



# Dwelling in the Word

## For Considering The Call to Faithfully Journey with those who are Dying

The ELCIC invites members and congregations to adopt the practice of **Dwelling in the Word** as you review, consider and reflect on the proposed new *Resolution on Decisions at the End of Life*. This invitation comes from the National Church Council, based on a recommendation from the Task Force on Decisions at the End of Life. A motion to adopt the *Proposed Resolution* will be considered at the 2019 National Convention.

**Dwelling in the Word** is a discernment discipline that helps a small group to be opened up to God speaking to us through the Scriptures. Listening anew to familiar texts reminds us that God is with us on our journey, and through all of life's complexities. Conversation and sharing build community and trust, and allow us the privilege of hearing how Holy Spirit is speaking to others.

The recommended practice is to have particular text read aloud three times. Normally, a different person reads each time, so that the words are heard from different voices. After each reading of the text, individuals reflect on a particular question and, if they so choose, to briefly share with their reflections another person or persons.

Generally, others are invited to listen to the words of each contributor without additional comment. The purpose is to listen to God and to each other, rather than to start a conversation. This practice is a prayer discipline that happens at the beginning of a gathering; there will be time for conversation as the gathering/meeting continues.

Some recommended possible texts for **Dwelling in the Word** and *Decisions at the End of Life* are:

- Psalm 23
- John 14:1–3
- Jeremiah 29:11–14
- Romans 8:31–35, 37–39

After reading the text for the first time, consider and share briefly on the following question:

- Where did you find yourself stopping? What words, phrases or ideas stuck out for you?

After reading the text for the second time, consider and share briefly on the following question:

- What questions arose for you as you heard the reading?

After reading the text for the third time, consider and share briefly on the following question:

- What does this mean for us today? Is there a word from the Spirit?

## **Psalm 23:1-6**

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;  
he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff— they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD  
my whole life long.

## **John 14:1-3**

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

## **Jeremiah 29:11-14**

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

### **Romans 8:31–35, 37–39**

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.