

February 10, 2021

Dear Church,

When I was in school, by the time we got to February we were just so *done*. We were tired and stressed and reeling from the rush of finals and the sense of foreboding that came from the bulk of a semester still ahead of us. My roommates and I lovingly coined the month “Forget About It February”. I wonder if collectively many of us are finding ourselves with the same kind of feeling...we’ve been in quarantine for over 11 months, the holidays have come and gone, many of us have spent too long away from our usual connections and activities and this is the part of winter that just seems to drag on as we longingly wait for spring. Anyone else feeling a bit of “Forget About It February” ?

We’ll spend much of this month and next observing the season of Lent, and given where we are in the calendar year, and in the liturgical year, I feel like we are all in need of something life-giving. To that end, might I suggest....spiritual practice? A few years ago, I stopped giving something up for this season, and instead began adopting a new spiritual practice each Lent. It’s how I have built habits of meditation and prayer and journaling, and to be honest, those practices have been the things that have kept me most grounded and sane in this most unusual year. Honing a spiritual practice is a way to live with a bit more intention, to learn patience, and to purposefully connect with God in a way that can help us to see what is really important. You can forgo the more formal route if meditating daily or lectio divina don’t quite fit your routine or style. Start with considering what brings you joy or peace or a sense of connection to something bigger than yourself. What are you already doing that enlivens your days? What would you *like* to be doing? And how can you bring just a bit more of that into your life? Maybe that means hiking more, or giving yourself an hour to paint or draw a couple days a week, or even just closing your eyes for 30 minutes in the middle of the day. We can use this time to cultivate the practices that invite more peace and joy and groundedness into our lives.

As for me, I’ll continue to pray, to write, and to meditate, but I’ll also be spending time crafting and baking and taking naps. We’ve been through a lot this year, and it is good to make time to care for our spirits, as well as our bodies. And remember, even as our Lenten journey begins, Easter is coming...

Journey well.

Peace,

Pastor Emily