Course J – Dreams and Dreaming in the Bible and in Our Lives Today

Zoom, February 8 – March 15, 2027

Lecturer: Reverend April Yamasaki

What dreams do we have when we're asleep? What dreams or cherished aspirations do we have when we're awake? This course will explore dreams and dreaming in the Bible, with reference to contemporary dream research and a view to what we can learn for our own dreaming today.

Weekly outline

Week 1 – An Overview. An introduction to dreams and visions, and is there a difference? The Bible includes warnings against dreams and positive examples where God speaks through dreams. How can we discern our dreams today? Prophetic visions, Jacob, Joseph, the magi, Pilate's wife.

Week 2 – Living the Dream. Dreams and our sleep cycle: ordinary dreams, lucid dreams, false awakening dreams, nightmares. Dreams when we're awake: aspirations/cherished ideals, daydreams, hallucinations, visions. Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel, Jesus' vision for his ministry.

Week 3 – Living Beyond Our Broken Dreams / Learning to Let Go. Broken dreams are a reality of human life. How do we cope with our broken dreams and live beyond them? How do we discern when to let go of a dream, and what practices help us to let go? Naomi, Job, Daniel, Solomon.

Week 4 – Learning to Dream Again. When we've set aside a dream or experienced a broken one, how can we make room for a new dream? As we learn to dream again, what is the role of prayer and other practices? Jesus in the desert, Saul/Paul, Psalms.

Week 5 – Living the Dream Revisited. A case study of Joseph, the dreamer (Genesis 37–46). How did Joseph's dreams and the way he understood them and lived them out change over time? The conclusion to our series and what we can learn for our own dreaming today. Joseph, Jacob, Anna, Zechariah.

About the Lecturer

Reverend April Yamasaki served for 25 years as the lead pastor of a growing congregation, then felt called to focus on her writing ministry. She now serves as resident author with a liturgical worship community, editor of Rejoice! daily devotional magazine, a spiritual formation mentor with Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, and often speaks in churches and other contexts. Her books include Sacred Pauses, Four Gifts, and Hope Beyond Our Sorrows. In these and other ways, she is living out her childhood dream of becoming a writer. At the same time, with the sudden death of her husband and in other circumstances of life, she is well acquainted with delayed, disappointing, and broken dreams. To learn more, please see AprilYamasaki.com.