



## Grain

“Christians who join with Americans of other faiths and of no faith have the opportunity to practice our faith in a way that defends democracy and promotes the common good.”

-Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

## Field

<sup>25</sup>Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup>“Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup>Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup>For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup>Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, <sup>30</sup>saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ <sup>31</sup>Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup>If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. <sup>33</sup>So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions. Luke 14:25-33

## Thoughts

Several years ago, before returning to the ministry within the ELCA, I worked with an LGBTQ+ education organization. The program staff organized events and activities that helped queer youth and their allies learn how to speak up for themselves and for justice. Being an activist was a positive way to channel their sense of injustice and to help others. Advocating for any type of injustice can in and of itself be transformative. But if you stick with advocacy over the long run there is also a cost. The youth experienced the cost of their labor ending in disappointment; after putting energy into creating a youth campaign against the amendment to ban same sex marriage the amendment passed. We should have prepared the youth more for the reality of advocacy, which includes a lot of work and many disappointments. And they would not always be applauded for exercising their voices. A few years later, same sex marriage became legal on a federal level, but at the time the Wisconsin amendment passed the moment of failure seemed enduring and the disappointment palpable.

Doing justice work as faith-based advocates we begin with Jesus. Jesus walks with us, and we end with Jesus. In whatever way we are called to follow Christ and however we have been transformed, we are told to prepare for losses and conflict. Jesus didn't tell the crowd to create divisions but to expect them as a result of putting the love of God and neighbor at their center. In our current society with so many examples of families divided over politics, the hyperbole Jesus is quoted using in this Gospel is challenging. We want to find ways to heal, not make way for more divisions. And yet, what lies ahead cannot be easy. The increase of Christian nationalism, which goes hand in hand with threats to our human rights and democracy, has moved from the fringes into concentric circles closer to the center of American political life. Along with hopeful efforts to improve the ways we are able to care for God's creation, there is a continual drive to harm the earth and to limit our basic rights in the name of God. We will experience delays in movements forward and perhaps even more reversals. In this environment, what does it mean to follow Jesus? The answer involves love and a cost. Happy Monday!

## Share

Send any quotes you'd like to share with our network to [cindyc@loppw.org](mailto:cindyc@loppw.org)

All Monday Quotes found under the Resources & Advocacy Tools tab at [www.loppw.org](http://www.loppw.org)

Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy