

June 20, 2017

Dear Friends in Christ:

We would like to share with you about a seminary open lecture class that we started three years ago. "Open lecture" means that it is a class open to the public as well as seminary and undergraduate students. We will be starting the class once again in September for 14 weeks.



If the class had an English title it would be "Sensible Christian Spirituality," as the course is based on how we use our 5 senses to interact with God, exploring new ways to express our spirituality on a daily basis. Each week we transform the classroom to create a different environment in which to engage in another facet of spirituality. Most weeks are based on the "Pearls of Life," using a bracelet with 18 different colored beads, each having its own meaning. This bracelet facilitates an inner conversation with God about our dreams, longings and prayers. At the beginning of the course each participant makes his or her own bracelet that will be used in each session. A Lutheran Bishop from Sweden came up with the idea of the bracelet in 1995.

We explore the area of breath as it relates to our spirit, the use of silence, time (Chronos and Kairos), and the Biblical concept of Sabbath. Music plays a big part of this course and the harp is often used during portions of the teachings.

Aspects of the life of Christ are also incorporated into the lessons, including Christ's baptism, temptation in the desert, and healing ministry. During these subjects, we make active use of water, sand, rocks and aromas to give



participants sensory experiences in their own personal spirituality. We are fortunate to have our campus in a location blessed with the nature of God. We have one lesson that includes a nature walk where participants spend 30 minutes in nature. We ask them to bring back something that has had meaning for them from God's creation and share that meaning with others in small groups.



Later in the course we have a Taize worship service making use of music, candles, and darkness.





Near the end of the course we give the students an opportunity to walk the labyrinth which is set up in the chapel of the school. It remains up after class so that other students from the school can experience the labyrinth. At the end of the 14-week program, we concentrate on the concept of "potlatch" (the word comes from the Chinook Jargon, meaning "to give away" or "a gift") where each participant shares something from their life that is meaningful to them.



We have really felt blessed to be able to lead this class together and to be part of a process where individuals are finding new ways to communicate with God and to be enriched by that relationship. We are amazed at how God has been able to touch the lives of those who take this class with us.

We ask your prayers for the following:

- The "Sensible Christian Spirituality" class beginning in the fall.
- The seminary faculty and students.
- The six students Carol works with in the harp program.
- The seven seminary students doing spiritual direction with Jim.
- The prisoners Jim and Carol meet with each month in Fuchu Prison.
- Inspiration for all the pastors of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church.

May Christ fill your hearts with joy and peace this summer,

Jim and Carol
Tokyo, Japan