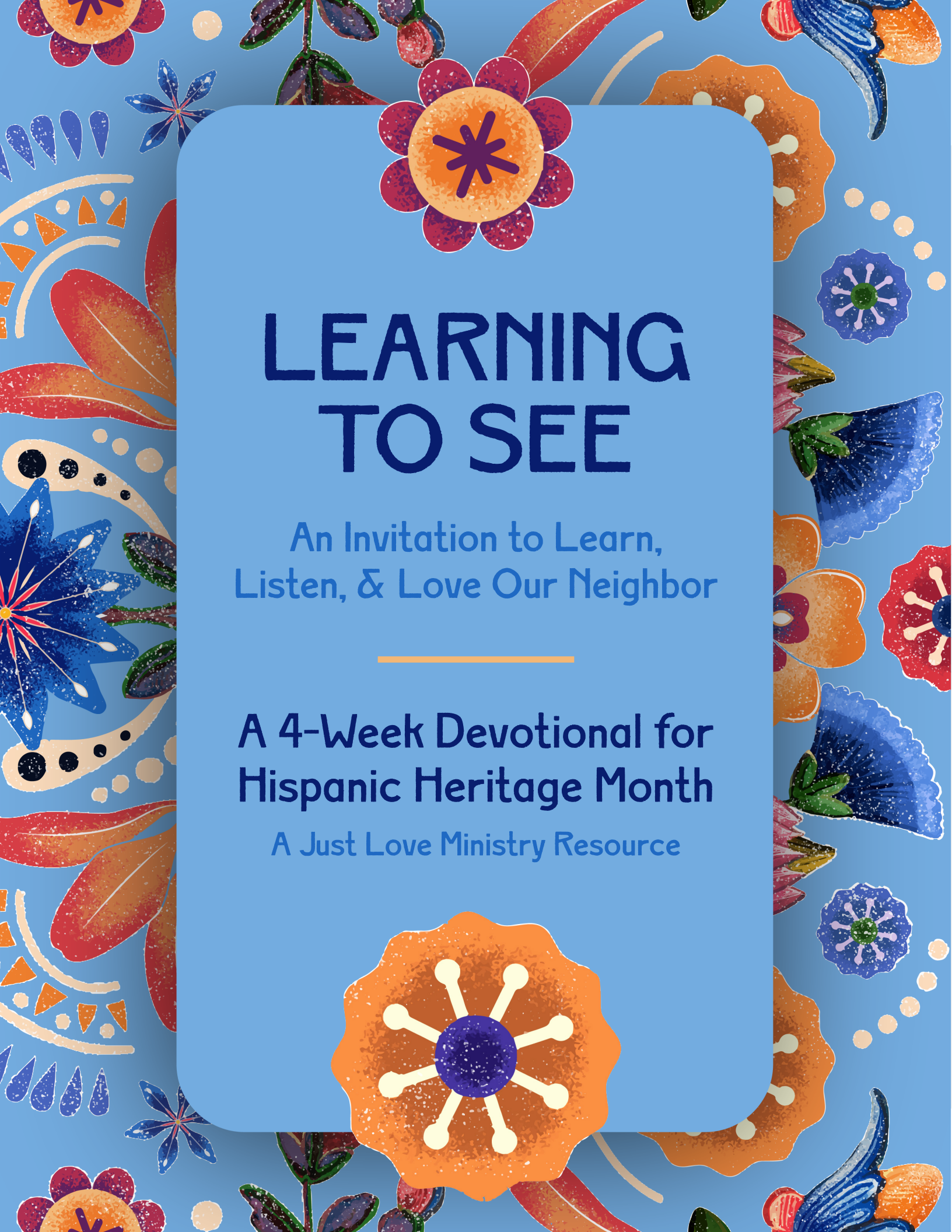


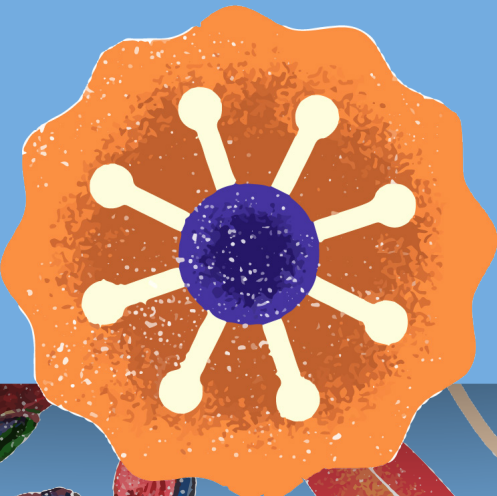
The background of the entire page is a vibrant, colorful border featuring various floral and geometric patterns. The patterns include stylized flowers in shades of orange, red, blue, and purple, along with leaves, dots, and geometric shapes like triangles and circles. The colors are bright and saturated, creating a festive and celebratory atmosphere.

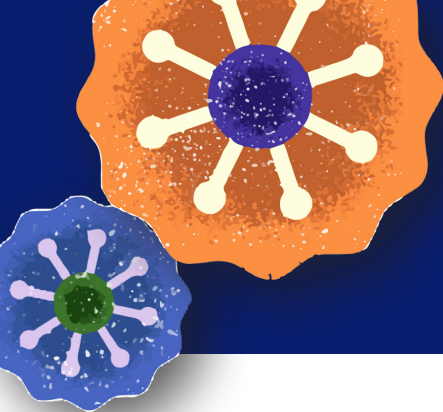
LEARNING TO SEE

An Invitation to Learn,
Listen, & Love Our Neighbor

A 4-Week Devotional for
Hispanic Heritage Month

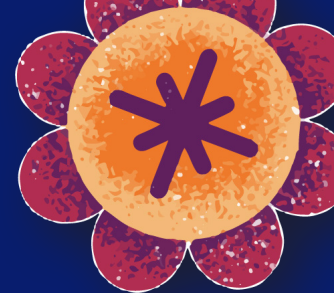
A Just Love Ministry Resource

A large, stylized orange flower with a dark purple center and white stamens is positioned at the bottom center of the page, partially overlapping the light blue background.



WEEK 1:

Whose Story This Is



LEARN

Hispanic Heritage Month began in 1968 as a one-week observance under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded to a full month in 1988. September 15 was chosen as the starting date because it's the independence day of five Central American nations — Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua — just before Mexico's independence day (September 16) and Chile's (September 18). "Hispanic," "Latino/a," and "Latine" are not interchangeable, and not everyone identifies with all of them. Hispanic generally refers to people with ties to Spanish-speaking countries (including Spain); Latino/a refers to people with roots in Latin America, whether or not Spanish is spoken there (this includes Brazil, where Portuguese is spoken); Latine and Latinx are newer gender-inclusive terms used by some, though usage varies and some Latino/a people reject "Latinx" as an imposition from English speakers. This month covers people whose families came from over 20 countries, each with its own history, cuisine, race, and relationship to the United States.

LISTEN

Scriptures:

[Genesis 11:1-9](#) · [Ruth 1:1-18](#) · [Acts 2:5-11](#)

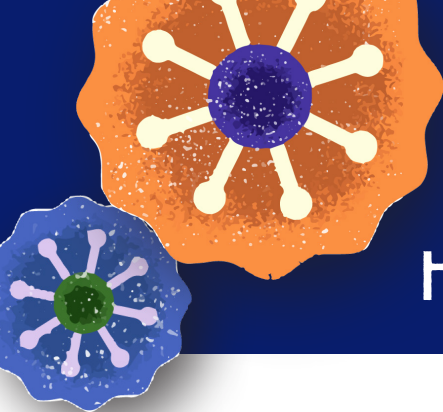
Notice how much of Scripture's own story of salvation runs through migration: Abraham, Joseph, Ruth — a Moabite foreigner who becomes an ancestor of Jesus — and the Holy Family's flight to Egypt. At Pentecost, the Spirit doesn't erase language or nation; it lets every person hear the gospel in their own tongue. **Listen for your own assumptions as you read this week: Where have you treated "Hispanic culture" as one thing rather than dozens of nations and stories? Have you thought about immigration as a theological subject before, or only a political one?**

LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

Learn which specific countries the Latino/a/e people in your life or congregation trace their families to — don't assume, ask respectfully and listen to the answer as a gift, not a data point.

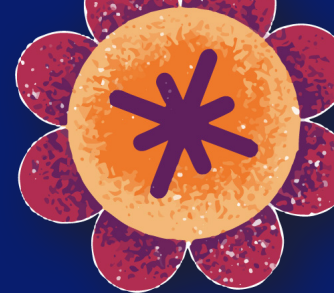
Prayer

God of every nation, open my eyes this month to histories I was never taught, and give me humility as a learner. You write immigrants into the very lineage of your Son — help me see migration, and my neighbors, with your eyes, and help my learning become love in action. Amen.



WEEK 2:

How Faith Was Handed Down



LEARN

Christianity came to Latin America through Spanish and Portuguese colonization beginning in 1492, often violently — forced conversion and the destruction of Indigenous religious sites were carried out by colonizers claiming Christian justification. Yet some clergy became fierce critics of this violence from within: Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566), a Spanish colonist-turned-priest, became one of history’s earliest vocal defenders of Indigenous peoples’ human rights. Latin American Christianity today carries both legacies — deep faith and cultural memory of violence done in Christianity’s name. Faith in many Latino/a/x families is passed down as much through el hogar (the home) as through institutions: home altars with candles and images of saints, prayers led by abuelas, and rites like the quinceañera, marking a girl’s fifteenth birthday with a Mass and blessing. The relationship between parents and godparents (compadrazgo) is often lifelong and binding — godparents help raise and mentor a child for life, and the two sets of parents become compadre and comadre to each other. Lutheranism also has a long, lesser-known history in Latin America: German and Scandinavian immigration in the 1800s–1900s planted Lutheran churches across Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and beyond, which grew under Latin American leadership. Autonomous Lutheran church bodies across Latin America and the Caribbean are today full communion partners with the ELCA.

LISTEN

Scriptures:

Micah 6:8 · 2 Timothy 1:5 · Romans 10:14-15

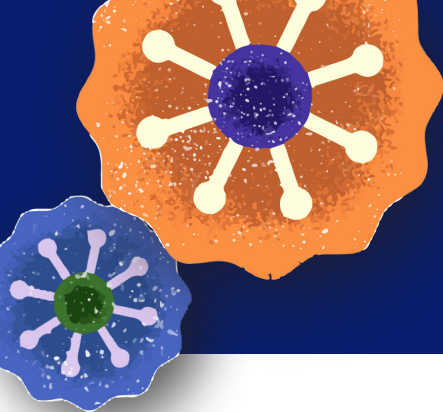
Paul reminds Timothy that his faith first lived in his grandmother and mother before it lived in him — faith is something received before it’s something held. Listen for how faith reached you, and notice that it may have reached others through very different, equally faithful, paths — a kitchen altar as much as a sanctuary. **Where did your own family pass down (or fail to pass down) faith outside of church walls? Is your community more individualistic or more communal in how it shares responsibility for raising children in faith?**

LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

Ask a Latino/a/e friend, neighbor, or church member about a faith tradition from their family. Then simply listen, without steering the conversation back to your own experience.

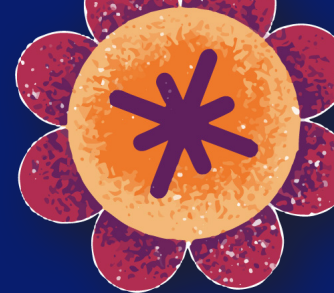
Prayer

God, thank you for the faith handed down through generations I never knew, in homes and languages not my own. Help me see faith formation happening outside my own familiar structures, and help me pass on what I am learning as an act of love, not just knowledge. Amen.



WEEK 3:

The Cost of Faithfulness



LEARN

Óscar Romero (1917–1980), Archbishop of San Salvador, became an outspoken critic of his government's violence against the poor during El Salvador's civil war and was assassinated while celebrating Mass in 1980. The Roman Catholic Church canonized him a saint in 2018; the ELCA's own calendar of commemorations also honors him as a "renewer of society." His witness is closely tied to liberation theology, which emerged in Latin America in the late 1960s and insists that theology must engage concrete social and economic injustice, not remain abstract. That same era produced César Chávez and Dolores Huerta, who co-founded the United Farm Workers union in 1962, organizing largely Mexican American and Filipino American farmworkers using nonviolent tactics rooted explicitly in their Catholic faith. Huerta — still living, and less remembered than Chávez despite equally central leadership — coined the rallying cry "¡Sí, se puede!" This history connects to the present: thousands of migrants have died attempting to cross the U.S.–Mexico border in the desert Southwest over the past two decades, prompting some faith communities, including Lutheran congregations, to leave water stations in the desert — an act of mercy that has, at times, carried legal risk. The ELCA's own ministry, AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities), launched in 2016 to accompany unaccompanied migrant children and advocate for just immigration policy, rooted in a Lutheran theology of walking alongside neighbors rather than aiding from a distance.

LISTEN

Scriptures:

[Luke 4:18-19](#) · [James 5:4](#) · [Exodus 22:21](#)

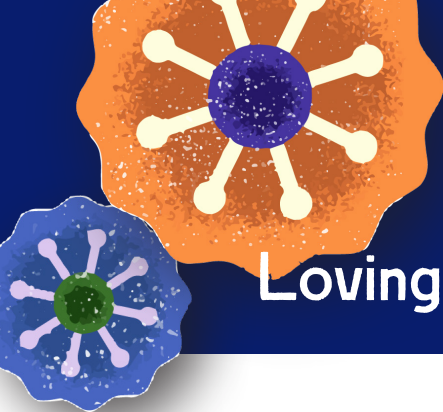
Jesus opens his ministry in Luke 4 by reading Isaiah's words about good news for the poor and freedom for the oppressed and then says, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Listen for what it means that the gospel is announced first to those who are suffering, not last. **Has your congregation ever, even unintentionally, asked people to set aside their culture to "fit in" and how is that different from genuine partnership?**

LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

Look up AMMPARO and learn one concrete way to support them — financially, through advocacy, or through direct relationship.

Prayer

God of the poor, you called Romero, Chávez, and Huerta to costly witness. Give me even a fraction of their courage, and don't let my response to this history stop at feeling sad — move my grief toward love that acts. Amen.



WEEK 4:

Loving Our Neighbor Beyond This Month

LEARN

Research on “heritage months” broadly shows a common pattern: attention and engagement spike during the designated month and drop sharply afterward. Congregations that build lasting relationships with Latino/a/e communities typically do so through ongoing partnership — shared worship, joint mission projects, pulpit exchanges — rather than a single annual event. ELCA Advocacy offers one concrete way to move from appreciating culture to advocating for policy affecting Latino/a/e neighbors, informed by this church’s theology and its companion relationships across Latin America and the Caribbean. Small, ordinary acts also matter. Learning a few words of Spanish (*buenos días*, *mucho gusto*, *la paz de Cristo*) is a way to honor a language rather than always expecting others to accommodate yours. Sharing a meal — a specific dish from a specific country, ideally learned from someone who can tell its story — builds relationship better than a generic “cultural night.” Attending a Latino/a/e-led congregation, festival, or event as a respectful guest, simply to be present rather than to help or observe, is a step many congregations skip in favor of hosting their own separate events.

LISTEN

Scriptures:

[Luke 10:29-37](#) · [Acts 2:46](#) · [Galatians 6:9](#)

The lawyer in the parable of the Good Samaritan asks Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” — seeking a boundary for who he does not have to love. Jesus reorients the question entirely: not “who qualifies,” but “to whom will I become a neighbor?” Listen for that shift; it moves the burden from classification to action, and it’s a fitting question to carry out of this month and into the rest of the year.

Has this month moved you toward actually becoming a neighbor to specific people, or has it stayed mostly informational? Is there a difference, in your life, between appreciating Hispanic culture and loving Hispanic and Latino/a/x neighbors in concrete, ongoing ways?

LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

Write down one relationship or commitment from this month that you will intentionally continue past October 15, and put a date on your calendar to check in with yourself. Neighbor-love, in Luther’s sense, isn’t a feeling — it’s help and support offered in ordinary, daily life, long after the calendar page turns.

Prayer

God of every nation, tribe, people, and language, thank you for this month of learning. I am still a beginner — keep me humble, keep me curious, and make me a genuine neighbor, not only in October, but always. Through Jesus Christ, who breaks down every wall between us. Amen.