

**UKIRK**  
COLLEGIATE  
MINISTRIES

**U** *Worship* **2024** 

# Welcome to UWorship 2024.

This worship resource is a continuation to the good and holy work done in 2015, when the first UWorship Resource was published. In the 9 years since that resource was published, the world has continued to transform before us. We learned of new needs held by students and college ministries. It is likely that, in ten more years, successors to this project will identify other needs held by students and college ministries. This worship resource is a living document, and we hope that may be adapted to the needs and context of your ministry.

One of the most beautiful parts of campus ministry is the prism of ways that we worship and find God within this world together. Whatever context you find yourself in, we pray this resource will provide you with grace, space, hope, solidarity, and peace.

*You got this.*

Allison Wehrung, John Golden, Nathan Wheeler, and Rachel Penmore

Liturgy is the Work of the People. Liturgy is the people's celebratory and grateful response to God's work through Christ's reconciling action. Liturgy is a dialogue between God and the people gathered in worship. Liturgy is our prayer, our song, our acclamation, our tears, our cries, our confessions, our readings, our being present and our acting together to glorify God. This is a collection of liturgies designed with college ministry at the front of our mind.

There are a few ways that Christians have ordered worship throughout the millennium, but the one that we follow here is a four-fold movement that the previous UWorship Resource called GERB: Gather, Encounter, Respond, Bless.<sup>1</sup>

**Gather:** First, we the people gather together and gather themselves in the presence of God. We are called to worship, we confess our sins, and we celebrate that the Lord welcomes us into community with God.

**Encounter:** We encounter God through the reading of scripture and through the proclamation of God's word. God's word may be shared through a homily, or it may be shared through song, dance, visual art, drama, testimony, or honest, candid, prayerful discussions.

**Respond:** After our encounter with God's word in our present place and moment, we are called to respond. We may respond through an affirmation of faith, through a prayer of the people, or through celebrating the sacraments of communion or baptism (we probably won't celebrate many baptisms in the college ministry, but we might celebrate a reaffirmation of baptism!).

**Bless:** We are sent out into the world with a blessing. Blessings include a charge, God's imperative to be salt and light to the world, and the benediction, God's good and present Word that sustains the people until they gather again.

This Worship resource follows this GERBy structure. It offers both full worship liturgies and supplemental activities that may be used to augment worship in college ministry.



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<sup>1</sup> This terminology is from the original UWorship resource published in 2015.

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A word on the formatting:

- Words for the leader to say out loud are in regular print
- **Words for the community to say together are in bold**
- *Words that are instructions only are in italics*

# ORDINARY TIME

## Opening Prayer

A. Creator, stir up in us Your call to be co-creators with You. We are invited to join Your good holy work in the world to see You all around. God, call us back to hear what You hear, see what You see, and love what You love. Holy One, we are again gathered to learn to be the people You called us to be. People of justice, mercy, and love. Amen.

B. Lord, we doubt, we waiver, we falter. Yet, You still believe in us. You still hold strong to us. You remain with and for us. As we sing, pray, listen, and proclaim, we do so in faith, bold and wavering, yet You still call. May we hear You call us today.

## Call to Worship

A.

Here we are Lord, to worship You.

**Now is the time to worship,**

To sing new songs.

**Now is the time to worship,**

To pray for ourselves, our families, our friends, our community, our world.

**Now is the time to worship,**

To seek forgiveness, assurance, and healing.

**Now is the time to worship,**

To hear your wisdom spoken, sung, and proclaimed.

**Now is the time to worship,**

To be renewed and transformed.

**Now is the time to worship.**

We gather now to worship You.

**We are gathered. Now is the time to worship. Amen.**

B.

We gather this day,

**To hear a new word**

**To sing a new song**

**To be transformed.**

We gather this day,

**To seek the peace that passes all understanding**

**To find rest for our souls**

**To be renewed.**

We gather this day,

**To pray**

**To listen**

**To learn.**

We gather this day,

**To lift up our voices**

**To be still and know**

**To be made new. Amen.**

# ORDINARY TIME

## Call to Confession

A. Friends, we enter this space fully human and fully imperfect. God calls us to lay down our egos and confess the ways we let distractions distance and reroute us from the Word. Let us come together now as a people of prayer to confess our sins together.

B. God welcomes us over and over again. Let us confess how we try to limit that welcome and get in our own way.

C. Oftentimes, we fear hope and would rather choose worry. Our lives and our futures are gifts that are invaluable and treasured. Let us come together now to confess the ways we ignore and neglect God's gifts to us.

## Prayer of Confession

A.

O Lord, our shepherd, maker of heaven and earth,

**We lift our eyes up to the mountain tops,**

Looking for Your guidance and Your love.

**You watch over us day in and day out,**

Yet we let our feet lead us astray

**We slip, stumble, and fall into sin.**

We confess that we do not wait for Your guidance,

**Trust in your protection,**

Or be a place of comfort for others.

**Forgive us.**

As we go into this scary world, we need Your direction to help us see the way.

**We go into this world as fully human and fully imperfect, knowing You love us not despite this but regardless.**

We pray in Jesus name,

**Amen.**

B.

When our spirits despair and we deny our blessedness,

**Forgive us, O God.**

When we ignore the mighty things You have done,

When we doubt Your mercy,

**Forgive us, O God.**

When we are proud

in the thoughts of our hearts,

**When our power rests on the oppression of others,**

When our wealth causes others to go hungry,

**Forgive us, O God.**

*At least 10 seconds of silence.*

Help us to live in the ways Jesus showed us.

**Amen.**

# ORDINARY TIME

**C. God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, the world we live in has hurt and fear, but Your love shines with peace, support, and community. Too often we cast a shadow by blocking Your gift of love. We turn away from the poor; we ignore cries for justice; we do not strive for peace. In Your mercy, we ask for forgiveness and renewal so that we may instead use our gifts in the ways You have intended. Amen.**

## **Assurance of Grace**

A. What a gift it is that we are fully human and fully imperfect, known and loved by a God that wouldn't have us any other way. Hear the good news that you are loved fully and completely exactly as you are.

B. Friends, remember there is nothing you can do to make God love you any more and there is nothing you can do to make God love you any less. The God of Love loves you exactly as you are. With that knowledge, know you are forgiven and be at peace.

C. God of eternity, You have promised to be with us no matter where we find ourselves, whether stuck in the past, present or the future. Your love promises to follow us wherever we go, remind us of that and help us embrace that love in all we do.

## **Prayer for Illumination**

A.

Creator,

Calm our hearts and give peace to our minds

    Direct us along the path of righteousness.

Help us respond to Your abundant love.

    Accept our offerings of praise.

May we receive Your blessing of Your word even to our bones,

    So that we may go out to the world

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

B.

Invite worshipers to take a few deep breaths, then slowly lead the following prayer as their breaths continue.

*Breathe in*      Come Holy Spirit.

*Breathe out*    Ignite our hearts.

*Breathe in*      Come Holy Spirit.

*Breathe out*    Open our minds.

*Breathe in*      Come Holy Spirit.

*Breathe out*    Relax our bodies.

*Breathe in*      Come Holy Spirit.

*Breathe out*    Speak to us.

*Breathe in*      Come Holy Spirit.

*Breathe out*    We are listening.

C. Psalm 1

Happy are those who delight in Your presence,

Who meditate day and night on Your saving Word.

Like trees planted by streams of water,

May we yield the fruits of Your spirit,

Grow green, flourish, blossom,

And extend our roots into Your love.

# ORDINARY TIME

## Scripture Reading & Proclamation

### Affirmation of Faith

*As time allows, these questions can be used to debrief either of the following activities:*

- *Did this activity feel easy or difficult? Why?*
- *What was the easiest word or statement for you to include? (Or, which one did you pick the quickest?)*
- *Were there any you had trouble deciding between? What made you pick one that you did?*
- *What surprises you, about the process or about your finished collection?*

### A. Sticky Note Statements

*Supplies: sticky notes with words written on them, blank sticky notes, writing utensils, wall space/whiteboards/easels with prompts.*

*To make your word bank, write words on some of the sticky notes, and post them on a surface all together, with the blank sticky notes and writing utensils nearby. ([A starter list of words is in the appendix.](#)) Within sight of the word bank, create four areas with the headings: God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, The Church. These areas could be on poster board, a piece of newsprint or butcher paper, sections on a whiteboard, etc.*

Affirmations of faith often speak to our beliefs about the persons of the Trinity, and about the Church in the world. Take a few minutes to look at the collection of words. Which ones would you use to describe God? Jesus? The Holy Spirit? Which words would you use to describe the Church, or what it could be? When you're ready, take a sticky note for each of those four things and add each note to its corresponding area, adding more words to make a phrase or sentence if you like. If you have an idea that's not already listed, use the blank notes to add it yourself.

*Discuss using the questions above, or offer a prayer of dedication.*

### B. I believe...

*Supplies: printed "I believe" lists ([see appendix](#)), writing utensils*

*Give participants time to look over the list of statements, and invite them to mark five beliefs that are most important to them. They might highlight a few more "secondary" beliefs if time allows. You can increase or decrease the number of statements they should choose to fit whatever time you have, or narrow down the starter list. It might be helpful to remind students that not picking something doesn't mean they don't believe it, just that the statements they do pick are the most significant to them.*

*Discussion using the questions above, or simply invite folks to share one statement they marked as the group comes back together. A framework for sharing could be:*

[Ministry name], what do you believe?

*Individuals each share one statement.*

This we believe.

Amen.



# ORDINARY TIME

## **Communion**

*Communion is one of the two sacraments of the Presbyterian Church. It is an outward sign of an inward Grace. Communion represents the community gathered, and ties us to the ancestral community of our connectional church. We share the symbols of bread and cup remembering the meal that Jesus shared with his disciples, represented in Mark 14:22-24, Matthew 26:26-28, and Luke 22:19-20.*

### **Invitation to the Table**

A.

Friends, in the fullness of who you are,

You are welcome here.

Whether this is your first time here, or you're here every week,

You are welcome here.

Whether all the things on this table look familiar or you have no idea what is going on,

You are welcome here.

Whether your faith feels strong and solid, or you don't know what to believe in, or if you even believe at all,

You are welcome here.

In the fullness of who you are, come to this table,

Embraced by welcome.

B.

Beloved, take a deep breath, release your shoulders from your ears, and come to this table. This table is not Presbyterian, or UKirk's. It doesn't belong only where we have worship, or to any particular place or time. This is the Lord's table. So come to the table, Beloved Child of God. This is the place where you are always enough, you are always welcome, and you always belong.

### **Prayer of Great Thanksgiving**

A.

God, we come to You with gratitude and joy as we release our expectations and embrace our identity as beloved children of God. We join our stories with the generations that have gathered around this meal and meals like it to embrace Your welcome and find ourselves in Your presence and grace.

Jesus reminds us that we bring the fullness of our humanity here. Our hurts, our joys, our scars, our recoveries. Jesus came into the world and challenged systems, encountered the broken, and showed us radical world-changing love. He was murdered by an unjust system but the Spirit would not be silenced. Through his resurrection we find a ground-shaking, unfiltered love that wakes us up out of our complacency and calls us into New Life.

The Spirit journeys with us still, shaking the dust from our weary bones and enlivening our overburdened hearts. She makes us new each morning, reminding us of who we are called to be, and how She is already immersed in the world, calling for us to lift our eyes and take notice. She is poured upon these gifts of bread and cup, uniting us in the Body of Christ.

Let this bread and cup, these ordinary pieces of extraordinary grace, ground us and inspire us to move into this world with abundant love and world changing faith. Amen.

# ORDINARY TIME

B.

God, You have been with us since the beginning,  
Where You created, stirred, spoke, and the world came alive.

**You continue to move in this world,  
Inviting us into the cycles of life, death, and new life.**

We see this personified in Jesus.  
He came as a sibling, pioneer, friend, and prophet.  
Fully human, knowing breath in his lungs,  
Fully divine, knowing a call greater than this world could handle,  
**In his living, dying, and refusing to die  
Your hope and your call come alive in us.**

The Spirit sparks our souls with humility, justice, and mercy.  
She is in the quietest heartbeat and the loudest voice raised in the street.

**Come now and surround this communion.  
Come now and revive this community.  
Come now, as Three in One, intimate, alive, ancient, Love Divine.**

Let us know we are loved and cherished forever. So we join our voices with all creation praying together... *Use a version of the Lord's Prayer that fits your community.*

C.

As we open ourselves up to this communion, let us take a moment and think of who God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are to us. What names do you use for them? What ways do you know them, or wish to know them more? As we come together in prayer, I invite you to speak those names into the provided moments. Let us pray.

Inviting Trinity, we come to You with Your many names, our many experiences, and in a multi-faceted world, and You meet us here.

God, You are  
Holy, behind, beside, and before us.

You are all the names we say now:  
*Space for students to speak names of God.*

Jesus you are  
Our comfort, so very human, an incarnation

You are all the names we say now:  
*Space for students to speak names of Jesus.*

Holy Spirit, you are  
Our inspiration, our frustration, the unknown and the authentic.

You are all the names we say now:  
*Space for students to speak names of the Spirit.*

Three in one, we come to meet You, with Your many names filling our space and reviving our hearts. May we encounter this blessing as we share in this sacred cup and bread that grounds us, and inspires us in familiar and unexpected ways. Amen.

# ORDINARY TIME

## **Words of Institution**

The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

## **Sharing of the Bread and Cup**

*Distribute the elements in a way that fits your context.*

This is the [Bread of Life or Body of Christ or Bread of Abundance] for you.

This is the [Blood of Christ or Cup of the New Covenant or Cup of Abundance] for you.

## **Prayer After Communion**

A. God of grace and love, thank You for this meal, this time, this community. May these gifts of bread and cup call us into the world to be surprised where You are already at work, and to hear the call where we are being invited to join. Amen.

B. God, you have moved in this space through these ordinary extraordinary things. May we be moved to move outside of this space to create ordinary extraordinary space in all we do. Amen.

C. It’s a gift to be here, it’s a gift to share this meal together, it’s a gift to be inspired and loved. Let us not neglect this gift as it calls us into the world. Amen.

## **Prayers of the People**

A.  
God of our aching world, the oceans seem less vibrant, the green of the grass turning brown, and the chirps of birds being drowned out by construction. When we look around we see how our actions harm Your beautiful planet. Remind us to take time to look and notice the peaceful spots where buttercup flowers are still blooming and groundhogs are still scurrying. Guide us to see how Your Love manifests into the gentle warm breeze of spring air and the rays of sunshine that hit our cheeks reminding us to never lose hope in the beauty of Your purposeful touch.

God of the hills and valleys, our community is going through so much. The hatred we see around us and in the news is deafening. Show us a guiding hand to reach out to those affected by the hurt of our world. Lord, there is pain in our community; help guide us to be spaces of comfort for others, spreading love and acceptance.

God of peace, when we are hurt, we are the first to hurt those we love. We say things we don’t mean and act in ways we regret. Remind us there is always room to let out our emotions but help us to be servants of Your word remembering to approach friends and strangers with kind words and gentle actions. Many times we are so quick to judge the actions of others forgetting they too are human and have their own struggles. Help us to give ourselves and others the same compassion You constantly gift to us. We pray for your grace in all we do. We pray all these things the way Your Son taught us saying:

*Use a version of the Lord’s Prayer that fits your community.*

# ORDINARY TIME

## B. Newspaper Prayer

*Supplies:*

*Option 1: physical newspapers, highlighters*

*Option 2: links or a QR code to news sites, pen and paper for individuals to write headlines down, or markers and a communal place for writing headlines.*

As overwhelming as the news is sometimes, it can also be a meaningful thing to name out loud the headlines that compete for our attention.

*Put on some music and invite participants to look through the headlines, highlighting or writing down the ones they want to include in their prayers. Encourage them to acknowledge the tough ones, but also to look out for positive news, however big or little. After some time has passed, offer the following prayer with space for people to read their headlines out loud.*

Creator God,

We come to You with so many things on our minds and hearts. We lament the heaviness that we sense both close to home and in other corners of our country and world.

*Space to share hard headlines.*

God who meets us in our sorrows,

**hear our prayers.**

In the midst of all that, we also lift up to you the celebrations in our own community and beyond – the stories that give us hope, or at least allow us to let out the breaths we’ve been holding.

*Space to share happier headlines.*

God who meets us in our joys,

**hear our prayers.**

Between the lowest lows and the highest highs, we also honor the more ordinary moments in between, and the events that don’t fit neatly into one category or the other.

*Space to share any other headlines, or share other prayers.*

Ever present God,

**hear our prayers. Amen.**

## **Charge**

*A. Jeremiah 1*

The Word of the Lord has come before us, saying:

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you. Do not say, ‘I am only a student,’ for you shall go to all whom the Lord sends you, bearing the Image of God, the Love of Christ, and the Hope of the Holy Spirit no matter where you go, no matter what you do.”

B.

Look backward to see where you came from. God was there.

Look down to see where you are. God is here.

Look forward to where you are going. God will be there.

So in your comings and your goings,

# ORDINARY TIME

Rest in the assurance that you are not alone.  
Rest assured that you are welcomed by Christ,  
And that you are sent out with Christ.

## C. *Heidelberg Catechism*

What does Amen mean at the end of our prayers and at the end of our worship?  
It means that this shall truly and surely be!  
We rest assured that God listens to our prayers,  
And responds with steadfast love and mercy to all.  
So pray boldly and without ceasing.

## **Blessing**

A. The new creation is everything! May God's new creation rise up to meet you, unfold around you, completely surround you, go forth with you wherever you go, and bless you beyond all words and comprehension.

B.  
Bless the Lord, my soul!  
Bless the Lord, all people!  
Bless the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.  
Bless our Creator, our Savior, and the Holy Spirit.

## C. *Inspired by Showings by Julian of Norwich*

May the revelation of Divine Love  
Endlessly dwell in your soul,  
Protect you in all things,  
Guide you in all ways,  
And wisely save and keep you in love.

## D. **Combined Charge & Blessing**      *2 Corinthians 13*

Finally, sisters and brothers and siblings, farewell.  
Be restored; listen to God's appeal; agree with one another.  
Live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.  
Greet one another with holy love. All the saints greet you.  
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

### Call to Worship

Here we are

### Bursting at the seams

Our calendars our full of assignments, meetings, papers, and due dates

### Our moments are full of friends and family and everything in between

In this space, let us take a moment, amidst the buzz of the world

### Let us pause, breathe, and be here.

Let us be in this space, open, ready, to breathe in your grace

### Come, Let us worship God.

### Call to Confession

Paver of the way, You call us to trust in Your Word, in Your way, and in Your path yet many times we stray from Your call and think we know the way better. Let us come together now and confess the ways in which we wander from Your path.

### Prayer of Confession

God of the rough waters,

### You call us to lift up one another; yet, all too often we end up tearing others down.

You lift us up through our mistakes and missteps;

### Yet, we tend to focus on where we fail and define ourselves from our shortcomings.

You Love us, not despite, but regardless.

### Help us see each other and ourselves as people, instead of only accomplishments.

### There is grace enough for all of us.

We strive to live as You teach us, leading with love, grace, forgiveness, and acceptance.

### In Your name we pray, Amen.

### Assurance of Grace/Passing the Peace

What a gift to know that a loving God will always love us, no matter what. With this news, may we take a deep breath, remember we are forgiven and remember we have work to do.

Inspired by that work, may we pass the peace to one another.

### Scripture Ideas

- Jeremiah 32:36-41 (Trusting God in the unknown.) *Jeremiah knows that the people are being scattered and suffering under the Babylonian occupation, however he reminds the people that God will gather them back. God is not abandoning them. Similarly, even when the semester feels overwhelming, like they are in a foreign land, God is beside them, and will continue to journey with them in all things.*
- Philippians 4:4-6 (Peace in times of anxiety and stress.) *What we know about God is that God is bigger than our stressful overwhelming thoughts. The school year is infused with overwhelming anxiety, but this scripture reminds us that God's peace surpasses understanding*

### Prayers of the People

God of endless compassion, we don't understand how You could love people who make so many mistakes. We don't understand why You believe in the good of humans when we see so much evil. We don't understand, but You don't ask us to understand. You ask us to love our neighbor, you ask us to share a meal, you ask us to stand with the excluded. Holy God we ask for Your help as we take small steps toward Your image. We ask for forgiveness when we make mistakes, and we stand in gratitude for Your patience and love.

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

God, our parent, your children are hurting. Around the world, we see conflict that is quantified by death, we echo the voices that have been silenced by those in power, and we feel the gravity of decisions being made in our government right now. Please be with all those hurting, and help us be a healing presence for the world.

God of wondrous faith, we are in awe of the ways you move in the world and the faith you have in us. When we feel lost and far from home, You meet us in the darkness with accepting love. Show us how to express this love to ourselves and to others feeling lost around us. May we follow this love that was expressed by your son, Jesus who also taught us to pray saying...

*(Use the version of the Lord's Prayer that fits your community.)*

## **Litany for the New Semester**     *Psalm 23*

As we start a new semester

Full of uncertainties, unknowns, and already infused with stress

**God our good shepherd**

**We have everything we need**

As we walk through quads, get lost looking for class

Oversleep and run late

**You lead us to rest in grassy meadows and by restful waters**

We declare majors, take on minors, balance class credits

Internships, jobs, bills, things we feel prepared for

And things we have no idea how to handle

**You guide us, and accompany us in all things**

When things fall apart, when we encounter sickness, a failed exam,  
unexpected news, overwhelming assignments

When things are beyond words or understanding

**When we walk through the valley, when things feel lost**

**We are not afraid because you are with us.**

You never leave us alone, and there is no amount of stress that can separate us from you

**You lead us and guide us**

**You make us feel secure**

We give thanks for the community that we have found

The friends we bring with us and the ones we are currently building

The safe places to land, and the encouraging words that come unexpectedly but lift us up

**You revive our spirits**

**Our cups brim with blessings**

This new beginning, this new semester is full of possibility

There is life to be lived and love to be found

We give thanks for the privilege to be here, the gift to learn

And the challenge to ask questions and grow

**Your beauty and love chase after me**

**Every day of my life**

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

We are not alone, we have everything we need to start this new semester  
We are beloved, made in your image  
Children of God

**We are at home in the house of God forever. Amen.**

## **Blessing of the Backpacks**

*One way to begin the school year is to offer a blessing of their backpacks, the thing they carry with them to class every day. You can have these printed on cards and laminated or have actual keychains made.*

May your backpack always be light.

May your lunch always be your favorite.

May it never rain when you are walking to class.

And may God bless you as you learn

## **Sending**      College Student Beatitudes

Blessed are the college students  
In brick buildings and behind computer screens  
Those with a trust funds and those on financial aid  
Those in their first year, those finishing a fifth, and all the spaces in-between,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the sports superfans and those who don't know the difference between a football and a baseball,  
For they will both find a place here.

Blessed are the procrastinators and the planners,  
For God willing the work will get done.

Blessed are the loud and boisterous and the calm and contemplative,  
For they will all be heard.

Blessed are those who feel pressure to define a major before they're ready, and those who see their calling clearly,  
For they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who are overworked, overscheduled, and overwhelmed,  
For they will find rest.

Blessed are those who feel lonely and isolated,  
For they will be comforted by the living body of Christ.

Blessed are the survivors,  
For their stories will be heard and believed.

Blessed are those who find affirmation in the Church and those who have been harmed by it,  
For they will find peace.

Blessed are those whose truest identity is unwelcome in their family of origin  
For they will be called children of God.



# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

Blessed are those living with mental illness or instability  
For they will see God, and a plan for moving forward.

Blessed are those in the age of imposter syndrome, feeling crushed by filters, feedback, and followers,  
For they are created in the image of God.

Blessed are those who invite one another into this family of faith  
And those who are brave enough to show up.

Blessed are the hopeful,  
the hopeless,  
the forgotten,  
the found,  
the closeted,  
the open,  
the meek,  
the proud,  
the courageous,  
And the coping.

Blessed are those working to make the world a better place, and those who aren't sure where to start.

Blessed are you in all times, in all places, exactly as you are  
For yours is the kingdom of heaven.

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## FAMILY WEEKEND

*Whether your context has a “family weekend” this is an opportunity to honor the family/chosen family that supports students in so many ways. It is also a chance to look at the type of support students have. Having them create a tangible list of people they can rely on can be a valuable tool.*

**UKirk Family Tree** - *To celebrate the family that raised us and surrounds us, whether biological or chosen, you can create a family tree as part of your worship space.*

- *Create a tree. You can do this by printing a tree, drawing a tree, getting a branch from outside, or some other way that works for you! (for an example of this type of tree, see appendix)*
- *Have a basket of leaves. You can make them out of paper or buy some from the store. If you buy silk leaves you will want to use a permanent marker on them.*
- *Have each student collect five leaves.*
- *Invite them to write the names of five people that feel like family to them. Five people that when they feel anxious, scared, or overwhelmed, can help them feel less alone or like they have to figure it out for themselves*
- *As they finish, have them add the names to the tree*
- *In addition to these leaves, have a card they can put these five names on and put it somewhere they will find it. This can be an important resource when they need support during the year. It gives them a tangible list of folks to reach out to.*

### **Closing Prayer**

God, we give you thanks for those on this journey with us. For those who show up in the valleys and dance with us on the mountain tops. For those who raised us, and those who continue to raise us up. May we always remember those who walk with us, behind us, beside us, and before us. Let this family of faith be a reminder of the Beloved community we were made for. Amen.

*You can keep this tree up all year and use it as a reminder of the Beloved community and that they are always cared for.*

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## MIDTERMS

*With the stress of the middle of the semester, this is a great time for intentional pause to create dynamic, embodied, creative ways of encountering prayer. See the Appendix for a list of prayer stations. These stations are able to be set up in a variety of spaces and allow students to engage with them during worship, or during a difficult season of the semester.*

### **Prayers of the People**     *Matthew 4:19*

God of the seas, everything in this world seems to come in waves. Tides come in just as we are surrounded by hate, violence, and war in the headlines. The waves seem too high to remember the beauty, the peace, the calm. We feel lost as the water rises up, overwhelmed by the weight of the world. There are too many things on our plate. Too many things due, too little sleep, it all just feels like too much.

Just as the tides come in however, they also go back out. Just when it seems like we forget what the calm feels like, You are there receding the waves revealing the beauty of the horizon. We are reminded of all the good in the world, with everything from the smile of a passing stranger to a meal shared with unsuspecting guests. You always shift our gazes up to see the world through Your perspective and, everytime, we remember what a gift it is to experience Your beauty in all creations around.

God of all moments, we see You working in our community. Just as You told the disciples to cast their nets out to catch the fish, help us to cast our nets upon the lost, broken, and forgotten. Show us how to live as fishermen in this world, inviting the hungry to the table, standing in support with the oppressed, and lending a hand to the stranger that has lost hope. God, we see so much of Your love, Your life, and Your grace in all corners of the world. We ask for direction and patience as we strive to live as Your son taught us to praying...

*(Use the version of the Lord's Prayer that fits your community.)*

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## ALL SAINTS

*All Saints Day is celebrated during the first week of November. It is a way to recognize the full community of the church, those who have come before us and those on this journey now. It is a way of honoring the inspirational and supportive people in our student's lives. Traditionally All Saints day focuses on those who have died, however not all college students have experienced loss of this kind. Therefore, it can be helpful to focus it not entirely on loss, and to open the invitation to those who have supported and encouraged them.*

- *This is a traditional order of worship, however another option for this service is to host a storytelling night inspired by The Moth storytelling podcast. Give students a prompt of "stories of community" and invite them to share a story (under 3 min)*

### **Call to Worship**

In this stillness of this time,

**We come with our stories.**

In the fullness of our lives,

**We come with our history.**

In the presence of this place,

**We come here because of who came before us.**

It is the stillness of this time,

**That reminds us we are not alone.**

It is the fullness of our lives,

**That reminds us that we are more than one moment, one assignment, one deadline.**

It is the presence of this place,

**That brings us into the community of Saints,  
those before, those here, and those to come.**

With all of these, Let us worship God.

### **Call to Confession**

We are afraid we are lost, that there is too much, that we are too much. But there is nothing that can separate us from God, not even our fear.

### **Prayer of Confession**

**I am afraid it's all too much and my fear feels overwhelming.**

It's ok to be afraid. You are not too much.

You are not here alone

**I am not here alone**

You are carried by your community

**I am carried by my community**

I am afraid it's all too much and my fear feels overwhelming.

**It's ok to be afraid. You are not too much.**

I am not here alone

**I am not here alone**

I am carried by my community

**You are carried by your community**

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## **Assurance of Grace**

By God's grace we are carried by the community, supported by love, and inspired by the mentors, guides, friends, family, and loved ones that continue to surround us and remind us of God's unending, unbreakable love.

With this news, may we know we are forgiven, loved, and be at peace.

## **Remembering Our Witnesses**

*There are many ways you can invite your students to honor the community and people that have supported them. This can be actual people, it can also be pets, places, community. This can be an invitation to think about all the ways they feel supported. It may also be a space where there will be grief for feeling unsupported by members of their community.*

### **A. Creating a Great Cloud of Witnesses**

*Create a "cloud" on the communion table with fabric. Invite students to write names of people that have supported them, inspired them, or loved them. Have them write these names on pieces of paper and have them place them in the cloud.*

### **B. Honoring with Images/Token**

*Before worship, invite your students to bring an item or image of ancestors/community that have supported them and brought them to this moment. Create a space where they can bring these pieces and create a collage on the table of all these pieces.*

### **C. Candles and Community**

*Gather tea lights and have students write qualities of people that they consider saints on the tea lights for all the saints they wish to honor. Create a collection of these lights on the table as a way to honor and celebrate the community.*

## **Scripture**

- Ephesians 1:16-23 ("Great cloud of witnesses") *Emphasizing the communal and spiritual connection of the community of God, this scripture highlights the unity and shared inheritance of people of faith, the hope and riches of their calling, and the immense power of God working within them.*

## **Litany for the Saints**

*After each prompt allow for 10-20 seconds of silence and invite students to speak the names into the space and then respond with "We lift them as they lifted us".*

Let us bless the community that got us here today, and the great cloud of witnesses that remain present in Spirit.

We know we do not travel this way alone

We wouldn't be here without the saints who inspire us, encourage us, and remind us of who we are called to be...

### **We lift them as they lifted us**

For all the ancestors of our faith, who remind us that we are not the first nor the last to be on this journey of faith...

### **We lift them as they lifted us**

For the ministers and teachers, the supporters and coaches that remind us that we are stronger, braver, and more than enough...

### **We lift them as they lifted us**

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For the family we are born into and the family we have chosen...

**We lift them as they lifted us**

For the friendships that shape and make us, and remind us that we are never alone...

**We lift them as they lifted us**

For the places, pets, communities, and all your creatures that have provided space, welcomed us, and reminded us of your unconditional love...

**We lift them as they lifted us**

For the whole messy family of faith that we are a part of. For those no longer with us, and those we will never forget...

**We lift them as they lifted us**

**Now and always,**

**Amen.**

## **Affirmation of Faith**      *Heidelberg Catechism*

In life and in death we belong, body and soul, to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Christ's body assures us that, not only will our souls be taken immediately after this life to Christ, but also our very flesh will be raised by the power of Christ, reunited with our souls, and made like Christ's glorious body. We are comforted by the promise of life everlasting. Even as we already now experience in our hearts the beginning of eternal joy, so after this life we will have perfect blessedness such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart has ever imagined: a blessedness in which to praise God forever.

## **Sending**

Go into the world, knowing without a doubt that you do not do this alone. You're surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses that each step you take is surrounded, supported, encouraged, and loved. Go into the world and remind people of the same.

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## THANKSGIVING

**Raising an Ebenezer** *Inspired by 1 Samuel 7:12-17 and the hymn “Come Thou Fount”*

*Background: when we meet Samuel he is has grown up to become a great prophet and leader for the people of Israel. And during this time the Philistines have risen to power.*

*In a crucial battle, the Israelites bring out the ark of the covenant as a magical trophy to show off to their enemy. God was not having this, so Israel loses the battle and the Israelites lose the ark and the Philistines take the ark to their temple, which God is not pleased with. So, God sends plagues to the Philistines which leads them to send the ark back to Israel. Our scripture meets us in this moment when they have just gotten the ark back after kind of a wild ride. This is where Samuel is, after this battle, they have gotten the ark back and he knows he needs to mark this moment.*

*To commemorate God’s intervention Samuel took a stone and set it between the towns of Mizpah and Shen and called it Ebenezer (which translates to “stone of help;” eben - stone, ezer - help). Samuel wanted the people to remember not just for a few days but for years, decades, or generations, how God will be with them. God will come to their aid. God will accompany God’s people.*

Just like Samuel it is important that we give thanks for the ways that God has been with us and mark these moments. We have to raise an Ebenezer.

When we were vulnerable God was there

When we got it wrong God was there

When we are enduring the unimaginable, God was there.

College is a time of always looking ahead. Always answering the question “what’s next?” In the face of this, it’s important to take a moment and say thank you that we have made it this far, to raise our Ebenezers.

- *Create a collection of stones on the communion table, or just in a bowl. Invite students to come get a stone of help and hold it in their hands.*

Think of how God has been with you up to this moment, and will be with you still.

- *Invite them to lay their stone down somewhere on campus when they want to acknowledge and give thanks to God for accompanying them on this journey. Let this be the encouragement that we need to pause and give thanks for how far they have come.*

### **Closing Prayer**

God you have been with us, alongside each and every heavy step we have taken. May we take our gratitude out into the world and raise our Ebenezers, knowing you will continue to guide us, sustain us, and support us. Amen.

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## END OF SEMESTER/GOING HOME FOR BREAK

### **Opening Prayer**

As we try to find the time in the midst of studying, writing our final papers, finishing our projects, and taking our exams, we try to remember that we aren't machines but your beloved creations. We aren't just what we produce, perform, and process; we are living, breathing things. Help us find our breath in all this mess. As we move toward the end of our time together, we hold fast to the thought that we are beloved. Amen.

### **Prayer for when going home is no longer home.**

God, help those of us who have anxiety well up when we think about going back home. What once was a safe place for us no longer feels safe. Our friends, our lives, our people are here now. Remind us that you are with us when we feel alone, separated, isolated, estranged. God of the brokenhearted, help us as we head into the unknown.

### **Scripture Suggestions**

- John 14:27—*Jesus tells His disciples that He is giving them peace, a peace unlike what the world gives. He encourages them not to be troubled or afraid, reassuring them with His comforting presence and peace.*
- Colossians 3:14—*Paul advises believers to put on love above all else, because it binds everything together in perfect unity. Love connects, supports, encourages, and is shown in and through community.*

### **Sending**

Have the group form a circle, hold hands/touch shoulders, or be close enough to feel connected. Invite them to share one word with folks in the room for what they want to take into their break.

**We go from here connected, we go from here supported, we go from here knowing we are always welcomed back. Let us go in peace.**



# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## EPIPHANY

*In the wider Church, Epiphany takes place on January 6. But, even if your ministry doesn't start back until later, an Epiphany celebration can be a meaningful chance to focus on God's guidance in the new year.*

### **Call to Worship**

We gather at the start of a new semester,

**Waiting to see how this season will go.**

We gather together, some of us surefooted and some of us less so,

**Asking God to show us the way.**

We gather to worship.

**May we lift our hearts, our minds, and our voices together.**

### **Call to Confession**

Our own journeys look different than the one the magi were on as they sought out Jesus, but we too are sifting through the different influences in our lives – good, harmful, and to-be-determined – seeking an honest and faithful way forward. We're bound to make a few missteps along the way, but trusting in God's everlasting love, we can bring our whole selves to this place. Let us pray.

### **Prayer of Confession**

**God, we are being pulled in so many directions. Flashing neon and glaring screens, the loudest voices competing to tell us what to buy, where to go, who to be. Forgive us when we follow the wrong signs. Have mercy on us when we let our own self-interests steer us away from what you would have us do, and lead us in the way of sharing your world-changing love.**

**Amen.**

### **Assurance of Forgiveness**

One: Whether our footsteps are sure or shaky, heading straight ahead or taking a few turns along the way, may we trust that God's goodness never ends.

**All: Trusting in the promise of a humble young Jesus, thanks be to God that we are forgiven!**

### **Prayer for Illumination**

Hear us, God, as we pray:

**Open our ears,**

To your word today, and the ways it has spoken to us through generations.

**Open our eyes,**

To the signs of your presence above us, around us, and in us.

**Open our hearts,**

To the unexpected ways you embody love in this world.

**Amen.**

**Scripture**    *Matthew 2:1-12*

### **Star Words**

*Star words, like the star that led the magi to Jesus, are meant to offer guidance — or, at least, an extra layer of meaning — throughout the coming year. They're not meant to tell a person exactly what to do, but can be an invitation to recognize God's presence among us, a touchstone to return to again and again.*

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- **Making Star Words:** *There are options to fit all sorts of budgets and available supplies. The stars themselves are often paper, but could also be wood or plastic cutouts. For paper, you can print star outlines and cut them out yourself, or buy a star-shaped punch (3" is a good size). The words themselves can be handwritten, printed straight onto the paper, or printed on labels then stuck to the star. A list of words to use or choose from the list in the Appendix.*
- **Distribution:** *Star words are often received in the context of a worship service, especially fitting as a response or offering after hearing the word.*
- **Reflection:** *After community members receive their star words, you might offer space for them to reflect on the words they've received.*

*For conversation in a group:*

What are your first reactions to the word you received?

What about your word comforts you?

What about your word challenges you?

*For more individual reflection, share [copies of the star words reflection sheet found in the Appendix](#).*

## Prayers of the People

Ever-present God,

Be with those of us who feel the pressure of expectations coming from all sides – from parents, professors, supervisors, social media or their own selves. May they hear your voice in the midst, speaking loud and clear to what is most important. Hear our prayers as we name the things that compete for our attention. *(Silence or time for naming things out loud.)*

Be with those of us who see the road ahead clearly. May their confidence be a foundation that enables them to support those they meet along the way. Whether or not each of us feels clarity here and now, hear our prayers as we give thanks for people, places, and events that, in the midst of it all, are signs of your presence in our lives. *(Silence or time for naming things out loud.)*

Be with those of us who are still searching for a path forward: learning how to do life after a loss, re-thinking school or career plans, or simply overwhelmed at just how many options there are. Hear our prayers as we offer our questions to you. *(Silence or time for naming things out loud.)*

Lord, hear our prayers. Amen.

## Sending

As you go from this place, may God guide your feet, your hands, and your heart,  
So our steps can be sure even when the ground shakes;  
So our work can be rooted in love;  
And so we might live with faith and trust in a God who shows us the way.

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## TRANS-AFFIRMING TRANSFIGURATION

*Christ's Transfiguration is usually celebrated on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. This transition from celebrating after-Epiphany Ordinary Time to commemorating Lent is appropriate, as the Transfiguration is the moment when Christ turns his ministry from the provincial peoples of Galilee to the power and institutions of Jerusalem. In all three of the synoptic gospels, Christ's Transfiguration is preceded by Peter's messianic proclamation and Christ's invitation to the disciples to take up their cross.*

*The Transfiguration is a Theophany, an Apocalyptic moment, and, to use contemporary jargon, "Christ's glow-up." In the life of campus ministry, we are blessed by the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people, and particularly transgender students, who may likewise experience a "transfiguration." This liturgy takes inspiration from the experiences of these LGBTQIA+ students through whom we encounter the imago dei and by which God's unconditional love is revealed to us.*

*If you are considering using this liturgy, do so with care. While there is an undeniable need to affirm, validate, and celebrate LGBTQ+ people in the church, and while this text lends itself towards a queer interpretation, there is also the risk that applying any anthropological lens or "ground-up theology" to the transfiguration is analogous to Peter's desire to set up tabernacles on the mountain to establish a human dominion instead of the Divine reign of God. However, we hope that this liturgy may be received in the right time and by the right students so that they may hear the words of God: "This is my child, my beloved."*

### Call to Worship

Holy One, you transitioned from the divine sphere into human existence.

**Word made flesh, living among us, full of grace and truth!**

Holy One, you came out of the wilderness proclaiming the good news of God:

**The time of the reign of God is here. Rejoice!**

Holy One, you declare that you are the Lord of the Sabbath

**We declare that you created us, sustain us, and liberate us.**

Holy One, you cast our demons, restore bodies to wholeness, and shepherd those who are lost.

**We are a traumatized body; through your healing touch, guide us back home.**

Holy One, your presence queers our existence.

**We are transformed by your grace, always transforming by your love.**

### Call to Confession

Even those who were closest to Christ's human, bodily existence could not fully comprehend the queerness of Christ. Even the disciple who first declared that Jesus is the Messiah failed to understand the way of the cross. Even now, we fail in our attempts to love God with our whole heart, soul, and body. Let us go to God in prayer, asking for our transformation:

### Prayer of Confession

**Transforming God,**

**You invite all to come after you; all you ask is that we deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow you. Yet we balk at this strange invitation. Anxiety creeps in when we encounter strangeness. We fear what we do not know and do not understand. We live in and create systems of oppression that separate ourselves from strangers. We struggle to accept diversity within ourselves and within our neighbor. We divide ourselves, instead of celebrating our distinctions together. We enforce uniformity, confusing that with seeking unity.**

**Strange God,**

**Restore within us a sense of who we are, who our neighbors are, and who you are. Assuage our fears and inspire curiosity and compassion between us; form and transform us into your likeness and your image, queering ourselves and accepting the invitation to follow you to the cross.**

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## **Assurance of Grace**

We yearn to be received authentically, justly, and entirely. Through Christ's love for each member of this collective body, let us respond to the yearning of our hearts and receive one another. Let no one be stranger or estranged – and may the peace of Christ be with you all!

*Passing the Peace*

## **Prayer of Illumination**

Lord, as we read the scripture and receive your Holy Word, we pray to you: may that which is queer become clear, and may that which is clear become queer to us. May your divine transcendence become imminently known. May those gathered here experience the kin-dom of God come into power.

## **Scripture**

Mark 9:2-9 (*or Matthew 17:1-9 or Luke 9:28-36*)

## **Affirmation of Faith**

Let us celebrate the core of our Gospel. God loves all of us. God loves us all without condition. God loves us without exception. As a church, we strive to welcome everyone in our diversity, trying to love as God loves. And the Gospel that we celebrate is that God's love welcomes our diverse sexual and gender identity. Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer, Straight, Male, Female, Nonbinary. God's love welcomes our diverse ethnicity. Whether Black, brown, white, Asian, indigenous, God's love welcomes our questions, our belief, our unbelief, our exploration of the richness of human knowledge found in science, diverse religions, and spiritualities. God's love welcomes us whether we are rich or poor, able-bodied or disabled, young or old, suffering or rejoicing. God's love welcomes everyone. God's love welcomes everyone without condition and without exception. So, welcome, beloved community.

## **Prayer of the People**

God of transformation,

Whether we come with joy and thanksgiving, or anxiety and lament, we come before you. We pause, and we remember that you are here in our midst. Even as our lives feel precarious, even as some of our neighbors struggle with their own insecure existence, we remember your steadfast love and presence. Where we share in joy or concern, let us respond together to "God of transformation" with, "Hear our prayers."

We give gratitude for the essential ways that you provide for us; we give thanks for the water that quenches our thirst, the trees that provide us shelter, the land which provides us nourishment, the communities in which we find belonging, the artistry which gives life meaning. God of transformation,

**Hear our prayers.**

On this day, where we commemorate the story of your transfiguration by centering queer narratives, we pray for all queer, transgender, and intersex children and youth across the globe. We pray for their safety and protection; we pray that they receive affirmation and validation; we pray for their flourishing and blossoming. God of transformation,

**Hear our prayers.**

We pray for gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, and allosexual individuals. We pray with joy that love is love. We affirm that you, O Lord, are love. And we know that wherever Love exists, we witness a glimmer of the holy energies residing within your Triune Being. God of transformation,

**Hear our prayers.**

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We pray for all those who hunger for justice and thirst for mercy. We pray for those who have joined the struggle for liberation of the oppressed; we pray for those who strive to transform our world into an open and equitable society; we pray for those who have transgressed against the powerful and lifted up the lowly. God of transformation,

**Hear our prayers.**

We pray for those who have gone before us to pave the way of history for this moment. And we pray for those who will follow after us. We pray for those who never experienced the freedoms we experience now, and we pray for those who may taste the freedom that we have not yet received. Give us the courage and strength to pick up our cross and follow you into your freedom that is at once far-away and imminent. God of transformation,

**Hear our prayers.**

God, hear our prayers. Hear these prayers, which we pray in Christ's name and through the Spirit. **Amen.**

### **Charge**

Take up the cross and transgress against oppressive powers. Be transformed by the Word of God, behold the beloved Christ, and be liberated by the power of the Holy Spirit.

May God bless you and keep you,

May God smile on you and be gracious to you.

May God look you full in the face and grant you peace.

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## ASH WEDNESDAY

*Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. For most college students this falls around the middle of the spring semester and can offer a meaningful opportunity for self-reflection and spiritual growth amidst their busy schedules. It's a chance to pause and bring their faith back into focus as Lent begins.*

### **Call to Worship**

We have started down a road that will take us to the cross.

**It is a journey we take together, and a journey each makes alone.**

We are invited to notice things on the way –

**To notice the sharp stones, the uneven ground, the mercy of shade, the faithfulness of those who walk with us.**

We carry little with us but that which is in our hearts:

**Hope, trust, fear, apprehension, wonder, sorrow.**

On this walk we rest and sing and pray and listen.

**In our worship, we rest and sing and pray and listen.**

Then let us worship God.

### **Call to Confession**

Friends, we are missing the ground beneath our feet. We neglect the air in our lungs. We have forgotten the dust we are created from. Let us come to bring our full attention here, to God in this space, bringing our most vulnerable selves.

### **Confession**

**Holy One, You breathed life into dust,**

**And yet we hold our breath.**

**You threw stardust into the heavens,**

**But we forget to look up.**

**You filled the earth with minerals and rich soil,**

**And we take advantage of these gifts.**

**Forgive us,**

**Wake us up to the divine dust of the earth, the sky, and our bodies.**

**May our voices never tire of saying...**

**Thank You for this dust**

**Thank You for this dust**

**Thank You for this dust.**

### **Assurance of Grace**

You are beloved dust. Dust of this earth, dust of the stars, dust of the very essence of creation. In life and in death, we belong to this dust, to this love. What a gift to always be beloved dust, forgiven, known, at peace.

### **Prayer for Illumination**

God of the here and now, you know my entire being. You know my feelings, my fears, and my heart. Sift through all that I am carrying today and turn my attention to the good that remains. Amen

**Scripture** Psalm 51:1-17

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## **Affirmation of Faith**

- **Imposition of Ashes:** *Share a traditional imposition of ashes, inviting students to come forward and have a cross of ash placed on their hand or forehead.*
- **The Creativity of Dust:** *Lay butcher paper on a table. Using charcoal sticks have students draw, smear, explore, wipe their hands on the paper and invite them to see what the dust says for them. Encourage them to be messy.*

## **Prayers of the People**

Creating God, You made us from the earth. Remind us that we belong to each other.

When we see our neighbors working to stretch and grow, may we do what we can nurture fertile soil. When we begin to consume more than we cultivate, may we remember the Beloved community. Creating God, You made us from the earth. Remind us that we belong to each other.

Infinite God, the same breath of creation put the stars in the heavens and the air in our lungs. When we feel small or forgotten, remind us that we are a beloved part of a bigger story. Fill us with wonder at the vastness of who you've created us to be and who we are together. Infinite God, the same breath of creation put the stars in the heavens and the air in our lungs.

Dirt and Stardust,  
Under our fingernails,  
Coating our feet,  
In every breath,  
Love us back to You, to each other, and to ourselves. Amen.

## **Sending**

*Invite folks to leave in silence as they remember who they are as Beloved children of God, dusty and known.*

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## HOLY WEEK

*Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week/Passion Week. This centers on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, where he rode in on a donkey and was celebrated with waving palms while the people chanted "Hosanna." The Passion week includes Maundy Thursday, which commemorates the Last Supper; Good Friday, which observes the crucifixion of Jesus; and Easter, which is the day of celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. Below, you will find elements to use in one service that touches on all of Holy Week or elements to use throughout the week.*

### **Call to Worship**

*Provide Palms (if possible) or have students create their own Hosanna by tracing their hand and writing on the traced hand what they might want to be saved from.*

Hosanna! Hosanna!

We wave our palms in adoration for the inbreaking of love making its way again into the city.

**Hosanna! Hosanna!**

Praise be to the God who reminds us that blessed are the peacemakers, the humble, the meek.

**Hosanna! Hosanna!**

As we begin to end our Lenten practice and turn towards resurrection, we remember your non-violent resistance towards empire and injustice.

**Hosanna! Hosanna!**

Guide us again through your life, death, and resurrection.

**Hosanna! Hosanna!**

### **Call of Confession**

Crowds gather, shouts are raised, we welcome our sibling Jesus. But in the same breath our shouts turn to accusation and fear. Let us confess the ways we let ourselves be swept up in the violence of our world.

### **Confession**

We pause to confess that we still live in ways that cause innocent men and women to die. We acknowledge that we have, at times, celebrated the empire and jeered those who try to dismantle systems of oppression. We, at times, resemble the crowds that called for and cheered the death of an innocent man. We confess that we have lost sight of the kingdom of God. Call us back towards your love and grace. Forgive us once again and lead us towards the hope of resurrection.

### **Assurance of Grace**

Though we fail to be the people You called us to be. We are reminded on this Maundy Thursday that Jesus invited saints and sinners, friends and enemies, trustworthy and liars, the loyal and betrayers, all to join him at the table for a meal. God forgives and invites all to a new beginning. Amen.

### **Good Friday Remembrance**

*Setting up your space for this service, if you have a communion table, you can cover it with a black cloth/sheet. If there are windows, you can cover them while you read Mark 15:21-41.*

*While scripture is read, or in silence, take the elements out of your worship space until it is bare.*



# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## Prayers of the People

A.

God of the far and wide, we come to you today as sheep that have gone astray. We meet once more, this time at the foot of the cross. Just as Your Son has come to the cross beaten and battered, we too have been torn down by this world. Our weary eyes scan the familiar scriptures reading the names of Pilate, Peter, and all the rest, and for a moment, hope flares like a lit candle. Might these readings end differently? Might humans do justice with kindness and humility? As we turn the page, it is the same as it was before. Jesus is pulled to the cross to die. We feel the pain of this ending all over again just as we feel pain looking at this aching world. We may have new names for our transgressions like racism, sexism, transphobia, and more; but the same sin still crouches and lies in wait. The ancient, ravenous, roaring lies still devour their prey. We, like sheep, have all gone astray.

It is at this moment we must cling to our confession of hope. There was evening, and then there was morning. There was chaos and then order. There was grief and then comfort. All that was created was good and very good. So this shall begin again. There is life again: life of the spirit, life of dreams, life of justice for all your children, life for the broken and rejected, life for those we love, and life for us.

As we huddle together at the foot of the cross, we ask for your comfort in this time of uncertainty. Hold us close and be a guiding hand to comfort the aching around us. May we invite the rejected to feast with us at the table, may we ignite action for the oppressed, may we be a space of comfort for strangers and friends. Hold us close so that we may find Your grace stronger than our fears. Hold us close as we move from the woundedness of life into the healing of Easter. Amen.

## B. Hosanna Prayer Station

*Supplies: blank paper or small poster boards spread out on a wall or table, charcoal sticks for writing. Optionally, write or paint SAVE US at the top of each sign with space below for people's responses.*

Matthew 21 talks about Jesus entering Jerusalem to shouts of “hosanna!” Colloquially, “hosanna” has come to mean a general exclamation of praise or celebration, used almost interchangeably with “hallelujah!” But the word’s original Hebrew and Aramaic more directly translate to “save, we pray.” So really, when Jesus is riding into Jerusalem, the people (who were under Roman rule and expected to worship the emperor, not God) are shouting to Jesus, “save us!”

If you were holding up a sign as Jesus rode by, what would your hosanna say? Complete the sentence “Save us from \_\_\_\_\_” on one of the signs. Don’t be afraid to write big, and add as many answers as you have. (If there aren’t any more blank signs, just add yours to one that’s already written on.)

Spend some time in prayer reflecting on what you (or others) wrote.

## Stations of the Cross

*See the [additional resources](#) for ideas.*

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## **Communion**

### **Invitation to the Lord's Table**

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God.

We celebrate the story of Christ's victorious entry. We mourn the story of Christ's tragic passion. And we re-enact the Last Supper.

We do this so that, even 2000 years later, on a college campus far removed from the geographic location and context that Christ was located in, we may participate in the feast that is made available to all.

So come. Come and join the feast knowing that there is a seat at God's table.

### **Prayer of Great Thanksgiving**

Hosanna! Hosanna! The people cried with gratitude and thanksgiving

As they watched Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey.

Christ's triumph was visible to all. Christ was victorious. Christ is victorious.

And yet, even as Jesus was celebrated,

The rich and powerful plotted his demise.

Jesus went and cursed the fig tree that did not bear fruit,

Then overturned the money changers tables, as the temple

Had become a place of greed and extortion.

He criticized the selfish and greedy,

Jesus lifted up the widow as the most generous,

And lifted up the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, imprisoned

The disenfranchised, the oppressed, the marginalized, and the abused,

As the people in the person of Christ.

Christ's reign challenged and challenges the sinful structures of the world,

And so those structures plotted to put him to death.

They bribed one of his friends, one of his closest followers,

So that he would betray Jesus and hand him over to his death.

And yet, on the night before his arrest, Jesus sat down with his disciples.

All of his disciples. Those who would betray him, those who would abandon him,

Those who would deny him, those who did not understand him.

Jesus sat down with them, washed their feet, and instructed them to love one another.

Jesus empowered them to be humble. Jesus empowered them to be human.

Jesus empowered them to see others as human and worthy of dignity.

Jesus was betrayed.

He was sentenced to death.

He was placed on the cross.

He cried his last breath.

And Jesus died.

Yet in death, even a Roman soldier recognized Christ as the Son of God.

We likewise proclaim that Christ is the Human One

Who reigns with God in Glory.

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, upon this campus ministry, upon this college campus, upon our region, upon our nation, upon our world, upon all of Creation. May the gift of bread and cup unite us with you and with our neighbor; may we be reconciled with all who share in this feast. We pray this

## ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty Creator now and forever.” Amen.

### **Words of Institution**

We give you thanks that the Lord Jesus, on the night before he died, took bread, and after giving thanks to God , he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying “Take, eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, he took the cup, saying: this cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

### **Prayer after Communion**

Gracious God, may this night remind us that death does not have the final word. May the gift of this bread and cup open us up to never be the same. Amen.

### **Sending**

Keep us, Holy One, in your loving embrace. May we not leave longing to hear from you. May we know that silence doesn't mean abandonment. Open our hearts and minds to hear from you as we leave this space to encounter the world.

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## CREATION CARE/EARTH DAY

### **Opening Prayer**

Creator,

We read how you spoke all things into life. We share that we are familiar with all of your creations. We give thanks for the beauty and sprawling wonder of this world we get to call home. Create a renewed sense of awe and ignite a passion to care for what we call home.

### **Call to Worship**

God you tend the garden of this world

**May we remember the invitation to take part**

To play in the mud, get our hands dirty,

**Plant, prune, dig, care**

Let us remember creation is a part of us

**We are beloved creations of an endlessly creative Creator.**

Hallelujah, let us worship God.

### **Hymns of Praise**

*“For The Beauty of The Earth” Glory to God #14*

*“This is my Father’s World” Glory to God #370*

*“Fall in Love with the Earth” (music found at [creationjustice.org/plasticjesus](http://creationjustice.org/plasticjesus))*

### **Call to Confession**

We were called from the beginning to care for the earth and all that is in it. Let us confess the ways we have chosen to destroy instead of protect.

### **Prayer of Confession**

We know recycling is not enough, but we sometimes find it is as much care and concern as we have for the planet. We confess our efforts at times are but minimal efforts to thwart the climate disaster we face together. We’ve enjoyed clothing and goods that drive up the carbon footprint that leads to ongoing global warming. We know the feeling of hunger pangs, yet we toss away food in mass every day. We enjoy our lifestyles and use the next gadget and device, knowing that millions are affected by the overconsumption of precious minerals that power our pleasure. May we confess that we often use, exploit, and take advantage of God’s good creation while knowing we cause irreversible damage each passing day. May we pause and remember the land we stand on and its complicated history, giving acknowledgment to the Native peoples to whom this land belongs. Let us now repent, turn around, and move towards creation care that isn’t just about us but all of creation. Amen

### **Assurance of Grace**

We know that God forgives, and we celebrate that though we have a long way to go, there is still time for us to join our good God in caring for our planet. May we resolve ourselves today to accept our call to care for all that is around us and be purveyors of peace.

### **Prayer for Illumination**

God of the sacred words, we hold space at this moment to hear from you. Open up our ears to listen to your words. May it move our hearts this day. Amen.

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## Response

### Option 1: Lectio Divina

Lead your group in an ancient practice called *Lectio Divina*, which translates to “divine reading”. This practice is a way of reading the text that helps the listener meditate on the words of scripture.

- Choose one of the suggested passages below or another creation based scripture.
  - Psalm 19:1-4 (the heavens are telling the glory of God)
  - Psalm 65:5-13 (silence the seas, water the earth)
  - John 1:1-5 (In the beginning was the Word)
  - Colossians 1:15-16 (Christ the firstborn of creation)
- *First reading: Read your chosen passage and invite people to listen for any word or phrase that stands out to them. Invite them to share their word or phrase.*
- *Second reading: Read the passage you’ve chosen and invite folks to be open to any emotions/feelings evoked in them. Invite them to share.*
- *Third reading: Read the passage one last time. Invite folks to listen once more and rest in those words, phrases, emotions, and feelings. In what ways is God inviting you to act in love after hearing God’s words today?*

### Option 2: Visio Divina

Like divine reading, this invites participants to reflect but is centered on seeing. Find a spot outside.

- *First Reflection: Have them choose their hands or feet (if feet have a group, take off their socks and shoes), take in the intricacies, and connect with their being in creation.*
- *Second Reflection: Have them locate something around them (grass, trees, butterfly, bird, etc) and take in the intricacies of that piece of creation.*
- *Third Reflection: They end their time by responding to how they want to pay closer attention to the creation around them.*

## Sending

In the creation story we read, God saw everything made: it was good. And may we see that there is still good creation. God has given us a gift of a good world that we are to care about and for. May we not lose sight and our focus on the fact that the care of creation is a God-given call on each of our lives.

May we lift up and advocate for justice for God’s creation. May we take steps daily to live connected to the earth, its inhabitants, and our role in caring for it. Amen.

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## FINALS

*As Finals are often a time of great stress, it can be a good opportunity to offer a moment of calm during worship. The following prayer can be done with multiple readers or with just one. During the prayer, give each student a piece of paper and something to draw with. Have them move their pen during the entire prayer. The goal is not to create a great work of art, but just to let themselves move freely and see what comes.*

*Another option is to record the prayer ahead of time. This would allow you to record many voices speaking as well as to incorporate music.*

### **Drawing Prayer**

God of intentionality, you purposefully crafted everything from the mysteries of the oceans to the life springing up from the valleys. We breathe in Your creations everyday, from the warmth of the spring air moving to the sound of the birds chirping with every sunrise.

Many times we fail to remind ourselves that not only did you create the wonders of the world with beauty and intentionality, but you created each of us as perfectly imperfect beings. When we fail to extend love to our own minds and bodies, remind us that we are covered in Your fingerprints each meticulously crafted to spread love and breathe in courage.

Our bodies are strong and made to do amazing things, so guide us as we learn how to appreciate the capabilities and love ourselves in the same way You teach us to love everyone around us.

God of peace, everyday we see more and more destruction being done to Your beautifully crafted earth. We are surrounded everyday with headlines of more death, more violence, and more hatred. Lord, when we get dragged down from what seems like the disparity of the world, guide us back to see the goodness we often overlook.

Remind us to delight in seeing the kindness of a stranger and the happiness of a neighbor. Show us that our feet are made for dancing, our voices for singing, our hands for lifting up neighbors in need, and our smiles for inspiring those struggling.

Spirit of divine humanity, we tell ourselves over and over that we are not good enough, that others are doing better, that we might as well give up. We need to be reminded that in your eyes, we are enough.

You don't ask for more than we are capable of, so why do we? We are grateful for this gift of life, so help us live to the fullest and in the way Jesus taught us long ago. Your Son who walked here on Earth and taught us to pray with these words...*(Lord's Prayer)*

# ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

## BLESSING OF THE GRADUATES

As we bless our graduates, let us respond to “God on this Journey” with “We bless them on their way”

God of this journey,

**We bless them on their way.**

God of the first day,

The inbetween,

The final moments,

And beyond, we ask your blessing on these graduates.

For all the work they have done, the time they have given, and the deep breaths they deserve.

For a season that began on zoom,

And continued through shut downs and mandates,

For the ways you endured, hoped,

washed our hands, And didn't give up;

God on this journey,

**We bless them on their way**

For those whose path forward is clear,

And those who only see the next few steps,

For those who are confident their work here is done,

And for those who feel things are unfinished;

God on this journey,

**We bless them on their way**

For the places that feel like home,

The places you have made home,

And the places that never felt like home;

For those continuing school,

beginning their careers,

or just planning for tomorrow;

God on this journey

**We bless them on their way.**

For pages written, classes skipped, and tests graded on a curve,

For the late nights, early mornings, and exhaustion of the grind,

For achievements recognized and those overlooked,

For all you poured into this place and now take into the world,

God on this journey,

**We bless them on their way.**

For moments of deep grief,

For moments of deep joy,

For moments when we didn't know what to feel,

For knowing our neighbors are surrounding our prayers,

God on this journey,

**We bless them on their way.**

## ACADEMIC/LITURGICAL YEAR

For the people, places, and ordinary moments  
That showed us the deep Love of God in everything,  
For the family you have found here;  
With every step you take,  
God on this journey,

**We bless them on their way.**

God of the journey,  
Of the first day,  
The inbetween,  
The final moments,  
And beyond, we ask your blessing on these graduates.  
For all the work they have done, the time they have given, and the deep breaths they deserve.  
And all God's people said Amen.



# THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

## BEING A PERSON

*There's a lot going on in the world, and in our own backyards. Honoring our lament and grief is important, but we also know that there are glimpses of goodness and hope too. Young adults are figuring out who they are in the midst of all of that, often in new spaces, or learning to inhabit old spaces in new ways. With this service, we hope to offer a place for students to honor the depth and breadth of being a person.*

### **Call to Worship**     *Psalm 96 & Matthew 6*

Scripture tells us to sing to the Lord.

**In this space, may we offer the truest songs of our hearts, whether they sparkle with joy or are dulled by grief, trusting that both are faithful.**

Scripture tells us, “do not worry,” but it’s not always easy.

**In this space, may we recognize our hopes and our fears, trusting that both are welcome.**

As we gather, may we honor the depth and breadth of what it means to be human.

**In this space, may we remember that we are not alone. Let us worship God.**

### **Call to Confession**

When we join together in times of confession, we accept God’s invitation to worship with our whole, authentic selves. It’s not about getting bogged down in every single mistake we’ve made, but about naming the ways we might do better together. Acknowledging that we are all works in progress, let’s join together in a prayer of confession.

### **Prayer of Confession**

*The words of the prayer could be read by a leader or in unison. Between sections, invite worshipers to reflect using a breath prayer, repeating the following phrases from Psalm 139 with each deep breath. (Consider saying the first breath’s prompts out loud each time, then leave silence for them to repeat at least 3-4 more times.)*

*Breathe in: Search me, O God.*

*Breath out: And know my heart.*

God of love,

Too often, we don’t leave room for the complexities of being a person. We let our anger consume us, or rush right past it toward feelings that are more comfortable. Forgive us for the times we favor simplicity over authenticity.

**Search me, O God...and know my heart.**

Forgive us for the times we have caused harm to ourselves and others with our words, our actions, and our inaction.

**Search me, O God...and know my heart.**

You see us when we are too overwhelmed to see ourselves. Guide us to recognize your grace in our lives, and to share it as often as we can.

**Search me, O God...and know my heart.**

Amen.

### **Assurance of Forgiveness**

Psalm 139 reminds us that God has known us since our beginning. Even as we continue the work of becoming, the work of getting to know ourselves,

**God already knows us. God already loves us. And that will never change. Alleluia!**

# THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

## Scripture Ideas

- Consider the Psalms, which include practically the full range of human emotions, from tree-clapping joy to lament, intercession, and anger.
- Genesis 32:22-32 (Jacob wrestles with God) Jacob is navigating broken family relationships but also ends up with a blessing. He gets a new name and moves forward, but not without a limp. We end up with bumps and bruises too, but maybe that's okay if the alternative is not being affected by anything at all.
- Ezekiel 37:1-10 (The valley of dry bones) Hope in the midst of desolation is possible, but the process of getting to new life can be messy and visceral – this prophecy doesn't skip to a neatly wrapped-up ending, it gives us details of sinew and skin.
- Matthew 15:21-28 (Jesus and the Canaanite/Syro-Phoenician woman) Even revered role models like Jesus are complicated sometimes.

## Prayers of the People

*Supplies: space on a wall/easel/whiteboard/etc, writing utensils, sticky notes (blue, green, and yellow). Ahead of time, write "Lord, hear our prayers" on the board/easel or on a piece of paper on the wall.*

*Being a person is messy. Our hardest moments mix in with our happiest, not to mention the ones that don't fit neatly into any category at all. We don't have to pick one or the other – God is big enough for all of it, and this communal prayer makes room to hold what's on our hearts together.*

*Offer some quiet time (optional: play some music in the background) for people to write their prayers on the corresponding sticky note color, adding them to the board/wall as they go. Encourage pray-ers to draw or simply write initials on their sticky notes, if that feels more comfortable than writing things out.*

- *Yellow: Joy/celebrations*
- *Blue: laments/concerns*
- *Green: both/other*

Expansive God, we come to you today carrying so much. Joys that lift our spirits and laments that weigh them down. In-between times that feel harder to figure out. We offer you our prayers – the ones we have written here and the ones we carry quietly in our hearts – and we ask that you would send your Spirit move among us and assure us of your presence, whatever the coming days might bring. Amen.

## Sending

*Invite worshipers into one more time of breath prayer, this time praying words from Psalm 46:10 ("Be still and know that I am God.") Again, say the prompts below out loud once or twice before allowing participants to continue in silences for at least 3-4 more breaths.*

*Breathe in "be still,"*

*Breathe out "and know."*

Whether you feel joyful or heartbroken today, whether you feel a little of both or you don't know what to feel, go from this place encouraged by God's presence with you and in this community. Go from this place knowing you are not alone. Thanks be to God for that.

# THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

## ADDITIONAL OFFERINGS

*Prayers, activities, and rituals related to the human experience.*

### **Reaffirmation of Baptism and Faith**

*This is a service for a student that wants to reaffirm their baptism. For many students, college is a time where they begin to claim new parts or deconstruct old parts of their faith. As campus ministers, we can meaningfully affirm that journey with them. In the Reformed tradition we recognize one Baptism. This service is a way to celebrate their faith journey and re-affirm their first baptism and celebrate the person they are becoming.*

*Notes:*

*It can be helpful to have the student write a brief faith statement before this service. It allows them to explore more specifically how their faith has grown and developed.*

*Some transgender students may give themselves a new name as a part of claiming their newly revealed/discovered identity. Their previous name/identity is gone, and a new name/identity has come into being (2 Corinthians 5:17). They may, therefore, feel seen, validated, and affirmed if they are given an opportunity to reaffirm their baptism/faith under this new identity.*

[Name] is here to reaffirm their baptism  
To say what they believe and respond to God's call to them and to the world.

[Name], we are so excited for the faith journey you are on,  
And how you are living that faith in this community and the world.  
Even before you were born and baptized,  
God delighted in you, and called you Beloved.  
You were claimed by Christ,  
Whether you knew it or not.  
And the Holy Spirit was equipping you  
With unique gifts and talents to collaborate  
in Gods' creative work in the world.

Surrounded by community,  
Baptismal promises were spoken to you, for you, and with you  
Seeds of faith were planted in your story, and have continued to grow  
We give thanks for that day,  
And gather today to affirm who you are and who you are becoming.

*(Move to the font, or somewhere where you have water.)*  
Through these waters we are reminded of the family of God,  
That encourages, challenges, and supports us as we grow in faith  
And affirms what we believe...  
Not because we are absolutely certain about these things,  
But, because we are always becoming faithful to them,  
And learning to wrestle with these claims  
About our relationship with God.

*(This next piece is meant for those who are gathered to emphasize how we do this in community)*

# THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

As we are one body with many members  
We affirm your baptism in this community  
So I ask to all of you  
Will you, as community members of [Campus Ministry Name],  
Promise to support, encourage, and love [Name].  
As they embraces a life of faith and continues to grow in what she believes  
Will you?  
**We will.**

*To Person Reaffirming Baptism:*  
[Name], in the community of the people of God  
You have grown, explored, questioned,  
And shaped your faith into a foundation that will be with you  
As you move into the world  
And so I ask you these questions

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God  
Do you turn from shame and toward a life of abundance?  
Do you?  
**I do.**

Do you reject the voices that challenge your first  
And forever identity as a beloved child of God  
Do you?  
**I do.**

Who is your Lord and Savior?  
**Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior**

Will you follow the example of Christ  
to show radically inclusive love to the world?  
**I will.**

Will you, to the best of your ability,  
Follow the church's leadership and fellowship  
To do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly  
Will you with God's help?  
**I will with God's help.**

Anointing with Water  
[Name], child of God,  
You have been sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism  
And marked as Christ's own forever  
May the Spirit continue to strengthen and sustain you as you move into the world

*Laying on of Hands*

# THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Holy God,  
In countless ways,  
In the storied journey of our faith,  
You reveal your great love to the world.  
We are claimed as your own by water and by grace.  
May this day be a blessing  
That remembers [Name]'s baptism,  
And serve as a reminder,  
That baptism's promise  
Does not wear thin over time.  
This gift is hardy and sure.  
We could not break it if we tried  
This grace has a firm grip on you, beloved one.  
[Name], you are more than enough.  
So, may you move into the world  
Renewed in your baptismal covenant  
And empowered to love and serve this world with joy,  
Striving for justice and peace in all the earth. Amen.

## **Body Scan Blessing**

Sitting comfortably with your feet on the ground, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. In...and out.  
In...and out. In...and out.

Feel your feet. The shoes that cover them. The ground beneath them.  
Remember the places that are holy ground to you.  
What is it that makes them feel sacred?  
Give thanks for your feet.

Feel your legs, from ankle to calf, from knee to hip.  
Think about the places they have carried you.  
Where you have been on your way here; where you hope you will go.  
Give thanks for your legs.

Feel your stomach.  
What is nourishing you right now?  
What is unsettling you?  
Give thanks for your stomach.

Feel your lungs, expanding and contracting,  
the wind and breath and spirit of God saying "I am here, with you."  
"I am here, with you."  
"I am here, with you."  
Give thanks for your lungs.

Feel your heart beat, whether it is quick or calm,  
What is breaking your heart right now?

# THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

What, big or small, helps mend it?

Give thanks for your heart.

Feel your hands – padded fingertips, wrinkly knuckles, lined palms.

What or who holds you steady?

What might you be holding onto too tightly?

Give thanks for your hands.

Feel your arms, from wrist, to elbow, to shoulder.

Remember the people and places that have embraced you.

Consider ways you might offer those spaces to others.

Give thanks for your arms.

Feel your head – neck to chin, mouth to nose, ears, eyes, forehead and scalp.

Remember all the new things that you learned today

Remember all the food you tasted and smelled, the sights and sounds you experienced.

Give thanks for your head.

Open your eyes.

Give thanks for the beloved creation that is your whole self.

Breathe in...and out. In...and out. In...and out.

Amen.

## **The Color Spectrum**

*Materials: canvas drop cloth, other plain fabric or posterboard; paint of various colors; printed or projected copies of color meanings ([see appendix](#)); paint brushes*

*Create a wall hanging or Communion Table covering with your community, inviting participants to use different colors for the things they're carrying with them. Depending on your community's size and available space, this could happen as part of a worship service or as one of several prayer stations.*

*Sharing the color chart in the appendix, have participants consider these questions. (If you don't have all these colors of paint, just share the meanings of the ones you do have.) Keep in mind that associations with color vary by culture; invite them to include associations that are not listed. You might note that each color has positive and negative associations – one person's abundance could be what another one lacks. Sometimes we're carrying both in ourselves, too. And all of that is okay.*

*What do you feel like you have a lot of right now?*

*What do you feel like you need more of right now?*

*As they're ready, invite participants to make marks on the cloth in the color(s) of their answers – handprints or abstract brush strokes could both work.*

*Close with a prayer of dedication.*

# THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

## What's Taking Up Space

*Supplies: Copies of brain and heart outlines ([see appendix](#)), coloring utensils.*

*This is a chance to honor what's taking up space in students' brains and hearts at a given time. You might do this at the beginning of a school year or semester as a way to honor what students are bringing with them to a new season together, as a school break approaches and some might have mixed feelings about returning home, before or after a mission trip, etc.*

Take some time to think about what's taking up space in your heart or mind – you can pick one or use both – as you anticipate the coming [semester/year/trip].

Using the markers or colored pencils, fill in the space with different colors representing how much brain or heart space that thing is taking up. Label the sections, use initials if that's more comfortable, or simply fill in the space with color as you reflect. The things you put on paper might be people, events, or more general hopes, fears, or questions. Anything you're carrying with you.

*If time allows, offer space for participants to share some of what they did.*

## For group reflection

- What was that process like? (Easy? Hard? Meaningful? Uncomfortable?)
- Are the things taking up room what you want them to be, or are there things you want to/hope will change?
- How do you feel having put some of these things to paper?

## Closing Prayer

God of transitions, as one season ends and another begins, we recognize the people, the situations, the hopes, the questions that we carry with us this day. May we hold these things with grace for ourselves and each other, nurturing the ones that enrich our lives and loosening our grip on the ones that weigh us down. May we find comfort and courage in the promise that you know us – heart and mind – and are with us no matter what. Amen.

## Tree Ring Reflections

*Supplies: blank paper, printed or projected example image of tree rings ([see appendix](#)), writing utensils*

Each ring in a tree's trunk represents a year of its life, and bears signs of what happened during that year. In years with plenty of water and nourishment the ring is thicker, while years of drought are thin. Forest fires can leave scars, but the tree grows beyond them.

Think about your faith life so far, and draw your own tree rings to represent them.

1. Start with a small dot to represent the beginning of your life.
2. Add a ring for each year so far. Some things to consider:
  - Draw thinner rings for years where your faith did not grow much (whether you were just very young or you didn't have the nourishment you needed).
  - Draw thicker rings for years your faith grew a lot.
  - If a significant challenge to your faith has happened, leave a mark like a forest fire scar on that year's ring to acknowledge it.

# THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

## **A Liturgical Reenactment of a Psalm 22**

*Consider asking multiple readers and participants to assist with this ritual. Perhaps one or two people may lead the reading, while several people are asked to remove a particular item at the given moment.*

*Supplies: table; candle(s); tablecloth; communion vessels; Bible. Organize these items on the table in a way where they are visible to all.*

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.  
Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

*Remove Bible from table.*

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint;  
My heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast.

*Remove candle(s) from table.*

My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws;  
You lay me in the dust of death

*Remove communion vessels from table.*

For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they bound my hands and feet. I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me; they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.

*Remove tablecloth from table.*

### *Moment of Silence*

From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.

I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.

*Replace tablecloth on the table.*

You who fear the Lord, praise the Lord! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify God; stand in awe of God, all you offspring of Israel!

*Replace Bible on table.*

For God did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; God did not hide God's face from me, but heard when I cried to the Lord.

*Replace candles on table.*

From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear God..

The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek God shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever!

*Replace communion vessels on table.*

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all families of the nations shall worship before God. For creation belongs to the Lord, and the Lord rules over the nations. Future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that God has done it.



# THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

## **Litany of Feelings** *Adapted from Psalm 59*

Deliver me, O God from the stress that feels soul deep.  
My fists are raised because everything and everyone feels against me.  
I long for safety and comfort,  
I long for peace and grace.  
I long for a sense of control,  
But when it's offered  
I get in my own way.  
It all feels too much.  
It all feels not enough.  
I feel it all.

The world is an endless bad news cycle;  
I feel powerless.  
I feel skeptical.  
I feel abandoned.  
I feel nothing.

The world is fueled by anxiety and fear;  
I feel isolated.  
I feel open.  
I feel frustrated.  
I feel apathetic.

The world is bubbling with inspiration;  
I feel amazed.  
I feel confused.  
I feel guilty.  
I feel hesitant.

The world is full of life and celebration;  
I feel depressed.  
I feel fulfilled.  
I feel scared.  
I feel indifferent.

The world is full of too many moments that leave us lonely;  
I feel disappointed.  
I feel withdrawn.  
I feel insecure.  
And yet, I feel curious.

The world is ablaze;  
I feel inspired.  
I feel vulnerable.  
I feel furious.  
I feel powerless.

# THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

God, you are my strong, safe place,  
You will never leave me alone.  
You love me for all I am,  
For all I experience,  
For all I feel.  
You are my strong safe place,  
Now and always  
Amen.

## **Election Litany**

*This litany can be used at any point during the electoral cycle. It also may be a useful starting point in response to any paradigm-shifting political events.*

As our nation elects new leaders to fulfill the role of the state,  
**Guide us towards justice and peace.**

May we remember that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and that in Christ we trust and obey in life and in death.  
**Guide us towards justice and peace.**

May we discover grace abundant from our life in communion with Christ.  
**Guide us toward justice and peace.**

May the rulers of our nations exercise their office with responsibility, with dignity and respect for others, with charity towards all, and ill-will towards none.  
**Guide us towards justice and peace.**

May the citizens and residents of our nation dwell in community with one another.  
**Guide us towards justice and peace.**

May we welcome the stranger in our midst, build neighborhoods of love, and be delivered from political retribution.  
**Guide us towards justice and peace.**

May we reject totalitarianism and move towards freedom offered through Christ.  
**Guide us towards justice and peace.**

May we trust and obey the power of the Word by which God upholds all things.  
**Guide us towards justice and peace.**

May we rest knowing that God will be with us always.  
**Amen.**

# WORSHIP WE WISH WE DIDN'T NEED

## A GENERAL SERVICE OF LAMENT

### **Call to Worship** *Psalm 130*

Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord.

**Lord, hear our voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the cries of our hearts.**

Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord.

**We wait for the Lord; our soul waits, and in God's word we hope.**

But Lord - how much longer must we wait?

**Hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with God is great power to redeem.**

But Lord - how much longer must we wait?

### **Call to Confession**

God calls out:

Seek good and not evil, that the Lord will be with you.

Hate evil and love good, and establish justice where you live.

Hearing God's call, let us confess our sins.

### **Prayer of Confession**

**Merciful God, we come before You with bitter tears. We profess Your goodness in the world. But as we look around, it is easier for us to see the brokenness of the world. It is easier to believe in our inadequacy. We are distressed, our stomachs churn, our hearts are wrung out, our bodies grieve, tears flow from our eyes. We are crushed by the hard things in our lives. Forgive us when despair threatens to overcome us; forgive us when apathy dulls us to the beauty of your creation; forgive us when we lose hope that You are making things new. Amen.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; God's mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning; great is God's faithfulness." Holding onto this hope that never fails, let us pass the peace of Christ.

### **Prayer of Illumination**

Transcendent God, as we encounter Your Holy Word, grant us respite from that which trevails us so that we may rest in Your presence. Quiet our minds from distractions, and fill our hearts with all that is good and pleasing to You. Amen.

### **Scripture Ideas**

- 1 Kings 19 (*Elijah meets God at Horeb*): After a confrontation with the priests of Ba'al, Ahab and Jezebel threaten Elijah's life. Elijah runs away into the wilderness and is afflicted with a depressive episode. God meets Elijah in this space, revealing Godself through the sheer silence.
- Lamentations (*Poems of lament in the context of the fall of Jerusalem*): Who doesn't like a sad song? Sometimes, singing a sad song somehow makes things better. There are not many sad songs within Christian Contemporary Worship music, but they are common in the Hebrew Tradition.
- Job (*a prolonged exploration of the problem of evil*): The Book of Job is beautiful and complicated. Job demands that God give an account for why Job is experiencing the horrible suffering placed upon him; and yet, Job also provides some of the most poetic language on the mysterious majesty of God.
- Jeremiah 8:18-22 (*Is there a balm in Gilead?*): Jeremiah is filled with passages of existential dread. The threat of Babylon looms on the horizon, and nothing that he says to the powers convinces them to turn from their ways. Jeremiah laments what seems inevitable.

# WORSHIP WE WISH WE DIDN'T NEED

- Psalms (e.g. *Psalm 130, Psalm 8, Psalm 38, Psalm 10, Psalm 42-43*). As mentioned with *Lamentations*, sometimes it's nice to take a sad song, sit with it, and let that make things feel better.

## **Prayers of the People**

Merciful God,

We find ourselves on this college campus experiencing a myriad of stresses. We worry about our grades, whether we are aiming for a perfect GPA or at risk of academic probation. We worry about paying for tuition, student loans, rent, groceries, and other living expenses; we worry about our relationships, our friendships, our family dynamics. We worry about our future, about finding a job, about finding a home. We worry.

### **Lord have mercy**

As we look beyond our college experiences, we find more things to feel concern about. We worry about climate change; we worry about our political future; we worry about our economic stability; we worry about our healthcare system; we worry about wars abroad and rumors of war closer to home; we worry.

### **Christ have mercy**

Silently or aloud, we bring the prayers of our communities. Where we share, let us respond together, "Hold us in your mercy."

At this time, a moment of silence may be held for individual prayers to be shared. After a person concludes their prayer, pray together:

### **Hold us in your mercy.**

We find ourselves buried in the miasma of stress, named and unnamed, articulated and inarticulable. Amidst these burdens, may we find rest within you. May we find assurance in your mercy, faith in your presence, freedom in your love, hope in the ineffable and unknowable ways that the Holy Spirit is moving in our world.

### **Hold us in your mercy.**

## **Affirmation of Faith**      *Confession of Belhar*

**We believe in the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects, and cares for the church through Word and Spirit. This, God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end.**

**We believe in the one holy, universal Christian church, the communion of saints called from the entire human family.**

**We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ;**

**We believe that God has revealed God's self as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people.**

## **Sending**

*Listen or sing "Where Peace, Like a River (It Is Well With My Soul)" Glory To God #840*

## **Blessing**

Even if the words of this song ring hollow to you now, may you soon discover these words to be true.

# WORSHIP WE WISH WE DIDN'T NEED

## AFTER A MASS SHOOTING

*One of the greatest fears experienced by Christian educators working in campus ministry is that they will learn that their campus has become the site of another mass shooting. Virginia Tech in 2008, Oikos University in 2012, Santa Monica College in 2013, University of California, Santa Barbara in 2014, and Umpqua Community College in 2015, Michigan State University in 2023 have all recently experienced this horrific trauma. Neil Myer, the UKirk Campus Minister at Michigan State University organized a prayer vigil at Eastminster Presbyterian Church following that most recent tragedy. It is our prayer that no one ever has need for this liturgy again.*

*Materials: candles, lighters or matches*

*As people are coming into the space of grieving, distribute candles to each individual. Recruit a few people to help start the candle lighting at the appropriate time in the service.*

### **Words of Welcome**

Let's start by taking a couple of deep breaths. We are gathered tonight because another act of unspeakable gun violence has occurred in our nation, this time in our community, in the place where we live or learn, work or play. Evil opened fire on students in places where they should feel safe. Our community sheltered in place for hours in fear, because we know in America none of us are safe from gun violence. [Number] lives were lost and [number] were injured. We are reeling from so much trauma. And so...

We are gathered tonight because we do not understand and we struggle for words.

We are gathered tonight because we are heartbroken and afraid.

We are gathered tonight because evil is present in our world.

We are gathered tonight because we need to lament.

We are gathered tonight because we need God's healing.

And we are gathered tonight because prayer is not the final step but the first step in responding to violence as a people of faith.

Often before we can respond with action or advocacy (and we must), we must first sit in grief, name evil for what it is, and pray for God's courage to faithfully respond "No more." So let us worship with silence and music and prayer.

### **Opening Litany**

Loving God, come be with us.

**We are heartbroken and afraid.**

Holy Spirit, come sit with us.

**Our hearts are heavy with grief.**

Lord Jesus, come be our healer.

**We long for your healing and love.**

### **Call to Confession**

We come tonight broken — heartbroken and broken by sin that separates us from neighbors and keeps us from loving one another as you love us. And so we pray first, O God, asking for your mercy for us.

# WORSHIP WE WISH WE DIDN'T NEED

## Prayer of Confession

**Merciful and compassionate God, we come to you broken and weary by the violence that surrounds us and the violence and fear that dwells within us. We come to you, confessing that we perpetuate violence by denying its very presence in our own lives and refusing to hold accountable the institutions that live and move by violent means. We come to you seeking mercy and forgiveness. Help us to name and claim all that separates us from you, from one another, and from the most vulnerable of your creation. We come to you, praying for guidance and wisdom, that we might learn to love our neighbors as ourselves and be your presence for healing and justice in this world. We pray in the name of Jesus the Christ, our Way, our Truth, and our Life.**

*O Lord, have mercy; O Lord, have mercy; O Lord, have mercy; have mercy on us. O Christ, have mercy; O Christ have mercy; O Christ, have mercy; have mercy on us. Amen.*

## Assurance of Pardon

On nights like tonight we need to hear again and again, “the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. May the God of mercy, who forgives you all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.”

## Scripture Ideas

- Psalm 13 *How Long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?*
- Jeremiah 9:17-24 *Teach your children a dirge, your neighbors how to lament.*
- John 14:18-27 *The promised sending of the Holy Spirit.*

## Affirmation of Faith

*Read Psalm 23 in unison.*

## Candle Lighting

Leader 1: We light candles in the midst of the darkness of the world.

Leader 2: We light candles in remembrance of those who have lost their lives [yesterday].

Leader 1: We light candles in hope for those still hospitalized.

Leader 2: We light candles for others and we light candles for ourselves.

Leader 1: We light candles to remind ourselves:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

## Closing Song

*“God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me” Glory to God #543*

## Blessing

May the God of all comfort, the love of Christ, and the peace that passes understanding be with you, now and every day. Amen.

# WORSHIP WE WISH WE DIDN'T NEED

## AFTER A DEATH BY SUICIDE

*This liturgy can be used after a suicide or as a service of solidarity for those affected by suicide (that could be people who have lost someone to suicide, someone who has attempted suicide, someone who is thinking about suicide, or someone worried about someone who might be considering suicide). You'll find opening remarks, prayer, and music suggestions for the service. Some of this service was adapted from the Christian Century.<sup>1</sup> If you are able, have a grief counselor present, include information about campus resources, and point people to call 988 if they might need someone to talk to today.*

### **Welcome & Gathering**

*Play Instrumental music as people arrive and find their seats.*

### **Opening Words<sup>2</sup>**

We've gathered today to talk about something that usually evokes silence — the silence of shock, pain, terror, and loss. We've gathered together in solidarity about something that often keeps people isolated — in despair, grief, or guilt. We've gathered to find hope together that we perhaps struggle to find alone.

Our challenge is to break through the stigma and silence that allows suicide as an option to grow in the dark corners of tormented and isolated minds, and bring to light what is so often hidden away. May we find peace and hope in our gathering today and remember the life of [name(s) or “those we love”], who we have lost to suicide.

### **Testimony**

*This space is provided for a personal story spoken or read by someone who was identified ahead of the service to share during this time. If you don't have someone you can move to the prayer below.*

### **Prayer of Permission<sup>3</sup>**

God, we sometimes are at a loss about how to feel. We are stumbling around in this dark fog, unable to see or feel our way through. Are we stuck in this dark forever? Are we allowed to feel joy again? Is it okay to laugh? Or to be just numb to it all?

May we know we have permission to feel as deeply as we need, or to feel nothing at all. That we have permission to smile or laugh if we find something that encourages us to do so. We have permission to cry and shout if that's what we are feeling. We have permission to laugh, cry, and live our lives. May we be reminded that we are not alone in this dark. That there is a way through, and it starts with allowing ourselves to live and feel however we may need. We have permission. Thank you. Amen.

**Poem** “When Great Trees Fall” by Maya Angelou<sup>4</sup>

### **Silent Reflection**

### **Candle Lighting**

*Have an area set up for people to come forward to light a candle of remembrance. You might have someone play music or share a solo while folks come forward or go around the room to light their candle.*

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1 <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/first-person/liturgy-people-affected-suicide>

2 Adapted from <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/first-person/liturgy-people-affected-suicide>

3 Adapted from <https://thefriendshipbench.org/a-letter-to-parents-surviving-a-childs-suicide/>

4 Available at <https://funeralguide.co.za/suicide-poems/>

# WORSHIP WE WISH WE DIDN'T NEED

We invite you to come forward to light a candle of remembrance for [person(s) who died by suicide]. May these flames provide hope in our souls as the glow brightens the dark of not having [name(s)] here with us. Let this moment honor the light they were in our lives.

You are also invited to light a candle(s) in support of those who have considered suicide. May they know that they are loved and come to see light in the midst of the darkness they are navigating.

## **Testimony or Homily**

*This time is set aside for another personal testimony, or a minister can share a homily.*

## **Passing of Hope<sup>5</sup>**

In many worship services, there is a time set aside for the passing of peace. Today, we want to offer hope. So, we invite you now to stand and greet one another with the words, "I'm so glad that you are here. May hope be in you." And respond back with, "And also in you." I invite you now to pass on hope.

## **Hymn**

*"Be Still My Soul" Glory to God #819*

## **Closing Prayer**

God, we miss [name(s)]. Bind us together and help us in our grief. We pray that in time our grief will turn to joy of the indelible mark [name(s)] life had on each of us. Be close to us. Amen.



# Sticky Note Words

Abstract	Intimate
Brave	Joy
Cautious	Just
Challenge	Kind
Complicated	Loud
Concrete	Love
Confusing	Open
Controlled	Ordinary
Cosmic	Patient
Creative	Peace
Debatable	Perfect
Extraordinary	Quiet
Faithful	Routine
Familiar	Simple
Family	Solid
Flawed	Strong
Friend	Together
Gentle	Traditional
Good	Uncertain
Grounded	Unexpected
Growing	Unfamiliar
Hope	Unreachable
Humble	Vulnerable
Imperfect	

# I believe...

*Compiled by Rev. Sarah Speed*

## **Core Values**

- I believe community matters.
- I believe it's okay to have questions — to be unsure.
- I believe faith and doubt are interconnected.
- I believe prayer comes in lots of forms — long and formal, short and informal, verbal, visual, tangible, embodied...
- I believe humans have a role to play in bringing about positive change in the world.
- I believe I can make a difference.
- I believe there is evil in the world.
- I do not believe that evil is God punishing us.
- I believe love is real.
- I believe I can make a difference.
- I believe in the power of forgiveness.
- I believe in second chances.

## **God**

- I believe in a God, or a higher power.
- I believe God is love.
- I believe creation is made in God's image (including me).
- I believe God's love is boundless and unending — bigger than I can ever understand.
- I believe that God loves all people — young, old, queer, cis, liberal, conservative, any race or ethnicity, full of doubt, convicted in faith...
- I believe God loves and offers grace to even my enemy.
- I believe that God hears me when I pray.
- I believe that all are welcome at God's table.
- I believe that I receive God's grace freely. I do not have to earn it. I cannot lose it.
- I believe that God's grace is stronger than hell or judgment.
- I believe that I am loved and claimed by God.
- I believe that God is bigger than the labels we give God, neither male nor female, but more like light — shining through everything.

## **Jesus**

- I believe Jesus of Nazareth was a historical human.
- I believe Jesus was God's son.
- I believe Jesus was a social justice radical, caring for the sick, the hungry, the poor, and the widowed.
- I believe Jesus was executed by the state.
- I believe Jesus was resurrected on the third day.
- I believe justice was a core tenant of Jesus' ministry.

## **The Holy Spirit**

- I believe the Holy Spirit can speak to us in a variety of ways — gut feelings, gentle nudges, through prayer, song, friends, silence, and more.
- I believe the Holy Spirit is with God and is God — a member of the Trinity.
- I believe the Holy Spirit is always with me, going before, behind, beside, and in front of me.

## **Humanity**

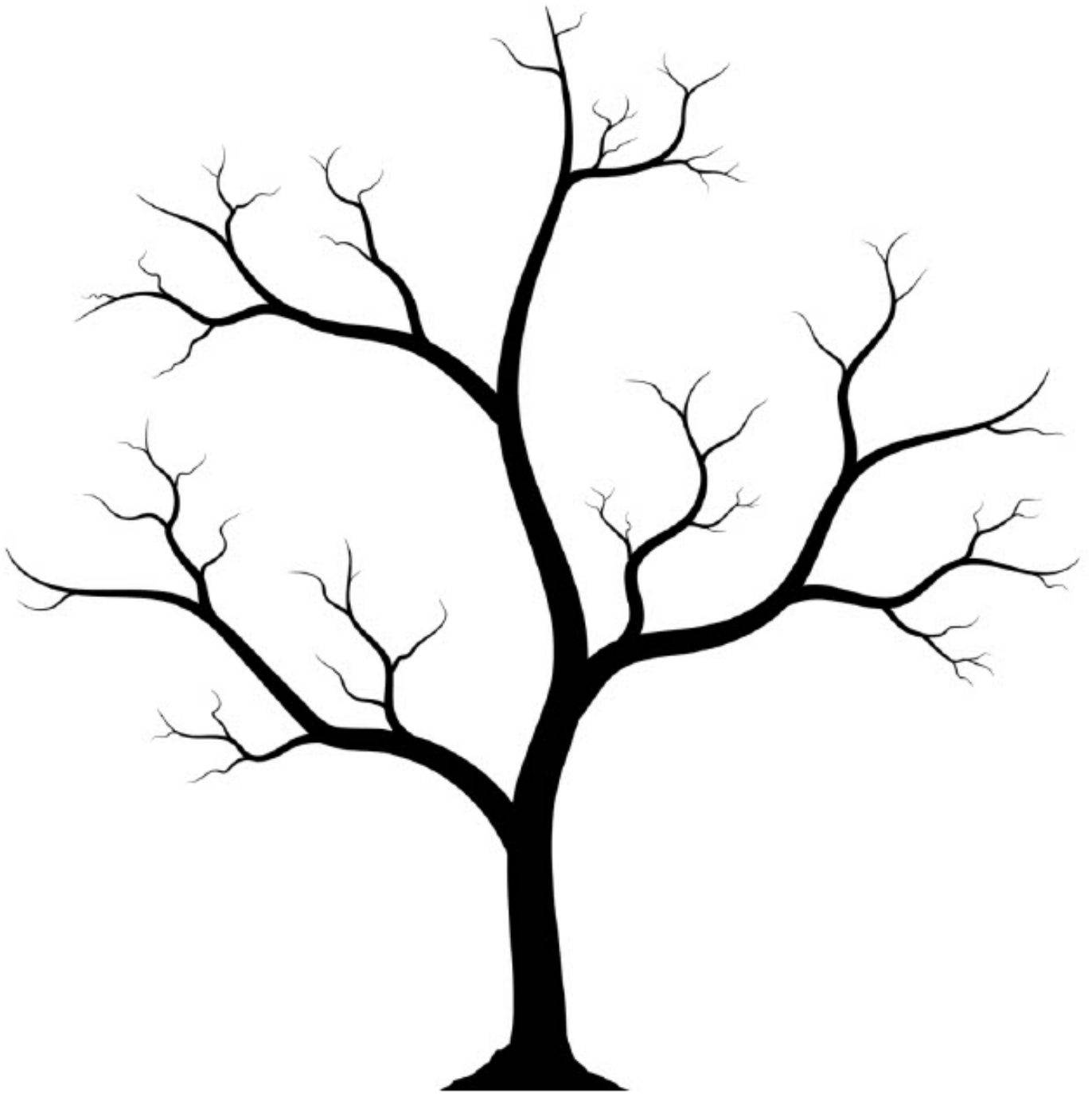
- I believe that God can use ordinary people like me to make a difference.
- I believe that part of our Christian calling is to love, advocate for, and feed people.
- I believe that God speaks to ordinary people, which means I do not have to go through another person to access God.
- I believe that I am a sinner. However, I do not believe that is my primary identity. Beloved child of God is my primary identity.
- I believe that as a Christian, I cannot sit by while evil exists and not feel compelled to respond.
- I believe that God does not need me to be perfect, God simply asks me to love my neighbor as myself and to love God.
- I believe my worth is not rooted in my ability to produce.

## **The Bible**

- I believe the Bible is written by human hands, and needs interpretation.
- I believe the Bible is the word of God, allowing me to see God more closely.
- I believe the Bible is a library of books, full of many different genres.

## **The Church**

- I believe the church, at its best, is a beautiful community that supports, shares, and grows together.
- I believe the church should welcome all, all the time.
- I believe that the rituals of faith, like communion and baptism, are important acts to help reconnect with God.
- I believe that baptism is a visible sign of an invisible grace, reminding me that I am sealed in God's love.
- I believe communion should be a reminder of what the Kingdom of God looks like — a place where all are fed.
- I believe worship is an important part of my relationship with God, because it allows me consistent time to be with God and in community.
- I believe that churches are human organizations which have often done wrong. However, I believe that with the help of the Holy Spirit, Christians can be an incredible force for good.



# Star Words

abide	boldness	decision
ability	bravery	dedication
abundance	breath	deep
acceptance	brilliant	deliberate
acclaim	build	delight
acknowledge	buoyant	depth
action	calm	desire
activity	caring	determination
activism	carry	devotion
adopt	celebrate	dig
adoration	center	direction
adventure	certain	discipleship
affection	challenge	discipline
affirmation	change	discernment
agreement	character	discovery
alert	charity	discretion
align	cherish	distinction
alive	choice	dream
allure	chorus	dusk
amaze	clarity	dwell
anchor	closure	eager
animate	coexist	ease
announce	coherence	education
answer	combine	embrace
appreciation	comfort	empower
approval	commitment	encouragement
aspire	community	endurance
assemble	compassion	energy
assurance	competence	enjoy
astonish	complete	enlighten
attend	comprehension	enough
authenticity	concern	enthusiasm
authority	confidence	empathy
awake	connect	equality
awareness	constant	essential
awe	contemplate	esteem
balance	content	eternal
be	continuity	examine
beauty	counsel	excitement
beginning	creation	expand
belief	conviction	expectation
belonging	courage	experience
beloved	creativity	explore
birth	curiosity	faithfulness
blend	dance	family
bloom	daring	fast
bounty	dawn	favor

# Star Words

fearless  
feel  
fellowship  
finding  
flex  
fly  
focus  
foresight  
forgiveness  
foundation  
freedom  
friendship  
fulfillment  
fun  
gathering  
generosity  
gentleness  
gift  
gladness  
glory  
goodness  
grace  
gracious  
gratitude  
Grow  
guide  
harmony  
healing  
hear  
heart  
helping  
holiness  
home  
honesty  
honor  
hope  
hospitality  
humility  
humor  
ignite  
imagination  
immerse  
include  
increase  
innocence  
insight  
inspire  
integrity  
intention  
intuition  
invitation  
journey  
joy  
jubilee  
justice  
keen  
kindness  
knowledge  
language  
laughter  
leadership  
learn  
life  
light  
listening  
liveliness  
love  
loyal  
marvel  
mediate  
meditate  
meekness  
memory  
mercy  
mild  
mindful  
motivate  
mystery  
nature  
newness  
nourishment  
now  
nurture  
obedience  
observe  
offering  
openness  
opportunity  
overflow  
pardon  
participation  
passage  
passion  
patience  
peace  
penitence  
perception  
perfection  
persistence  
perspective  
persuade  
play  
plenty  
possibility  
power  
praise  
prayer  
precious  
preparation  
presence  
proclamation  
profound  
protection  
promise  
provide  
purpose  
pursue  
question  
quiet  
radiate  
reach  
ready  
receive  
recreate  
redirect  
refine  
reflect  
refresh  
relationship  
release  
remember  
renewal  
resistance  
respite  
responsibility  
rest  
restoration  
revelation  
sabbath  
sacred  
sacrifice

# Star Words

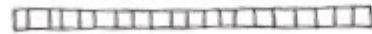
satisfaction	teaching
see	tender
seek	testimony
self-awareness	thoughtful/think
sense	treasure
sensitivity	time
serene	together
service	touch
share	transformation
shine	travel
silence	triumph
simple	trust
sincerity	truth
sing	understanding
soar	unity
soft	valor
solitude	value
source	venture
sow	victory
speak/speech	vision
spirit	vitality
splendor	vocation
stability	voice
start	waiting
steadfast	walk
stillness	warmth
story	weave
strength	welcome
stretch	will
success	witness
sunrise	wholeness
sunset	wisdom
support	wonder
sure	worth
surprise	yes
surrender	zeal
teaching	zest
tender	

# FIRST REACTIONS

This word makes me feel...

- |                                     |                                    |                                |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excited    | <input type="checkbox"/> Skeptical | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> encouraged | <input type="checkbox"/> annoyed   | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curious    | <input type="checkbox"/> mad       | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

(check all that apply.)



★ DEFINE your word in your own terms.

LIST different versions of your word, or words that are related.

How do these affect your definition?  
What else comes to mind when you think about your word?





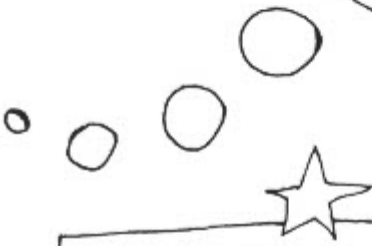


What **INVITATION(S)** might God be offering to you through this word?

TODAY'S DATE:



What questions do you have related to your word?



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**WRITE A PRAYER** inspired by your word.



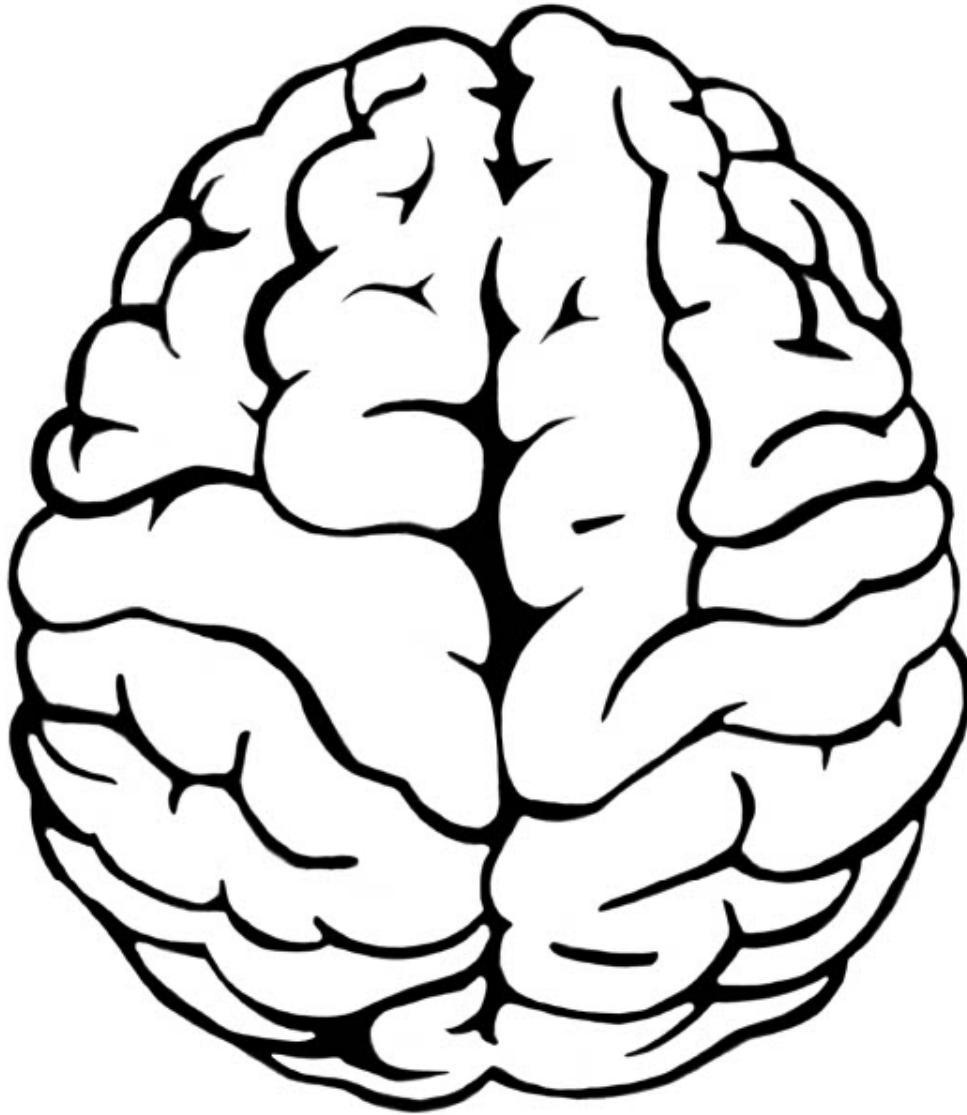


<https://www.serenaaarchetti.com/blog/the-meaning-of-colors-how-to-use-colors-in-your-art>

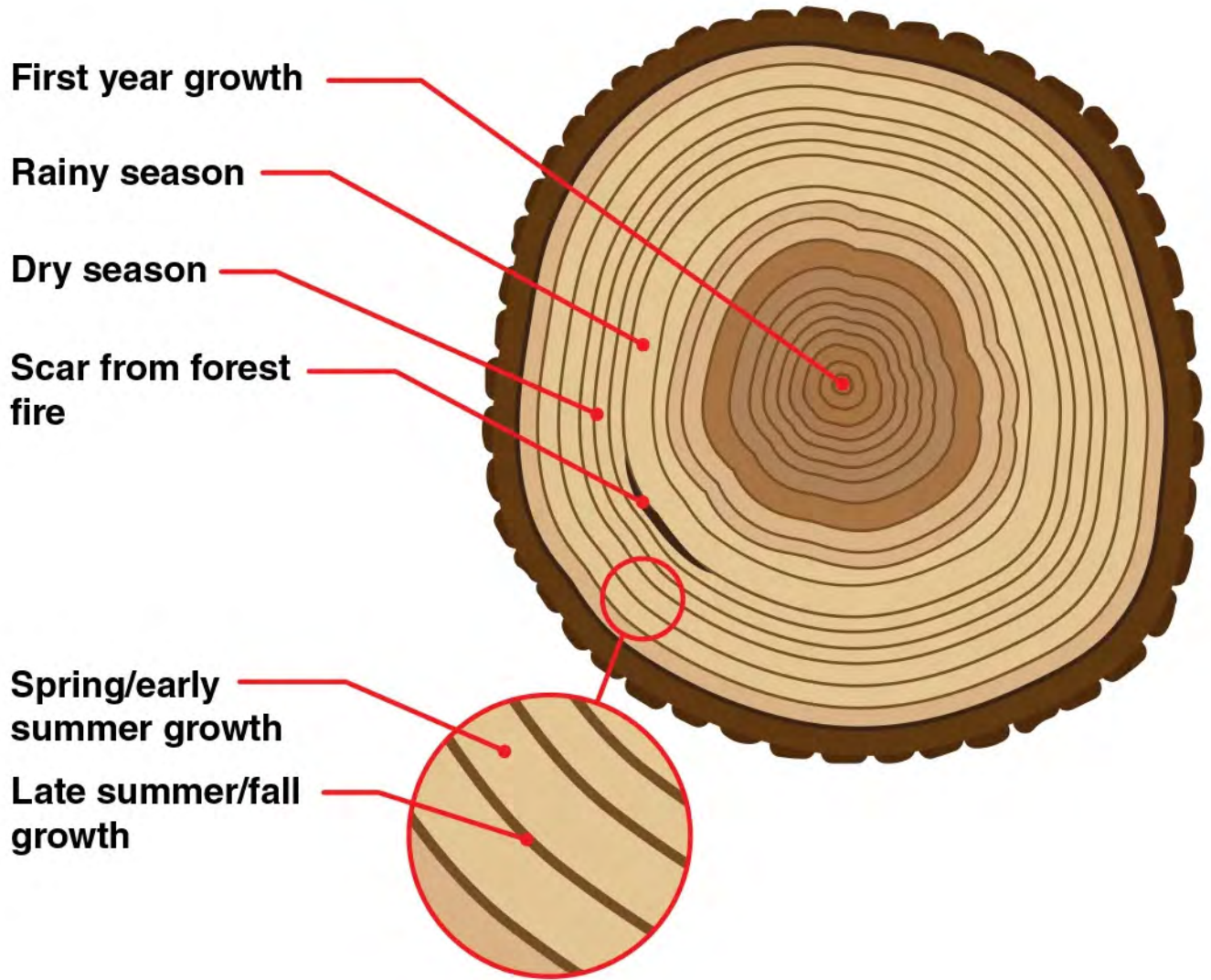
# What's Taking Up Space



# What's Taking Up Space



# Tree Rings



# PRAYER STATIONS

*These stations can be adapted to most spaces and occasions. They are meant to be used as tool for reflection, contemplation, prayer, and pause.*

## **Station: Coloring**

- Instructions: Inviting students to take 20 minutes to color mandalas or other images so that they can take a moment of peace amidst the stress.
- Prompt: Mandalas represent the spiritual journey. As we seek to encounter God on our own paths. Choose a mandala and color it in, being intentional with each color and let it allow you to have a moment of prayer as each color fills in the image
- Materials: Mandalas or other images to color, Markers, Colored pencils, Crayons

## **Station: Anointing with Oil**

- Instructions: This is a space where you can offer anointing or to have students anoint themselves independently.
- Prompt: In scripture and Christian tradition, oil is used to anoint people and places for three purposes: for healing and comfort, for marking as holy, and for symbolizing dedication to God. Even in times of grief and loss, of sorrow and sadness, of stress and anxiety, we can find comfort in God. In all times, we belong to God, and each one of us bears God's holy image. Put a dot of oil on the inside of your wrist or the back of your hand where you can smell it throughout the rest of the day, and be reminded that you belong to God and you bear God's holy image
- Materials: Oil (you can use regular olive oil or specialty oil), Container for the oil

## **Station: Gifts of the Prophets**

- Instructions: Inspired by the gifts that the different prophets in scripture had (gifts of listening, activism, hope, inspiration, lament, etc.) Using the images on temporary tattoos, invite students to see where they see their gifts and to put those tattoos on to remind them of their gifts as prophets.
- Prompt: Prophetic gifts are all different. Moses was an instigator, Miriam was a companion, Jonah was reluctant but vulnerable, and Amos was a challenger. When you think of your prophetic gifts, look at the temporary tattoos on the table. What image are you drawn to? Place this image on your hand or arm as a reminder of your God given gifts.
- Materials: Temporary tattoos, Small bowls of water, Paper towels

## **Station: Coffee Ground Gospel**

- Instructions: Lay a plastic tablecloth on the table. Place coffee grounds in the center and invite students to draw or write in them. (The table cloth isn't necessary but makes for easy clean up.)
- Prompt: Take a moment to be present. Inhale the smell of the coffee grounds. Move them around with your hands. Notice how they feel against your fingers. Write or draw the prayer you need for today.
- Materials: Plastic table cloth, Coffee grounds

## **Station: Writing Our Joy**

- Instructions: This is a space where students can brainstorm their joy. Oftentimes we can get bogged down in the weight of the world. This is an invitation to remember the Good News.
- Prompt: We feel joy not because the world is perfect, but because we know that God is near. Take time to write down 20 things that bring you joy. Get creative with it if you'd like! You can doodle, write in different colors or in different sizes. If 20 words are a breeze, then write down 30! And with each joyful reminder, say a small "thank you" to the God of good news.
- Materials: Large paper, Markers

# PRAYER STATIONS

## **Station: Beloved Names**

- Instructions: This is an opportunity to look at the variety of names for God and ones they resonate with, and also to lift us the ways that God sees us and names us.
- Prompt: Scripture shows us God has many different names. Look at the paper, what names do you resonate with? What is missing? Using one of the colors, write the names you have for God on the candle. Then think of the names that God has for you. In another color write those names on the candle. Let the light from within illuminate the many ways we are known, seen, and loved by God who goes by many names and it always rooted in love.
- Materials: Candle votives, Paint pens, Names for God written out for students

## **Station: Candle Lighting**

- Instructions: This is a space of stillness and a call to rest.
- Prompt: Light a candle and take a deep breath. Rest is not a reward in exchange for your exhaustion. You are worthy of it now. You don't have to wait until it hurts. Slow down long enough to reclaim yourself today. Let these breath prayers guide you in a moment of rest.
- Materials: Candles, Lighter, Optional: printed breath prayers that give you short phrases to repeat for each "inhale" and "exhale"

## **Station: Black Out Poetry**

- Instructions: Inviting students to create their own poems from familiar scriptures or poetry by using markers to cross through various words.
- Prompt: Pick a poem or scripture that speaks to you. Read through it once. As you read it, pay attention to the words, phrases, or general themes that you like. Don't read too intently- just let the words wash over you. Read it again and circle words or phrases that stick out to you. Use a sharpie or pen to black out everything that is not one of the words your circled See what emerges. Let it be a poem. Let it be a prayer. Let it be a gift.
- Materials: Scriptures or poems, Dark markers or sharpies (It can be helpful to do an example ahead of time, so folks can see what this looks like.)

## **Station: Quiet Corner**

- Instructions: Create a cozy space with pillows, blankets. Have playdough for students to hold and mold what they are feeling. This space they can use the prompt or just sit quietly and enjoy the quiet.
- Prompt: This is a safe place to land. All that you are feeling is safe and welcome here. Take the playdough and mold what you are feeling. Squeeze it into your anger, or feel it's smoothness resonate with your joy. Whatever you are feeling is ok, whatever you create is ok. Feel your feelings and know this is a safe place to land.
- Materials: Pillows, blankets, rugs, etc.; Playdoh

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## **Also from UKirk**

College & Young Adult Sunday Resources

Full services on the following themes, available in English and Spanish.

Belonging & Becoming (Jeremiah 1:4-10)

God Is with Us in Every Season (1 Kings 19:4-8)

Listening to Jesus' Instructions (Matthew 14:22-23)

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/office-of-christian-formation/college-and-young-adult-sunday/>

UWorship (2015)

Liturgy for ordinary time and occasional services, a three-year campus ministry lectionary, glossary of religious words, and more.

<https://ukirk.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/uworshipresource.pdf>

## **Creation Care**

Earth Care Congregations

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/earth-care-congregations-guide-greening-presbyteri/>

Presbyterians for Earth Care

<https://presbyearthcare.org/>

Devotional & Worship Aids

<https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-aids/>

Educational Resources

<https://presbyearthcare.org/educational-resources/>

## **Palm/Passion**

Stations of the Cross

Create your own with visual art by Mary Button

<https://www.marybutton.com/>

By Rev. Rachel Penmore (UKirk UTK) and Rev. Allison Wehrung (UKirk Ole Miss)

<https://bit.ly/4cflkZi>

## **Transfiguration/Pride**

enfleshed: spiritual nourishment for collective liberation

<https://enfleshed.com/liturgy-library/>

More Light Presbyterians

Worship resources, tools for becoming an affirming community, and more.

<https://mlp.org/worship-prayer-liturgy/>

## **For After a Death Suicide**

Christian Century: Liturgy for People Affected by Suicide

<https://www.christiancentury.org/article/first-person/liturgy-people-affected-suicide>

Funeral Guide: Resources for what to do when a loved one dies, how to cope with grief, and more.

<https://funeralguide.co.za/suicide-poems/>

Soulshop Movement

Resources and workshops for faith-based suicide prevention

[www.soulshopmovement.org](http://www.soulshopmovement.org)