
hulking and bulky,
that didn't stop me
from thrilling
in its whitish breast,
its short, hooked beak,
the branch an altar—
slender and dark,
and though I passed it
in seconds,
seconds are all it takes
for whatever is sacred in me
to be called to
by what's sacred
in the world.
Hours later,
I still wonder why
the heart leaps up so.
I don't know, but
that is perhaps itself
the miracle—
that some part of us
knows how to fall in love
with a bird on branch,
its body still,
while all around it
the wind.

Reflection: I wonder what part of today felt sacred.

Wednesday, November 6 - Orientation, Embassy visit in Guatemala City

John 1:6-8 (NRSVUE)

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

Life's Journeys According to Mister Rogers

Are you able to believe in a loving presence who desires the best for you and the whole universe? With all the sadness and destruction, negativity and rage expressed throughout the world, it's tough not to wonder where the loving presence is. Well, we don't have to look very far. Deep within each of us is a spark of the divine just waiting to be used to light up a dark place. The only thing is – we have the free choice of using it or not. That's part of the mysterious truth of who we human beings are.

Reflection: I wonder where you saw light today.

Thursday, November 7 - Learning opportunities - visit to UPAVIM

Romans 12:9-13 (NIV)

Love in Action

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Excerpt from A Theology of Liberation by Gustavo Gutiérrez

'Love of Enemies' does not ease tensions; rather it challenges the whole system and becomes a subversive formula. Universal love comes down from the level of abstractions and becomes concrete and effective by becoming incarnate in the struggle for the liberation of the oppressed.

Reflection: I wonder where you saw love in action today.

Friday, November 8 - Southern Encounter

Micah 6:8 (NIV)

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

and to walk humbly with your God.

The Wilderness Is a Place of Disruption by Sarah Are

My grandfather was a good man,

But he believed

That wilderness emotions

Were not to be seen.

Cry with the door closed,

Don't dwell on the negative.

Chin up, kid,

We've been here before.

My grandfather was a good man,

But I'd like to say --

The wilderness is here to interrupt your
previously-scheduled programming.

Like water in the desert

And setting the slaves free,

The wilderness might be

The very thing we need,

The very thing we dream,

The very thing we plead

For.

I guess what I'm trying to say is --

It never seems appealing to let a bird in the house,

But if you do,

Then you might as well

Open every window and door.

And if you do,

Then you might find yourself

Basking in the light,

Dancing in the breeze,

Overwhelmed with the beauty

That an open door brings.

So I'm opening my door

And inviting in the wind,
To rustle up my heart
And start over again.

For sweeping the truth under the rug
Has never gotten us far.
So may the wilderness be like a
Bird in your house.
Throw open your doors.
The truth must come out.

Reflection: I wonder when you knew God was with you today.

Saturday, November 9 - Southern Encounter

Ruth 1:16 (NIV)

But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God."

In Praise of Mystery: A Poem for Europa by Ada Limón

Arching under the night sky inky
with black expansiveness, we point
to the planets we know, we

pin quick wishes on stars. From earth,
we read the sky as if it is an unerring book
of the universe, expert and evident.

Still, there are mysteries below our sky:
the whale song, the songbird singing
its call in the bough of a wind-shaken tree.

We are creatures of constant awe,
curious at beauty, at leaf and blossom,
at grief and pleasure, sun and shadow.

And it is not darkness that unites us,
not the cold distance of space, but
the offering of water, each drop of rain,

each rivulet, each pulse, each vein.
O second moon, we, too, are made
of water, of vast and beckoning seas.

We, too, are made of wonders, of great
and ordinary loves, of small invisible worlds,
of a need to call out through the dark.

Reflection: I wonder what part of today was the most important.

Sunday, November 10 - Southern Encounter

Matthew 14:17-21 (The Message)

“All we have are five loaves of bread and two fish,” they said. Jesus said, “Bring them here.” Then he had the people sit on the grass. He took the five loaves and two fish, lifted his face to heaven in prayer, blessed, broke, and gave the bread to the disciples. The disciples then gave the food to the congregation. They all ate their fill. They gathered twelve baskets of leftovers. About five thousand were fed.

Logos by Mary Oliver

Why wonder about the loaves and fishes?
If you say the right words, the wine expands.
If you say them with love
and the felt ferocity of that love
and the felt necessity of that love,
the fish explode into many.
Imagine him, speaking,
and don't worry about what is reality,
or what is plain, or what is mysterious.
If you were there, it was all those things.
If you can imagine it, it is all those things.
Eat, drink, be happy.
Accept the miracle.
Accept, too, each spoken word
spoken with love.

Reflection: I wonder what part of today felt like a gift.

Monday, November 11 - Activities with San Antonio's community members at Rio San Juan; travel to San Antonio, Cunen. Meet host families.

Matthew 22:36-39 (NIV)

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

From The Secret of Staying in Love by John Joseph Powell

"It is an absolute certainty that no one can know his own beauty or perceive a sense of his own worth until it has been reflected back to him in the mirror of another loving, caring human being."

Reflection: I wonder where you saw love today.

Tuesday, November 12 - Activities with host families.

Zoom call with Danville Congregational Church at 12:30pm PST

Philippians 1:3 (The Message)

Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God.

How It Might Continue by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

Wherever we go, the chance for joy,
whole orchards of amazement—

one more reason to always travel
with our pockets full of exclamation marks,

so we might scatter them for others
like apple seeds.

Some will dry out, some will blow away,
but some will take root

and grow exuberant groves
filled with long thin fruits

that resemble one hand clapping—
so much enthusiasm as they flutter back and forth

that although nothing's heard
and though nothing's really changed,

people everywhere for years to come
will swear that the world

is ripe with applause, will fill
their own pockets with new seeds to scatter.

Reflection: I wonder when you felt joy today.

Wednesday, November 13 - Farewell and travel to Guatemala City

Philippians 4:6-7 (NRSVUE)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Blessings in the Chaos by Jan Richardson

To all that is chaotic in you,
let there come silence.

Let there be a calming
of the clamoring,
a stilling
of the voices that
have laid their claim on you,
that have made their home in you,
that go with you
even to the holy places
but will not
let you rest,
will not let you
hear your life with wholeness
or feel the grace
that fashioned you.

Let what distracts you cease.
Let what divides you cease.
Let there come an end
to what diminishes
and demeans,
and let depart
all that keeps you
in its cage.

Let there be
an opening
into the quiet
that lies beneath the chaos,
where you find the peace
you did not think possible
and see what shimmers
within the storm.

Reflection: I wonder where you felt peace today.

Thursday, November 14 - Learning Opportunities in Guatemala City

Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)

but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Reflection: I wonder what part of today was your favorite part.

Friday, November 15 - Travel Home to the US

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)

The Fruit of the Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

From Silence by Thich Nhat Hanh

Breathing in, I know I am breathing in.

Breathing out, I know I am breathing out.

Breathing in, I see myself as a flower.

Breathing out, I feel fresh.

Breathing in, I see myself as a mountain.

Breathing out, I feel solid.

Breathing in, I see myself still as water.

Breathing out, I reflect things as they are.

Breathing in, I see myself as space.

Breathing out, I feel free.

Reflection: I wonder how you encountered the Spirit today.