**Reflections from our Executive Presbyter**

**~Deb’s Deliberations ~**

A picture containing flower, bird

Description automatically generated

**Recipes for Congregational Health**

* Release traditions that are limp or lifeless.

Know that Grief will be involved!

* *Avoided* Grief calcifies into Bitterness and Blame
* *Acknowledged* Grief opens us up, creates insight,

and eventually blossoms into Growth and

Gratitude

* Honor traditions without being defined – *or*

*confined* – by them.

**Remember that…**

**We are defined by our connection with Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord**.

**Deep Listening (*not to be confused with placid agreement!*) = Holy Love**



**Trust + Relationships = Holy Space**

New possibilities

and fresh mission opportunities

grow and blossom in this sort of culture!

**What does “Holy Space” look like in our Congregations?**

* **Clear Sense of Purpose**
  + What does your particular congregation offer to the world *beyond its members* that no other body can offer? How does your congregation share the love of Jesus Christ in *concrete ways*?
* **Flexible Mindset** 
  + Are you willing to change your worship time for the sake of local outreach and collaboration? Are you willing to experiment with worship, education, and mission/outreach events to see what works -- *and what does not* -- so you can best be a vibrant mission outpost in your community?
* **Gratitude**
* **Generosity**

A close up of text on a white background

Description automatically generated

Our **vulnerabilities** and **mistakes** provide opportunity for God to work among us, teaching and strengthening us for the sake of our witness to the kingdom – *here and now*!

“No one is brought to life through curses, gossip, accusations, or blaming.” -*Henri Nouwen*

We have two choices: transmit pain or transform it!

Will we be vessels of blinding bitterness

or open-eyed blessing?

Every day of our lives,

**God is quietly – and relentlessly -- working**,

bringing us out of a Desert of **Terror, Fear,**

**and Anxiety** into a **Pasture of Wide-Eyed**

**Wonder, Joy, and Creativity.**

When we trust that our unknown future is BLESSING rather than BURDEN, we will see the way in which God paints vibrant possibilities into our personal and public lives!

* How will we, as disciples, give voice to gratitude as we learn to trust?
* A picture containing bottle, sitting, black, holding

  Description automatically generatedHow will we resist grumbling?
* How will we build one another up without offering mindless platitudes?

We are not **called** by God to be a **perfect** people.

We are being **perfected**—*drawn into God’s kingdom* – by becoming a **called** people.