



Abundant Health

The United Methodist Church

SPIRIT – BODY – MIND

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands! Serve the Lord with gladness! ...Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! --Psalm 100

How is it with your spirit today? How do you find joy and celebrate the blessings in your life? How do you practice spiritual self-care?

For many of us these days, these are difficult yet important questions to answer. Religious leaders, researchers and writers have tried to understand and address the high level of unhappiness in the U.S., to the extent that there are even college courses now that try to teach people how to be happy! Perhaps not surprisingly, here are a few of the things they've found that improve people's happiness:

- Devoting time to friends and family
- Practicing gratitude and acts of kindness
- Striving for optimism
- Being physically active
- Engaging in spiritual or religious practices

While for some of us, many of these activities are second-nature, for most of us, we need to devote time and attention and "practice" to consistently find joy and grace in our lives.

Here is a spiritual practice that many have found to be life-changing. Take a moment right now and write down one blessing or one thing for which you are grateful today:

For the next week, try to keep a "gratitude" journal and write at least one entry each day. It may be that this will become a new habit, one that will greatly strengthen your own spiritual health.

The Abundant Health website of the General Board of Global Ministries notes that "Resilient spiritual health gives us purpose in our daily lives. We find strength to face our own brokenness and the fractured world around us, allowing us to rise up as disciples who speak words of hope and plant seeds of peace. As we seek to follow Christ and live as he asks us to live, our communities will become places of grace and love."

Please turn this page over for additional reflection questions and resources to consider on your journey to Abundant Health in Spirit, Mind and Body.

Questions for Reflection: Spiritual Self-Care (adapted from the Wespeth Center for Health):

1. How fulfilling is my devotional and prayer life?
2. What spiritual practice or practices are a part of my daily life?
3. How does my devotional and prayer life connect me to God?
4. Do I have a spiritual leader or advisor? Who is my spiritual leader or advisor?
5. How do I find spiritual nourishment in my worship community?

A Few Resources:

Abundant Health, General Board of Global Ministries website: <http://www.umcabundanthealth.org/>

Dewitt Jones, "Celebrate what's right with the world", TED Talk, January 2018

Doyle, Brian, [A Book of Uncommon Prayer: 100 Celebrations of the Miracle and Muddle of the Ordinary](#), Notre Dame: Sorin Books, 2014.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams, [The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World](#), New York: Avery, 2016.

Rohr, Richard, [Just This](#), Albuquerque: CAC Publishing, 2017

Rubin, Gretchen: [The Happiness Project](#), Harper, 2009

Wespeth: www.wespeth.org/center-for-health/the-focus-of-the-center-for-health