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St. Luke's Episcopal Church
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Until We Meet Again!

Many of you may be familiar with David Letterman. For those of you who aren't familiar with him (he was born right up the road in Indianapolis) he is a television host, comedian, and writer who hosted late night talk shows for 33 years, with his most notable talk show being 'Late Night with David Letterman.'

The '*Top Ten List*' was a regular segment of his late night television program, as each night he would present a list of ten things, compiled by his writing staff, that circulated around a common theme. Typically, the lists were given humorous topics such as, '*Top Ten Signs Your Kid Had A Bad Day At School*', or '*Top Ten Rejected James Bond Gadgets*.' On one memorable occasion he had Mick Jagger, of the Rolling Stones, deliver the list of the '*Top Ten things he learned after 50 years in Rock 'N' Roll!*'

Well, on a more suitable and much more practical note, I have compiled my own Top Ten list of some of the themes that I have talked to you about, or preached on, over the course of the past three years. I would like to leave you with these topics, because they are what I consider to be 'nuggets' and some of my core beliefs. I hope that you will find some of them to be a source of strength for you in the days, weeks, and years to come. First, allow me to take you off the hook, as some studies have revealed that the average person remembers a sermon for about 15 minutes after it has been delivered - So, who knows? If any of these topics ring a bell with you, and you actually remember me delivering a sermon that pertains to any of these 'Top Ten' nuggets/topics, well...then consider yourself to be doing better than average!

- 1) **Go wants all of you not just a part of you.** In other words, if you're not 'all in' you are missing out on the grace-filled life that God has in store for you. Metaphorically speaking- He doesn't just want the living room and the dining room, and the guest room, He wants the whole house! He wants all of you! And this is the only way that He can provide you a life of fullness and grace! And most times this requires number 2 on the list.
- 2) **Step outside of your comfort zone.** Have you ever heard someone say "I can't believe it! I never thought I could do this or that, and I feel so alive because I did it! Often we have no idea of what we are capable of until we step out of our comfort zone. You see, it is so easy for us to stay within the realm of what we know, it's safe, it's familiar, but just imagine what is out there, and especially when we give our whole heart to God, while trusting him to move forward on a new journey in our life, while trusting him fully & completely along the way. The Gospel of Luke illustrates this so beautifully as Jesus says to his disciples "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (V.12:32 NRSV).
- 3) **Allow yourself to be vulnerable,** at the appropriate time, as this is when authentic human connection is formed. We are each created uniquely by God. There is not another one of us on the planet, so let your light shine! Our light shines brightest when we are connected with one another, as we are created to live in community. In the words of author, Professor of Social Work, and fellow Episcopalian, Dr. Brene Brown "*Vulnerability isn't good or bad. It's not what we call a dark emotion, nor is it always a light, positive experience. Vulnerability is the core of all emotions and feelings. To feel is to be vulnerable. Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, accountability, and*

authenticity. If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path.”

Remember – Everybody has a story. Take time to listen, and to connect with one another.

Most often you will discover that we are much more alike than we are different.

- 4) **Make time for silence.** Unplug, step away, and create time to connect with God. I know this may sound simple, but there is a whole world out there constantly vying for our attention, and before we know it another day has passed, and so we may say “Oh, I’ll set aside some time for God, or prayer, tomorrow.” The funny thing is - when we do set aside time to spend with God – things tend to slow down, and our souls (our inner beings) are replenished with God’s healing, peace, and infused strength for the journey. “*Silence is God's first language*” wrote the 16th-century mystic St. John of the Cross. While Monk and priest Thomas Keating’s work “Invitation to Love” takes this a step further as he writes “*Everything else is a poor translation. In order to understand this language, we must learn to be silent and to rest in God.*” In silence God listens to us, in silence He speaks to our souls, and in silence we are granted the privilege to listen to his voice.
- 5) **We walk by faith not by sight.** Believe in the unseen, for the things that we see are temporary, but the things that we do not see are eternal. We acclaim this belief in the Nicene Creed, which upholds the tenants of our faith. “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.” There are things that may occur in our lives that simply can’t be explained, and yet, through our faith we can hold tightly in knowing that God is always with us. This is further expressed by the author of the Book of Hebrews “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (V. 11:1 NRSV).

- 6) **Use your imagination** – for it is only then that we can embrace the mystery. As the collect on page 280 of the BCP reads “O God of unchangeable power and eternal light; look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery...” We embrace the mystery through the sacraments, and we embrace this mystery of faith each time we partake in the Holy Eucharist – a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. We acclaim that we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, of which we cannot see with our eyes, yet we know they are present, as we praise God “joining our voices with Angels, and Archangels and with all the company of heaven!” We can only truly embrace this beautiful mystery when we allow ourselves to open our hearts and minds to God.
- 7) **We are in the world, but we are not of the world.** When we are baptized into the Body of Christ we are “sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism, and marked as Christ’s own forever.” In the Gospel of John as Jesus is communing with God on behalf of his disciples, prior to his arrest, *“I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in your truth; your word is truth”* (V.17:14-17 NRSV). Yet, let us also remember that Jesus is with us in the world, and He continues to do mighty works, as He builds the kingdom of God through us!
- 8) **Christian responsibility – our ‘job description’** ⁷ *He said to him, “‘you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’* ³⁸ *This is the greatest and first commandment.* ³⁹ *And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’* ⁴⁰ *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets”* (Matt. 22:37-40 NRSV). So what does this mean for you? How do you choose to express this truth

to your loved ones, friends, co-workers, community and the world? Christian vocation isn't only for priests, or bishops, it is for all Christians. Each of us is called by God to serve God in ministry. What is this for you? Flee, be silent, and pray as you ask God to reveal what the answer for you.

9) **Go to the basement** – deep within ourselves. In order to learn what are calling is in this life we sometimes need to depart from the analytical and go deep in to the spiritual (in other words go from the brain to the heart/basement). God supplies us with intellect, memory, reason and skill, but there is divinity in each of us, because He lives in each of us, as we are children of light.

10) Rely on the **Peace that surpasses all understanding**. Peace in the midst of the storm, the raging waters, the strong winds... Jesus calmed the sea “Peace be still!”

Jesus is the Bread of Life – the Bread of heaven. When we partake in the Eucharistic feast let us always recall that we who are many members are one Body in Christ. “We who are many are one Body because we share one bread, one cup.”

Remember the best is yet to come! (The Rt. Rev. Hugo Pina-Lopez story).

Until we meet again! May God remain with you always!

Amen.

