

Dio. of South Dakota Clergy Retreat 2023: "Telling God's Story in Our Stories"

With a good balance of rest, reflection, and recreation, our clergy retreat this spring at [Abbey of the Hills](#) will focus on deepening our relationships with each other by reflecting on the past year and sharing and telling God's story...by sharing our own stories.

Although we serve in the same Diocese and are part of the Body of Christ in this part of God's kingdom, our contexts, backgrounds, ministry, prayer, and life perspectives vary greatly. We know our own selves well – and we all have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Yet how well do we know, and what can we learn from our fellow clergy that might enhance our own understanding of God, ourselves, each other, and our Diocese as a whole?

There is much to learn from each other's lives as we serve alongside Jesus and each other. So in keeping with our Diocesan theme of "Loving to Tell the Story," using material from the Episcopal Church Program, "From Many, One: Conversations Across Difference," and by reflecting on our relationships with God and what God has been up to in our lives since our clergy retreat in 2022, we will spend our Tuesday morning session time in small groups doing theological reflection and exploring these four questions: "Since we last met...What have you lost? What do you love? Where does it hurt? What do you dream?"

During our Wednesday morning session, we will again break into small groups, and on that day, we will further explore where God's story is in our stories by answering questions that come from "An Invitation to Evangelism" program from Forward Movement. These questions, which are all about telling God's story in our stories, will prompt us to share our thoughts and practices of prayer, the people who have been our saints, where we have seen God in those different from us, etc.

Cost: Each clergyperson is to register individually. The costs are \$185 per clergyperson or \$130 (total \$260) for clergy couples sharing a room. If you are not going to require lodging, the cost is \$80 per clergy person. Scholarship assistance is available for those who need it – simply contact the Bishop. Clergy who serve in reservations or who have continuing education funds provided through the diocesan budget are encouraged to pay the full amount and then request reimbursement from their continuing education funds by contacting Canon Mitch Honan (mitch@episcopalchurchsd.org).

The deadline for registering is Friday, April 7th at 4:00 PM Central Time. This deadline is set by the needs of the Abbey for a solid count of how many people will be attending our retreat. Scholarship assistance is available for those who need it, and you may direct a request to the Bishop (jonathan@episcopalchurchsd.org).

Directions to the Abbey: We are asked to please note that typically, car/cell GPS will not successfully navigate directions to the Abbey of the Hills, so please follow the below instructions.

From the East - From Milbank, SD:

Take U.S. Hwy 12 west 12 miles to 147th St. (Abbey sign), turn left 1.2 miles

From the West - From I-29 (Exit 207):

Take U.S. Hwy 12 east 9 miles to 147th St. (Abbey sign), turn right 1.2 miles

2023 Clergy Retreat, Abby of the Hills Retreat Center
April 24-27
“Telling God’s Story in Our Stories”

Retreat Schedule

Monday, April 24th

4:00-6:00 p.m. Arrival and Check-in to Retreat Center
6:00 p.m. Dinner
7:00 p.m. Introductions, Overview of Retreat Time, followed by Compline

Tuesday, April 25th

7:15 am Centering Prayer
8:00 a.m. Breakfast
9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
9:45 a.m. “What do you love? What have you lost? Where does it hurt? What do you dream?”
12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Retreat Time for Prayer, Study, Reflection, Relaxation, Conversation
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer
6:00 p.m. Dinner
7:00 p.m. Social Time

Wednesday, April 26th

7:15 am Centering Prayer
8:00 a.m. Breakfast
9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
9:45 a.m. “An Invitation to Evangelism: Telling God’s Story in our Stories”
12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Retreat Time for Prayer, Study, Reflection, Relaxation, Conversation
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Prayers for Healing
6:00 p.m. Dinner
7:00 p.m. Social Time

Thursday, April 27th

7:15 am Centering Prayer
8:00 a.m. Breakfast / Move out of rooms
9:30 a.m. Bishop’s Time
10:30 a.m. Wrapping Up, Closing Prayer & Benediction
11:00 a.m. Departure
(Lunch is on your own)

Questions to Reflect On Ahead of Time:

Tuesday's Questions

What do you love? *What do you value? What will you struggle to protect?*

So much of human action and thinking is driven not by hate or anger but by the urge to protect what we love. By asking and sharing our answers to “what do you love,” each of us has a chance to name and to hear what matters most to us and why. It’s harder to argue when we start from what we love.

What have you lost? *What keeps you up at night? What has been lost in your community? What do you miss?*

People across the spectrum understand the experience of loss: the loss of money, jobs, status, national identity, cultural identity, a sense of security, a sense that they matter, etc. By asking and sharing our answers to “what have you lost,” we become curious about what each of us has lost, what we’re grieving, and perhaps what we’re trying hard to get back.

Where does it hurt? *How have you been wounded by life? What makes you angry? How or where do you feel that pain and anger?*

Regardless of our race, gender, age, ballot choice, earnings, or location, we all know what it is to hurt. By asking and sharing our answers to “where does it hurt,” we become curious about how each of us has been wounded by life, by others, and by social forces, instead of assuming “others” are fine and only I or my group is hurting. We offer up our experiences and learn to offer one another compassion.

What do you dream? *What do you hope for the future – for yourself, your family, your community, and your nation?*

We all dream of a better world, as we imagine it from our own personal perspective, but we don’t get to hear or share that vision very often. Instead, people often assume that their own ideal picture of life, community, and society is shared by everyone or that certain others can’t possibly want the same kind of future they do. By asking “what do you dream,” we become open to hear and share each other’s dreams for our families, communities, society, and ourselves.

Questions to Reflect On Ahead of Time:

Wednesday's Questions

These questions are on special cards from "Forward Movement" that will be available to the groups. Because of copyright, we may not post them on our website or social media.