

A Time For..... Seeking the Beloved Community

Our goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.

~ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 1966

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:



a time to be born, and a time to die;
 a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

a time to kill, and a time to heal;
 a time to break down, and a time to build up;
 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;



a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
 a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
 a time to tear, and a time to sew;



..... I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him. That which is, already has been, that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by.....

~ Selections from Ecclesiastes 3

SERIES TOPICS
(Details below)

- The Character of Beloved Community
- The Pandemic
- Hyperpartisanship
- Technology
- Racism and White Privilege

The Synod of the Trinity enters:

A Time For..... seeking Martin Luther King's Beloved Community

The words of Ecclesiastes 3 are incredibly timely for us! The vision of Martin Luther King Jr. continues to inspire us. In this challenging year, we find ourselves moving daily between change and loss, silence and speech, hiding from and exploring a world we could not imagine just six months ago....

COVID19

George Floyd

Zoom

Masks

Breonna Taylor

Protests

Police Response

Trayvon Martin

Social Distancing

Flames

Together-Apart



We long for new hearts for ourselves and real change for people long oppressed. The long-standing pain, anger and brokenness pour out from the cracks in our communities – and our hearts are overwhelmed. The ground shifts around us as realities old and new are displayed – and our spirits long for real improvement in our world.



Where do we go? How do we go? Christians have long sought to live into the Kingdom of God modeled and promised by Jesus Christ. In that spirit, Martin Luther King's vision of *the Beloved Community* is a wondrous image of life lived with a wholeness and integrity that speaks to the common good. It is a global vision in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth, the strengths of diversity, and an abundance that comes from gifts lived out together in peace and grace.

Where do we go? How do we go? We invite you to be a part of presentations and conversations that move us towards action as we look at the *times and seasons* around us – right now – in light of the *Beloved Community*.

We'll explore the meaning of Beloved Community, identify some values that characterize Beloved Community, and begin to make connections with specific challenges in our world right now. Please join us!

Our topics include:

The Character of Beloved Community
The Pandemic
Hyperpartisanship
Technology
Racism & White Privilege

But the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. It is this type of understanding goodwill that will transform the deep gloom of the old age into the exuberant gladness of the new age. It is this love which will bring about miracles in the hearts of [sic] men. from "Facing the Challenge of a New Age," Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 1956

Kickoff Conversation

The Character of Beloved Community

by Dr. James Calvin Davis

Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Dr. James Calvin Davis is a minister member of Albany Presbytery and the George Adams Ellis Professor of Liberal Arts and Religion at Middlebury College (VT) where he has taught for 20 years. A theological ethicist in the Reformed tradition, Davis writes and teaches broadly on the moral values necessary for healthy democracy, as well as the ways that the church can help cultivate those virtues, for its own good and the improvement of civic life in the U.S. He is the author of four books, including *In Defense of Civility: How Religion Can Unite America On Seven Moral Issues That Divide Us* (WJK, 2010) and *Forbearance: A Theological Ethic for a Disagreeable Church* (Eerdmans, 2017). His fifth book, *Why God Loves Football: Theological Reflections on the Holy Days of American Culture*, will be released by Cascade next year.

James' book *Forbearance* is available through Hearts & Minds Bookstore's website (heartsandmindsbooks.com/order). Read a review of the book by Hearts and Minds Bookstore co-owner Byron Borger [here](#).



Remaining Discussions

The Pandemic

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus serves as the associate director of the Ministries of Compassion, Peace and Justice in the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the director of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the PCUSA's program responsible for natural and human-caused disaster response and long-term recovery in the U.S. and globally, and for humanitarian response to refugees and asylum seekers. Prior to joining the national PCUSA staff, she served Congregations in New York and Miami, taught preaching and liturgy at the Florida Center for Theological Studies and was a National Response Team founding member for PDA. She is an author, certified Compassion Fatigue specialist, spiritual director and loves to sing and cook (often at the same time) in her free time. [Recording available here.](#)

Hyperpartisanship

Speaker: Dr. John C. Welch, a native of Pittsburgh, received a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering & Economics from Carnegie-Mellon University, a Masters of Divinity degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and a PhD in Healthcare Ethics from Duquesne University. Dr. Welch led a successful 22-year career in the information systems industry with several corporations such as IBM, Grubb & Ellis and Deloitte & Touche. Dr. Welch served as pastor of the Bidwell Presbyterian Church for seven years and as the vice president for Student Services and Community Engagement & Dean of Students of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary for 13 years. Dr. Welch committed his time and talent leading and serving on 23 boards, commissions and committees during the past 15 years. [Recording available here.](#)

Technology

Speaker: Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow is an author, speaker, parent, consultant, coach, podcaster and pastor. He speaks and writes on issues of faith, technology, race, parenting and church culture. He is currently the pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto, a senior consultant with The Convergence Network, and a Gallup-certified strengths coach. He has an active online presence and can be found on most social networks via @breyeschow. For the past decade-plus, Bruce has guided communities and their leaders into technological spaces that honor the joy and transformation that can occur when we take online relationships seriously. During our time, we will explore postures and practices that reject the notion that either in-person or online community are ideal forms of community, but when done well, can help us to experience the fullness of the Body of Christ. [Recording available here.](#)

Racism and White Privilege

Speakers: Ralph B. Lowe Jr. has been serving as the director for Justice Ministries for the Pittsburgh Presbytery for a little over a year. His vision is to create communities where people of all races come together in love and compassion despite differences. He provides inspired leadership on breaking down barriers that prevent truth, justice and reconciliation. Through various justice ministries, Ralph seeks to shed light on injustice and inequality while offering hope for a better future.

Brian Wallace serves as the associate minister to Pittsburgh Presbytery, a role he's been in for four years. He's a life-long Presbyterian and a 100 percent textbook suburban white guy with a mix of evangelical and mainline roots. He has a passion for youth ministry and seeing the church integrate Jesus' model of discipleship with the call to pursue racial justice and reconciliation. [Recording available here.](#)