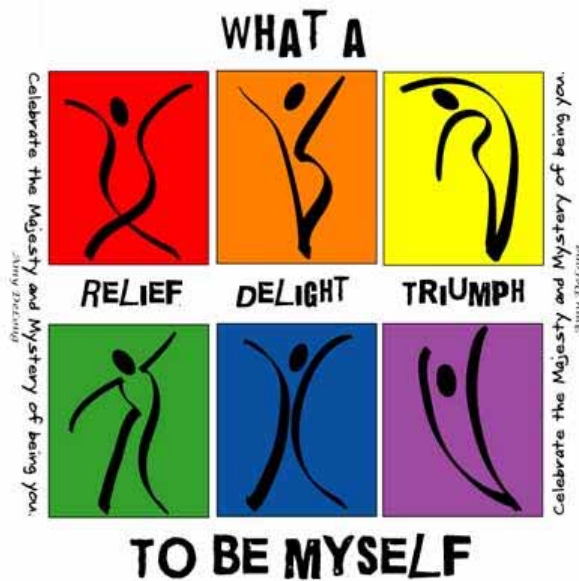


20 DAYS WITH AMY



On July 1st, Rev. Amy DeLong will begin her 20-day suspension, “to be used for spiritual discernment in preparation for a process seeking to restore the broken clergy covenant relationship” (words of the trial court). Carol McPherson proposes we journey with Amy during these 20 days, using excerpts from Amy’s sermon and the closing sermon by Rev. Janet Wolf.

Let this be a time for us not only to support Amy in prayer but to discern how God is calling us to work for the restoration of the Church’s covenant to love as Christ loves – a covenant that the UMC has broken, and continues to break, in its adherence to the homophobic and unjust laws in its *Book of Discipline*.

We have provided this booklet of daily meditations for those who wish to support Amy with their prayers and to reflect on how God is calling us to work for restoration.

July 1

Put My Tears in Your Bottle (Psalm 56: 1-6, 8-9)

“There is a sacredness in tears.
They are not a mark of weakness, but of power.
They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues.
They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition,
and of unspeakable love.”
~ *Washington Irving*

July 2

My Spirit is Grieved (Lamentations 3:46-54)
Rachel Mourns for her Children (Matthew 2: 16-18)

As Rachel mourned the children King Herod said must die
good people stood by silent and no one questioned why;
why children had to suffer to save a king his throne,
why people stood by watching and let them die alone.

July 3

Peter Cried Bitterly (Matthew 26: 69-75)
Soaked with Tears (Psalm 6: 2-3, 6-7)

Out of the depths, O God, we call to you.
Wounds of the past remain, affecting all we do.
Facing our lives, we need your love so much.
Here in this community, heal us by your touch.

July 4

Is There No Balm In Gilead? (Jeremiah 8:11 & 8: 18, 22-9: 1)

Out of the depths of fear, O God, we speak.
Breaking the silences, the searing truth we seek.
Safe among friends, our grief and rage we share.
Here in this community, hold us in your care.

July 5

Poor Dead Lazarus (John 11: 32-44)

Come on out, Lazarus. Come out of the grave, out of the tomb, out of the closet. Leave behind the wrappings and trappings of death. Lazarus, come out! You're not going to be mistaken for dead any longer. And then there is an order from Jesus to the community. "Unbind him and set him free." Oh, that's good news, Lazarus isn't alone. There are people gathered around who are gonna help him tear off his grave clothes and step into the breeze so the stink of death can blow right off him. It is the community that unbinds him and sets him free.

July 6

Set others free, in whatever small or grand ways you are able to do that. Risk vulnerability in order to create intentional community in the midst of the wilderness. Break the silence, say the words, name the fear and injustice. Come out – straight people need to come out, too. Give voice to your hopes and dreams and share your vision of a better day and a better church. And most importantly, work to build a safe church where GLBT people can be fully present – "Without," as Parker Palmer says, "fear of being punished by the system."

July 7

Blessed Are You (Luke 6: 20-23)

Wipe Away Every Tear (Revelation 21: 1-5)

Transforming Tears (Psalm 30: 1-5, 11-12)

God of the loving heart, we praise your name.
Dance through our lives and loves; anoint with Spirit flame.
Your light illumines each familiar face.
Here is this community, meet us with your grace.

July 8

And See – We Are Alive (2 Corinthians 6: 8b-10)

We are treated as impostors, and yet are true;
As unknown, and yet are well known;
As dying, and see – we are alive;
As punished, and yet not killed;
As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;
As poor, yet making many rich;
As having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

July 9

There is so much weeping, and for good reason. Knowing I am gay, the church nurtured, ordained and appointed me and then tried to pretend I wasn't gay. They were ever so glad to use my gifts, my talents, my time...as long as I was willing to keep one foot and all my mouth in the closet. Well Church, can you hear me now?

I don't have a name any more. They call me "The Respondent."
They think we've disappeared. Well, Church, can you see us now?

We are treated as dying, and see – we are alive.

July 10

The United Methodist Church tells me I am required to abide by their unjust laws. Dr King tells me it is my moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. Now, who do you think I'm gonna listen to?

The Church tells me I should show no pride. Their practices and policies scream in my ear, "Hate yourself. You're disgusting and deviant, diseased and disordered. Despise yourself."

But, I refuse to let their lies in. I will not carry their shame in my skin. I've had the audacity to love myself – and to claim that God loves me, too.

July 11

They can try to beat us up with their Bible-thumping, spiritual abuse. They can try to kick us out, shut us up, imprison us body and soul. They can witch-hunt us, charge us, sentence us. They can try to blame us and shame us. They can huff and puff and try to blow us down – but we will have none of it.

We are punished, but not killed.

They got more power, but we've got more passion.
They've got a hierarchy, but we've got a higher authority.
They've got more laws, but we've got more love.
They've got more capital, but we've got more courage.

We are seen as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

July 12

It is difficult to crack a system which claims to be morally superior and yet is bent toward injustice, and silence and bigotry.

We know better, don't we?
But we won't give in, will we?
We won't give up, will we?

Now is the time to raise our voices,
To re-engage our conscience and our indignation.

Now is the time to disobey unjust laws.
To stop discriminating even if the Church says we can.
Now is the time to break the bonds of shame and
uncertainty and complicity.

We are regarded as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.

We do not need voiceless supporters. We do not need
complacent friends. We need prophets, saints and sages, truth-
tellers and troublemakers, agitators and apologists.

Are you willing?

July 13

Who is able to stand?

I saw a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, all colors, cultures, and classes, all ethnicities, genders, and sexual identities, STANDING (the Revelation of John). Who are these and where have they come from? These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes...in the blood of the lamb.

By the power of the Risen Christ, **we are still standing.**

July 14

God is powerfully present, moving among us to heal our wounds, soothe our sorrows, gather up the broken pieces of our families and communities, hold us with a love that will not let us go and send us back into the world on fire with a holy passion for justice.

By the power of the Risen Christ, **we are still standing.**

July 15

Our God weeps with those who hurt, counting every tear, moving toward the day when we will hunger and thirst no more, when every tear will be wiped away; reminding us here and now that we have already been raptured. We have already seen glimmers of God's glory; we hear God's words in Isaiah and Romans: in the very place where it was said to them: you are not my people, THERE, in that place, THERE they shall be called children of the living God.

By the power of the risen Christ, **we are still standing.**

July 16

II Corinthians 5 – afflicted, not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. We are not lost or abandoned; God is with us in the midst of this turmoil; teaching, guiding, tending.

By the power of the risen Christ, **we are still standing.**

July 17

We serve the God who yearns for the healing and wholeness of all creation, the God who causes deserts to bloom and water to run in dry places, the God who sends us to be agents of change and challenge.

By the power of the risen Christ, **we are still standing.**

July 18

With the help of God and each other, we leave here ready to be the church of Jesus Christ, to engage powers and principalities; to expose, unmask, challenge and confront, contradict and dismantle systems and structures of injustice one piece at a time, in the name of the one who calls us to be ambassadors of reconciliation and redemption.

By the power of the risen Christ, **we are still standing.**

July 19

For God is even now breaking down the walls that divide and building up the ties that bind us together; teaching us to dance on the common ground of astonishing, startling, marvelous, life-giving, joy-creating, world transforming, death defying grace; empowering us to be instruments of justice, generosity and joy; channels of healing and hope.

By the power of the risen Christ, **we are still standing.**

July 20

God gives us this day the vision and holy boldness to turn dreams into reality, to live as kingdom people here and now with passion and persistence, with outrageous hope and creative courage, with soul stirring laughter and a wide open love that's just going to stun the world.

By the power of the risen Christ, **we are still standing.**

~ Rev. Janet Wolf, Professor of Church and Society,
Tennessee Annual Conference



Rev. Amy DeLong

Photo by Amy Zellmer

customcreationsphotography.com

More on Rev. Amy DeLong at www.loveontrial.org.



This prayer booklet brought to you by the “Rich Rituals” Team (Carol McPherson, chairperson) at Broadway United Methodist Church. For more information, see Broadway’s website at www.broadwaychurchchicago.org or call the church office at 773-348-2679.