**Small Group Session: Week of Ash Wednesday**

“Perfectionism is impossible. Transformation isn’t.”

**Opening**

*Leader:* We are beginning a reflective journey together during the Lent season with the book *Good Enough: 40’ish Devotionals for a Life of Imperfection* by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie. In our Ash Wednesday worship, we were reminded that “Perfectionism is impossible. Transformation isn’t.” Here is an excerpt from the scripture:

*And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward… but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” - excerpt from Luke 19: 28-40*

Jesus used the word “hypocrite” to describe those who put on airs in public to make people believe that they were holy, that their religious practice was… well… perfect. But their hearts were actually not in the practice, rather in the rewards that public approval could bring them–which is here today, often gone tomorrow. Sometimes it is life itself that robs us of the shiny, perfect life that we had planned for ourselves. A diagnosis. A broken heart. A lost opportunity. This Lent, rather than change for “the best,” we’ll seek to gain momentum one day at a time, as Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie say in the book, “to reach for a faith that is never perfect, but good enough.”

Let us light a candle, take a deep breath, and pray:

**Holy One, Merciful God,**

**make yourself known to us,**

**Be present with us in this often troubled journey of life.**

**Create in us hearts that are open to transformation.**

**Give us the patience of practice in this Lent season–**

**ordering our days with time enough for you.**

**Amen.**

**Sharing**

*Leader:* In our conversation, everyone is invited to share, but sharing is not required. Please make room for all voices, keeping your contribution to a respectful time limit so everyone has a chance. Whatever is said here stays here – not because we are telling secrets but because we honor that what a person says here is their story to share.

I invite you to share something from the devotions in the book you read so far that resonated with you, hit you as truth in your own life and faith, was funny or painful, or made you think about your own experience. What struck you this week as “good enough?” These are just suggestions… feel free to share whatever is bubbling up around this topic.

*[after all have shared who want to…]*

*Leader:* A question for the group–what would you say about the difference between change or improving for the sake of perfectionism, and a more holistic change for the sake of our own needed transformation?

**Closing**

*Choose one of the blessings from the devotions in the book to read as a closing.*

*Then read this benediction, taken from our weekly worship, together…*

**And now, may the God who loves all of creation, especially the imperfect bits,**

**and Jesus, our companion along this crooked path called life,**

**and the Holy Spirit, who loves to improvise in surprising ways,**

**go with you, dwell among you, and give you joy. Amen.**