



November 10th, 2023
Ordinary Time

Dear Friends,

“What do you want?” That question is a question Jesus asks quite a bit. And almost always, it is for the sake of the one He is asking. What do I want? This is a good question to ask ourselves, but also a good question to ask of a Church. Embedded in our Rule of Life are our answers to this question. Here at All Souls Charlottesville, we refer to them as our “hopes.” So, if you were to ask us, “what do you, as a Church want?” We would answer, “we hope to receive and give away God’s hospitality, God’s restoration, and God’s shalom.”

God creates because God is a creator, the first and ultimate artist. God’s artistry is always textured and beautiful – and usually surprising. God always goes physical, hands deep in the soil. God intends to create communities that embody what it means to be truly human, living wide awake under God’s good rule. God is communal (Trinity), and so God creates other communities that reflect the Trinity’s own life. Christ longs for communities where he can be at home (or as the apostle Paul said, “dwellings in which God lives by his Spirit.”). Our hopes reflect our meditations on who the Trinity is and how our Trinitarian God intends to form us as a people in his world.

HOSPITALITY — We hope to live with openness toward one another, toward our neighbors and toward strangers who we hope will become friends. We want to meet around a table, sharing meals and stories and laughter and tears, sharing life. All are welcome here.

RESTORATION — Our world is not as it should be, but we hope for our hearts, our families, and our neighborhoods to all be restored to the beauty and wholeness God has always intended. As we find restoration, we want to be part of God’s intent to restore all things. We want to give ourselves to the long, deep work older Christian communities called “the cure of the soul,” the radical healing of the whole person – and the radical healing of whole communities by the radical love expressed in Jesus’ death and resurrection.

SHALOM — We want to work toward the well-being of our city, reflecting the reality that, in every way, Jesus is good news (gospel) for Charlottesville. We hope to see life, in all of its wonder and beauty and healing, take root among us – and among our neighbors.

What do these hopes have to do with our Rule of Life? Everything. To be clear, our Rule of Life did not give birth to these hopes. Our hopes, as reflections of our meditation on the Triune God, gave birth to our Rule. Our Rule provides us the path by which we create space to become the kind of people who receive and give away God’s hospitality, God’s restoration, and God’s shalom.

Tomorrow we will think a bit about a personal Rule of Life rooted in our communal Rule.

Peace to you this Friday,



Rev. Bliss Spillar
Senior Pastor