>> McKenzie Stribich: I am going to start while David is getting his camera figured out. Welcome, everybody. I'm really, really pleased that you could join this Bible study put on by St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Long Beach, California in partnership with RespectAbility. My name is McKenzie. As I've said, I am a National Leadership Apprentice in the Faith Inclusion and Belonging department at RespectAbility. This collaboration came to be through my passion for disability inclusion in all spheres of life including in my beloved parish of the last 10 years. I have been at St Luke's since I was 21 years old. You do the math, I'm 31. And during that time I have found my voice as an advocate for disabled people like myself. This advocacy has been born out of my own experience as a disabled person in various faith communities through the years. My apprenticeship with RespectAbility has given me the tools, the resources, and the support to help organize this event in collaboration with my priest, Jane Gould, and my friend and fellow parishioner and our fearless leader today, David Tabb Stewart. St. Luke's, as a justice-loving place that aims to create space for all marginalized people has been a wonderful home to me as a disabled person. It's my desire to see such welcome as I've experienced ripple through all faith communities, which is why we're here today. I would like to thank my supervisor, Shelly Christensen, especially for encouraging me to bring my work back to my church home. And with that Shelly is going to give a brief introduction to RespectAbility, so Shelly it's all yours.

>> Shelly Christensen: Thank you McKenzie. Can you hear me okay?

>> McKenzie: Yes.

>> Shelly: Oh so good. I'm experimenting like David with technology. I'm Shelly Christensen. By way of introduction I often say that is "Christensen" the Jewish spelling. So I come from the Jewish tradition and it's interesting because when when I was waiting to get on all of a sudden some music started playing from my phone and I thought, "Wait where is that coming from?" And it just was like appeared out of nowhere and it was, it was Psalm 133: "Hineh ma tov uma na'im / Shevet achim gam yachad" "How good it is that we are all here together in this space." And it was sung by the Abayudaya Jewish community of Uganda. That's a recording that that I had found and I've had opportunity to speak and meet some, of some of the community members there so... It's a an honor to be here tonight. I want to thank I want to thank St Luke's, Jane, and I want to thank David for--bringing McKenzie in to create something that wasn't there in the space, and and that's what RespectAbility is about. We're a national non-profit organization and we were founded about 10 years ago. Faith inclusion has always been a component of RespectAbility's work. There are four pillars of the work that we do in the, in the disability community. One is entertainment news media and that is really a very dynamic part of the organization. It's working with the studios, the directors, filmmakers, actors, and technicians to ensure that people with disabilities are portrayed accurately in films, in television and also have opportunities to to work in the field We are, our Policy and Workforce Development team is constantly working in the policy area to ensure that people with disabilities have, again, can live the lives of their choosing and that policy supports that. Our leadership team, and Ben is, Ben Spangenberg, is our fearless leader for the National Leadership Apprenticeship Program, and part of that leadership team trains upcoming leaders, early career professionals, and people who aren't so early in their careers to work in the various departments at RespectAbility. We also have a National Speakers Bureau as part of leadership. And then that brings us to Faith inclusion and Belonging and that is the department that I'm leading and it is the work of a lifetime. I have a long history of working in faith communities and interfaith and different and multi-faith areas. And it's so inspiring to me to be able to work with McKenzie and Gabriella to be able to bring these, these ideas and this passion and to share that passion for inclusion and belonging for all people with lived experience of disability, mental health conditions, and those who love them to belong, truly belong to the community of faith that one chooses and to participate in the ways that one wants to participate. A very important part of course of all this is our theology and interpreting our theology. And so I, on that note, I'm going to turn it over to Reverend Jane.

>> Reverend Jane Gould: Sure. Thank you Shelley and thank you for encouraging this sort of seed of an idea that McKenzie and I had on one of our conversations around how do we move forward at St. Luke's in terms of disability concerns and particularly as a faith community that has chosen to make becoming Beloved Community central to its mission. What does it mean to be a Beloved Community that fully embraces those with disabilities. And we're all learners on this journey and part of where McKenzie and my conversation went was around our sacred texts are such a mixed bag here because McKenzie will periodically send me texts, only occasionally during worship, when we're reading something, and, you know blindness or lameness are seen as signs of sin. You know, used as images for lack of faith. And then of course we realized, you know, we have an expert in that arena who is actually a member of our congregation. So mostly I get to sit here in the place of being grateful to RespectAbility for providing the impetus and space for this gathering and grateful to members of St. Luke's, MaKenzie and David Stewart, that we actually have a capacity to invite our own people and the broader community into this conversation about where are our sacred texts and our traditions assets as we seek to become Beloved Community in relationship and in community with those who are disabled, and how are there obstacles that get in our way? And so with that, what I will say about David Stewart is I'm going to mostly let him introduce himself, but Dave, the people who expect Dave to show up pretty much most days and pay him would be Cal State University, Long Beach where he is a member of the Religious Studies department, has been chair of that department um but I think for our purposes, the sort of main research focus that Dave had in his career is on the body and biblical law. And so he takes account of disability and ability, communicable disease, gender, ritual purity, and sexuality. He's also written extensively on LGBTQIA plus interpretation of the Bible. And these interests actually rather than starting as academic ones as so often happens with folks Dave did kind of a activism walkabout before he went to the academy with extensive involvement in peace and justice work, homelessness, and disability rights. And so he brings both the scholar and the activist to his teaching with us over the next five weeks. And so, thank you Dave for being willing to share with St. Luke's and with RespectAbility your talent and your time. and I will just say what I didn't do. Which is because we have captioning and we have Spanish language interpretation we should try not to speak in really fast long sentences.

>> David Tabb Stewart: Okay, well that's what I'll try and do then is not to speak fast So I am Dave, so if you can call me Dave as opposed to something else, that's fine and I'll just add to what Jane said that when my wife and I found out that our daughter had an intellectual disability when she was four years old, that that became a kind of key moment in my life and it was what led me into disability rights advocacy. And there was a lot to do I discovered, in that realm. And also, later when I went back to school to do graduate work I discovered that there were a lot of things that the Bible said about disability that were surprising and this became one of my interests, scholarly interests, so look at that. And also because it had a kind of practical dimension to it that many people had misunderstandings about what the Bible had to say. And we all know that the Bible, whether loved or not loved, is an important cultural influencer in our society, and that it's useful for us to know what the Bible has to say. I can't promise you that everything that it says about disability you'll find uplifting but I think that some things are actually. And so I'll be sharing some of those things. And in terms of the intellectual or academic side, one of the things that got me kind of riled up was when I discovered in a book that was called The History of Disability written by a French author Henri-Jacques Stiker, S-T-I-K-E-R that he began with this sort of horrible example suggesting that the stigmatization associated with disability was precisely the same as associated with ritual impurity in the Bible. And actually he didn't even specify that it was ritual and purity. But he suggested that any kind of impurities such as that associated with menstruation or touching corpses, or eating meat that was forbidden, or eating meat that wasn't properly slaughtered and forth, all of those things where... disability was in the same category as that. And what that got me going on because of the time I was, my focus was on the book of Leviticus, which is the third book in the Torah, and the third book in the Hebrew Bible which actually ultimately became kind of my favorite book in the Bible. I don't know how many people that's true of, but it was for me. And I ended up studying with a fantastic scholar who was the world's Mr Leviticus, Jacob Milgrom. So what I wanted to do then was go back and my instinct was of course this wasn't true and that where Stiker began was complete misunderstanding about biblical categories. So behind one of the things, the structures, that's underneath the surface of biblical books sometimes is the structure that it has for ideas and the organizing category for disabilities in the Bible is something called "mumin." That's M-U-M-I-M. It's a "mum," M-U-M. And a mum is, sometimes the word is, sometimes translated "blemish," which I think is also not a good translation. But it does point to a visical... a physic— a visible, physical...that's how I got "visicle"... a visible physical matter of the body. So something is visible, something is physical to other viewers of the body. But not everything that might be visible and perceived in our own society today as being a disability counted as a disability within the biblical framework. Anyway, the category of mumim or blemishes is entirely different from the category of ritual impurities, and the two don't intersect. They don't come together at all. Ritual impurities are a different matter that can impair the priests in the Bible, or other people in the tradition from doing certain kinds of ritual acts. And the Bible had kept the priests from offering sacrifices on the altar. But it was only a temporary impediment. Or we could, I suppose we could say it was a kind of disability. But it was only a temporary impairment that could be quickly resolved in most cases by washing and laundering, just waiting until sunset for one day. And then the person was ritually cleansed and could go about their business. But mumim were things that permanently disabled priests-- not all Israelites--but permanently disabled priests from carrying out their office. So the whole subject of disability comes up first really around the question of can priests perform their duties or not. Now for people and priestly families, even if they had one of these mumin, they were still able to eat the food from the sacrificial altar which was the priest, the gifts to the priests for their service--the gifts to their family for their service. And so they could still eat the priestly food or the sacred food--the sacred donations. As for the everyday Israelite, we'll get to that on maybe our third talk. The disabilities mentioned in the Bible affected every day Israelites a little bit differently than they affected priests. And of course Moses himself is the focus tonight was a Levite, so he was in the family that--out of the clan that eventually had all of the priests. His brother Aaron was over all of the priests, and so this was of great concern. Now one of the things that I've just glanced at as we were sort of talking was the fact that the approach that I'm taking is really called a cultural disability approach, which is different from a, say a medical disability approach where we get a medical diagnosis, which is what struck me when what happened when I first learned that my daughter had a disability is it was I was talked to about it in medical terms. But a cultural approach is a little bit more subtle in some ways. It recognizes that within different cultures and different places and at different times what people consider disabilities differ. And as a matter of fact if I was using a kind of cultural definition of disability, one of the things that I would say about it is that it's the culture actually forms our ideas about what things are disabling, that disability develops as a product of the ways that a culture sees or uses physical differences. So I think it's time for a joke now. So I'm going to tell you a joke the ancient Hittites had. So the ancient Hittites were part of the contemporary world with the ancient Israelites. And even some of the people in the Bible are identified as Hittites although I'll just tell you a secret--they weren't actually Hittites they were Neo Hittites. This is putting on my pedantic hat now. But anyway in a myth called "The Sun God and the Cow and the Fisherman," but the fisherman doesn't come into the joke. So in this myth of the Sun God and the Cow, the Sun God was in heaven and looked down and saw an absolutely beautiful cow. A fantastically beautiful cow. And so they got together. The cow became pregnant. The cow had a calf. The cow turned around and looked at her calf and then turned her eyes back up to heaven to speak to the Sun God and said, "Look! What kind of a calf is this?? This is a two-legged calf!" Okay so these jokes aren't as good as they, they might seem like. But anyway the idea here of course is that if you're going to be a cow having only two legs is a disability right. So it's a cow disability to have two legs. But obviously for us it's a an advantage to have two legs. So this is the same way with disabilities. Some disabilities offer you certain advantages. And any of you that might have read Temple Grandlin—Grandin--who talks about about autism, her own autism. She talks about how her autism slows down her perceptions of things and she's able to see things that other people aren't able to see, thus making her kind of the perfect person to work on why animals get spooked. Whether walking through cattle shoots or whatever she's able to take the place of a cow and figure out why the animals are getting spooked and not moving forward. And so she has this special ability that comes along with what others would perceive as a disability. And of course if we were talking to people of the Deaf community with a capital D, the Deaf Community, then they would also talk about Deaf culture as their own culture. So the same thing here. The same thing in the Bible. We're talking about about a particular culture and how it views disabilities. So the surprise with Moses, because Moses, especially if you have the Charlton Heston version of Moses in the Ten Commandments, this is not the Moses that the Bible presents. This is, there's a different Moses there. And this Moses, when he is going along and sees the Burning Bush when he's about 80 years old and suddenly stops and says, "Huh you know I think I'm going to go turn aside and see this great sight." It's like seeing a sign that says "Yosemite this way." If you decide to go look at Yosemite. So the same thing. He decides to go look at it. And then he discovers that there's a voice that's coming out of it that's introducing God's self to him and he's told that he's given a mission of what he wants, what he needs to do. Now I'm gonna be daring here and see if I can share screen. Op! Can the host enable screen share? We'll see if this is going to work. Because what I want to do is I want to show you a passage in the Bible instead of just reading it about loud to you. But I'll read, I'll do both. Oh look I can do it now. Okay so I'm now sharing. And it says here that you're able to see it, so it should say "The Bible and Disability: Moses the Disabled Leader." and I'm going to pull this up so it doesn't block. Okay so I'm going to be daring again and actually run the slideshow. Ah! Okay! So it says that you're able to see it. If anybody can't see something as we go along just please tell me. So the story of Moses of course begins with Miriam when she helps the daughter of Pharaoh take Moses out of the River Nile and in essence adopt him and raise him up. So the story of Moses begins as, in his infancy when he is not able to take care of himself. And 80 years later suddenly we come to the excitement of his scene, the burning bush. And in this particular image that we're looking at, Moses is looking at a bush where flames are coming out. And at the top and among the flames with black fire on top of the white fire of the flames is the Divine name, which is covered up by the transcription message here. I'll move that away. So the Divine name is over here. And at the burning bush Moses is given instructions. And now I see that perhaps this was a mistake, because I have frozen up. Okay. Op! No here we go. Just move slowly is all. So this is after the Divine Being tells him that he wants him to go and deliver the people out of Egypt. Moses said to the Lord, "Oh my Lord, I've never been eloquent, neither in the past, nor even now that you have spoken to your servant. But I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." So in, if we were to translate the Hebrew a little bit more idiosyncratically, or maybe just a little bit more literally, he's saying I have a heavy, I have heavy speech, and I have a heavy tongue. Or sometimes this is translated as a slow tongue. So I have a slow tongue, a heavy tongue. And the Lord said to him, "Well who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seen or blind? "It is--is it not I, the Lord? Now I will be with your mouth." So he says, well listen I can't, I still can't do it. And God gets angry at him and says, well I'm gonna, okay I'm gonna give you Aaron as your accommodation here. But I want to go back and think for just a minute about these terms that are used. So I've put up here a kind of translation along with the trans-- what's called a transliteration where I've taken the Hebrew letters and put them into Latin letters. So heavy mouth, heavy tongue, [inaudible] disability. And the Divine Being says back to him, God says back to him, look you know, who is it that's made someone who's mute, who's mute, who's made Deafness, who's made the perceiving, or the open--the word there— "piqqeakh"--means "open." And in the translation I had there it translated as"seeing," but actually it means something more like "perceiving," and can really refer to all of the disabilities that are mentioned here: muteness, deafness, blindness. And its opposite as open-mouthed, open-eared, open-eyed... All of these seem to be...God is--seems to be treating all of these as disabilities in a sense. And the way we know--one of the ways that we know this is that all of these words in Hebrew, "illem," "kheresh," "piqqeakh," "iwwer"-- all of them follow the same noun form, which is a just to be technical, is it a "qittel" noun form. So, well, we're pressing forward. So the thing is is that the qittel noun form is an noun form that's just used for disability words. And the same noun form and--I don't know, is this another joke? The same noun form is used for seeing, hearing, and by implication, being able to speak. The same noun form subsuming all of those under the idea of openness. Of open-mouthed, open-eared, open-eyed. And so sometimes I wonder here if this is the equivalent to an ancient Israelite joke, where you say all of these things are like on the same level. And of course if for a moment we think about the Divine Being and the plenitude of the Divine Being, the greatness of the Divine Being, the power of the Divine Being, then from that kind of distance and perspective human abilities and disabilities might just be exactly on the same level and hardly different in any way. So he consents to give Moses an accommodation which is his brother Aaron. And Aaron is the guy that's going to go help him to speak to the people. And so I'm going to stop sharing that for a moment and-- Moses is ready to go. He's given a charge now that's--he needs to go back to Egypt and to deliver various messages. So and sometimes I think that the Divine Being has a sense of humor because now here the person with the speech impediment is made the prophet who has to speak to everybody. He's going to have to speak to Pharaoh and later we find out not only he speaks to Aaron but he has to speak to the people, and he has to speak to the sons of Aaron. So he becomes a public speaker-- despite whatever this particular impediment that he has is. And so the story of Moses is an extremely rich story full of all kinds of incidents and obstacles that get in his way. But the part of his story that appeals to me is the next part of the story where he adapts to and is slowly drawn out by the Divine Being to work around his speech impediment. And we find it in the stories of the different plagues. So you remember that there were ten plagues that were brought against Egypt. And these ten plagues of course are remembered at Passover, the Passover seder. So Jews every year remember the ten plagues of the seder dinner, pour out a drop of wine to remember each of the ten plagues and the suffering, reminding them of the suffering that the Egyptians also went through. But in the first plague God comes to Moses and says, now listen what I want you to do is I want you to go say to Aaron what you're going to when you go talk to--what you're going to say when you go talk to Pharaoh and what you're going to do. And what you're going to do is you're going to take the staff that Moses had that he'd been using apparently helping him with his sheep and helping him to walk around. So there's even a hint that he has a staff, that there's another bodily impairment. Perhaps he also has a little bit difficulty in walking as an 80 year old. So we're going to take the staff and you're going to give it to Aaron and Aaron is going to have to hold this staff out. So Moses and Aaron are going to be working together. He's going to hold the staff out for the first plague that is going to be delivered. And as a result of this they knew exactly this Moses and Aaron go and he holds out his staff and the result of this, of this is the first plague. So everything has gone okay. So this begins in Exodus chapter seven, and then in chapter 8, 9, 10, and 11 we have the story. In the second plague we have this this plague of gnats that is--alright sorry--the second plague we have first we have the plague of blood and then we have a second plague, and in the second plague Moses and Aaron go together and Aaron does all the hard work. And the third plague we have Moses and Aaron going together and this is the plague of gnats. Gnats are going to be brought out upon the land. And this time Moses actually is the one that holds the staff. So before this Aaron was doing all the hard work. He was the one that was holding the staff and over the waters that turned to blood. And now Moses is the one that's holding out the staff. So we see this kind of little tiny step where Moses isn't leaning on the staff. And he hasn't given up the staff to Aaron to do good work but he's also using the staff then. And so on. And then at the fourth plague we, have another change. This time Moses and Aaron are no longer working as a team. It seems like that once Moses was able to hold out the staff on his own that he no longer needed the full set of accommodations that Aaron was giving him. And so now he just goes directly to Pharaoh and talks to Pharaoh. And forecasts the next plague of flies. And he doesn't do anything—there's no work with the staff now. There's no holding out of his hand instead of the staff. Instead, at the dividing just says it. And at the fifth plague God comes to him and says, "Moses, I want you to go talk to Pharaoh again." And in the fifth plague he does not do anything except go and tell Moses what the plague is going to be. And God does all of the work of the plague. But in the sixth plague we go back to Moses and Aaron working as a team, and Aaron acting as a kind of accommodator [inaudible]. So you notice that in plagues four and five, he seemed to be able to have sufficient confidence to speak with his impediment to Pharaoh who was--it would be like going and speaking to President Biden or some years ago going and talking directly to president Trump. You would have a sort of awe about that, wouldn't you? And so of course he knew Pharaoh apparently because he'd lived in Pharaoh's household. But he had to go now and tell Pharaoh this message. But at the sixth plague God instructs Moses and Aaron and instructs Aaron in particular, take this dust from the ovens and have Moses himself with his own hands throw it up in the air. And so in this plague we have Moses again, the 80-year-old acting and throwing up the dust into the air with his own hand. And so Aaron is there to offer any assistance if it were needed, but in this case Moses is able to act on his own and throw the dust in the air and it turns to flies. And at the-- It turns, I'm sorry, into the plague of darkness. At the seventh plague we come to the plague of hail. And in this one God just speaks to Moses directly. But he tells him to take his hand and his staff and hold it up in the air. But of course Moses had his own mind about things. He's sort of a little bit like my students who have trouble learning how to follow instructions. So he doesn't follow the instructions exactly. So what he does is instead he just holds up the staff and he doesn't like put his hand way out there holding up the staff. Nevertheless the Divine Being brings the plague of hail down in Egypt. And in the eighth plague Moses again is just instructed directly to go out and speak to Pharaoh and the Egyptians. And he's told to stretch out his staff and Moses again doesn't follow instructions, and instead he stretches out his hand, the thing that he was supposed to do the last time, stretch out the hand and the staff. The thing that he didn't do, he stretches out the hand and forgets to stretch out the staff, but the Divine Being still helps him with the eighth plague of locusts. And in the ninth plague God comes to him again and says, Moses what you need to do is you need to go out now for this plague of you need to stretch out just your hand. And in the ninth plague he's finally able to follow the instructions and he does just that, he stretches out his hand, and Aaron isn't helping him. And then the final plague, the 10th plague, which is the death of the firstborn, Moses is instructed to tell everyone about the plague, including the Israelites about the plague and what they're supposed to do. And now he's speaking to general audiences. Now what I see in this is this sort of growth, as part of his growth as a human being, but also of his growth around learning how to use his body and not depend so much on the accommodations that have been provided for him. and he learns how to communicate in a way that others are able to get the message and not just his brother, Aaron. And so this continues because in the Book of Leviticus, which I said earlier was my favorite book, we have Moses now constantly delivering messages to God's people and to Aaron and to Aaron and his sons. And so the book, the very book begins with saying that God called him and tells him to go and speak unto the Israelites and then give them commands about sacrifices and so forth. So we have a whole series of messages that the Divine being gives to him. And so over and over again we see him going and delivering the message and then we have sum up passages that say, and yes the thing that God told them to do, he did it. And so he's even commanded to go and now give his brother, who has been his accommodator, his assistant, he's told by the Divine Being to go order, to command his brother Aaron to do certain things. And he goes and does that. Now the book of Deuteronomy also talks about Moses and disabilities at the very end in chapter 34, when we're getting kind of the sum up of all of Moses's life. And the book of Deuteronomy seems, it seems to be very conscious of the fact that in Exodus and Leviticus that Moses has been working around his own disabilities. So at the end of the book of Deuteronomy it says that at the end of his life, his vigor had not been impaired and his sight had not been impaired. So it's careful to say that when we might have expected the kind of disabilities that come with aging--Deuteronomy the Bible is careful to say, hey wait a minute. In these two areas he didn't experience disability So he was, his body was a complex mechanism. Some parts of his body had disabling impediments and other parts of his body worked perfectly fine and maybe even beyond fine, and then he was described as vigorous. So this is, in short the story of Moses as the person, as the leader with a disability who had to do all of the things that he was called to do while he was coping with that, with things his possible difficulty at walking, his possible difficulty in stretching out his hand, and also his difficulty with speech. Now I've mentioned some cultural differences, how different cultures think about disabilities. But one of the things that the story of Moses brings up to me is well you know like, why didn't God just like, heal the disability? I mean I have to think that [indistinguishable] God is God who's calling me to be the prophet, the law Giver for Israel. And, he could have like God could have just presumably healed him of these disabilities and allowed him to speak freely. But the question is why didn't that happen? So he did learn how to use his hand, and he did learn how to use his legs, and he did learn how to use--not depend on his staff. And he did learn how to speak in such a way that people were able to listen closely and understand what he said apparently. So I guess one of the questions that I had for you that were listening is, can you think of any reasons, you know, why there wasn't like this--if God is all-powerful right, why didn't God just, you know heal the messenger? What was--what advantage was there in having a messenger that had a disability? What advantage is there having a messenger beside Charlton Heston? Another thing that people that do cultural work and follow this sort of cultural approach to disability would say is that it's very interesting that if we think of Exodus and the books of Torah as a literary work that the main figure in the Torah, at least the last four books of the Torah, is a person with a disability. and so, to what degree that is just also a kind of literary we could call it a literary assistive device, and the writer—is the writer of this actually creating or making use of the fact that Moses had a disability as a literary device to engage our interest and to feel the constant tension that Moses might have felt himself. So I I see a hand. I see that hand, Shelly. What were you going to suggest or ask?

>> Shelly: So I love this teaching so much. I, when I look at the story of Moses and his beginning as really the, not just the spokesperson but the leader and the phenomenal task he had ahead of him, I always when I give talks, I like to introduce Moses and this relationship he has with God, with Moses really saying, you know what, God, thanks but no thanks. [David Laughs] I'm just not, I'm just not the person. You really aren't, you know, I can't do this. And then God says to him, I mean look Moses please, come on! You've got the gifts, the strengths, the talents, the wherewithal, the drive. You have everything that it takes to be a leader, and if you don't, if you don't possess every strength at the moment, you have the seeds of those strengths. And you know, the question would be, where would, where would people be without Moses and without God's you know foresight to bring this man, who yeah, maybe had some trouble speaking. It's like, you know, that's a whole thing that that just I think serves as really a very powerful story, very powerful narrative about what people can and can't do and about the assumptions that we make, and even the assumptions we make about ourselves, and what we can and can't do. So yeah, I love this.

>> Dave: I can say that my daughter, when we went to visit the governor one time did something that I couldn't do. She threw a pencil at the governor, which was exactly the right gesture at the time. Okay I've got, looks like Virginia has a question or a comment. Go ahead!

>> Virginia: Hi, thank you. One thing that you didn't address, and I know it's because this is so content-packed you didn't even have time to address it, that, I just wanted to talk about for a little bit, and that is going back to the very, very beginning--at least this is from a Torah point of view, because I have to admit I don't remember what the King James said about this. But if you look at the story when Miriam puts him in the basket down the river, it talks about um Pharaoh's daughter saw him crying in the basket. It doesn't say she heard him crying in the basket. And so that's telling us from the very beginning that everybody knew he was disabled in some way with his speech. And which of course I love the perspective you've got of doing this culturally, because that then leads to the question of, well is that why Miriam picked Pharaoh's daughter to take him, because perhaps Egyptian society would have rejected him as being a viable human being, if it was anybody else but daughter of the Pharaoh that took him, if it was just any Egyptian woman that found him or saw him, [chuckles] so to speak, and she adopted him, would he still have been ultimately healed, because of the disability and it needed to be Pharaoh's daughter because she was royalty taking him in and making him her son that ultimately saved him from being killed because of his disability. But that tells us at the very beginning that he was severely disabled when he was a baby. So that was just kind of another talking point I would love to discuss, and I'd love to hear you all discuss. So thank you for letting me comment.

>> Dave: Well I just will say that's a fantastic point. So I salute you. That was really good.

>> Virginia: [laughs] Oh thank you!

>> Dave: Okay, Darlene, go ahead please!

>> Darlene: I don't know if anyone has read "My Body is Not a Prayer Request" by Amy Kenny. Highly recommend. Perhaps the reason God did not heal Moses, Dr. Amy Kenny suggests--the wording in the book of Daniel about the wheels around the throne possibly suggesting God being in a wheelchair. Well, maybe.

>> Dave: Well yes, and also in Ezekiel you have the wheels on the Divine Chariot.

>> Darlene: There you go there you go, yes, yes —

>> Dave: So that's a very, that's a novel idea, and I'm glad that you mentioned that book because it does address some possible answers for why the Divine Being didn't just fix things.

>> Darlene: Bringing disability into leadership as a strength.

>> Dave: There you go.

>> Darlene: As Temple Grandin brings it back into full circle being a strength and not something that needs healing.

>> Dave: Do you think that somebody that has difficulty, you know, with their tongue and forming words then would give more significance to words, that words themselves would be extremely important. Just like, because Temple Grandin realized that her perceptions of reality were staccato snapshots, allowed her to see things that other people didn't see as a kind of word master that—Do you think that that struggling with the time it might have given him more appreciation for those words.

>> Darlene: And God did repeat to Moses, I made that tongue for you.

>> Dave: Yes. [Dave laughs] There you go.

>> Darlene: That's the tongue I gave you.

>> Dave: There you go. [laughs] Okay, other thoughts here, or other questions? I see Jane has sort of raised her hand, okay. But you have to unmute yourself. Go ahead.

>> Jane: I did. Yeah, I, what I was just thinking—there, there seems a pretty consistent pattern in scripture of some sort of disability or challenge being embedded in those God chooses to have lead. And, you know, I guess from the story of Moses whether you look at Moses, you look at Paul, you know, or you look at one's...all the women that are chosen by the Divine One who have all these social strictures against them. I guess part of my wondering is that it's a physical manifest way to communicate, you may think you have the capacity to do this on your own but none of you do. You all carry within yourself disabilities that are gonna keep you from achieving if you try to do it on your own. You're gonna need Aaron. You're gonna need me. You, like you are not on your own capable of achieving all that God would have you achieve. So I just, I wonder about that as another sort of reason for the implanting of disability among so many God chooses to lead.

>> Dave: Well I could mentioned that one of the judges, the left-handed judge. The word for left-handedness also follows this qittel noun form that I mentioned that is used for disability. So left-handedness is seen as a disability, but he uses it quite effectively to take, grab this weapon which was an unexpected thing when he was fighting to deliver the people. And actually all of the judges, just going along--riffing along what you were saying, Jane, all of the judges had some kind of mark against them that they--which shouldn't have been chosen, you know. But instead they were chosen, they were divinely chosen. But none of them should have been chosen if you were starting from scratch and saying, who should be the leader, you know. Okay so we have maybe time for one more question although it's almost time because I was strictly told that I had to around 8:10 tell you what the next talk is going to be about. Okay. So since it's 8:11 Pacific time, then I'm going to tell you what the next talk is about. The next talk will be on Wednesday, October 26th, and we'll talk about Aaron as cyborg. So Aaron's assistive devices to function as high priest. And then we'll also talk about the Nazarite workaround that allows people to work around their disabilities and do priestly things. And finally also think a little bit about Israelites and their disabilities. But next time it'll be Aaron as cyborg, the disabled priests, and the Nazarite workaround So it's 8:11. There's still time for one more comment or question.

>> McKenzie: And Dave, just so you know we're losing our captioner at a quarter after.

>> Jane: That's why he was given his 8:10.

>> Dave: Okay so it looks like...

>> Jane: Is there anything it would be good for us to read or look at or anything in preparation for next week where you would direct us?

>> Dave: Yeah, so you should look at – you should look at Leviticus — the favorite book, Leviticus chapter 21 and 22, where it talks about the disabilities of priests and and animals, okay, sacrificial animals. And if you're very motivated you could look at Leviticus 8 which is where all the cyborgian stuff comes in when the priests are ordained, and before they can function as priests they have to put on all kinds of equipment and cover up almost their entire bodies. And so these are, will be our texts of Interest. Leviticus chapter 8, and then the short passage in chapter 21 and the short passage in chapter 22, that deal with disabilities of priests and animals. So I'm going to hand it back to our host then.

>> McKenzie: Well, thank you everybody for coming. This was really delightful. I'm super proud of what we've done here and what we're gonna continue to be doing for the next month. I hope you all join again and, yeah, this was great!