



## *The Gift of Rest*

Greetings, Lori!

My focus for this newsletter is not to inspire you to be busier, study more, work harder, or add another task to your to-do list. In our 24/7 world, we hustle from one thing to the next and often feel behind or overwhelmed. So today I want to just say: Stop. It's Biblical, you know.

From the beginning, God created in us a need for Sabbath rest. Offering our best to God every day requires not only that we take care of ourselves physically and mentally, but that we remember that God provides for us always, even as we stop working, stop moving, stop doing. A wise friend encouraged me to read an excellent book called ***Wrestling With Rest: Inviting Youth to Discover the Gift of Sabbath*** by Nathan T. Stucky (April 2019), and it resonated so deeply that the book is now required reading for the third course in our Certification in Youth Ministry.



Stucky writes "The great hope of the Sabbath is not that we keep it or observe it with great diligence. Of course, we may cease our labors, we may shut off our phones, and we may enter this rest. Our young people can turn off their tablets, put away their resumes, and set aside their gym bags. These all point to the hope we have, but they are not our hope. No, our hope is not that we keep or observe the Sabbath rightly, but rather that in and through the Sabbath we are kept and seen. In and through the Sabbath, Christ himself sees us in our fractured efforts and brokenness, and Christ himself keeps us (169)."

As we move into the summer months, our daily rhythms are ripe for a makeover. Where might you find a moment for rest? Space to read or reflect? Time to be still? As we're reminded above, Christ will keep us in our stillness and our rest. Thanks be to God.

Peace,

Lori Richey  
Director of Online Education

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## *New and Featured Courses*



### **Let Us Explore "A New New Testament"**

This course will lead you to the spiritual richness of meaning in the New Testament with the companion of a new look at the New Testament.

"A New New Testament" is the controversial work of a group of 19 scholars referred to in the book as the New Orleans Council. Edited by Hal Taussig, who also wrote extensive introductory matter, "A New New Testament" includes 10 "recently discovered works" that the council chose as being ancient manuscripts that complete and update the standard Christian New Testament. Taussig said in an interview that "Although the western branch of Christianity has implied that the Bible is eternally stable, this has really never been the case. Both now and for the past 400 years Catholics and Protestants don't agree on what is in the Bible, and neither do Episcopalians and Lutherans. Internationally the eastern Orthodox, Ethiopian, and Syriac Bibles all contain different books than the western Catholic and Protestant Bibles." From this perspective 'A New New Testament' is simply yet another variation on what is in the Bible and what is not. From another perspective, it is the first edition of a Bible ever to include the gospels, letters, and prayers that have been recovered from in recent times.

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### **Awe and Wonder: The Arts in Worship**

You live in a visual world created by God, the Master Artist. When you connect your congregation to the arts in worship, you are inviting the Holy Spirit to shine! "Awe and Wonder: The Arts in Worship" is for beginners or

learners who need a refresh of the arts as well as for those who simply appreciate art. The 10-day course follows Scripture and offers ideas from the lectionary year, suggesting themes for special times. It includes instruction on forming a team, tools to help you plan, resources to guide and direct you, and a supportive connection to other participants.

By exploring many ways to worship through music, dance/movement, visual art, media/digital art, and theater arts, you will enjoy the journey and leave the course with ideas and plans ready to implement.

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### **Closing Conversations: An End-of-Life Care Guide**

Some of the most difficult questions a person will ever face may be centered around the end of life. Discussions



of preferences and possibilities may seem to be filled with emotional landmines and possible hurt feelings. “Closing Conversations: An End-of-Life Care Guide” can help with answers to those thorny questions and smooth the process for all involved. Whether the central person is you, a family member, or someone you know, this class can be helpful to clergy, chaplains, family, friends and

individuals facing end-of-life situations. Topics will include communication of wishes, helpful documents, telling your story, challenges associated with end-of-life care, and what to expect.

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## ***Microcourses (One Week or Shorter)***

In addition to Blackboard interactions, one required Zoom meeting will be held on Monday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. (Central Daylight Time). The meeting will not be recorded.

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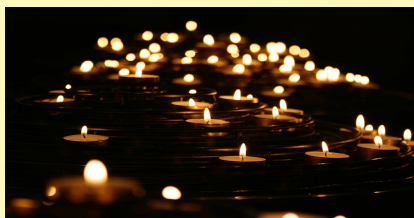


### **Autism and the Church Microcourse Part 1**

In today’s world one in five individuals is autistic. The worlds of these individuals, and the worlds of their families, mostly consist of isolation and loneliness. Developing ministries to reach out to these families not only helps us respond to God’s calling, but also gives hope to families

who struggle to find hope within their crazy worlds. Learners will gain a basic understanding of autism, an understanding of how they might help these unique persons grow in their faith, and a view of what a basic autism ministry might look like.

[Autism and the Church Microcourse](#)



### **Fractured Ground Microcourse**

News just broke—a catastrophic event has occurred in your community. What do you say? What is the message when violence, natural disaster, or disease raises questions about where God is to be found during tragedy?

This one-week microcourse is for those who want to explore communicating following mass trauma. It will provide an overview of material from the course “Fractured Ground: A Book Study Exploring Mass Trauma” without the two-week commitment, while retaining the communication tools used in coping with mass trauma.

[Fractured Ground Microcourse](#)

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