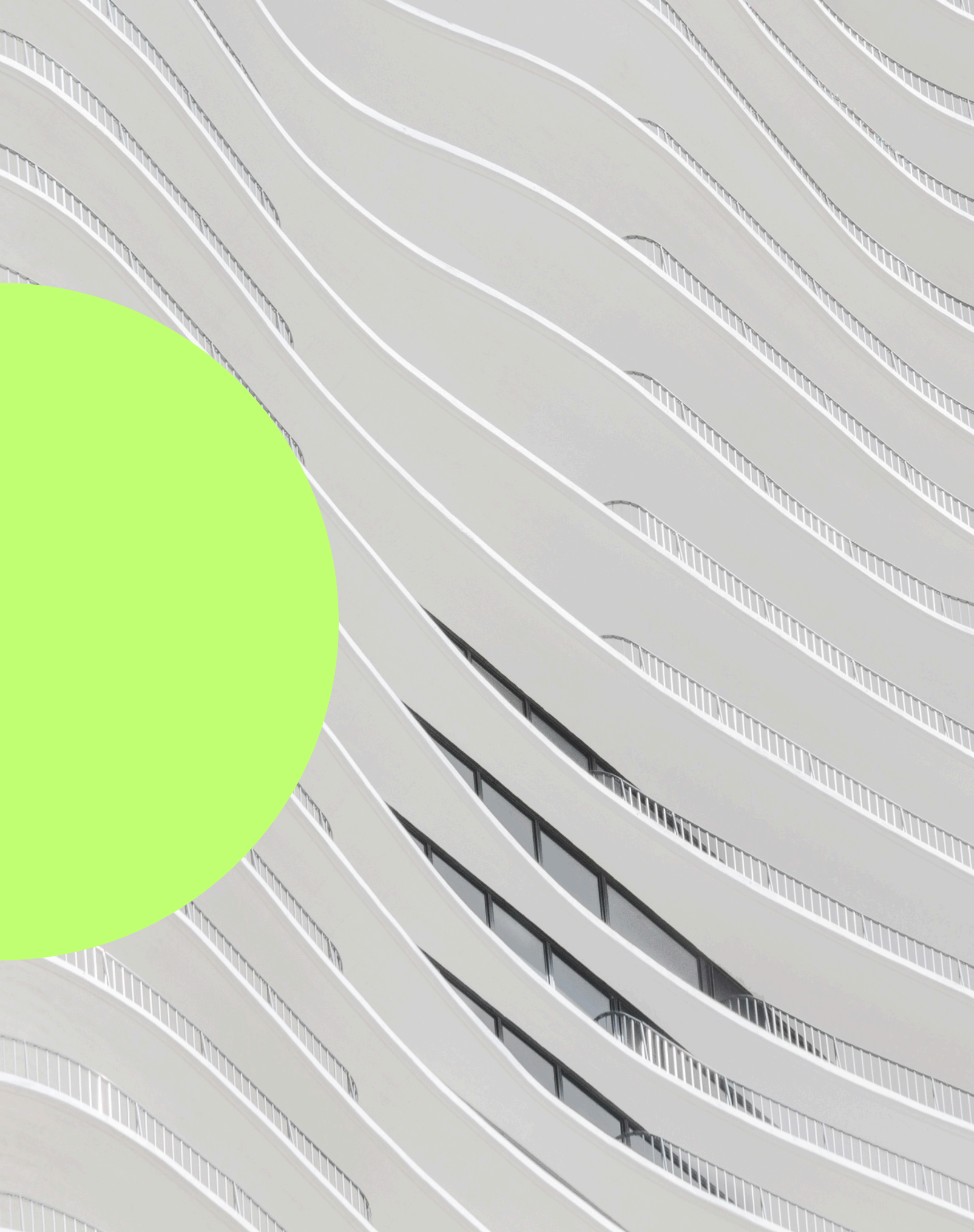




Rev. Emily Flemming
Christ Church United Methodist

Posttraumatic Growth

Review of recent research on cultivating resiliency, experiencing healing and finding hope after profound adversity

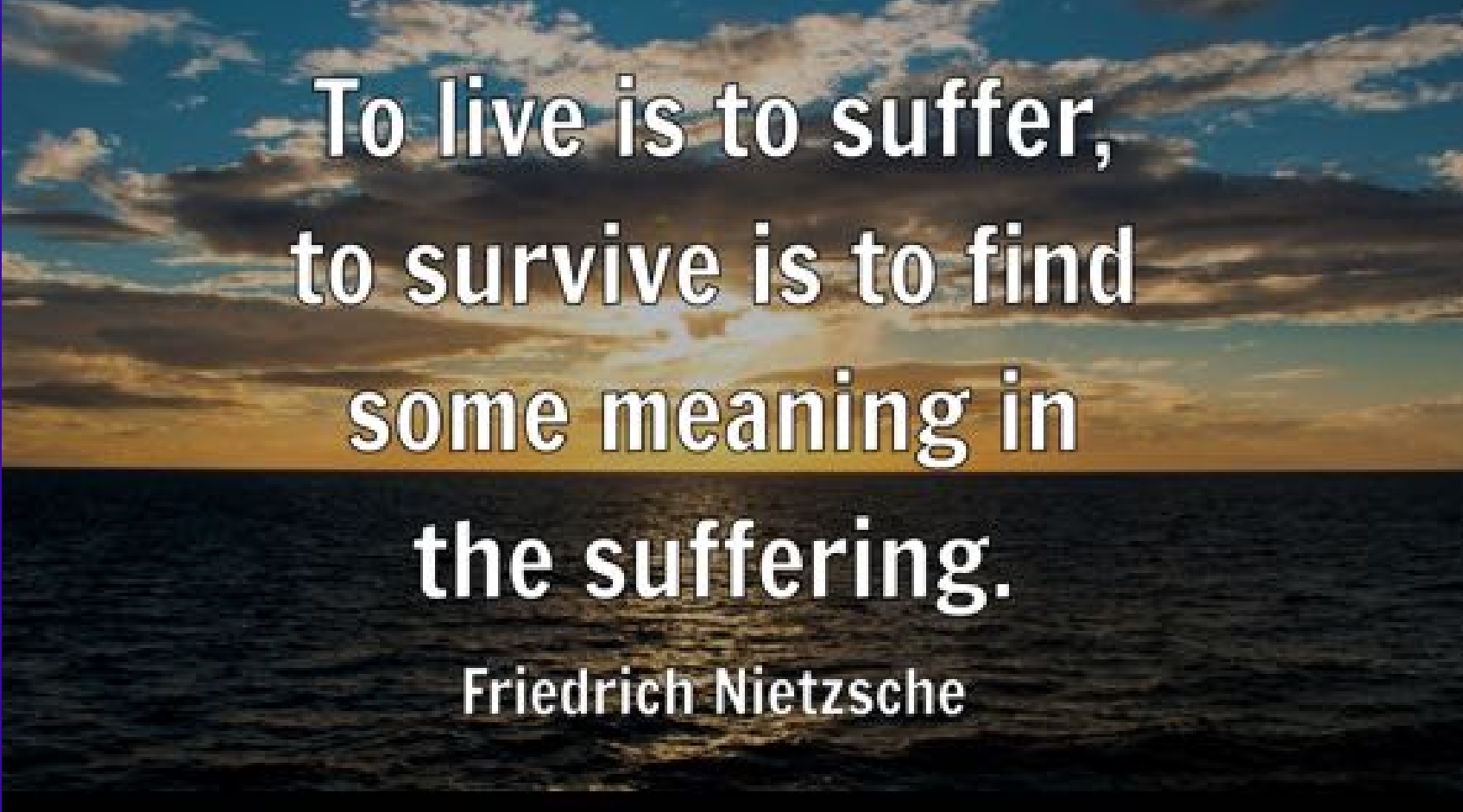




When Disaster Strikes



Severely distressing life events (active combat, grave illness, grief/loss or real or perceived violence) can cause trauma, incl. PTSD (“getting stuck”). Each can also be a turning point/catalyst, shattering previous assumptions & cultivating transformation



To live is to suffer,
to survive is to find
some meaning in
the suffering.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Pain is unavoidable

The struggle is real - but the struggle through pain is also the way forward, a true hope for increased strength or new appreciation for life after suffering. The belief that positive change or transformatonal growth can emerge from suffering is well-established in ancient philosophical and religious traditions (Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, and more).

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)

Speaking of Christ's execution and resurrection, this American theologian and political reformer said in 1937: "Christianity transmutes the tragedy of history into something that is not tragedy."

Billy Graham (1918-2018)

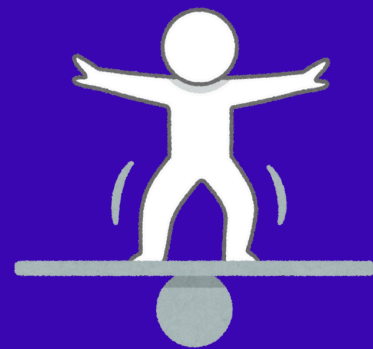
This Southern Baptist evangelist and Civil Rights advocate said in 1981: "Suffering tends to plow up the surface of our lives to uncover the depths that provide greater strength of purpose and accomplishments. Only deeply plowed earth can yield bountiful harvests."

Reynolds Price (1933-2011)

This American novelist and playwright paralyzed with spinal cord cancer said in 1994: "[Trauma forces a person] to be somebody else, the next viable you, a stripped-down whole other clear-eyed person, realistic as a sawed-off shotgun and thankful for air, not to speak of the human kindness you'll meet if you get normal luck."

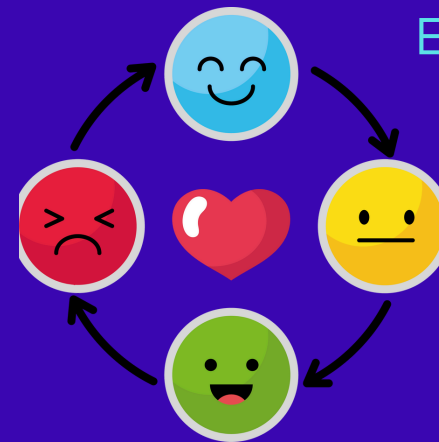
PTG & Resilience

Posttraumatic Growth (PTG) is distinct from, yet often coexists/is connected, with resilience. Resilience is enduring, “bouncing back,” recovering, regaining and returning to “normal.” PTG is both the process of a profound and active psychological struggle to understand suffering after shattered assumptions, and the outcome of that process: transformation



Stabilization

The aftermath of trauma requires initial stabilization, leaning on foundational coping skills, like self-care, consistent sleep, healthy eating, regular exercise and resuming basic routines or activities, even if the usual “joy” remains absent/elusive.



Emotional Regulation

As our fight, flight or freeze response begins to calm down, we can create a safe and validating space by using therapies like cognitive processing, prayer & mindfulness, and other techniques to help regulate our distress.



Deeper Growth Work

The work of reconstruction or rebuilding after disaster includes sitting with suffering (not rushing to heal), focusing on the present, and attempting to make meaning, reframe or rewrite narratives by journaling, storytelling, peer support or communities of faith.

Taking Inventory

The term “PTG” was coined in 1995 by psychologists Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun, after studying Vietnam veterans. They created and published an inventory in 1996 to assess the self-improvement or expansion that an individual undergoes after traumatic events.



**-IT'S-
YOUR
TIME**

Questions for Reflection



- What areas have I experienced growth? What impact is that having on me?
- What areas do I score moderate or low? What is contributing to my experience?
- What do I want to celebrate?
- What is one area I would like to make some adjustments so I can improve myself?

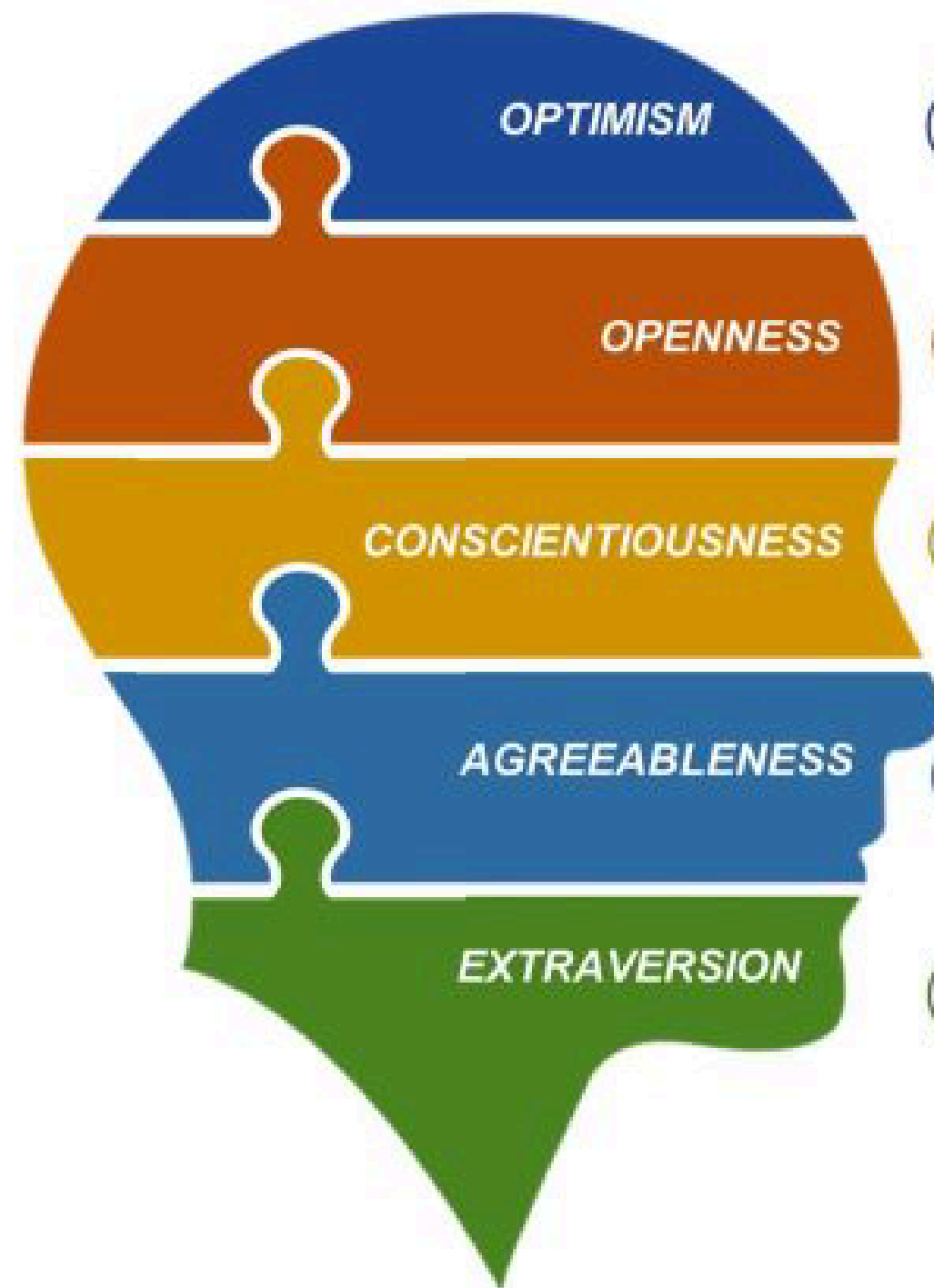


Harvest
After
Hardship

Our November Sermon Series

Email Emily pastor@christchurchcolorado.org

Call or text: 720-445-1905 for more details



Life Orientation & Personality Traits

Favorable for Domains



OPTIMISTS may be better able to focus attention and resources on the most important matters and disengage from uncontrollable or unsolvable problems



Individuals with **OPENNESS** are more likely to be curious, open to new experiences, emotionally responsive, may more readily reconsider their altered beliefs and values



CONSCIENTIOUS individuals tend to be better at self-regulating their internal experience, impulse control, problem-solving, adjusting to stressors and cognitive restructuring



Individuals who are **AGREEABLE** are more likely to seek support when needed and to receive it from others



EXTROVERTED individuals are more likely to adopt problem-solving strategies, cognitive restructuring, and seek more support from others



Some Traits support PTG

Post Traumatic Growth
Domains:



Personal
Strength



Closer
Relationships



Greater
Appreciation
for Life



New
Possibilities



Spiritual
Development