

WOC UMW Lenten Study for Sunday, March 6, 2022 4:00 p.m. ET
Tattered and Mended Chapter 10: Broken Furniture Refurbishing: Pre-Art
Prepared by Cecelia Long

4 minutes	Greetings/Introduction of Tech Person and other Facilitators Using Speaker View when with large group and using Gallery View when in small groups Review RESPECT Guidelines
3 minutes	Centering Time
5 minutes	Scripture Isaiah 61:4 (rebuild ancient ruins) Scripture Amos 9:11 (wall up the breaches) Scripture 1 Chronicles 26: 27 (repair the house of the Lord) Scripture 1 Kings 18:30 (fix the altar)
5 Minutes	Overview of Introduction to <u>Tattered and Mended The Art of Healing the Wounded Soul</u>

Cynthia Ruchti says that People are tattered. Some might say “Then let’s make tattered fashionable.” But God invites us to mend. Tattered is not an irreversible condition. It is not a label that indelibly marks us. What happens to us at the hands of others or as a result of our own poor judgment and mistakes can leave us battered and frayed on the soul level. God invites us to mend at God’s artistic hand and eye.

Centuries old artwork, pottery hidden under pounds of earth, moth-eaten sweaters, furniture that is broken and sagging----once vital health---a promising relationship---the job you thought perfect for you---the friendship you hoped would never end---the loss of your soul mate---Your questioning soul-----Are these beyond hope?

A popular approach is to adapt to the tatteredness and resign ourselves to the hopelessness of it all, which not only keeps us broken but convinces us that healing is impossible---or worse, unnecessary.

An invitation from God invites us to watch the progress of God’s intricate, meticulous, compassion rich artistry. It is an invitation to lose our fears of the process and engage with God for our mending.

Have we become comfortable with our tatteredness, our brokenness? Rather than resign ourselves to desperately cling to fragile shreds of recovery, rather than discard our broken, threadbare, scarred relationships, we can rediscover the art of mending. Through these sessions during Lent we will share the insights that Ms. Ruchti has for us.

In the various sessions, we will learn how God can work with us. we read how individuals use their art to change or mend or make an object and to have it more valued. Or certainly more beautiful in the eyes of the beholder.

I invite you now to go into breakout rooms where you will do the following:

1. Select a facilitator and someone to record.
2. Give introductions by each person
3. As you heard the scriptures, you heard that ruins were rebuilt or damages repaired. A. What images of your own life were brought to mind? B. Have you ever had something that was broken? C. What did you do with it? D. Did you try to mend or repair it? Did you throw it away? E. How did you feel by the action you took? (Everyone is encouraged to participate.)

12 Minutes Breakout Rooms

6 minutes Come back together and share responses

10 minutes Broken Furniture Refurbishing and Process

When I volunteered to be one of the facilitators for the Lenten Study, I had all kinds of ideas about what I wanted to do. I originally intended for you to hear from a person who fixes broken furniture. I even made phone calls to several to invite them to share the process and what makes them do what they do. As I began to search around for someone I realized that they needed a lot longer than 10 minutes to share the process of refurbishing or fixing broken furniture. The process takes a long time depending on the depth of brokenness.

Instead, I began to think about the furniture in my own house and how one piece in particular became wobbly or on the verge of not staying together. This piece of furniture is my own dining room table. It is a wooden table that is more than 40 years old. It did not belong to anyone in my family, but has been in my possession for much of its life. I received it when I lived in Evanston Il when some dear friends were preparing to move to Atlanta, Georgia. They were planning to start with new furniture in Atlanta and told me the pieces they were not taking with them. Their 20 year old dining room table and 6 chairs and a buffet were not going with them.

I said I would take these pieces because I did not have a formal dining room set. In fact, I gave my informal table and chairs to a friend who was moving to Canada.

But let me not get distracted. I have had this dining room table for 31 years. The table is scarred and the finish is coming off. The table is wobbly because the wood screws have worn down over the years. I sit at the table daily. I have a few meals here, but this table has become my work table. I keep my lap top on the table most of the time. I intended to have someone refinish the table and chairs and make the table legs sturdier. But instead, I have not done it. I

have left it as it has become. I love this table, and my cat Gabby loves it too. In fact, I'm told that when I travel, she walks across the table and plops down on its cool surface.

I am sure that somebody looking at my table might see Pre-Art. They would see the scratch marks and the unevenness of the finish of the table as being artistic. I do not see that. I still see the people who gave the table to me and I remember our meals and conversations we shared at this table. I also see the table as my work area and I do not want to change my work area.

I understand from reading, Cynthia Ruchti, that Pre-Art is being able to see the other side of any object and of persons which is beyond the reality of what is in place at the moment. A creative person might turn a crib into a love seat. Creative persons or God will thrive on discovering a place for their creativity to land. I know that some creative persons I know would change my table into a beautiful piece of art. But then, I would lose my work area!! I would not want to mess up a beautiful piece of furniture.

Part of the invitation to mend our tatteredness when so many around us are resigned to leaving things tattered, is God calling us into a creative process together with God. God mends artistically and invites us to create with God---be co-creators. Every broken thing we make beautiful is an investment in our healing.

God created humanity in God's own image. God created women and men in the divine image, God created us all. Genesis 1:27.

Ruchti says that the act of creation draws God near or draws us nearer to God. That makes perfect sense to me. There is healing when we are in God's presence. No wonder so many wounded souls find the hope for which they are searching during the process of singing, or journaling, or worshipping, or sitting and meditating, or looking at the bird sitting in the tree top. Hope hangs very thick in God's presence.

As I researched furniture refurbishing, I did learn that there are differences and similarities between furniture restoration and complete refurbishing. Restoration is generally light cleaning and cosmetic repairs, like sanding away the scratches, or repolishing the wood or a very good cleaning of the fabric on furniture.

Refurbishing furniture takes a lot of time and effort. It means getting down to the very original base of the item and starting from the beginning by sanding it down to the original piece. Then add the stains or colors that are more original.

God works with us in the state we are in as we are in the healing process. We do not have to have a new body, but we have to be willing to let go of our harmful practices and hurts that have kept us from growing and becoming more at peace with ourselves. With God's help we can be restored and be freed up to move ahead.

- 12 minutes Breakout Rooms
 Facilitator leads group in discussing the following:
 Think of your experiences with broken relationships.
 How did you engage with the person or people involved?
 Were you able to mend the relationship or give any advice for mending?
 Did the relationship change?
 How did you feel before and after the relationship changed?
 What made the relationship worth mending?
- 5 minutes Popcorn Feedback from breakout rooms (Random Room #'s)
- 5 minutes Closing Words and Prayer

Our God stands by us through everything that we encounter. Our God is the one who hovers over us with a heart of compassion itching to make art out of our messes, to stitch together our gaping wounds and present us to the world as evidence of God's artistry.

Faith tells us that God sees the art that isn't yet born in us.

God has prepared things for those who love God that no eyes have seen, or ear has heard or that haven't crossed the mind of any human being. 1 Corinthians 2:9.

Creativity itself ---or art in our wounded seasons---changes things. What we write in our journals while we go through crises, or when we are trying decide how best to say something to someone who is hurting. Even if our outcomes do not change things as we would want, we are changed for having spent the time working on an outcome. I hear people say, "I do not have all the answers, and I do depend on the input from others to help me know myself better." While we do not possess all the creative inspirations, we should be open to talking to others or listening to those who are willing to share with us. We should be willing to use words of songs and poems to strengthen us and to give us inspiration to move ahead.

We may not understand all that takes place in mending our tatteredness and that is ok. The fact that we may not know why or how we are in a different place but we know that we feel different and are more at peace. We can now offer supportive words to others and be a guide for them. We are all raw or rough forms of art---waiting to be remade and brought to a state of being more complete. We thank God for being the artist and using us as a subjects to be mended and made whole.

Let us Pray: Dear God, We confess our need for you today. We need your healing and your grace. We need hope restored. Forgive us for trying to fix our situations all on our own.. You see where no one else is able to fully see or

understand. You know the pain we've carried. The burdens. The cares. You know where we need to be set free. We ask for your healing and grace of you the Master Artist to cover every broken place. Every wound. Every heartache. Thank you that you are able to do far more than we could ever imagine. We reach out to you, and know that you are restoring and redeeming every place of difficulty. We lift prayers for all who are in the midst of war and beg for your being with them in their hour of need. We pray for an end to war. In Jesus Name. Amen.