

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

September 21-22, 2019

“Building New Foundations”

By Rev. Eric Moeller

What Is This?

This brief guide is intended for use individually, or in small groups. It's your chance to dive deeper into the issues raised in the weekend sermon and to connect a Biblical story with your daily life.

Revisit the Texts

Isaiah 58: 6-12

Big Ideas Raised

- Isaiah 58 is believed to have been written after the experience of 60 years of exile in Babylon to a community of faith in conflict; conflict between those who had remained and those who were returning from exile; conflict of what constituted true worship of God, and conflict over how they might rebuild upon the ruins of what they lost.
- We are in a similar situation. The decline of St. Lucas UCC is, in part, due to external forces beyond our control that have caused rapid declines in religion. Our congregation has also declined due to internal conflicts as we seek to understand why we stand in relative ruins, and how we might rebuild what we lost. Isaiah 58 offers a way forward; a way of hope.
- For St. Lucas to experience the renewal Isaiah describes (renewal largely based on our actions), we need to be a congregation that pursues both social justice and charity, meets our internal spiritual needs and missional needs, and stops the pointing of the finger and speaking of evil that has led to blaming individuals, groups, and clergy for the current state of things, and creating conflicts that drive others away.
- St. Lucas' light can shine brightly, it is already breaking through the darkness. But in order for St Lucas to become like watered garden, full of life; to have your ruins rebuilt, and new foundations built up for the future, you must become an Isaiah 58 congregation, and you can do this, should you choose.

Questions Meant to Dig Deeper

- Have you experienced or witnessed any of the recent conflict at St. Lucas? Do you agree or disagree with Pastor Eric's analysis of the conflicts? Are there other ways you read this text that speaks to our conflicts and the possible ways forward as a congregation?
- What are current forms of injustice and oppression you see in our society, and how might St. Lucas participate in addressing their causes and breaking the yokes? Are there other ways you can imagine St Lucas working to feed, clothe, house, and address the needs of the afflicted?
- Why do you come to worship? What do you believe the purpose of worshipping with a faith community to be? Does the experience affect the way you live your life?

Revisit the Sermon

For a recording or a manuscript of this weekend's sermon, please visit: <https://www.stlucasucc.org/sermons-resources>