KEYNOTE 2 - FRIDAY MORNING

Yesterday, we rooted ourselves in the wisdom of Ecclesiastes.

We talked about how time isn't something to race against, but something to befriend.
That the church isn't dying - it's just being refined.
And that becoming takes time.

But today, I want to shift us just a little.
If yesterday was about *what time it is*, today is about *what we're going to do with it*.

Because here's the truth: **discernment is holy - but it cannot end in abstraction.**
Eventually, we have to plant our feet in the dirt and live it out.

Yesterday, we read Ecclesiastes 3 - "There is a time for everything."
And today, I want to pair that with another moment in scripture. A moment that happens early in Jesus' ministry - in Luke 4.
Jesus walks into the synagogue. He unrolls the scroll of Isaiah and begins to read:

> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.
> He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
> and recovery of sight to the blind,
> to let the oppressed go free,
> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

And then - without fanfare - he sits down and says:
"Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Not someday.
Not eventually.
Not once we get the budget figured out.
Not after the next council meeting or the next strategic plan or the next big denominational shift. Or dare I say even a bishop's election!
But **today.**

I don't know about you, but I have spent a lot of time waiting.
Waiting to feel ready.
Waiting for someone to give me permission. Waiting for someone to like me enough.
Waiting for the stars to align and the circumstances to stabilize and the "right time" to appear with neon signage.

But here's the kicker of Luke 4: Jesus doesn't wait.

He reads the words of justice and mercy and release - and then he sits down and says:
Now.
Here.
This is the time.

And I think if we're honest, that kind of immediacy can be terrifying.
Because it means we can't hide behind theory anymore.

It means the Gospel isn't just a nice idea or a someday hope - it's an invitation to embodiment.

It's not just what we believe.
It's how we live.
It's how we love.

It's how we structure our communities and tell our stories and build our budgets and welcome the stranger and feed the hungry and treat the people we'd rather ignore.

It's what we do with our hands.
And it's what we do with our resources.

It's what we do when someone walks in off the street - not with a pledge card, but with a prayer request and a bag of laundry.

This is not the kind of Gospel we can intellectualize into safety.
It is the kind of Gospel that asks us to *step in* - even when we don't feel ready.
Even when we don't have all the answers.
Even when it's messy. Especially when it's messy.

Because if Ecclesiastes reminds us that there is a time for everything…
Luke 4 reminds us that *today* counts.

That the work of the church isn't someday work. It's today work.

If the Gospel is good news, then it must be good news *now*.
Not in theory.
Not in heaven only.
Not just for some.
But for all of us. In the middle of our real, messy, beautiful, aching lives.

When Jesus reads the scroll of Isaiah in Luke 4 and says, *"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing,"* he is making a radical claim: that liberation isn't a someday dream.

It's a right-now possibility.

It's not for the afterlife.

It's for this life.

And it's not just spiritual.

It's material. Embodied. Tangible. Local.

It's the kind of salvation you can feel in your bones.

But let me be really clear about something-because I think sometimes we get this twisted.

The Gospel is not just for "the oppressed."

It is certainly *never less* than that.

But it is not only about a category of people that can be labeled as poor or marginalized.

It's not an outreach project. It's not a benevolence committee line item. It's not "for them."

Because here's the truth: ***none* of us are immune to the pangs of being human.**
Not one of us gets a pass from grief or loneliness or the ache to be seen.
You don't need to be sleeping under a bridge to know what it feels like to be lost.
You don't need to be in active addiction to know what it feels like to hunger for something more.
You don't need to be cut off from resources to know what it feels like to be cut off from yourself.

So if the Gospel is going to mean anything-it has to mean something to *everyone*.
It has to reach deep into every kind of human ache.
It has to be the kind of salvation that meets us right where we are-regardless of zip code or history or faith status.

Because the Gospel doesn't draw a line between the broken and the whole.
It names the truth: that we're *all* in need of healing.
And it gives us each other as the sacred, stumbling grounds where that healing begins.
It looks like Wednesday mornings in the parking lot of my building.
Where a handful of God's people gather to pray.
At 8:00am, in the freezing rain or the blaze of southern heat, we circle up to offer our hearts to our God.

We pray for power to fall and rise in our city so that equity and justice may finally win.
We pray for more strength to love our enemies.
We pray for our neighbors on the surrounding streets who fear us, who fear what they don't know.

We pray for people in their cars on their way to work, trying to pretend that everything is okay, when none of us are really okay.
We pray for broken relationships, and the senseless violence happening in our city and in our world.

We pray for the church-that it be a place where people find true peace and healing love.

And while these prayers are beautiful and robust, what makes them powerful are the hearts and mouths they came from.

These prayers come from the mouths of beautiful humans that slept on mats on the floor the night before, in the green space outside of our own building, in broken-down cars in a parking lot, in tent encampments.

These prayers did not come from the warmth of privilege.
These prayers came from the cool of the trenches.

And yet **these prayers are not for ourselves.**

They are not centered on our own needs, wants, or desires.
They are not asking for our own abundance and blessings.
They are for the people around us. Our neighbors who fear us. Our city that forgets us.
Life-toppling prayers from the forgotten edges of society.

This is what happens when the Gospel becomes real.
It moves us beyond ourselves. It calls forth love not as sentiment, but as solidarity.

Or what about what happens when we eat together?

In my community, we do this together each week. Nearly 250 of us gather to eat together following worship, week after week, after week. Last year we ate over 25,000 meals together. But what's powerful about this meal is not the food itself.

The power is that in the kitchen each week, beautiful humans that know the pangs of hunger, know the worry of empty pantries, humans that have experienced the insecurity of their next meal, are faithfully preparing the abundant meal for others.

And then as we serve the meal, a group of humans, some of which may be housed or unhoused, addicted or recovering, sick or well, diligently fill the plates of their neighbors, their community, because that's what community does.
That's what church does.

Eating together, serving together, doesn't care about race or gender or sexuality or age or how much money you've got in your bank account or if you even have a bank account at all.

Eating is human.
Serving is human.
And we are human together, serving together, dining together.
This is the Gospel made flesh.

Or what about the addict who finds the strength to ask his pastor to take his drugs from him-because he knows that keeping them means death, and he knows that even in his active addiction he wants more, deserves more.
He wants life.

Or the woman who found the courage to walk away from abusive relationships and now uses her story and strength to tell others that they are worthy of more, that they are deserving of peace.

Or the little girl that knows the cruelty of generational family trauma who rushes to the altar each week to announce, "*Pastor, play the song*" as she dances and ushers us into worship.

This is the Gospel in motion.
This is salvation, not as escape-but as embodiment.

And I want you to see something in all these stories:
There's no hero.

There's no charity project.
There's no savior complex.
There is just humanity.
There is just the messy, holy mutuality of people who are brave enough to show up with each other in the hard stuff.

That's what Jesus was doing when he read from Isaiah and said "Today."
He was breaking open the distance between divine love and human life.
He was collapsing the idea that you had to go *somewhere else* to meet God.
He was saying: *Look around. This is the place. These are the people. Now is the time.*

The Gospel isn't fulfilled in a statement of belief.
It's fulfilled when someone who has every reason to give up instead says, "Play the song."
It's fulfilled when the person who knows scarcity still chooses to serve others.
It's fulfilled when we remember that every single person-no matter their past, their pain, or their particular path-is capable of bearing God's image, and of being a messenger of grace.

So if we want to be people of the Gospel, we don't need better strategies.
We just need clearer eyes.

Eyes that look not for the polished or the pure, but for the pulse of God's Spirit in the places we were taught to avoid.

Because salvation isn't about us versus them.
It's not about "fixing" people.
It's about recognizing that *we're all in need*. And that the healing comes when we realize we belong to each other.
I offer to you this musical invitation from **DAWN** **LINK**

The Gospel is not an abstraction.
It's a Wednesday morning prayer in the rain.

It's a plate of food passed across a folding table.
It's a dance in the face of generational trauma.
It's a choice to stay, to serve, to love again.

This is what it means to say: "Today, this scripture is fulfilled."
Not just once in a synagogue long ago.
But now.
Here.
In us.
Among us.
Through us.
This is the Gospel.
And it is very good news.

But also, as the church we have to remember that we are not here to rescue. Jesus already did that.
We are here to remember.

To remember that we belong to one another.
To remember that the center of the Gospel has never been comfort - it's always been connection.

And not just connection to the people we like or understand.
But connection to the ones we were taught to overlook.

So let me say this as clearly as I can:
The church that will thrive in this season will not be the church that tries to attract the marginalized back to the center. It **will be the church that goes to the margins and remembers it belongs there**.

And I know that phrase - "the margins" - gets thrown around a lot.
But it's more than a buzzword.
It's where Jesus always located himself.

Not at the palaces. Not at the podiums.
But with the lepers, the bleeding women, the fishermen, the foreigners, the sinners, the hungry, the poor, the grieving, the forgotten.

To follow Jesus is to go toward the places others avoid.
To listen where others dismiss.
To build relationships where others build walls.

But here's the key - and I want you to hold this closely:
This is not about doing ministry *for* the marginalized.
It is about doing ministry *with* those at the edges - and recognizing that **they are not objects of our compassion. They are subjects of God's liberation.**
It is not about "outreach." It is about equity.
It's not about "helping the less fortunate." It's about building a world where everyone's fortune is bound up together.
Because it is.

Now let's get practical.
Some of you may be familiar with a concept called the **curb-cut effect**. It comes from urban design.

In the 1970s, disability activists in Berkeley, California started fighting for small sloped ramps to be cut into sidewalks - what we now know as curb cuts - so that people in wheelchairs could move safely and independently through public spaces.

At the time, people argued that this was a niche accommodation. That it would cost too much. That it only benefited a very small number of people.
But then something fascinating happened. Once curb cuts were installed, *everyone* benefitted.

Parents pushing strollers. Workers rolling carts.
Travelers pulling luggage.
Kids on scooters. Joggers.

Elderly people with walkers.

A change that was originally designed to support one community ended up making life more accessible for *everyone*.

That's the curb-cut effect.
And I believe it's a kingdom principle.

Because this is what happens when we design from the margins.
When we listen to the voices at the edge.
When we build systems and ministries that meet people in their most vulnerable places - it doesn't just help *them.*
It helps *us all.*

And that leads me to a related framework: **targeted universalism**.

It sounds like a contradiction at first, but it's actually incredibly powerful.

Targeted universalism says: we can hold a universal goal - like dignity, belonging, or safety - and still recognize that different communities face different barriers to reaching that goal.

So instead of pretending we're all starting from the same place, targeted universalism says:
Let's design policies, programs, and practices and minister - that meet people where *they* are - and help us all move toward the same shared vision.

Let me give you a theological translation:
Jesus didn't treat everyone exactly the same.

He didn't prescribe the same steps to the woman at the well as he did to Nicodemus.
He didn't ask the man lowered through the roof to tithe first.
He didn't tell Zacchaeus to leave the tree and then lecture him about budgeting.

He met people in their actual context.

And then he spoke truth and grace and transformation *from there*.

So what if the church did the same?

What if, instead of trying to make people fit into a model we already designed, we let the lived experience of people at the edge shape the model itself? What if your congregation asked:

- Who's not in the room - and why?
- Whose voice shaped this program - and whose didn't?
- Who are we asking to conform - and who are we adjusting for?

What if we stopped asking "How do we get them to come to church?"
And started asking "How do we become church where they already are?"

This is what we try to do at The Dwelling.

It's not always perfect. But it's always real.

We started designing worship that includes testimony from folks whose theology is still evolving.

We started cooking meals with folks who've known real hunger - not because we were "feeding the poor" but because we were feeding each other.

We started our shower ministry - not as a nice extra, but as a core part of the gospel and reminder of our baptismal promises.

And in this kind of community, we don't ask, "How do we keep ourselves safe or comfortable?"
We ask, "What can we learn from the way they love one another?"
We ask, "What does worship look like when the sermon is a shared conversation?"
We ask, "What does healing look like when we're willing to receive, not just give?"

We are part of the same human family - broken and beloved - trying to remember how to be whole together.

There is no ministry at the margins that doesn't begin with proximity.

Not proximity as optics, but as relationship.
Proximity that allows your worldview to be disrupted.
Proximity that changes how you spend your budget, not just your spare time.
Proximity that turns mission statements into shared meals.
And proximity that teaches you that the so-called margins are actually the center of God's attention.

Because Jesus doesn't just *serve* the poor.
He says: **"Blessed are the poor."**

So if **we're serious about following him, we cannot stay in the safe center.**
We must go - and not just go, but stay.
Stay long enough to be changed.
Stay long enough to see the strength of people who were never weak - just miscategorized.
Stay long enough to dismantle the idea that charity is enough, when what's really needed is justice.

And this doesn't mean you have to start a brand-new ministry or reinvent the wheel.
It just means you have to start noticing.

Notice who your building was designed for.
Notice who your liturgy assumes is in the room.
Notice who your leadership team represents - and who it doesn't.
Notice where your resources go - and where they don't.

Then start asking better questions.
And let those questions shape your action.

Because when we build for the people at the edges -
when we cut curbs, when we share power, when we center the least likely - the Spirit

shows up.
And the blessings multiply.
You may think you're designing for a small group.
But in the end, you're building a church that works better for everyone.
Not for.
But with.

Not on behalf. But alongside.
Not as saviors. But as neighbors.

So may we stop building churches that try to make the margins disappear.
And **start becoming the kind of church that understands:**
The margins were never marginal to God.
It was always the starting point.

But building a church *with* people at the margins isn't just about structure or strategy. It's about intimacy.
About proximity that leads to real recognition.

Because at the core of every system we dismantle, every meal we share, every gathering we host-there's a deeper question being asked, sometimes with words, sometimes with silence:
Do you see me? Do you know who I am?

And that's why naming matters.
Because to be named is to be seen.
To be named is to be known.
To be named is to be remembered when the world has forgotten you.

And I want to tell you a story about that-a story about a man we called The Mayor.
We hear the question asked: "What's in a name?"

It's a question that echoes through literature, scripture, and everyday life.

But for those of us who walk with people at the margins-people who are often unnamed or misnamed or entirely forgotten-it's not a rhetorical question.

A name is more than a label.
It's recognition.
It's belonging.
It's being known.

And for one man in our community-a man we called The Mayor-his name was something that, for years, he fought to claim as his own.

Now, let me be clear.
He wasn't elected.
He didn't hold office.
He didn't wear a suit, and he definitely didn't have a campaign slogan-though Lord knows, he always had something to say.

But if you walked the streets of our city, you'd realize quickly:
He was *somebody*.

He was the kind of person who made you feel like you mattered.
He greeted people by name. He remembered your story.

He offered directions, advice, good gossip, or good theology, depending on the day.
He had no official home. No ID. No documentation.

But he had community. And the streets gave him a title:
The Mayor.

It was a name of honor. A name of affection.
But behind that name was a deeper ache:
He had a *real* name.

He had a legal name.
But hardly anyone knew it. And for years, he couldn't prove it.

Because without an ID, he wasn't just invisible to the system-he was locked out of it.
No ID meant no housing.
No ID meant no access to healthcare.
No ID meant no way to get his birth certificate.
And no birth certificate meant… you guessed it: no ID.

It was a vicious cycle.

One that people like The Mayor-people without stable housing, without family advocates, without a spare hundred bucks or a printer or a permanent address-get caught in all the time.

But let me tell you something about The Mayor.
He never stopped fighting.
Never stopped believing he mattered.

And finally-after ongoing red tape, rejection, and holy persistence-The Mayor walked into the DMV, and he walked out as Torin Brown.

That little piece of plastic.
That thing so many of us toss in our wallet and never think about again.

For Torin, it was a triumph.
It was proof.
It was recognition.
It said: *I am who I say I am.*
It said: *I belong here.*

A few months after this, Torin had moved up north, Set up his tent encampment near the river's edge.

One night, a storm came in hard.

The water rose fast.

And our Mayor-the man who'd shown so many of us what real dignity looks like-was swept away and drowned.

But when they found his body-when they pulled him from the river-do you know what they found in his pocket?

That ID.

That precious, hard-won symbol that the world had finally seen him.

And I have to believe that when Torin took his last breath, he knew who he was.
And God knew it, too.

Torin wasn't The Mayor just because we called him that.
He wasn't The Mayor just because people knew his face or his route or his reputation.

Torin was The Mayor because he carried within him a sacred authority.

He was already seen. Already named. Already loved.

Long before the world caught up and gave him recognition, God had already called him by name.

And that's what the church should be about.

Not waiting for the world to validate people.
Not demanding that someone clean up or get "stable" before they're welcomed.
Not requiring proof of worthiness before we extend community.

The Gospel tells us something different.

It tells us that we are *already somebody.*

Already named.
Already loved.
Already enough.

And that's where we begin.

Because when you know someone's name-when you remember it, speak it, hold it in community-something powerful happens.

Naming is not just polite.

It is prophetic.

It is a refusal to let anyone fade into the blur of the background.
It is a declaration that no one is unimportant.

It is the very first act of creation in Genesis-God names the light, the dark, the sea, the sky.

And then gives humanity the responsibility to continue that work: to name and to know and to steward with care.

Torin's story reminds us what's at stake.

Because when the world is telling someone they're nothing,

when bureaucracy is saying "you don't exist,"

when systems are grinding people down to paperwork and policy-

The church must say:

We see you.

We know your name.

You are somebody.

So let this be our call:
To become the kind of church where no one is anonymous.
Where names are remembered, not just recorded.
Where stories are held, not just heard.
Where dignity is restored, not after a form is signed, but the moment someone walks in the door.

Because our faith doesn't begin with achievement.
It begins with identity.

And identity doesn't come from a piece of plastic.
It comes from being made in the image of God.

So what's in a name?

Everything.

WE ARE ONE VIDEO: (3:23)

Once you've seen someone in their fullness-once you've spoken their name with reverence-it changes you.

But it also opens you to something deeper. Something that goes beyond recognition. Because if naming is the beginning of belovedness… resurrection is what happens when belovedness gets its way.

Now, I know "resurrection" can sound like a big, lofty word.

A holy mystery reserved for Easter Sunday and white robes and brass instruments.

And sure-resurrection can look like lilies and hallelujahs and empty tombs.

But more often than not?
Resurrection looks like something far more ordinary.
Far more quiet.
Far more Tuesday.

Let me tell you what I mean.

There are moments in life you never forget.
The sounds.The images.
The smells.
They're forever etched into your senses, becoming an intimate, lived part of your life story and witness.

I remember the physical strength I found to pull him out from under the locked bathroom stall door.

I remember the hard and cold tiles beneath my knees as I did chest compressions to keep him alive.

I remember the labored choking sound of his breathing and the faint sounds of the sirens as EMS arrived.

I remember the fumbling of my hands as I administered several rounds of Narcan, the overdose reversal drug.

I remember the helpless feeling that washed over me as he was taken away and all that was left to do was pray.

But I will also forever remember the feel of cool water that slipped between the cracks of my fingers as I cupped my hand to hold the baptismal waters.

I will forever remember the sight of the small flame that danced on the single beeswax candle leftover from Christmas Eve worship-the candle that proclaims the light of Jesus.

I will forever remember the sweet and small community that gathered, and when asked, "Do you renounce…"-they screamed, "YES!" before we could even finish naming the sin we were renouncing.

That day, I had the deep privilege of baptizing Johnny-a brother who, not long before, was nearly dead under the weight of addiction and overdose.
Under the weight of chest compressions and prayers.

But on that day? There was no death.
Only life.
New life.

New creation.
The visible sign of God's abundant invitation to a new self.

So maybe there *was* death that day-
The death of the old self.
The death of doubt and disconnectedness.
The death of despair that said he wasn't worthy of beginning again.

In that surrender, the weight of death was destroyed by the power of God's gentle water.

Because that's what resurrection looks like.
Not perfection. Not performance.
Resurrection as the next right breath.
The next brave step.
The next small act of hope.

I've seen it when a man who's relapsed-again-shows up anyway. And instead of hiding, he walks into worship holding a bag of chips and says, "I'm sorry I messed up, but I missed you."

I've seen it when a mom who's lost custody of her kids writes them letters she can't send yet-but seals them with prayers and hope that someday, they'll read them and know she never stopped loving them.

I've seen resurrection when a man who once stole from the community is now the one who shows up earliest every Sunday to set up chairs-because he wants to give back what he once took.

Or when a young man who's seen more violence than most adults can bear said, "I think I want to try writing poetry."
And someone handed him a journal with his name written inside.

JARED POETRY VIDEO

Resurrection looks like believing-maybe for the very first time-that you belong.

And it's not always shiny.
Sometimes it's messy.
Sometimes it's slow.
Sometimes it smells like cigarette smoke and spilled coffee.
Sometimes it sounds like off-key singing and unfiltered prayers.
Sometimes it feels like grief, still lingering in the corners.

Every Sunday at The Dwelling we begin our worship with the same song.

I know, that God, my God, God Is good
I know, that God, my God, God Is good
You know that, he brought me
Out of darkness, God Is Good

And then it goes on to say:
God made a way,
put food on my table
put, shoes on my feet
guide my every footstep
God is good

And one Sunday, one of my people was not feeling it.
My sweet Mechelle - deeply known and deeply loved, stood up during our opening song, as the tambourines were going and the dancing was in motion - and yelled, "stop singing, God is not good today." And then she proceeded to walk up to the altar and in once smooth backhanded motion, cleared the entire altar - breaking the chalice and the candle holders. Spilling the elements.

It was absolutely disorienting.
But what happened next is what matters.

The room didn't erupt into a frenzy.
Fear did not take over.
Instead, Cowboy walked up to her, grabbed her hand, and said, "come on baby - let's go have a cigarette."

As they left the room, the community took hold.

James went to the mic and started singing Amazing Grace acapella. And every voice in that room joined.

And as we sang, we cleaned up the shattered pieces.
We replaced the chalice with a stained, but clean, coffee cup filled with grape juice.

Our loaf of bread that had hit the floor and was soaked in the spilled grape juice was replaced with a couple of bagels and were placed on the still intact plate.

The candles were taken from the broken holders, placed directly on the altar, and relit.
And then we played the song again.

I know, that God, my God, God Is good
I know, that God, my God, God Is good
You know that, he brought me
Out of darkness, God Is Good

But **resurrection doesn't need ideal conditions.**
It just needs *one small crack* for the light to get in.

A life of faith is a pattern of grace.
A pattern of love that keeps choosing us even when we don't feel worthy of being chosen. Even when we're bold enough to say that for that moment, God is not good.

The church's job isn't to manufacture resurrection.
It's to notice it.
And To name it.
And To celebrate it.

To stand in awe of it when it breaks through-whether in a sanctuary, a parking lot, a hospital room, a recovery meeting, or a tent.

So here's my invitation to you:

Don't look for resurrection only on Easter.
Look for it on a Tuesday afternoon when someone returns to the table.
Look for it on a Thursday night when someone chooses to call instead of trying to self harm or self medicate.
Look for it on a Sunday morning when someone walks through your doors, looking for nothing more than a second chance.

And when you see it?
Call it what it is.
Say it out loud.
That's resurrection.
That's grace.
That's Jesus, showing up all over again.
Resurrection doesn't only happen once.

So with that I think we then return to this idea and question about **what the church is becoming**.

I want to gift you this:
Becoming something new will almost always feel uncomfortable.
But **just because you are uncomfortable does not mean that you are not safe.**

So if we're going to be a church that lasts, we have to be a church that learns how to live in the stretch of discomfort. A church that doesn't pretend to have it all figured out but shows up anyway.

So as we go from this place, I want to offer you a final reading - a return, really - to the words of Wendell Berry:

> *No, no, there is no going back.*
> *Less and less you are that possibility you were.*
> *More and more you have become those lives and deaths that have belonged to you.*

You have become a sort of grave containing much that was and is no more in time, beloved then, now, and always.

And so you have become a sort of tree, standing over a grave.
Now more than ever you can be generous toward each day that comes, young, to disappear forever, and yet remain unaging in the mind. Every day, you have less reason not to give yourself away.

What a fitting word for the church today.
No, there is no going back.

Not to a version of ministry that made us feel powerful.
Not to a version of faith that ignored pain.
Not to a version of community that excluded anyone who didn't fit.

There is no going back.
And thank God for that.

Because the future God is calling us into is not a recycled past.
It is something new.

Tender. Brave. Unmapped.
And yet, entirely soaked in grace.

You have become - and are still becoming - those lives and deaths that have belonged to you.

The people who have shaped you.
The prayers that have carried you.
The places where you have been broken open and rebuilt in love.

And that becoming -
that holy, messy, unfinished becoming -
is not something to rush through.
It is something to bless.

This is the time.
This is the work.
And you are the church.

Not someday. Not when it's easier.
Not once you've figured it all out.
But now.

Now is the time to remember Torin's name.
Now is the time to bless Johnny's resurrection.
Now is the time to celebrate Mechelle's honesty.

To welcome the off-key singers and the street-corner poets and the prayers that come from the cool of the trenches.

Now is the time to look each other in the eye and say:
"I see you. You are named. You are loved. You are welcome here. You are enough."

Because this Gospel we preach -
this Gospel we live -
doesn't wait for us to be ready.
It simply invites us to begin.

Amen, Amen, and Amen.