

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Live Life and Ask Questions

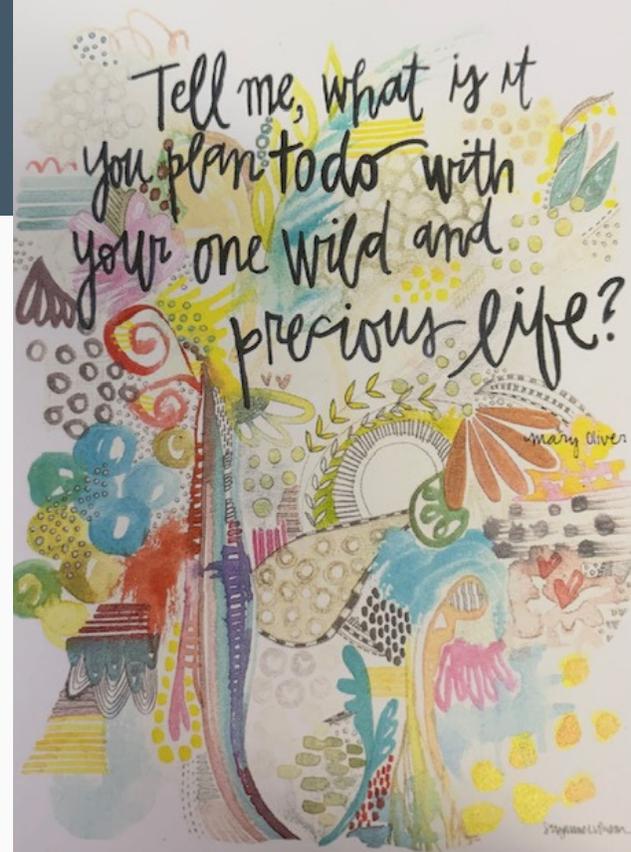
BY KATRINA

Three years ago today the world lost Rachel Held Evans, a gifted theologian and writer. Emma Green writing for *The Atlantic* argues that Evans' legacy is "her unwillingness to cede ownership of Christianity to its traditional conservative-male stewards" and that her "very public, vulnerable exploration of faith forged in doubt empowered a ragtag band of writers, pastors, and teachers to claim their rightful place as Christians." (Green, Emma. *Rachel Held Evans, Hero to Christian Misfits*, *The Atlantic*, 2019.)

Rachel died following an allergic reaction to medication for an infection. Her sudden death at 37 sent shock waves across Christendom and beyond. For those of us with whom her writing resonated, the grief was, and remains, palatable. Every time I read/reread one of her books, I still cannot believe she is no longer physically with us. Ironically Rachel died on May the 4th, when Star Wars fans boldly proclaim, "May the fourth be with you," a play on "May the force be with you." Rachel Held Evans was a force who inspired multi generations of folks with hope and empowered them to unapologetically ask questions.

My current Evans read is *Faith Unraveled: How a Girl Who Knew All the Answers Learned to Ask Questions*. For those who know me, questions are my thing. I ask them all the time. I have been known to ask questions that inspire additional questions and leave a conversation with more questions than answers. In the introduction Evans writes, "Faith can survive anything, so long as it's able to evolve" (p 17) and "When you count each one of your beliefs as absolutely essential, change is never an option" (p 18). I have so many questions, both personal ones and institutional ones. Truth is - as Rachel's words marinate - more questions pop into my head.

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Live Life and Ask Questions (cont'd)

Asking questions and being persons who question are often not compatible with conformity and homogeneous systems. Yet questions, and those who dare to question, are essential for system health and wellness. In questioning, even in questioning faith, growth and system evolution become possibilities.

Higher education is a perfect environment for questions. One could argue that questions are not only expected, they are required. The same can be said for faith. The academy uses terms like faith formation and spiritual formation to describe faith/spiritual developments that occur along the life cycle, many inspired by questions.

My favorite question comes from Mary Oliver. I have art in my office and all over my home and several notecards reminding me of her question, "What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

As the semester comes to a close I invite you to wrestle with Oliver's question. "What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" Life is precious and fragile. Don't wait for your life to begin, or put things on hold until you reach certain milestones. Live life boldly and unapologetically today.

Carpe Diem (Seize the Day... or more literally, "pluck the day because it is ripe" [Luu, Chi. *How "Carpe Diem" Got Lost in Translation*, JStor Daily, August 2019]).

Katrina

Sympathies, Concerns, and Congrats

Our sympathies are extended to:

- **Jay Hamm** (Environmental Services) on the death of his daughter.

For more information about the Spiritual Life Center, including info on student spiritual life groups, go to our webpage - link in the email signature. You can also visit our Linkt.ree (link is in email).

Dates to Remember

Thursday, May 5
8 p.m. in the Dell
MOVIE NIGHT
"Spiderman: Far From Home"
Hosted by Campus Outreach

Sunday, May 8
4:30 p.m. in Snidow Chapel
ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS
Final Mass of the Spring Semester

The Chaplain's Corner is a newsletter published by the Spiritual Life Center (SLC) at the University of Lynchburg. We share campus concerns and updates, spiritual life events and activities, and words for the journey.

If you have a joy or concern you'd like to share, reply to this message, email the SLC office - spirituallife@lynchburg.edu, or call 434.544.8348. We only share with your permission.

Current and previous issues are on the SLC page of the University website - go to Link in signature (www.lynchburg.edu/spiritual-life) and click on "Newsletter."

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