



Graduation Celebration 2025

You connected the dots of ancient text and brought the stories and the love of Jesus Christ to life.

Thank you to the parents who planted the seeds of Love's abundance that they might know The Way.



On a picture perfect Sunday afternoon, the graduating class of 2025 readied themselves to walk enmasse toward new found freedom. There to celebrate a sister's journey that she herself will make in two years shorter than she realizes, she plopped beside me and began to gush about her love of all things art. Her latest photography assignment involved a glimpse into grief, monochrome. "Without aesthetics, you know?" And here I am once more, hands open to receive the gift. Quite frankly, I prefer to take my grief with a side of aesthetics, for the love of God, please. Add color, add the dew dripping from a broken stemmed rose bud tinged edges bright pink. Soften that emotion all day long, because otherwise I'm prone to stumble into the sorrow I do my best to avoid at all costs. Cue deflection. Cue silence. Cue movement. Anything that softens the monochrome that waits for me to pause and acknowledge that it remains whether I choose to accept it or not.

The day before, I sat in a dining room filled with women as a mother dared with great vulnerability to ask a question monochrome.

"Any advice for a home that will soon be empty?" The silence thickened around us as color faded from the room. We knew all too well.

Whether it's your first child or the last, the washer quiets and the dryer slows its roll. The stairs, once rumbling with rush, now rustle with memories of Christmas mornings and the

rush to get to school and practices and performances and all things life rich and bucket full. The air in the room once transformed by the vibration of laughter and squabbling and music notes that changed the chemistry of heart and mind now rest in rainbow colors... visible to the mind's eye but just out of reach. Yes, what a woman once labored, a family now feels the rhythmic contractions in full.

I didn't answer. It felt too tender a question and I am spontaneously inept with what is meaningful and refuse to offer glib cliches like cheap meaningless vending machine trinkets.

I thought about a house empty... sheets unruffled, bathrooms spotless, dust unstirred by the rush of any given day, dishwashers that take longer to fill, a car whose gas gauge creeps far more slowly toward empty. Tires that no longer hum on roads long traveled with well worn destinations. A table with chairs no longer grate nerves as they scoot and creak across the floor. Instead, the deafening sound of silence. A grocery list shorter, little arms around the neck that grew to embrace fully and then opened the door to a new adventure and it is your arms that wrap around themselves to comfort. A heart that knows the depth of monochrome.

I think of Rabbi Leder who shared his perspective on the navigation of grief. Imagine that you are standing on the edge of the water. When a wave rises and crests, you can stand with your hands on your hips and feet planted firmly in the sand. When it hits, it will knock you flat on the beach and leave you gasping for air. On the other hand, when you notice a wave heading toward you, you can lie on the beach and allow it to wash over you in full. It may feel as if it will never recede, but eventually you will be able to breathe once more. So it is with grief.

After a woman labors, she rests.

After a man's toils, he rests.

On the seventh day, God blessed it and made it a Holy Day.

Because on that day he rested from all the work, all the creating God had done.

Jesus Christ labored and while he experienced death, the hope and promise of new life rested on the horizon.

Be still.

Be still and know that I am God.

In the monochrome that accompanies labor's end, God is even there.

Be still that Spirit might whisper hope's longing and new life that rises first in watercolor and deepens along a new journey rich in Love's abundant promise. Be still. God is near. You are not alone.

And then, in the whispers of watercolor beginnings...

"Every day God invites us on an adventure.

It's not a grip where he sends us a rigid itinerary.

God simply invites us.

God asks what it is He's made us to love, what it is that captures our attention,
what feeds that deep indescribable need of our souls to experience the richness of the world
He made.

And then, leaning over us, God whispers,

"Let's go do that together." ~ Bob Goff









Please join us this Pentecost Sunday at 10 am as three of our own are confirmed. You are invited to welcome them in the social hall afterward and enjoy a cupcake or four. As they sat with their Jimmy John's sandwiches, we talked about how the challenges experienced on the high ropes speak to the journey of faith.

"You have mental struggles along the way."

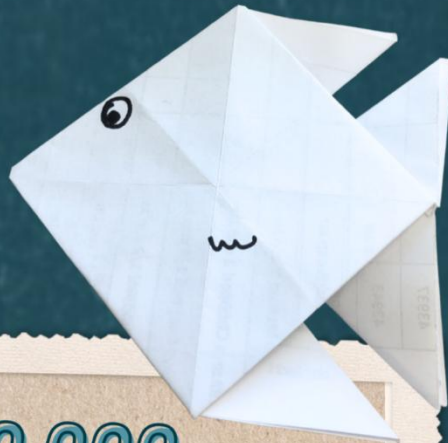
"Sometimes you want to give up."

"There are ups and downs... sometimes you feel like God's not there."

Whether we realize it or not, we are connected to something higher that holds us secure... beyond our challenges, beyond our mistakes, beyond our fear and our doubt. When we dare to travel the journey together, we encourage, we laugh, and we wait... so that no one ever feels like they're on this journey alone.

Join us to break the record for the largest display of origami fish! Let's show the world that we're united in protecting our waterways and shutting down Line 5 for once and for all.

GET STARTED



30,000

FISH out of 18,304 goal



Send your fish by June 5 to be counted!

Mail to: 754 Williamson St, Madison, WI 53703

You did it! You helped to create a record breaking statement!

"Earth provides enough to satisfy every human's needs, but not every human's greed." ~
Mahatma Ghandi





Poverty is both physical and emotional violence visited upon a child. When left unprocessed, the trauma exacts itself upon the next generation and the wooden floors of my childhood home were filled with eggshells.

This is not a victim's tale, just a seeker's story.

I remember attending church from time to time with my beloved grandma who danced on the keys of the organ and piano, fingers light. I remember feeling both envious and angry as I

looked around at families seated together. I remember somehow landing the part of Mary in the Christmas cantata and with a blue terry cloth bath towel draped over my head, I watched over that plastic doll in the manger and called it holy work as I lifted a piece of straw from its face.

On Graduation Sunday, I asked the seniors if they've ever known someone, but never really *known* them. It's how I've felt about Jesus for the better part of my life. Was it about the rituals, the guidelines, the believe and receive, the throne untouchable Jesus, the 'good enough' for Jesus, the book study Jesus... that little girl was still staring at the plastic doll in the manger, hoping for evidence of life.

I loved connecting the dots when I was young. Books and pages and pencils and if I dared mightily, I'd use crayons.

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Jesus said so.

What does it feel like to know, Jesus? Who am I to you; beyond my own musings, my own shortcomings, the biased filter of my own lens?

Enter your children. Enter our children... vulnerable, honest, curious, defiant, doubting, filled with wonder and love... miraculously and marvelously made.

"Proximity is the currency of Love."

In their presence, the pages of ancient text open wide and Holy dots find connection. Nourishment came with food, with laughter and occasional tears... all in the presence of love... and the presence of Love.

In these last days, I sat and asked Spirit to guide my words for each senior that the life of Jesus might be revealed in theirs. For the record, it's always been there. I just needed to be present with the pages.

In a pile of ashes gray white and cold, Justin taught me about curiosity that leads to greater depth in the meaning of the kingdom of heaven... and the gift of a child's lens.

On a concrete pad and gritty sand, Anna brought to life the words necessary to show up for those overlooked and ignored.

In every word you speak, Alex showed me what the goodness of the heart stores and ultimately, where your greatest treasure lies.

Hayley brought to life the wilderness experience of Jesus and how beyond a world that tries to stuff you in boxes unchosen, your truest identity sets the course for abundant life.

When your spirit has been crushed, Indy taught me the depth Christ's mandate and a greater depth to the meaning of Love. Diversity is a gift.

When friendships faltered, Camryn taught me about perseverance... reaching for the hem of Jesus Christ that she might know her belonging in the One who calls her daughter.

Great intellect was a given, but would those broken felt belonging in the words of Jesus alone. Luke taught me the second language of Jesus through the beatitudes, through music that offered a collective belonging, through a gaze that afforded the knowledge that one is fully seen and heard in presence offered.

One can either live from a space of fear or dare greatly to own all that they are from Love's vantage point. Hannah dared greatly and offered me a glimpse of Love's abundance beyond fear... and maybe even and especially in the midst of it.

Lauren taught me about the magnitude of Christ's humility even in the midst of extraordinary God given gifts. They are lived not from a space of ego, but from the depths of Love.

You could give me any child's name that walked through the door of room 216 and Spirit would show me where Jesus lives in the pages and chapters of their lives. The same is true for you, the reader. I've been searching for Jesus all of my life and learned at last that when I dared to open my heart wide, the stories came to life all around me.

"What's next? I'm asked that question a lot these days.

Stillness. Monochrome grief. And then ... God will invite me.

God simply invites me.

God asks what it is He's made me to love, what it is that captures my attention,

what feeds that deep indescribable need of my soul to experience the richness of the world He made.

And then, leaning over me, God whispers,

"Let's go do that together."

I pray the same adventure for you.

Thank you for your part in my journey.

#ImsearchingforJesus

