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For Immediate Release

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SEEKING A NEW PATH: A TIME OF RENEWAL FOR THE LGBT COMMUNITY

FAITH COMMUNITIES PARTNER IN A BOLD AND ECUMENICAL APPROACH TO LENT

[Dignity/Chicago](#) and [Wisdom & Word Works](#), two organizations grounded in the Catholic tradition, will partner to present a program for Lent focused on a fresh approach to preparing for Easter. The program, [Re-imagining Lent for all God's People](#), will feature a series of reflections by Reverend Jacki Belile of [Living Well Ministries](#), along with Dignity/Chicago's customary soup suppers on each of the five Sunday's of Lent. To participate send e-mail to dignitychicago@gmail.com, or call 312-458-9438.

The series begins with an Ash Wednesday Service on March 9, 7:00 p.m., in the Sanctuary at 3338 N. Broadway in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood, home to [Broadway United Methodist Church](#) (BUMC) and Dignity/Chicago. BUMC will be an ecumenical partner for the Ash Wednesday service, with pastors Revs. Lois McCullen Parr and Vernice Thorn co-presiding with Roman Catholic Womanpriest Rev. Barbara Zeman of Wisdom & Word Works and member of Dignity/Chicago's ministry team.

"We are really pleased to extend the radically inclusive model of Jesus by partnering with Dignity and Wisdom & Word Works," says Rev. Parr. "Our Broadway identity and ministry includes our dual commitments to be an anti-racist congregation as well as offering reconciling hospitality with GLBTQ folks. Leadership of people of color in our congregational life is a critical means for us to speak to the intersections of oppression," affirms Parr, who hopes that people who are searching for meaning will join the Lenten journey opportunities offered by these faith communities.

Said Chris Pett, President of Dignity/Chicago, "We've frequently heard from LGBT people of faith that they continue to look for opportunities to integrate their faith and their lives. This program offers a unique and inclusive opportunity during the traditional season of renewal, Lent, for people of faith of all backgrounds to come together to share, learn and be enriched."

Rev. Jacki Belile, CEC, is a lesbian Baptist minister and life coach, and the founder of Living Well Ministries. Rev. Belile has titled the Lenten series, "Joyful Journeys" and will integrate elements of modern culture, scripture, Catholic tradition and modern LGBT voices. During the first session, participants will watch the 2000 film "Chocolat". A romantic comedy fable set during Lent in a small French village, this film explores the contrasts between religious paths of fear and coercion and those of kindness and inclusion. Viewers will take away positive pictures of individual and community transformation. Rev. Belile will lead a brief discussion following the film.

“People of all sexual orientations and gender identities know the pain of religious messages that enforce fear, lack and self-doubt,” said Belile. “The series will re-imagine Lent this year with a dedication to broad welcome and self-reflection. With Lenten discipline, we will nourish the trust in Divine compassion and abundance which leads to true –even joyful – repentance.”

On subsequent Sundays, sessions will include guided reflections and sharing. Participants will receive a book of daily reflections to take with them.

Rev. Zeman adds, “This Lenten journey presents a new way of being: in Joy ... in harmony ... in communion with our **higher power** and with one another. As an Inclusive Catholic community our identity is modeled after Jesus’ Wisdom and Word. All are welcome!”

Re-imagining Lent for All God’s People

Program Schedule

All activities will take place at Broadway United Methodist Church, 3338 N Broadway.

Sessions will begin at 6:15 p.m., immediately following Dignity/Chicago’s Sunday Mass (weekly at 5:00PM), and are expected to last 90 minutes.

A simple meal of soup and bread will be provided. There is no cost; free will offerings will be accepted.

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| March 9 | Ash Wednesday Service, 7:00 p.m. |
| March 13 | Joyful Journeys: Building Communities of Blessing
✚ Chocolat Screening, reflections on Lenten themes |
| March 20 | Reflections and sharing |
| March 27 | Joyful Journeys: Feasting "or" Fasting?
✚ A discussion of Divine abundance (Isaiah 55) and the Feast-First dynamics of personal and church growth. |
| April 3 | Reflections and sharing |
| April 10 | Joyful Journeys: Reimagining Repentance and Reconciliation
✚ Mk 1:14,15: Romans 2:4, A discussion of repentance and renewal with “Good News” and reconciliation at the center |
| April 17 | Palm Sunday – Mass 5:00 p.m. |
| April 24 | Easter – Mass 5:00 p.m. |

Reservations are encouraged and can be made through e-mail at: dignitychicago@gmail.com or by leaving a message at: 312-458-9438.

BUMC's Lenten program, "Water To Our Souls" includes Sunday morning worship at 8:45 & 11am, Sunday spiritual formation at 10am, Wednesday evening guided meditation (6pm) and book study (7pm), among other small groups and studies. See www.broadwaychurchchicago.org or call the BUMC office at 773.348.2679 for further information.

Dignity/Chicago is a chapter of Dignity/USA, and shares its mission to work for respect and justice for all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons in the Catholic Church and the world. We minister through education, advocacy and worship and believe that same-sex relationships are loving, life-giving and life-affirming.

BUMC Mission Statement: God calls Broadway United Methodist Church to be a faith community embracing the diversity of our Chicago neighborhood and larger community. We welcome all persons — celebrating the human family's God-given diversity of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, and physical or mental capacity. We also welcome persons of all social and economic classes and faith backgrounds. At Broadway, we are accepted into God's nurturing family, which invites us into spiritual growth through worship, study, mission, and social action. We are grateful for the opportunities God gives us to experience and share the love of Christ.

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