

A summary of Why Pray?  
November 10, 2017

The aims of the course have been to help people grow in the prayer life by inspiring them and giving them tools to pray and to help Christ Church discern its prayer vocation.

- Father Brian began the course by emphasizing two purposes of prayer: to learn to cooperate with God's work in the world and to teach us to long for our ultimate destiny, i.e. union with God.
- Bishop MacPherson talked about the threefold prayer of Jesus found in John 17: Jesus prays that he would glorify his Father, that his Father would glorify him, that his disciples would be protected from the evil one. Bishop MacPherson also led a quiet day in which he spoke of learning not to worry.
- Father Brian spoke about the central place the psalms play in the life of prayer, how they give us words to pray through the range of the human experience.
- Ann Bodling talked about how the aim of spiritual direction is to help people see God's work in their lives.
- Chuck and Nancy Cook told us how the ministry of healing does not simply end with Jesus but continues through Jesus' disciples. They led us through an exercise of healing prayer.
- Father Brian spoke about how the Psalms of lament can teach us to be straightforward and honest in our prayer.
- Father Steven Peay spoke about how the history of the Book of Common Prayer is rooted in the history of monasticism. Father Peay also led a quiet day teaching us the ancient art of Lectio Divina, a way of listening to God and praying the Scriptures. One of the striking things he underlined is that God longs for us. It is in our longing for him and his longing for us that we meet in prayer.
- Beth Bogard Vander Wel gave us a picture of how silent prayer can play an important role in our prayer life.

Questions for personal reflection:

- What “nuggets” have you heard from the speakers or from your group discussion that you find yourself thinking about?
- Which class or speaker did you find most interesting or nourishing? Why?
- What effect has this course had your prayer life?
- Have you become more aware of how God is moving in your life?
- What hopes do you have for your prayer life?

Questions for group reflection:

- Feel free to share out loud some of your thoughts from your personal reflection: what was helpful for you? How have you grown in your prayer life? How have been aware of God’s work?
- Fill in the blank in these sentences:
  - “I think that I would benefit from Christ Church doing \_\_\_\_\_ in our prayer life together.”
  - “I think that the people of Christ Church would benefit from doing \_\_\_\_\_ in our prayer life together.”
  - “I think that God might be calling Christ Church to \_\_\_\_\_ in its prayer life.”