

*Rev. Dr. Amanda Brobst-Renaud (Pastor Mandy), Assistant Professor of Theology-*

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*What are your initial thoughts on this conversation? What surprised you? What was most memorable to you?*

- ▶ *Mandy talks about having lived through an “extended wilderness period” while making some transitions. Have you lived through any “extended wilderness periods” in your life? What led you into the wilderness? How did you know you had crossed out of the wilderness?*
- ▶ *Mandy described living in a “season of obedience.” Obedience, honoring God by respecting God’s will and God’s commandments, is a key part of faith. In what ways do you struggle with obedience to God? In what ways are you living out your faith through obedience to God?*
- ▶ *Mandy has been finding renewal in the seasons and regular patterns in creation. What rhythms and patterns in your life have continued as usual in the midst of so much disruption? Where do you look for what’s “regular” and “reliable”?*
- ▶ *Mandy notes that “We get to choose where we give our energy.” Where is a good, life giving place for you to give your energy right now?*
- ▶ *“God and I are often in a fight about God’s lack of clarity in my life.” Do you find this to be the case in your life? What’s your comfort level with “being in a fight” with God? See Genesis 32:22-32 for an example of someone being in a fight with God and what comes from this fight.*
- ▶ *Mandy described discerning God’s path as being like spotlights on a stage: a pool of light, darkness, another pool of light. What’s your current spotlight? What’s the next pool of light you see?*
- ▶ *“If God tells you only what you want to hear, you’re probably not listening to God. If God hates all the same people you do, you’ve probably created God in your own image.” How can we tell if we are trying to make God in our own image? How can we remind ourselves and commit to living as people made in God’s image?*
- ▶ *Mandy mentioned the importance of “doing the things that put me in a place where God can move me, even when I don’t feel like it.” Where is that place for you? How do you get to that place?*
- ▶ *In the Small Catechism, Martin Luther wrote this about the 8th Commandment (You shall not give false testimony about your neighbor): “We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.” How can this insight into God’s word help us in a moment when we are living in a moment when there is so much polarization about current events?*
- ▶ *Mandy encourages us to think about this year not as going out or away from something, but as a time of God leading us through and deeper. What relationship or calling do you sense God is leading you deeper into?*
- ▶ *Mandy commended the congregation by saying, “Your creativity in worship has been incredibly inspiring...keep that sense of creativity.” What good things have come up over the past year that we as a congregation should hold onto and build on moving forward?*

