

The embodiment of our better angels.

I've carried these words in my heart and mind for several days. These words lodged in my heart when they were spoken in tribute by an individual about a long-time friend and colleague who passed away that *was the embodiment of our better angels*. The words uncovered the memory of Abraham Lincoln's lyrical and passionate appeal to the *better angels of our nature* with the closing of his first inaugural address.

Embodying our better angels isn't accidental. If left to chance, our worst impulses often respond first in times of change and uncertainty.

Embodying our better angels requires intentionality in gathering together with and getting to know those who are similar to us as well as those who are different from us. It calls us to humble listening as Jesus would listen. It inspires us to share our authentic voice. It asks us to learn how God is at work in the world. It challenges us to make a commitment to community.

Along with Pastor Marc, I've been looking forward to the return of informal fall conversations started three years ago called "Listening is an Act of Love." These gracious conversations without any agenda are precious opportunities to embody our better angels and weave community. Over the last three years, I've witnessed these conversations bring out new relationships in the congregation in addition to deeper understanding among those who have known one another for many years.

While reading a column by David Brooks earlier this year, I thought of our "Listening is an Act of Love" conversations. Describing Weave: The Social Fabric Project, Brooks wrote: *The first core idea was that social isolation is the problem underlying a lot of our other problems. The second idea was that this problem is being solved by people around the country, at the local level, who are building community and weaving the social fabric.... Every time you see that person deeply and make him or her feel known, you've woven it [the social fabric].*

Pastor Marc and I warmly invite you to join us for "Listening is an Act of Love" on:

- Wednesday, October 16 at 12:00 p.m. in place (hosted by Pastor Marc)
- Thursday, October 17 at 8:00 a.m. in Kofenya (hosted by Pastor Lawrence)
- Friday, October 25 at 5:00 p.m. in Books and Brews (hosted by Pastor Lawrence)
- Monday, October 28 at 9:00 a.m. in place (hosted by Pastor Marc)

You're welcome to come late, leave early, or linger with us in conversation.

President Lincoln reminds us that in times of change and challenge, the voices of our better angels are too often silenced. Through our worship and mission, learning and fellowship, for almost two hundred years, Oxford Presbyterian Church has given voice to our better angels. Please bring your voice to the table. Your voice matters.

