

Bread of Angels August 2023 Update



What is Bread of Angels?

Bread of Angels (BoA) is a small group exploring what it means to live a Christian Life in the world in which we find ourselves.

BoA is an integral part of adult Faith Formation and an element of CEC Sunday School.

As a small group, BoA is part of the fellowship of Parish Life.

BoA is not Bible study or a short course in theology, although we may find ourselves drawing on those resources from time to time.

BoA is anchored in the Baptismal Covenant, especially as we are called to resist evil ... proclaim by word and example, the good news ... seek and serve Christ ... and strive for justice and peace among all people, respecting the dignity of every human being (BCP: pp 304-5)

How did BoA get started?

About 18 years ago, four thoughtful, creative women started a “book club with a theological bend,” to better understand their “sense of Christianity.”

They named their new organization after their first book, *Bread of Angels*, by Barbara Brown Taylor (1997).

Why are we calling this *BoA: Resurrection*?

As early as the late Spring 2020, there began to be conversations about the post Covid environment – were we going to try to return to “normal” and resuscitate what was or were we going to acknowledge that after an extended life-altering, shared experience, things will never be the same. After a lot of conversation with people who had been part of BoA, we seized on the notion of *Resurrection* as a way to express that BoA has returned, but to a changed environment and with a renewed focus.

People with long experience with BoA will recognize that the basic threads of BoA have not changed, that our approach to our conversations about God, the Church, Christian ethics, *et al* takes cognizance of our world as it is as our focal point. Our readings and weekly dialogue draw on authors who are doing the best work in that space.

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Who can be part of Bread of Angels?

Bread of Angels is open to adults of all ages. You will need a curious and open mind, appreciating that people will bring differing views and experiences to the table. We will expect you to share your thoughts and ideas.

What is expected of participants?

Participants undertake weekly reading and reflection, coming together to dialogue and learn from each other with a willingness and openness to be changed by our shared experiences.

When do we meet?

9:00 in the Conference Room.

You may attend in person or using Zoom.

We will adjourn between 9:45 and 9:50.

Plan on a minute to pray and get started and a few minutes to close. Typically, our meetings can be counted on to create an intense, respectful, thought provoking 45 minutes.

Bread of Angels meets year-round, pausing on Christmas, New Year's, the Annual Meeting, Palm Sunday, Easter, and the Parish Picnic.

Coffee, tea, or ham biscuits?

Please bring your coffee or sippy, and a doughnut or whatever.

On the first and third Sundays of the month, different groups will prepare breakfast in Moore Hall. It will generally be available by 8:50 – so grab a plate and bring it with you!

On the third Sunday in the third month of each quarter, BoA will host the Parish Breakfast.

Realistically, I really can't do every week.

Join the crowd. Real life always has precedence. It will be helpful if you do the reading even if you are unable to participate on Sunday. Please let us know you won't be attending so we don't wait for you. No one expects everyone to be present every week.

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What if I can't be there in person?

In the hybrid world of Covid, we all learned to use Zoom. But in a year of experience, BoA has collectively decided not to Zoom. There is a sense that physical presence is part of the magic, and that when people cannot attend in person it is for good reason.

I am still confused about how Bread of Angels is organized.

So am I. That's on purpose. Think of it this way:

[All] members are responsible for leadership, active participation, preparation, and being open minded and respectful of the ideas and thoughts of others.

Together we are responsible for curriculum design, selection of materials, periodic review, and feedback. We all have a voice in our planning and direction.

The Convener is responsible for organizing; logistics; and interface with our Priests, staff, and Vestry.

How will we communicate?

The convener will provide you with a (flexible) curriculum outline at the beginning of each major unit (reading off a single book) that will be our base plan.

Each week you will receive an email reminder of our agenda for the week using a Google Group.

Once you join us we will link you into a Google Group which enables us to communicate safely and efficiently.

I am really busy; how much time will this take?

Aside from Sunday morning, we strive to keep the "homework" simple. We try to keep the reading assignments to about an hour or less. A good practice is to skim the reading early in the week so the "sticky bits" will get you thinking; then put your notes and ideas together as Sunday draws closer.

We have found that the book club format makes it easy to come and go as family and other commitments take you away. Read each assignment whether or not you can attend on Sunday, and you will come and go with ease. This is not quantum mechanics!

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What if “the dog ate my homework”?

Come anyway. If the dog eats your homework three weeks in a row, we will evict your dog – just kidding. Please do the best you can so that you can contribute your best.

What else do I need?

Our readings are provided by the Parish. If you prefer a digital version, you can purchase it on Kindle.

You will want a notebook or journal of some kind. We each tend to have our own approach to note taking, so find something – paper or tablet – that works for you.

Is this “Sunday School”?

Yes.

No, you do not get attendance badges.

Who am I?

I am Mike Harper, the convener. I have been a member of CEC since Leigh and I moved to Bowling Green in 1997. Leigh was born in Bowling Green and grew up here. I grew up in New Jersey. I was commissioned in the Infantry in 1969 and served in the Army for 26 years. Leigh and I met when we were each working at the Pentagon. We were married by The Rev Mark Linder in 1994. After leaving government service in 1995 we formed a consulting and executive education firm, from which we retired in 2018.

Respectfully,

Mike Harper

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