



**EMBRACING THE
GRACE OF IT**
JANUARY 14TH



**BECOMING
SANCTUARY**
JANUARY 21ST



**CREATING SAFE
COMMUNITIES**
JANUARY 28TH

SANCTUARY

BECOMING SANCTUARY

When we know that company is visiting, we might make some changes; we might need to clean up or make more room. Reflect this week on what it truly means for us to make our own lives spacious enough — safe enough — for others to share in them and find refuge within.

Before we make plans to give sanctuary as a church community, we must actually BE sanctuary. But what does that look like? How does a peaceful place gain peace in the first place? How does a church space differ from a mall? We are attempting to think deeply about our own lives and how they are ready to be shared with those who need real shelter and protection from dark circumstances.

There is a famous cathedral in Barcelona for which Antoni Gaudi made plans and designs to build; it is a recognizable landmark, known for being unfinished. They began construction for La Sagrada Familia in 1882; its design is intricate and particular. They hope to complete this structure by 2026, but this is merely a building. What care, planning and construction in prayer will it take to build, rebuild, and sustain the sanctuaries in our lives?



La Sagrada Familia, 1915

STUDY GUIDE - Week Three

These meetings have been so wonderful. Thank you for your participation. Again this week, we are looking at the personal. Pay close attention to what your own answers may be. We hope you feel safe enough in your group to go even deeper.

[Ephesians 3:11-21](#)

[Colossians 3](#)

Texts for Study

Read and contemplate the following scriptures. How do they inform your personal journaling and group conversation below?:

Ephesians 3:11-21**The Message (MSG)**

11-13 All this is proceeding along lines planned all along by God and then executed in Christ Jesus. When we trust in him, we're free to say whatever needs to be said, bold to go wherever we need to go. So don't let my present trouble on your behalf get you down. Be proud!

14-19 My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth. I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit —not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength—that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in. And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.

20-21 God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to "Become" sanctuary? What does that look like in our relationships - workplaces - congregations - communities? HOW do we BECOME sanctuary?
2. What would you need to change in your life to be more like a sanctuary? What structures would need to come down? Which foundations need firming? What noises need silencing?
3. Are there elements of the scripture above (Ephesians 3) that apply to your journey of becoming sanctuary? Are you running from anything? Is there anything keeping your sanctuary from being completely built?
4. What would the consequences of our being sanctuary look like? What might change in others?
5. What should we be praying about for you in your **becoming** a sanctuary?

Colossians 3:1-14 The Message (MSG)

He Is Your Life

1-2 So if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, *act* like it. Pursue the things over which Christ presides. Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from *his* perspective.

3-4 Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your *real* life—even though invisible to spectators—is with Christ in God. *He* is your life. When Christ (your real life, remember) shows up again on this earth, you'll show up, too—the real you, the glorious you. Meanwhile, be content with obscurity, like Christ.

5-8 And that means killing off everything connected with that way of death: sexual promiscuity, impurity, lust, doing whatever you feel like whenever you feel like it, and grabbing whatever attracts your fancy. That's a life shaped by things and feelings instead of by God. It's because of this kind of thing that God is about to explode in anger. It wasn't long ago that you were doing all that stuff and not knowing any better. But you know better now, so make sure it's all gone for good: bad temper, irritability, meanness, profanity, dirty talk.

9-11 Don't lie to one another. You're done with that old life. It's like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you've stripped off and put in the fire. Now you're dressed in a new wardrobe. Every item of your new way of life is custom-made by the Creator, with his label on it. All the old fashions are now obsolete. Words like Jewish and non-Jewish, religious and irreligious, insider and outsider, uncivilized and uncouth, slave and free, mean nothing. From now on everyone is defined by Christ, everyone is included in Christ.

12-14 So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How are the characteristics from Colossians 3:5-10 & 12-14 made real/alive in your actions today - toward yourself; toward COR and community?
2. What does it look like to be under construction and still provide sanctuary? Is that even possible? Why or why not?
3. What action steps can be taken by you to become more available as sanctuary for yourself; your church family; and community at large?