

Building Blocks for Faithful Living

A seven-week class at 9 am on Sunday mornings in the Swan Room from Jan. 11 through February 22, led by David Anderman.

We will take an introductory look at a variety of spiritual experiences, both individual and in community, at theological reflections that grow out of them, and at how these experiences and ideas can guide us in faithful living in community and in our world (i.e. the justice implications). And since spiritual experiences, theological reflections, and faithful living are mutually interactive and feed on each other, we will look at how faith is dynamic and changing over time and place.

Since this class is introductory, preparation will be minimal. Bring yourself, your experiences, and your insights and questions. David will write a one or two page non-technical document to help focus each session. At the end of the class, you will have explored some basic building blocks for faithful living, and will have a beginning sense of how they may fit together.

Session 1 - Jan. 11

Where and how do we become aware of a sacred or greater dimension in our world?

Session 2 - Jan. 18

In what kinds of communities can we share and reflect on the implications of these experiences?

Session 3 - Jan. 25

What words do we use in trying to describe this sacred/greater dimension to life? Who are we in relation to this something greater?

Session 4 - Feb. 1

How does all of what we have talked about so far shape our lives? What guideposts do we have for living our lives?

Session 5 - Feb. 8

What are the contemporary ways we see around us of distortions or exploitations of faith traditions, sacred texts, and religious institutions? How do we react to them?

Session 6 - Feb. 15

What can we learn from churches, especially those in minority communities, whose worship is always joyful in the face of terrible injustice and which grounds actions for justice?

Session 7 - Feb. 22

What kinds of faithful living and what kinds of community/church begin to take shape using these building blocks?

Please email David at ddavea@mac.com if you are interested or wish further information.

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Jan. 11 - Feb. 22, 2026

more detailed information for each class session

Session 1:

Ways of sensing and experiencing that something about the world that is greater than ourselves, the breaking in of another dimension to reality beyond the purely physical; words like enchantment, reverence; being moved by beauty in the world, in art, and in music; transcendence, a sense of the holy and of sacredness - all of these attempt to articulate and name a variety of different spiritual experiences. Our response to any and all of these experiences evokes gratitude within us.

Session 2:

Communities of faithful people gather to share, reflect on, and evoke the experiences of session 1. These communities are characterized by shared deep conversations, by meaningful friendships, and by extravagant hospitality.

Session 3:

Naming the source and origin of our sense of something greater than ourselves. Ways of talking about 'God' as love, event, ground - rather than as a royal being who is all-knowing, all-powerful, and totally beneficent. Ways of understanding ourselves and our lives in light of our awareness of a sacred/greater dimension.

Session 4:

Tradition and scripture have been guides for people over the centuries. What authority do we grant to traditions, social customs, etc.? How do we read and interpret scripture and/or other sacred texts?

Session 5:

Contemporary distortions of Christianity include rigid doctrines, white christian nationalism, Christendom, and others. We will discuss how they distort expressions of faith and how to recognize some of them.

Session 6:

Joy and justice. Worship and action. We will discuss the dynamic interplay of contemplation with faithful living and actions for justice.

Session 7:

Putting it all together. Our discussion will help us to assemble these building blocks in a way that makes sense for each of us and helps us to live faithful lives.

The later sessions are intentionally more vaguely described to leave room for being shaped in response to the previous sessions.