



Wednesday Prayer

12th Sunday after Pentecost – Holy Wisdom

**Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn her seven pillars.
“Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed.
Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight.”
Proverbs 9:1, 5-6**

This month I have engaged in a Bible study “Just L.I.F.E. (Liberation Is For Everyone!)” by Angela T. !Khabeb. In the first session, titled *Just Wisdom*, she introduces us to the wisdom shared here in the book of Proverbs – wisdom personified as a woman – and exclaims, “Why on earth have so many of us never heard of this before?”

When you think of wisdom, what comes to mind? *Who* comes to mind? For me, I think of wise elders, those who have experienced much and from whom I can gain knowledge and understanding. Another person may think of scholars, even feeling inferior in their presence due to their own lack of higher education. Someone may fall back on traditional gender roles and envision males as holding the greatest wisdom, or those who look most like them, or those who we have given power to in society. Biblical references to wisdom bring us to another understanding, using feminine imagery to present holy wisdom. God provides wisdom that requires no degrees or life experience, wisdom that breaks away from gender and cultural stereotypes, a wisdom rooted in God’s love for all.

Throughout this past year-and-a-half of attending many virtual webinars and trainings, I have often heard the phrase “Nothing for us without us.” Who holds the wisdom? When working for racial equity, are we listening to, learning from and raising up the voices of BIPOC folks? In our work to prevent child sexual exploitation and trafficking, are we listening to, learning from and raising up the voices of survivors? Of youth? When talking with young people about the risks and potential dangers of social media and gaming, are we listening to their experiences and knowledge?

In the creation of Cherish All Children’s guide for youth “Safe and Healthy Relationships”, we convened a focus group of youth. We asked for their feedback on what we had started writing – listening to the wisdom of these teenagers as they shared with openness and enthusiasm. We’re excited for churches to engage with youth using the guide beginning this fall.

Loving God, open our hearts and minds to your holy wisdom. Help us listen to, learn from, and raise up those who in the past we may not have seen or heard in our narrow views of wisdom. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director, and community advocate for racial justice.

*BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color