

## On the Way

### A process of spiritual growth and renewal.

“We are not now what we shall be, but we are on the way.”- Martin Luther

**1. On the Way is inquiry, exploration, preparation, and discovery.**

**Inquire** is a time to come and see, like Andrew and Peter in the Gospel of John. Inquire is structured around the questions and doubts of participants: the clash between Christian faith and the mythology of consumer culture. Inquire culminates in the Rite of Welcome for those desiring to proceed.

**Explore** follows; a time to study and pray. During Explore we traverse the landscape of the Christian life in the Lutheran tradition; prayer, the scriptures, the creeds, the liturgy. The end of Explore is the Rite of Enrollment, at which participants wishing to continue are clothed with the historic title of “Catechumen,” if they have not already been baptized; and those proceeding toward Affirmation of Baptism are given the title, “Affirmer.” **Prepare** follows; a time to find new life in Christ. During Prepare we are immersed in the meaning of Baptism and Eucharist, looking backward to the ways God has been preparing us and forward to the Sacrament of Baptism and the Rite of Affirmation of Baptism at the Easter Vigil. During the season of Easter, **Discover** focuses on discernment of vocation: Becoming aware of your special gifts for ministry as you live out your Baptismal calling.



**2. On the Way requests commitment, but does not lock you in.** We ask that if you begin one of the segments; Inquire, Explore, Prepare, or Discover, you make the effort to participate in all of the sessions and activities in that segment. We anticipate three sessions of Inquire in the Advent season (December), three sessions of Explore in the Epiphany season (January and February), four Prepare sessions during Lent (February and March, and three Discover sessions during Easter (April and May), in addition to weekly contact between sponsors and their catechumens or affirmers. Beginning a segment does not require you to engage in its culminating rite or sacrament. This should only be in response to God's leading.



**3. On the Way is an opportunity to ask difficult questions.** In our “post-Christian age” questions like, “Is there a God?” have been replaced with, “Why should I care about God?” Becoming involved in the church and the Christian life asks commitments of time and resources in an age when simply getting along demands a lot of both. Some enter the church with no experience of Christianity and others after long absence perhaps due to painful experiences involving Christians or the church. Walking through the church door brings a person face to face with such questions. Inquire honors difficult questions as part of the vibrant struggle that is a sign of God's presence and work in our lives.



**4. On the Way is a journey taken with a trusted Christian friend.** Early in the phase of Explore each participant is introduced to a person who will become his or her sponsor throughout On the Way. Through the times of Explore and Prepare sponsors and participants will talk regularly, pray with and for each other, study and minister together. Relationships formed during Explore and Prepare can become important and life-long sources of support and friendship.

**5. On the Way is an opportunity to see the breadth and depth of your own pilgrimage in faith.** Although it is a place to begin, On the Way is not the beginning. You are here because long before you knew your right from left, God knew you and began preparing you for your Christian journey. For those who have not been baptized and for those who have and desire to affirm their baptism, Prepare provides an opportunity to reflect on God's work through your past experiences and even though the generations who came before you.

6. ***On the Way* is a time for discerning and receiving God's gifts.** The storehouses of God are wide open to you, for a God who would not withhold his own Son would not hold anything else back. You are on the way because God has called you, and God will give you everything you need for the journey. Discover is a time for naming and claiming the gifts God has already set forth for you and preparing to use those gifts in future ministry.
7. ***On the Way* comes to an end, but it is not the end.** It is intended to prepare Catechumens and Affirmers for vibrant Christian living in a world that no longer accommodates, and is often hostile to, Christian faith. *On the Way* equips us to bear witness in a time when "Christian" may have a negative meaning in the popular mind.
8. ***On the Way* is for everyone, but it is not the same for everyone.** Beginning *On the Way* is a commitment to continue. You need go no farther than God is leading you. Different people may participate in different segments. Different people will have different roles. For those not baptized it is initiation. For the baptized it is growth. For pillars it is ministry. Those who are longer-term members may become sponsors for those who are approaching baptism or are new to Immanuel. Some may be catechists, leading sessions or segments of *On the Way*.

