

The Practice of Lectio Divina at Hillcrest

Lectio Divina (“divine reading”) is a way of reading Scripture that helps us hear God’s voice through the passage. It has its roots in the monastic tradition, and it can be practiced in a variety of ways. This description explains how Lectio Divina is practiced at Hillcrest.

We practice Lectio Divina in a small-group setting. We meet in the Chapel on Tuesday mornings from 6:45 – 7:45 am. Our time includes elements of liturgy, scripture and prayer.

Liturgy: We open with responsive readings from the Northumbria Community. The Northumbria Community began in Northern England and has gatherings around the world. They seek to be available to God and available to others.

Scripture: Each week we focus on a short passage from the Gospels as our meditation scripture. The passage is read three times, each time with a different purpose:

- With the first reading, we listen for a word or phrase that captures our attention.
- With the second reading, we listen for a sense of emotion, either our own emotion as we hear the story or an emotion in one of the characters.
- With the third reading, we ask the Holy Spirit to show us if there is an invitation for our day - a way we might respond to what we’ve heard.

Each of the three readings is followed by a time of quiet reflection. Participants are encouraged to bring a journal and record what they are hearing or sensing. After the time of quiet, participants are invited to share their thoughts. Sharing with the group is completely optional; it is fine to say “I pass.”

As individuals share, other members of the group listen quietly, respectfully and prayerfully. This aspect of simply listening distinguishes Lectio Divina from a typical small-group Bible study in the following ways:

- the group doesn’t engage in a discussion of the passage
- we don’t bring in other scriptures as cross references to compare or contrast
- we don’t comment on each other’s insights.

Over the years, we have found this prayerful listening to be especially meaningful to our gatherings. Listening as others share enriches our own experience of the passage. It also allows us to be amazed and blessed by observing each individual’s unique encounter with the Living Word. Every person’s sharing is treated respectfully and confidentially.

Prayer: At the end of the three readings and responses, we share prayer requests and praise reports. We conclude our meeting with a few minutes for silent prayer and a closing liturgy.

Our group is always open to new members. Membership is fluid; feel free to join us as often as your schedule allows. We look forward to sharing the richness of this spiritual practice.