



JOURNEY INWARD *to* JOURNEY OUTWARD

# **The Journey Outward**

Small Group Overview

Five Weeks, Fall 2023

Westwood Lutheran



# The Journey Outward

## Westwood Small Groups, Fall, 2023

Welcome to the Journey Outward, a five-week small group curriculum! In the fall of 2022, Westwood began a two-year focus: “Journey Inward to Journey Outward.”

In Year 1, We turned inward. We learned spiritual practices, gathered in small groups, and examined our interior lives. We heard the grace that God offers us in our innermost beings. We explored what it means to be broken *and* beloved.

Now in Year 2, we focus on the Journey Outward, asking ourselves, “what does it mean to be God’s hands and feet in the world?” On the Journey Outward, we stay connected to our internal work from Year 1, seeing these two aspects of our spiritual lives as deeply related.

As we turn outward, we will be led by scriptures, readings, conversations and faith practices that help us notice creation, encounter our neighbors, make new connections, listen to the pain of the world, and join with God in active love for this broken and beautiful world.

Our goal is to create a foundation for engaging with the world around us with humility and faithfulness. We are not saviors, but we do believe that how we show up in the world matters for the thriving of our neighbors. As we embark on Year 2, we trust that as we step out in courage, God’s grace is revealed in us and through us.

Finally, some of you will recognize the prayer by Larry Peacock that we’ll use in each session; we prayed last year for the inward journey. This year, as we pray it, we hope you notice the connection between the inward journey and the outward journey.

May I be at peace.

May my heart always be open.

May I awaken to the Divine Light within and all around me.

May I be healed. May I be a source of healing.



How to use this guide:

Each week includes a summary, scripture, and excerpts of readings from diverse authors. There are also questions for reflection and discussion.

Each session is designed for a one hour gathering, with approximately 10 minutes at the beginning for gathering, 40 minutes for discussion, and 10 minutes at the end to introduce a faith practice and close in prayer.

Leaders can adapt the curriculum in whatever ways suit the needs of their group, of course. Choose the questions that resonate with the group – no need to cover them all. And if one reading is of particular interest, spend time with it and skip others. This is your time!

Many thanks to Anna Martinez for her thoughtfulness and dedication in helping craft this theme and choose readings. And to all the leaders and participants who are on this journey of faith together, thank you!

-Westwood, 2023

