



Campus Ministries 2016-17

Prayer Booklet

learning
through
stories

GOSHEN  COLLEGE



Dear Goshen College Student,

Inside these pages...

- ... may you find respite and replenishment,
- ... may you find a home that places you into the protecting hands of God,
- ... may you drink in the words of those before you,
- ... may you encounter moments that awaken your spirit and attune it to your surroundings.

Inside these pages...

- ... are ways to help you connect with God,
- ... are words uttered (and screamed) to God by others of faith,
- ... are images of comfort and security,
- ... are challenges and soul-opening considerations.

Inside these pages...

- ... may you discover the God who accompanies you on your GC venture.

Go with the grace of God, the peace of Christ, and the discerning nature of the Spirit.

Blessings,
Bob Yoder, *campus pastor*

Psalm 61:1-5

1Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. 2From the end of the earth I call to you, when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I; 3for you are my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. 4Let me abide in your tent forever, find refuge under the shelter of your wings. Selah 5For you, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

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What is this place	Seek ye first the kingdom of God
God is here among us	Great is thy faithfulness
The Lord is in his holy temple	Lord, listen to your children
I sing the mighty power of God	O healing river
All hail the power of Jesus' name	I bind my heart this tide
O Lord, our Lord, how majestic	Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling
Create in me a clean heart	I heard the voice of Jesus say
Amazing grace!	I sought the Lord
Obey my voice	Be thou my vision
You are salt for the earth	Precious Lord, take my hand
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Campus Ministries Office Resources

Community Voluntary Service: Volunteer with local service agencies, spring break trips, on-campus awareness drives and other worthy causes.

Spring Break Trip: Pending student interest, we can help facilitate organizing a service/educational trip. Cost may vary depending on location. If interested, contact the campus pastor.

Inquiry Programs: The Summer Inquiry Programs (Camping, Ministry, Service) enable students to spend three months in a camp, congregation or service agency exploring faith, vocation and leadership.

Local Churches Directory: Pick up your copy in the Connector, Union or by the Campus Ministries Office in the lower level of Kulp Hall. It is also available on the campus ministries website.

GC Prayer Booklet: This resource offers a dozen Campus Ministries theme devotions, different ways to pray and prayers by other people. For your free copy, stop by the Connector, Union or Campus Ministries Office in the lower level of Kulp. It is also available on the campus ministries website.

Pastoral Care: A campus pastor is available to support, guide and comfort you. You are welcome to contact him anytime you need support.

Faith & Vocation Lunches: These monthly lunches allow students to listen to two employees share their faith and vocation journeys. Contact the campus pastor if interested in attending.

Retreats (personal and small group): The campus pastor can help you develop your own retreat and suggest various local places of interest to hold your retreat ... a great floor activity! Possible locations: College Cabin, Merry Lea.

Small Groups: Opportunities are available for students who are interested in meeting together in small group and Bible study settings. Contact your Ministry Leader.

Table Grace: Comprised of a group of upper-level students and first-years who meet in the apartments or small group houses for food, games and friendship to help ease the first years' transition to college life.

Spiritual Friendship/Direction: Some local spiritual directors offer special student discounts. Students can also be guided in the practice of peer-to-peer spiritual friendship.

The Labyrinth: Located by East Hall, this tool for prayer invites you to meet God as you walk its winding path to the center and back. We also have an indoor cloth labyrinth available for use.

The Quiet Place: Located in the lower level of Kulp Hall, and open day and night, this space is set aside as a place for prayer and meditation. Another prayer room is in the Church-Chapel.

Witmer Woods: Located on the west side of Main Street (SR 15) between the main campus and the College Cabin, Witmer Woods is a wonderful 18-acre arboretum of native shrubs and trees. This is an excellent place to spend time with God in nature.

Chapel: Chapel gathers the campus community every other Wednesday at 10 a.m. in the Church-Chapel for 40 minutes where we come together before God in worship and seek to be continually formed into the image of Christ.

Taizé Prayer Services: Taizé prayer service, typically held the first Sunday evening of each month, is a candlelight service that includes song, prayers, Scriptures and silence.

Catholic Student Association: This is a student group who meets to provide support for one another in their faith development. For more information, contact Ash Scarbrough at ash@littleflowerchurch.org.

Interfaith Conversation Groups: An opportunity to participate in one of ten groups led by an employee to help navigate how interfaith/intercultural contexts will impact one's major and vocation.

Prayer Odyssey: A week of round-the-clock prayer for our Goshen College community and our families, our communities and our world will be organized in The Quiet Place for one or both semesters.

Goshen-Greencroft Connection: This is a mentoring opportunity in which a Goshen College student is paired with a resident of Greencroft, a nearby continuing care retirement community. Kick-off reception in late September!

Other Worship Services: As student interest dictates, we are happy to arrange for a variety of types of worship services that quench your soul. Contact the campus pastor.

Prayer Schedules: Daily & Weekly

Below are two possible ways of engaging this GC Prayer Booklet: daily and weekly. This is only a suggested outline, but ultimately this booklet can best be used by the level of ownership you take in adapting it to fit your “prayer personality” and spiritual needs.

Daily Schedule: Our encouragement is to use the Examen and Prayer Journal on a regular basis, then explore a variety of the other types of prayers found in this booklet. After a few weeks of practicing a variety of prayer exercise, you may discover that a few of them connect with you more than others; that’s okay. Not all will “work” for you. But for those that do, use these on a regular basis.

Weekly Schedule: Again, our encouragement is for you to engage the Examen and Prayer Journal on a regular basis, and connect with a Spiritual Friend. In addition, you may wish to follow the outline below as your semester experience unfolds.

- Week 1:** Conversational Prayer (25)
- Week 2:** Be Still (31)
- Week 3:** Lectio Divina (28)
- Week 4:** Praying for Our World (26)
- Week 5:** Hearing God’s Voice (26)
- Week 6:** Praying through Drawing (34)
- Week 7:** Breath Prayer (27)
- Week 8:** Prayers of Lament (30)
- Week 9:** Praying with Water (35)
- Week 10:** Writing a Dialogue (24)
- Week 11:** Praying with Art (32)
- Week 12:** Conversational Prayer (25)

Finally, we encourage you to pray the words of other people of faith found on pages 36-43.

Psalm 16:1-2

¹Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge. ²I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.”

Types of Prayer

There are three ways of praying that I'd recommend using on a regular basis: spiritual friendship, the Examen, and keeping a prayer journal.

A Prayer Journal: A prayer journal is a kind of like a diary, but with a difference. All you enter in it are remarks about your prayer life. The experiences you have. The thoughts that come to you while you are praying. How your prayer life is affecting the rest of your life. What you're having trouble with in your praying. What God seems to be asking of you as you pray. Review what you have written from time to time. You will find that this prompts new reflections and prayers about things you wouldn't otherwise have thought to pray about. It is important to make an entry every day, just as you pray every day.

Examen: The Examen is a way of praying, in which you take time to be aware of God's loving presence, while quietly reflecting on two questions. The questions are opposite from one another.

These questions are designed to help us think about our day, our week, or our month, etc. in a way that recognizes both our joys and disappointments. It gives a way to name what disappoints, hurts, or scares us while at the same time declaring that there are things that bless, uplift, and carry us. It is a way of allowing God to be a part of our everyday ups and downs.

Here are some examples of questions you can use. Pick a question pair or two to use and then spend some time reflecting on each question. Share your thoughts and feelings with God, or your spiritual friend.

Example Questions:

- *What made me smile?*
- *What made me scowl or frown?*
- *For what moment am I most grateful?*
- *For what moment am I least grateful?*
- *When did I feel the most alive?*
- *When did I feel the most drained?*
- *What scared me?*
- *What made me feel safe & hopeful?*
- *What in my relationship with God is most helpful?*
- *What in my relationship with God is most challenging?*

Try with a pair of questions every night or at the end of every week as a way of strengthening your prayer life. You may want to design your own questions as well.

Spiritual Friendship

In the Christian church, there is a long tradition of spiritual friendship as a way to grow closer to God. What is a “spiritual friend”? How is a spiritual friendship different from other close friendships? In any close friendship, two people will share what is most important in their lives: hopes, dreams, fears, and concerns about relationships, as well as details of their everyday lives. In a spiritual friendship two people may also share such things, but in addition there will be a stated focus on each person’s relationship with God.

John Wesley used to ask, “How is it with your soul?” That is a good starting point for a spiritual friendship. In a spiritual friendship people agree to share about their spiritual lives in a way that encourages each one’s growth in God. They might set aside a regular time to talk about what is happening in their prayer lives, how the words of a sermon struck them, or an image that came during a period of silence.

Spiritual friends trust each other and pledge to keep conversations confidential. They practice holy listening and simple joys together. Your goal will be to each know God better and grow on your individual spiritual journeys.

Spiritual friends may not call it this, but they hear what the other is saying by holy listening. In this way the one who is speaking is heard, understood, and prayed for by the listener. How many friends really listen to you when you talk? How well do you listen when your friends talk? To be a spiritual friend, you must listen well—and you have the freedom to do that because you know that you’ll have a chance to be fully heard.

From *Soul Tending: Life-forming Practices for Older Youth and Young Adults*, p.182-183.

John 15:15

I do not call you servants any longer... but I have called you friends...

Meeting With A Spiritual Friend

While a student, you may relish the support of such a relationship as you experience new opportunities, new people, new food, and new encounters with God. A spiritual friendship can allow you to make space for God for the purpose of spiritual growth, mutual support, and accountability.

How do I go about spiritual friendship?

1. Ask a friend or acquaintance if he/she is willing to engage this practice with you.
2. Plan to meet once a week or possibly every other week.
3. Do not meet for more than one hour at a time; 30-45 minutes is also great. Give one another equal time to share. Listen openly, compassionately, and reflectively.
4. Take into account the description about spiritual friendships. Go over this together at your first meeting. Ultimately, this is meant to be a safe and sacred space that honors confidentiality!
5. Plan to meet at a location that allows you to safely speak. Dorm rooms may not be a good location because of traffic flow or because they are primarily social spaces.

What do we do at a meeting?

1. Spend a minute or two in silence as a time to center.
2. Then, ask each other the following questions. Feel free to adapt these in ways that are beneficial to you. Consider utilizing some of the other prayer practices in this prayer booklet.
 - *How is it with your soul?*
 - *Where have you seen God this week?*
 - *Where did you experience God's absence?*
 - *How are you being stretched?*
3. Close your time with a short prayer.

Psalm 25:1-5

¹To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. ²O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me. ³Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. ⁴Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. ⁵Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

2016-17 Campus Ministries Theme: Learning Through Stories

The Campus Ministries theme this year is Learning Through Stories. Growing up, the Apostle Paul’s epistles (13 of them!) seemed like a bunch of do’s and don’ts. I preferred the Gospel stories about Jesus; much easier to follow! However, as a college student I traveled the footsteps of Paul in Greece and Italy. The sights and sounds of the many geographic locations I visited helped me delve into the biblical story. I was impressed by Paul’s perseverance and passion in carrying out his ministry. I began to better understand the story behind these letters.

When I now read Philemon, I consider the backstory of the relationships among Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus. Paul listened to the cries of Onesimus and advocated on his behalf, pleading with Philemon to welcome him back. I crack up when reading in Galatians that Paul suggested some people should go “castrate themselves.” Learning the underlying story helped me appreciate why his anger burned so hot in this letter! Philippians comes across like a love letter referring to this congregation as “beloved” five times. Learning the broader narrative of these epistles inspires me to more fully value Paul and his ministry. But, this took time and patience on my part.

Today, our world oozes with pain and injustice often brought on by a lack of understanding and fear. And, we struggle to take the time or have the patience to learn the story of “the other.” We might think that it’s easier to rely on what we already know rather than to learn something new, but let us not be lazy! Learn. Through. Stories. May these devotionals inspire you with patience, time, and perseverance!

— Bob Yoder, *campus pastor*

Related Scripture Passage Devotions

Matthew 14:13-21	The Message of a Bible Story
Acts 9:1-9	A Transforming Story
James 1:19	Listen Before Speaking
I Peter 1:8-9	The Power of the Story
Zephaniah 3:17	God Rejoices Over Us
Proverbs 2:2	Listen and Understand
John 20:17-18	An Unexpected Messenger
Proverbs 16:9	Trusting in the Great Storyteller
Luke 10:38-42	Storylistening
James 5:16	Sharing Stories of Struggle with Others
Proverbs 27:17	Listening, Understanding, Loving
II Samuel 12:1-4	Be Not Blind to Your Own Reality

(Printed passages are from New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.)

Ways to engage the theme and related passages

Personal Devotions:

Read over the same passage each day for a week

Group Bible Study:

Select one passage per meeting time, read over it together, and ask the following questions:

- *What jumped out to me?*
- *What questions arose?*
- *How does this apply to my life as a college student or employee?*

Meetings, Clubs, Floors, Small Group Housing Units, Department meetings:

Open with devotions by reading over one of the passages, along with a simple prayer.

Spiritual Friendship:

As you meet with a spiritual friend, read together one of the passages each time you meet.

General Reflections: ask yourself or with a group of people:

- *When have I/have I not experienced:*
 - *moments of stillness?*
 - *moments with/with out God?*
- *What might I do to help create such times?*

Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading):

Individually or with a group, utilize this prayer practice for each of the scripture passages

Matthew 14:13-21

The Message of a Bible Story

BY **Andrew Pauls,**

Senior PJCS major, Music minor, Worship Assistant, former Ministry Leader

¹³Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' ¹⁶Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' ¹⁷They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' ¹⁸And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' ¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

It is easy for me to take Bible stories for granted. I grew up going to Sunday school and heard them time and time again until they became as stale as manna kept for the next day.

As I grow older, I am learning to appreciate these stories once again, even as I become more skeptical of their authenticity.

"Hold on," you say, "what is this guy getting at, what kind of devotional is this?"

Let me explain.

It is becoming less important to me whether a Bible story actually occurred, the thing that is becoming more important to me is the message it conveys.

Jesus himself used parables to prove a point. The significance of his parables was not their accuracy, but the message behind the story. If we get hung up on whether or not a story really happened, we can miss the point.

Take, for example, the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand. One can argue and show evidence that Jesus actually did feed the five thousand, or one could also present a compelling case that disproves its truthfulness. When it comes down to it, however, it doesn't matter! Either way, the story has value because it conveys the abundance of God's love in a world where scarcity drives the market. Believing in the *factuality* of the stories in the Gospels is not the point, the point is whether you believe their message and whether you are willing to learn from it and act upon it.

Acts 9:1-19

A Transforming Story

BY **Anne Buckwalter,**
Sophomore Music Education major, Worship Assistant

¹Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' ⁵He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.' ⁶But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' ⁷The men who were travelling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

The story of Saul's conversion embarks on a miraculous yet challenging journey. Similar to how Jesus called on his disciples to follow Him, so he called on Saul to obey His instructions (rather in a more demanding, frightening way). We as a diverse community of people today are also called to be disciples.

One way in which I relate to this story is through my baptism. When I was a junior in high school, I committed my life to Christ by pledging my membership to my church. During the baptism, my mind immediately went to Acts 9 (Saul's conversion). Instead, Jesus was asking me, "Anne, Anne, why have you sinned and acted against me?" I silently confessed my sins and proceeded to tell my congregation that I was willing to commit to the Holy Spirit. "Go," Jesus said, "Go and be baptized."

Like Saul, I became transformed. Although my name didn't change, I was a different person. You, too, can be transformed. Each of us change, whether we have Christ in our lives or not. Transformation is a part of life. Transformation can be either good or bad. I challenge you to read the story of Saul, learn from it, and be transformed for the better.

Ask yourself: What sort of transformations do you want in your life? Are you struggling with sin or evil and long to be rid of it? How willing are you to listen for Jesus's voice? Where do you stand: Saul or Paul?-who do you want to become?

James 1:19

Listen Before Speaking

BY **Annika Detweiler,**
Sophomore Nursing major, Ministry Leader

You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger;

As a follower of Jesus I am continually convicted by how I can be quick to speak, but slow to listen. James 1:19 says, “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” This is a huge challenge for me. I have noticed how throughout my years, I have made assumptions about a person and have judged them based on that assumption. I had failed to listen to their heart, their story, their testimony before making assumptions.

This is a challenge for me and for every follower of Jesus. But, as we look at the life of Jesus, we see quite differently. Jesus paves a different path for how we should relate to others.

In John 4:1-26, Jesus meets a Samaritan woman who is at the well. In those days it was not okay for a Jew to associate with Samaritans but Jesus right away breaks this mold. The Samaritan woman questions why Jesus is asking her for a drink but Jesus shows interest and offers a different way of life. He offers her healing and transformation from her past through living water. John 4:13 “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Jesus knows this woman's past, but yet offers her living water. He shows us how to relate to others. We need to assume the best about a person, listen to their story and then offer healing and hope when needed.

There is power in listening before speaking. As I go about my day and you go about your day, I encourage you to ask God if He is asking you to simply listen to a friend who is struggling, or simply hug a son or daughter. There is power in our actions and we need to hear the stories of people before we make assumptions.

I Peter 1:8-9

The Power of the Story

BY **Christian Stoltzfus,**

Sophomore Computer Science major, Bible/Religion & PJS minors, Ministry Leader

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” (New International Version)

When we talk about Scripture, we talk a lot about Stories. We tell “the story of Creation,” “the story of David and Goliath,” “the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand.” We read the Gospels or preach the gospel, the “good story.” We talk about “God’s Story” and “Our Story” – we consider how our attitudes and actions contribute to God’s grand, timeless narrative.

We don’t mean that these are stories in the sense that they don’t contain Truth, or that they are gossip or slander. We don’t use the word to take away from their reliability, but to add to them; they are pieces of a narrative, an enormous puzzle relating God’s character.

But they are, in a sense, simply stories to us. We weren’t there when Jesus turned water into wine, or when He preached the Sermon on the Mount or walked on water. The stories recorded in the Bible, despite being foundational for our faith, still have some sense of the ‘other’ – they happened to other people thousands of years ago and in contexts vastly different from our own.

This is where Peter comes in. Writing to the church “scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1:2), he says: *I get it. You’ve heard the stories, you’ve had life changing encounters, you’ve devoted your lives to God. You didn’t have to see Jesus to have faith, and that fact has brought you incredible joy.*

This could as easily be said to us as them. We haven’t seen Him! We weren’t there! We don’t get to eat with or hug or listen to Jesus – we’re two thousand years removed. But, Peter says, even so: we love Him. He loves us. We know enough to believe without sight, to follow “even though [we] do not see him now.” And we don’t just believe about Jesus – believe that He lived, that He did some stuff – we believe in Him. We trust Him, we love Him, we follow Him to the ends of the Earth. And it truly bring us inexpressible joy. This is the power of the Story.

Zephaniah 3:17

God Rejoices Over Us

BY **Elsa Lantz,**

Sophomore Writing & TESOL majors, Resident Assistant

The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

I grew up in Denver, Colorado. During the summer, I attended Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp. Camp was a place where I could get away from the city and technology and connect with nature. I spent time in the mountains getting to know other kids who came from Mennonite backgrounds and exploring my faith.

One of the exciting parts of camp were the songs we would sing. While some were upbeat and fun, other songs were slower and had more of a sense of peace to them. For me, this verse is a song: *The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great joy in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.*

It was one of my favorite songs because while it was simple it had great meaning. We would typically sing it in the evening, often right before we were dismissed. I remember sitting outside by the entrance to a goldmine at camp, singing this song in the light of a fire as stars started to appear above the mountain's silhouette. In the beauty of nature, it is easy to see that God is with me.

While the rest of Zephaniah is pretty grim, this verse shows how much God loves us. Because this is a song, I felt God truly was rejoicing over us singing. I can't look at this verse without singing it now, but I find that it serves as a reassurance of God's love.

Often times I forget that God is with me. I find God in nature, and growing up in Denver meant that it was hard to see God around me. But going up to camp and being in a place that was completely surrounded by God's creation reminded me that I am not alone. As the verse says, God is with us and rejoices over us.

Proverbs 2:2

Listen and Understand

BY **Joelle Friesen,**

Senior Mol. Bio./Biochem. major, Int. Studies minor, SIPer, former Worship Assistant

Make your ear attentive to wisdom, and incline your heart to understanding.

A Sufi Story

Once upon a time, there was an old lady walking along a rushing river. She noticed a scorpion helplessly struggling against the strong current, and saw it get stuck in a tangle of branches. The woman immediately stopped and reached out toward the drowning scorpion, attempting to save it. But each time she got close, the scorpion's tale stung her, until her hand was bloody and she was wincing in pain. A passerby stopped and yelled, "What's wrong with you, fool! Do you really want to kill yourself trying to save that beast?" The woman looked at the stranger and responded, "Because it is the nature of the scorpion to sting, why should I deny my own nature to save it?"

Stories such as this one help us to understand the world in new ways. From picture books to biblical parables to personal accounts, stories have the power to convey core truths that cross boundaries. For example, this story comes out of the Islamic tradition, but yet it is reminiscent of the biblical call to actively love others as ourselves, unconditionally. It is only by listening to stories of others, opening ourselves up to understanding and being changed by the message, and then acting that we can make a difference in our world. As the anonymous quote goes, "the shortest distance between a human being and truth is a story." Through listening, we encounter deeper truths and learn to see ourselves as part of a larger story.

Prayer

God of all stories, grant us ears to listen and hearts to understand. May we hold the stories of others with grace and learn to act out of your love. Amen.

John 20:17-18

An Unexpected Messenger

BY **Landon Weldy,**

Sophomore Business Major, History Minor, Ministry Leader

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

We all have a favorite source of news. Television, radio, newspaper--even late-night talk-shows provide us with an endless barrage of news, most of it bad. But when was the last time you heard really good news? And who did you hear it from?

After Jesus' resurrection, he needed to let people know that he was back, that his promise had been fulfilled. It's like when a band comes back after a hiatus; they need to get the word out that they're back, better than ever, and not messing around. However, Jesus' news was fairly more radical than a band releasing a comeback album, even if we don't treat it as such today.

Jesus very well could have shown up unannounced at the doorstep where the disciples were meeting and say his message himself, however he chose to send out a messenger first, perhaps wanting to give them some forewarning. The interesting thing is who Jesus *did* choose: a woman, someone who did not have authority during this time. He did not choose Peter, his Rock; or John, his favorite. Instead Jesus chose to empower someone unexpected and show that women are highly regarded by the Kingdom of God.

We are called to listen to those who wish to speak. Everyone has something to say, whether we listen to them or not. If we don't, we may end up missing out on something important. Sometimes the best news can come from the most unexpected of places.

Proverbs 16:9

Trusting in the Great Storyteller

BY **Meredith Satchwell,**

Sophomore Nursing major, Resident Assistant

The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps.

When I was going into high school I knew exactly what I wanted my story to be. I wanted to be an active participant in as many activities as possible, I wanted to make lots of new friends and I wanted to grow closer to God. Little did I know then that my story was not going to be shaped by my own hands but by God's.

Three weeks into my freshmen year I became seriously ill and it wasn't until my senior year that I was finally able to be a normal teenager. My story changed dramatically throughout this time and I learned so many valuable lessons.

One of the most comforting things during this time was knowing that I wasn't alone on this journey. God knew that this was part of my story all along. Throughout this time I kept returning to Proverbs 16:9, "We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps." This passage gave me strength in this time of frustration and suffering.

While there were times that I struggled to trust God, Proverbs 16:9 re-centered my faith and helped me rebuild my trust in the lord. These words are a constant reminder that our lives are not truly our own but we are the great work of the Lord! We must not go about our lives expecting everything to go the way we want. But we must lift our desires to the lord, and trust in him. For he is our great storyteller.

Luke 10:38-42

Storylistening

BY **Monica Miller,**

Junior Music ed, major, Bible minor, Worship Assistant, MIPer

³⁸Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴²there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

As a strong introvert, I'm not predisposed to talk much. When I think of "stories," I immediately imagine myself doing the listening, rather than doing the storytelling, so to listen (or read) a story about listening to stories is a rare treat for me.

We don't often tell stories about listening. Listening is boring. You just sit there and listen. No exciting action, like walking on water or cutting off someone's ear and gluing it back on. There's no "wow" factor, and it feels unproductive at best.

If you're reading/listening attentively, I'm sure you can guess where this is going. If everyone is doing the storytelling, who is doing the storylistening? In order for one person to speak, another has to listen. For one voice to be truly heard, it has to be actively and earnestly listened to without an agenda. But can we go deeper than this? Can good listening actually be a spiritual expression of our theology?

What does the art of listening want to tell us? A practiced ear will take in words that may or may not be pleasing to it, and it will let the words soak in. Then, the words and the ear will mutually transform each other. What comes out is a thoughtful follow-up question or an insightful anecdote. Whatever comes in is converted through a learning process into a productive, constructive output. When we're talking about words, we call this listening. But when we're talking about actions, we call this pacifism.

Mennonites like myself do not have an exclusive claim on non-violent theology, though it is a cornerstone of our beliefs. Pacifism (not to be confused with its unfortunate cousin, passive-ism) is intimately connected to listening – to words or actions – and learning. Then, listening and learning are practical applications of my faith. If someone else is doing the storytelling, will you be open to learn by doing the storylistening?

James 5:16

Sharing Stories of Struggle with Others

BY **Rae Ann Miller,**

Sophomore Mathematics Secondary Ed. major, Bible/Religion minor, Resident Assistant

Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

When we make mistakes in life or are going through a really rough time it can be difficult to share it with others. Sometimes we are embarrassed of what they may think, don't want to be looked down on, or don't want to be a burden to others. But sharing your burden with a close friend is very healing and can help you so much in the long run.

This summer I was a camp counselor at Camp Friedenswald and there were moments when campers felt comfortable enough to share deep insecurities and other troubles they had been dealing with. Through the tears, the prayers, and the loving support you could see some of the weight be taken off their shoulders.

God doesn't want you to struggle alone but instead he put others in your life to help you bear the load. I challenge you to think about something that has been weighing on you, it may be something that happened recently or something that you have been holding on to for a long time. Take the time to share this burden with God and with someone you trust.

If you don't feel like you have a close friend you trust, you can always go to your ML, your RA, the campus pastor, or the campus counselor. They would all love to offer a listening ear and a caring spirit.

Proverbs 27:17

Listening, Understanding, Loving

BY **Rudi Mucaj,**

Sophomore History major, Political Studies & Pre-Law minors, Ministry Leader

Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another.

The world has never before been as globalized as it is today. People from different countries, cultures, religions, and so on, work and live in other nations; fall in love with people who have a different background than them, and start a new life away from home.

Yet, we also live in a world where some people see globalization as a threat and as confusion. We live in a world where people are being slaughtered for their views and lifestyle. We are witnessing the rise of dark and xenophobic powers, and even though we live in a very intercultural society, we understand one another less and less.

A lot of people blame the “system” for this bewilderment, but we do not realize that “system” is an abstract notion; the system is made by women and men. We are the system. We have the power to listen and understand one another, because only by coming together we can change one another and the world. We can give more love to our families, neighbors and even to strangers. That is the trinity of shaping and changing each other: listening, understanding, and loving, by working together for a brighter future. Only we have that power. As Proverbs 27:17 says “Iron sharpens iron and one man sharpens another.”

2 Samuel 12:1-4

Be Not Blind to Your Own Reality

BY **Mary O'Connell,**

Sophomore Social Work & American Sign Language majors, Resident Assistant

¹and the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. ²The rich man had very many flocks and herds; ³but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meager fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. ⁴Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him."

After David hears the story, he "burns with anger" at the injustice he sees and demands for redemption. But Nathan turns it around and rebukes David, saying how this very story is about him; he is the man who has stolen the lamb and taken it for himself.

This passage is often quoted in sermons, Sunday school classes, Bible studies, etc. It is important to know the context in which it was written. The previous chapter is about David's affair with Bathsheba. In order to save face, David has Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, purposely killed in battle so he can take her as his wife and father their son.

There are many things to take away from this story, but what I want to focus on is how easy it is to see the reality of someone else's situation but be blind to our own reality. It is easy to point out the sin in someone else's life but not see what we ourselves are doing. At the same time, it is easy to encourage and speak truth to others but not believe these words are true for ourselves. I often find myself judging others for negative things I see in them, but realize I do the same thing myself. The fact that I do this myself doesn't mean I shouldn't confront others, but instead ask for forgiveness, make sure I have a motivation of love instead of judgement, then confront the other person about what I see.

Matthew 7:3-5 says: "why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Writing a Dialogue: Meeting Jesus

BY **Marlene Kropf**

Begin by reading John 1:35-39 slowly and thoughtfully.

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day.

Imagine the scene in which John and his disciples see Jesus passing by. Notice the details of the scene – the road, the town, the sky, and vegetation. Let yourself become one of the characters in the story, perhaps one of the two disciples. Become aware of the disciple’s feelings as he or she follows Jesus. What is the disciple thinking? What does the disciple see in Jesus’ face when Jesus turns around and speaks? How does it feel to ask Jesus a question? What happens as the disciples follow Jesus to the place where he is staying?

Begin writing the story as though you are there.

You can begin at any point in the action. When you come to the place where Jesus asks the disciples, “What are you looking for?” let yourself become a partner in the conversation. Answer Jesus’ questions as if they are addressed to you.

For example, write:

Jesus: *What are you looking for? What do you want?*

Your Name: *Here you write whatever response seems like the one you would make to Jesus.*

Jesus: *Write Jesus’ response to you.*

Continue writing the dialogue as long as you have something to say. Don’t try to decide if the words are really the words of Jesus. Just write until the conversation is finished. There will be time later to reflect on what has happened in the exchange. Writing a dialogue is a way of trusting our imagination to lead us into a conversation with God. As a kind of prayer in which we both listen and speak to God, such dialogues can be a helpful discipline in hearing a personal word from God as well as helping to clarify our inner thoughts and motivations. In some cases, these dialogues can also be a way to discern God’s direction in our lives.

Conversational Prayer

Here you are invited to carry on a conversation with God which requires both speaking and listening. You can start on either side of the paper, “Me” or “God.”

If you start on the “Me” side:

What is it that you want to say to God? What is on your mind? What are you struggling with right now? Write it down. Then go to the side that says “God.” Listen to what God might be saying to you. Write what you think God would say to you in response to, what you have written. Then, go back to the “Me” side and respond to God. Continue this conversation back and forth for as long as you need to. Reread what you have written.

If you start on the “God” side:

What is it that God wants to say to you? Write it down. Then go to the side that says “Me.” Say what you want to God. Follow the same steps as above, going back and forth between the sides for as long as you need to. Then, reread what you have written.

ME

GOD

Praying For Our World

Reflect on the following questions to help guide your prayer time. It may be helpful to focus on one specific place: maybe an area of the world that intrigues or challenges you, an area or issue you that saddens or frustrates you, or you might think of young people like yourself in other parts of the world and what their lives are like.

- *What can I celebrate about the world?*
- *Who is hurting in the world?*
- *How do I invite the love of Jesus into those broken and hurting places?*
- *How do my choices affect others?*
- *Am I struggling with anger or even hatred toward other persons or nations?*
- *Do I pray about those struggles asking for God's guidance and grace?*
- *What are my hopes for the world (or for a specific place in the world)?*
- *How can my light shine in the world?*

Offer both your concerns and thankfulness to God. Ask God for guidance and courage.

Hearing God's Voice

What are your stories of hearing the voice of God?

Reading:

- *Mary (Luke 1:26-38)*
- *Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25)*
- *Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-18)*
- *Deborah (Judges 4:1-10)*
- *Gideon (Judges 6:11-24)*
- *David (1 Samuel 16:1-23)*
- *Hagar (Genesis 21:8-21)*
- *Disciples (Luke 5:1-11)*

Reflection:

- *When is one time that I have heard the voice of God?*
- *What was the context?*
- *How have you heard God's voice as a student? Was it direct or through other people?*

A Breath Prayer

For centuries the breath prayer has existed as a way to connect with God. For some it is a way to befriend silence; it gives you something to do as you begin to experience holy silence.

As you repeat the prayer, its words eventually become background so you can be open to hearing what God might say. You can choose your own breath prayer and then repeat it over and over in rhythm with the inhale and exhale of your breath.

First choose a simple phrase that summarizes what you may need from your relationship with God right now. You might choose a line from a song or a phrase of Scripture, as long as it is not too wordy. Or choose something like:

- *Be with me, God*
- *Jesus, help me follow you*
- *Spirit, give me strength*
- *Gracious God, fill me with love*
- *Guide me, Savior*
- *Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me*

You may wish to simply pray this prayer for a few minutes or up to 10, 20, or 30 minutes... however long you feel this is beneficial to your soul. You might also consider praying a breath prayer as you walk, run, ride bike, or some other seemingly mundane activity.

Isaiah 12:2

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

Psalm 57:1

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, until the destroying storms pass by.

Psalm 117:1-2

¹Praise the Lord, all you nations! Extol him, all you peoples! ²For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!

Lectio Divina: Praying The Scriptures

“Reading the Bible and praying the Bible are two very different undertakings. To pray the Bible is to apply listening and silence to the Word of God in order to hear God speak...The ancients realized that scripture, when read the right way, opens doors to a direct relationship with God.” (Creating a Life with God, pages 38-39.)

Lectio Divina is a way of praying Scripture. It dates back to the Middle Ages and has primarily been used among Benedictine monks. It “aims at giving an awareness of God’s presence through a fourfold process.”

This method can take five minutes or it can take several hours! You are encouraged to spend an equal amount of time with each part. Though any passage can be used, those that work well for this method of praying are often the Gospel stories and Psalms that range in length no more than ten verses.

Part I-Lectio (reading) Receive the word of God. Read the text twice, out loud or in silence, then pause for a moment. Read the text slowly again so that you can savor it.

Part II-Meditatio/Ruminatio (ruminate; mull over) Allow the word to be present. Read the text again slowly. Take notice of a word or phrase that strikes you in a unique way. After you read the text think about that word or phrase.

Part III-Oratio (speak) Articulate your response. Read the text slowly again pausing afterwards. During your silent pause take time to ask God, “Why does this word or phrase stand out to me today? What are you saying to me today?” Just wait and listen for a moment or two.

Part IV-Contemplatio (“contemplate”) Rest in the presence of God. Carry this prayer experience with you. Thank God for the word that was revealed to you today.

Some passages you might consider...

- *Psalm 1:1-6*
- *Psalm 15:1-5*
- *Psalm 101:1-8*
- *Matthew 6:25-34*
- *Matthew 14:22-33*
- *Matthew 20:20-28*
- *Mark 4:35-41*
- *Mark 6:6b-13*
- *Mark 7:24-30*
- *Mark 12:41-44*
- *Luke 8:22-25*
- *Luke 9:23-27*
- *Luke 11:1-13*
- *Luke 19:1-10*

The Jesus Prayer

“Prayer is essentially an entering into that knowledge of the Divine love holding us.”

— Simon Barrington-Ward, p.22

Turning our attention to God in an intentional way is the cornerstone of prayer. One prayer practice used over the centuries is the simple Jesus Prayer. This repetitive prayer invites the prayer to put her/himself in the presence of God and invite God’s mercy to wash over the prayer and the world. Three different options are listed here:

*Lord Jesus Christ
Son of God
Have mercy on me.*

*Lord Jesus Christ
Son of God
Have mercy on me, a sinner.*

*Lord Jesus Christ
Love of God
Have mercy on me
and on the whole world.*

Instructions from *The Jesus Prayer: A Way to Contemplation** by Simon Barrington-Ward include the following:

How to begin:

- Sit comfortably, relax and breathe slowly
- Pray the words of the prayer out loud: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me,” repeating the prayer over and over.
- Try to pray for ten minutes at first; gradually increase the time, if desired.

Additional Notes:

- When you find your mind wandering, let the words of the prayer bring you back to an awareness of God: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God...”
- You may choose to breathe intentionally as you pray, breathing in as you say the first half of the prayer (Lord Jesus Christ, Son/Love of God) and breathing out as you say the second half (Have mercy on me/Have mercy on me and on the whole world).
- Use this as a prayer of intercession by putting the name of a person, a group of people, or a situation in place of “me” as you repeat this prayer.
- Gradually let the prayer lead you into times of complete silence, resting in the love of God.

**The Jesus Prayer: A Way to Contemplation*, Simon Barrington-Ward, (US Edition: Pauline Books & Media, Boston, MA), 2011

Prayers Of Lament

Expressions of biblical lament can be found in numerous books of the Bible, particularly in Psalms. Of the 150 Psalms, nearly half can be categorized as a form of lament. These prayers can be for both individual and corporate settings. Though not all lament psalms follow the same format, there is often a common flow and movement among these prayers. See below. In these psalms, a critical turning point occurs in most of them when the plea or complaint turns to praise.

“The practice of lament gives you time and permission to vent your pent-up anger, your deep sadness, and your self-blame. You allow yourself to grieve in a way that leads to healing and renewal. As you pour out your grief, loss, pain, and anger in the presence of God, you discover that God hears your cries of anguish and comforts you. While you can’t remove the storms, quiet the thunder, or stop the lightning from striking, you can trust your tears to be the raindrops that release the clouds, allowing rays of sunlight to shine through. Before catching a glimpse of the rainbow, though, you have to brace yourself for the raging storm within.”*

Write your own “3-Act” psalm

Act I: Arguing with God

People get mad at God (or some other event/reality) and pour out their raw emotions.

Act II: Remembering God’s goodness

Gradually those who complained remember God’s help in the past and know that God has heard them.

Act III: Praising God

Those who lament realize they can trust God with their lives and they tell God, “Thanks!”

*Bass, Dorothy & Don Richter, eds. *Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens*. (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2002), page 251.

Psalm 22:1-2

¹My God, my god, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? ²O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.

Be Still

Be still and know that I am God. — Psalm 46:10a

In our busy and noisy world, it can be difficult to slow down...to stop...to relax...to breathe...to be still. This way of praying gives you opportunity to do just that...be still. And to do it in a way that calls us to remember who God is.

To pray this prayer, you simply keep in mind the phrase “Be still and know that I am God,” but you will actually “chop off” words of this verse until you are in total stillness. Repeat each phrase in the quietness of your mind for one minute. Or you can do it for more or less time than that, but keep it an equal amount of time.

Repeat the following phrases each for one minute...for a total of five minutes:

Be still and know that I am God

Be still and know

Be still

Be

...silence...

Psalm 46

¹God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; ³though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. *Selah*

⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. ⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. ⁶The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. ⁷The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

⁸Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth. ⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. ¹⁰Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth. ¹¹The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

Praying With Art

Spending time contemplating an art piece can be a way of entering into prayer. It can be a way of listening in prayer. It can be a way that Scripture comes to life for you.

- Choose a picture you would like to focus on. You may want to choose something related to a certain Scripture passage. Or select some paintings or drawings from religious art books or other sources.
- Sit down; make yourself comfortable. Ask God to open something up to you through this work of art.
- Spend time looking at the picture: notice color, texture, layers, the characters and scenery. Allow yourself to hone in on details.
- After some time, allow yourself to withdraw from looking at detail and look at the “big picture.”
- Ask what is this piece trying to portray? What is it saying?
- Allow yourself to be drawn in again, this time imagining yourself as a part of the scene. What character do you relate to? What emotion in the picture might describe where you are right now? What strikes you?
- Spend some time praying asking God what this means for you. It may be that this simply gives you a different view of Jesus or someone else to ponder. It may be a tool God is giving you to open up Scripture to you in a whole new way. It may be an insight into yourself. Whatever it is, thank God for it.

Psalm 33:1-3

¹Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous. Praise befits the upright. ²Praise the Lord with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings. ³Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts. ⁴For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. ⁵He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord. ⁶By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth. ⁷He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle; he put the deeps in storehouses.

Praying With Clay

Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. —Isaiah 64:8

It isn't always easy to put into words what we want to share with God. Sometimes it is downright hard to pray. Praying with clay can be a rich new way for you to experience prayer. You can use your hands to feel that you are sharing something with God.

- Choose a ball of clay to work with. Then make yourself comfortable.
- You may want to choose a Scripture passage on which to reflect, or simply use the clay to express some feelings or challenges you are experiencing.
- Try to get a bit lost in what you are doing, allowing God to enter into your process of creating.
- When you are done you may have a symbol before you or you may simply have worked some things out through the clay.

Psalm 8:1-9

¹*O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. ²Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. ³When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; ⁴what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? ⁵Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. ⁶You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, ⁷all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, ⁸the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. ⁹O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

Praying Through Drawing

Sometimes it is difficult to put into words what we are experiencing, what we want to share with God. Therefore, sharing with God through drawing can be helpful.

- It may help to capture emotions you are experiencing that are so hard to describe.
- It may be a special way to describe something you are struggling with.
- Drawing, like journaling, can be a special thing you can look back on and remember where you were spiritually when you offered such a prayer.
- Finally, try to think of this as a special offering to God. You are creating something as you pray. It is a gift that you share with God. It can be a symbol of your relationship with God and where you are in your journey.

Find a comfortable spot to spend some time drawing your prayers to God.

Psalm 139:1-6

1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me. 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. 3 You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Psalm 131

1 O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. 2 But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like the weaned child that is with me. 3 O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time on and forevermore.

Praying With Water

God is like water in many ways.

God is soothing and comforting like warm bath water.

God is powerful like the rushing water of a river or waterfall.

God cleanses us and refreshes us.

Slowly dip your hands in a bowl of water and try to open yourself to God's presence.

Offer a prayer, maybe asking God to comfort you, or challenge you, or cleanse and refresh you this day.

Psalm 65:9-10

9You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it. 10You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.

Praying With Photography

Use your camera to help you see reflectively. With your camera in hand, take a contemplative walk, being present to the life and to the details around you. Be mindful of that to which your eye is drawn. Receive (as opposed to “take” or “shoot!”) each of these visual gifts with your camera. Choose the image that most draws your attention. Use this image as a starting point for reflection on the holy, the sacred, the presence of God in all things.

Sit reflectively with one image and ponder some of these questions:

- *What emotions does this image evoke in you?*
- *What might God be offering you through this image?*
- *What might God be showing you about yourself in this image?*
- *In what ways does this image call you to grow or to be transformed?*

Receive your awareness with thanks and gently transition back to your day.

Adapted from *Eyes of the Heart: Photography as a Christian Contemplative Practice* by Christine Valters Paintner (Sorin Books, Notre Dame, IN 2013)

Prayers Of Others

A Reason to Pray

Whoever has not begun the practice of prayer, I beg for the love of the Lord not to go without so great a good. There is nothing here to fear but only something to desire. Even if there be no great progress, or much effort in reaching such perfection as to deserve the favor and mercies God bestows on the more generous, at least a person will come to understand the road leading to heaven. And if one perseveres, I trust then in the mercy of God, who never fails to repay anyone who has taken Him for a friend. For mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.

—Teresa of Avila, a 16th century Catholic Spanish mystic

A Journey Blessing

The journey blessing of Mary MacDonald has a sense of the presence of the Trinity accompanying the traveler, that profound and totally natural experience of God as Trinity that is so much a mark of Celtic prayer:

God be with thee in every pass, Jesus be with thee on every hill,
Spirit be with thee on every stream,
 Headland and ridge and lawn;
Each sea and land, each moor and meadow,
Each lying down, each rising up,
In the trough of the waves, on the crest of the billows,
 Each step of the journey thou goest.

—The Celtic Way of Prayer, page 11

A Trinitarian Prayer of Protection

This prayer is from the Carmina Gadelica, a 19th century Scottish collection of hymns, prayers, and blessings.

The guarding of the God of life be upon me,
The guarding of loving Christ be upon me,
The guarding of the Holy Spirit be upon me,
 Each step of the way,
 To aid me and enfold me,
 Each day and night of my life.

—The Celtic Way of Prayer, page 27

Psalm 121

¹I lift up my eyes to the hills— from where will my help come? ²My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. ³He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. ⁴He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. ⁵The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. ⁶The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. ⁷The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. ⁸The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

Plea for Perseverance

Dear eternal, heavenly Father,
 I call upon you from the depths of my heart;
 do not let me turn from you,
 but keep me in your truth unto my end.
 Instruct and teach me,
 your poor, unworthy child,
 that I may press even unto death,
 through all sorrows, sufferings, anguish and pain.
 Let me persevere, O God,
 that I may not be separated from your love.
 Comfort me by your holy word,
 in which I firmly trust.
 I commend myself to you and your church.
 Be my Protector today,
 for your holy name's sake,
 through Jesus Christ. Amen.

—**Anna of Freiburg**, a 16th century German Anabaptist martyr
zealous in her faith; drowned & burned

God's Encompassing Presence

God be in my head and in my understanding;
 God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;
 God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
 God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
 God be at my end, and at my departing.

—**Sarum Missal**, a 16th century English church liturgical prayer book

Desire for Faithfulness

O God,
preserve us in your keeping,
that we may not faint and abandon your Word.
Let us enjoy the faithfulness which you have shown
through your Son Jesus Christ.
Kindle in us the fire of your divine love;
lead us to practice love as your dear children.
Let the light of your divine glory illuminate us,
that we may walk in it.

O God,
we ask you for one thing more:
send us your Holy Spirit,
endue us with power,
renew our hearts,
and make us strong in you
that we may obey you
and praise your name. Amen.

—*Prayer of Hans Langmantel and his manservant and maidservant,
16th century Dutch Anabaptist martyrs*

Peace Prayer

Lord make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master grant that I may
Not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

—*attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, a 13th century Italian Catholic monk*

Two Different Prayers Before Travel

Lord Jesus Christ my God, be my Companion, guide and protector during my journey. Keep me from all danger, misfortune and temptation. By Your divine power grant me a peaceful and successful journey and safe arrival. In You I place my hope and trust and You I praise, honor and glorify, together with Your Father and Holy Spirit now and forever and ever. Amen.

Lord Jesus, You traveled with the two disciples after the resurrection and set their hearts on fire with Your grace. Travel also with me and gladden my heart with Your presence. I know, Lord, that I am a pilgrim on this earth, seeking the citizenship which is in heaven. During my journey surround me with Your holy angels and keep me safe from seen and unseen dangers. Grant that I may carry out my plans and fulfill my expectations according to Your will. Help me to see the beauty of creation and to comprehend the wonder of Your truth in all things. For You are the way, the truth and the life, and to You I give thanks, praise and glory forever. Amen.

—transchurch.org/sguide/praybk

Psalm 13

1How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? 2How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? 3Consider and answer me, O Lord my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, 4and my enemy will say, “I have prevailed”; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken. 5But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. 6I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

A Martyr's Prayer

Loving God,
 You have baptized us into one body
 and made us to drink the one Spirit.
 Now grant us pure and faithful hearts
 that we may serve one another diligently in love
 and find no cause to separate or divide.
 Call each of us to esteem others better than ourselves
 so we may remain together in peace and joy.
 Grant these mercies to us and all your people. Amen.

—**Tijs Jeuriaenss**, a 16th century Anabaptist minister.
In 1569 Minister Tijs was strangled and burned at the stake.

Strengthening the Faith

Lord God,
I will praise you now and until my end because you have given me faith,
 by which I have learned to know you.
When I felt the heavy load of sin in me,
 you came to me with the Lord of your divine grace.
For this I will now magnify and praise your glorious name forever.
Strengthen my faith, O Lord.
Do not forget me, but be with me always.
Protect and teach me with your holy Spirit
 that in all my sufferings I may receive your consolation.
Dear Lord,
help me to bear the cross to the destined place,
and turn yourself to me with all grace,
 that I may commend my spirit into your hands.
I sincerely pray for all my enemies, O Lord, however many there may be.
Do not lay their sins to their charge.
Lord, I entreat this according to your will.
May God finish his holy work and give strength to the end. Amen.

—*Prayer of George Blaurock and Hans van der Reve,*
 16th century Swiss Anabaptist leaders,
 written from prison to console and strengthen other believers

Patience

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart...
Try to love the questions themselves...
Do not now seek the answers,
 which cannot be given
 because you would not be able
 to live them.
And the point is,
 to live everything.
Live the questions now.
Perhaps you will then
 gradually,
 without noticing it,
Live along some distant day into the answers.

—*Rainer Marie Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet, 20th century German poet*

Transformation

O my Divine Saviour

Transform me into Yourself.
 May my hands be the hands of Jesus.
 May my tongue be the tongue of Jesus.
 Grant that every faculty of my body
 May serve only to glorify You.

Above all,

Transform my soul and all its powers
 So that my memory, will and affections
 May be the memory, will and affections
 Of Jesus.

I pray to You

To destroy in me
 All that is not of You.

Grant that I may live

But in You, by You and for You,

So that I may truly say with St. Paul,

“I love now, not I,
 But Christ lives in me.”

—Saint John Gabriel Perboyre, *19th century French priest and missionary to China, executed on September 11, 1840 for preaching Christianity*

God's Pencil

I always say I am a little pencil in the hands of God. He does the thinking. He does the writing. He does everything--and it's really hard--sometimes it's a broken pencil. He has to sharpen it a little more. But be a little instrument in His hands so that He can use you any time, anywhere. . . . We have only to say Yes to Him.

—Mother Teresa of Calcutta, *a 20th century Albanian nun*

May I See You Today

Dearest Lord, may I see You today and every day in the person of Your sick, and, while nursing them, minister unto You. Though You hide Yourself behind the unattractive disguise of the irritable, the exacting, the unreasonable, may I still recognize You, and say, “Jesus, my patient, how sweet it is to serve You.”

—Mother Teresa of Calcutta, *20th century Catholic nun*

Protection for the Journey

“The path I walk, Christ walks it.” The opening words of a traditional 6th century poem attributed to St. Columba ask for the protection and support of Christ’s presence on this journey wherever it may carry us.

The path I walk, Christ walks it.

May the land in which I am be without sorrow.

May the Trinity protect me wherever I stay,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Bright angels walk with me – dear presence –in every dealing.

In every dealing I pray them that no one’s poison may reach me.

The ninefold people of heaven of holy cloud,

the tenth force of the stone earth.

Favourable company, they come with me,

so that the Lord may not be angry with me.

May I arrive at every place, may I return home;

may the way in which I spend be a way without loss.

May every path before me be smooth,

man, woman and child welcome me.

A truly good journey!

Well does the fair Lord show us a course, a path.

—*The Celtic Way of Prayer*, page 6

Faithful Discipleship

Creator God, I yearn to be at home with people who know you and who share extravagant hope in your plans for the future. I want to see the big picture of where history is headed, so that I have confidence to be faithful to you even in hard circumstances. The call to follow Jesus is exhilarating, liberating, and difficult. I need to walk the way of Jesus with others who know the joy of your presence, the freedom of your forgiveness, and the power of your Spirit. May your kingdom come, may your will be done in my life as it is in heaven. Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

—J. Nelson Kraybill, *On the Pilgrims’ Way*, former president of
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN

A Foolish Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort
 at easy answers, half truths, and superficial relationships,
 so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger
 at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
 so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears
 to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war,
 so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and
 to turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness
 to believe that you can make a difference in the world,
 so that you can do what others claim cannot be done
 to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

—*A Franciscan Benediction*

Psalm 51:1-2

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

Psalm 23

¹The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; ³he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. ⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Journal

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2016-17 Ministry Leaders



Cassie Sessa
Kratz 1



Whitney Peterson
Kratz 2



Landon Weldy
Kratz 3



Rudi Mucaj
Kratz 4



Jose Ortiz
Yoder 1



Joshua Liechty
Yoder 2N



Christian Stoltzfus
Yoder 2S



Hannah Friesen
Yoder 3N



Maria Lopez
Yoder 3S



Courtney Crapser
Yoder 4N



Annika Detweiler
Yoder 4S

2016-17 Worship Assistants



Monica Miller



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