



2012-2013

CAMPUS MINISTRIES
PRAYER BOOKLET

 GOSHEN
COLLEGE



DEAR GC 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 and Gwen Gustafson-Zook
Campus Pastors

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.

booklet compiled by Campus Ministries at Goshen College

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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 on Feb. 23 - Mar. 3. Cost may vary depending on location. If interested, contact one of the campus pastors.

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

Local Church Directory: Pick up the *Local Churches Directory* by Bob Yoder's office or by the campus ministries bulletin board in the Connector. Available on the campus ministries website.

Retreats (personal and small group): The campus pastors 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, Brunk's Cabin, Merry Lea.

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

Table Grace: Comprised of a group of upper-level students and first-years who meet in the upper years' 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 a cloth, indoor labyrinth.

Witmer Woods: Located on the West side of SR 15 between the main campus and College Cabin is a wonderful 18-acre arboretum of native shrubs and trees. An excellent place to spend time with God in nature.

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

Chapel: Chapel gathers the campus community every Friday 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, held monthly, is a candlelight service that includes song, prayers, Scriptures and silence. Dates: Sept. 9, Oct. 7, Nov. 4, Dec. 2, Jan. 13, Feb. 10, Mar. 10, Apr. 7, May 5.

Catholic Student Association: A student club with faculty meets to provide support for one another in their faith development. Regular on-campus masses are conducted by local priests. For more information, contact Sophie Metzger at sophiam@goshen.edu.

Worship Night: Pending student interest and involvement, this student-led gathering meets several times a month, if not weekly, in a variety of on-campus locations. Some years they have met on Wednesday or Sunday nights, but most recently on Friday nights. Watch for details regarding time and location! Feel free to contact Gwen if you have any questions.

Pastoral Care: Campus pastors are available to support, guide and comfort you. You are welcome to contact them anytime you need support.

Other Sporadic Worship Services: As student interest dictates, we are happy to arrange for a variety of types of worship services that quench your soul. Contact Bob or Gwen.

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 (23)
- Week 2:* Be Still (29)
- Week 3:* Lectio Divina (26)
- Week 4:* Praying for Our World (24)
- Week 5:* Hearing God’s Voice (24)
- Week 6:* Praying through Drawing (32)
- Week 7:* Breath Prayer (25)
- Week 8:* Prayers of Lament (28)
- Week 9:* Praying with Water (33)
- Week 10:* Writing a Dialogue (22)
- Week 11:* Praying with Art (30)
- Week 12:* Conversational Prayer (23)

Finally, we encourage you to pray the words of other people of faith found on pages 34-41.

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

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.

2012-13 CAMPUS MINISTRIES THEME: SPIRITED LIFE: ENCOUNTER, DISCERN, RESPOND

The Campus Ministries theme this year is “*Spirited Life: Encounter, Discern, Respond.*” Living a *Spirited Life* is about encountering the Divine in us, discerning who we are in relation to the Divine and responding with a life lived fully, passionately, generously, day by day. Therefore, a *Spirited Life* is one lived from the place of God’s presence, God’s Spirit in us, enlivening us, inspiring us, enabling us to live into our full potential. A *Spirited Life* is a life out of which “*Passionate Learning*” flows freely.

The encounter between Nicodemus and Jesus recorded in the 3rd chapter of John’s gospel provides a biblical touchstone for reflection through the 2012-2013 academic year. This text is rich with imagery of theological discourse, encounter with Jesus, being filled with the Spirit, eternal/abundant life and God’s love for the world. Our hope is that we will all be in-spired (as in filled with the breath/wind/Spirit) to nurture an awareness of God’s ever-present Spirit in us and to embrace the daily opportunities afforded us to live our lives intentionally from that place of Spirit – that place of passion – in us.

Related Scripture Passages

<i>Revelation 21:3</i>	A New Reality in Our Midst
<i>Psalms 4: 1-8</i>	Letting Go
<i>Ephesians 3:16-19</i>	Life’s Divine Poetry
<i>1 Kings 19:11-13 & Proverbs 3:5-6</i>	Encountering and Discerning God’s Word in Prayer
<i>Ezekiel 37:5</i>	Making Space for God to Work
<i>Romans 12: 6-16</i>	Encounter, Discern, Respond
<i>John 3:5</i>	Breathe
<i>Ezekiel 37:1-6</i>	Can These Bones Live?
<i>Galatians 5:22-23 & Ephesians 3:16-17</i>	Dwell in Me
<i>Isaiah 42:1-9</i>	Bringing Forth Justice
<i>2 Corinthians 4:8-18</i>	Don’t Let Your Setbacks Set You Back
<i>Job 9:11 & John 3:8</i>	Ruach

(Printed passages are in 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

REVELATION 21:3 A NEW REALITY IN OUR MIDST

by **Quinn Brenneke**

Junior Business & Public Relations major, Global Economics minor

³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.” - Revelation 21:3 (ESV)

A lack of sleep or perhaps some old leftovers might be all it takes to instigate a dream that seems vivid enough to be reality. John the Revealer’s daydream, however, was probably not the product of cold pizza for breakfast. In the beginning of his book, he says that he was “in the Spirit” (1:10) when he saw the signs and wonders that are recorded in the final book of the Biblical cannon. Living a spirited life, John prophesied to seven ancient churches God’s plan for a new order of creation. He saw “a new heaven and a new earth” (21:1) that bore the beauty of a “bride adorned for her husband,” a dwelling place for God to be with His people. Likewise, Jesus Christ also announced a new reality. In the words of Isaiah, Jesus proclaimed a world free from captivity and oppression, good news for the poor and the blind (Luke 4:18) and promised to send his Spirit to live among humanity (John 16:7-14).

This new reality, the Kingdom of God, is in our midst. Just as John was “in the Spirit,” we can also participate in a similar spirited life, living in the Kingdom. When we let our worries and frustrations control our hearts, we force God out of His dwelling place. Creating space for God to dwell in our lives, away from the distractions of our world, might be one way to begin living “in the Spirit.”

God, open my eyes to see Your Kingdom, and create in me a heart that is open to Your Spirit. Help me let go of the things that force You out of Your dwelling place with me.

PSALM 4:1-8 LETTING GO...

by **Liz Core**

Senior Communication & Peace, Justice & Conflict Studies major

¹Answer me when I call, O God of my right! You gave me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer. ²How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame? How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies? Selah – Psalm 4:1-2

I believe God often confuses us with blessings and answers to prayers. We pray for safety, and brought into a dangerous situation. We pray for food, but called to give all we have for others. We pray for rest, yet called to walk a mile with our enemy. Yet, when we call, the door will always be opened.

This summer during my Ministry Inquiry position, I joined a group of individuals from my church who walked in this knowledge. Literally. The group—consisting of an experienced pilgrim, his wife, and their baby boy, a wandering artist, a musician, and three college students—decided to walk around the entire county with only the sandals on their feet (and some diapers and food for the baby) in order to rely on God’s provision.

On a long, tiring day we were low on food and weary from the sun. We saw a church. Over the course of the pilgrimage, churches had been our refuge in times of hunger and weariness. Yet as we approached the door and encountered the preacher, we were told that there was no food for us to eat. By this time, the baby and his mama were growing needy with thirst and hunger. As the preacher left the parking lot, they entered the church. In the freezer they found a bag of broccoli and a tub of ice cream. “Ice cream!” Mama called out to the weary travelers. As we prepared to dig into the tub of ice cream, mama stopped us with her hesitant, “Hm. Maybe we shouldn’t.” We were to experience God’s provision and this food was not given to us. So we left. As we continued, we were approached by a truck driven by a kind old farmer who invited us over for dinner. A three course meal including both broccoli and ice cream. As we let go, God came through.

Prayer: God, guide my way. I don’t know whether to go to the right or the left. But I will trust in you. You make me complete. I am a sinner, I am in darkness. I am a liar. I am a hypocrite. Sometimes I hate myself and other times I seem to love myself way too much. But, Today I proclaim that Nothing is impossible for You. Today, I will search my heart and be silent, Today, I will lie down and sleep in peace, for You alone make me dwell in safety.

EPHESIANS 3:16-19 LIFE'S DIVINE POETRY

by **Nina Fox**

sophomore English & Spanish Education major, Ministry Leader

... ¹⁶I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, God may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, ¹⁷and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. - Ephesians 3:16-19

In spite of brief, transient whisperings of a rather “pedestrian” appreciation for poetry, I did not really begin to enjoy poetry—to live poetry—until I entered my second semester at Goshen College. Of course, children and adolescents are generally somewhat disdainful of this, admittedly, bewildering art, and I was always a part of this blind—albeit, justified—majority. However, the combination of my own emerging adulthood as well as the acknowledgment that poetry often expresses my own heart’s stirrings with a rather uncanny exactitude finally convinced me of the rare beauty of this timeless, illimitable art. And in the months since that discovery last January, I have begun to read and memorize poetry as a part of my daily devotional. Of course, I do not do so out of a sense of obligation, (who, after all, ever feels obligated to read poetry?), but rather, I do so out of the sheer joy of learning, recognizing, and delighting in the gift of this divine expression of life’s ups, life’s downs, and life’s inevitable gray matter. Indeed, at this moment in my spiritual journey, the reading and memorization of poetry has become an essential element of prayer. After all, God has provided outlets for the passionate pursuit of learning in a million different forms and ways, and for me, the prayerful reading and memorization of poetry has become just one way to recognize the “breadth and length and height and depth of God’s love, and to know this love, which surpasses all knowledge and understanding” (Ephesians 3:18-19). For me, then, the discovery of poetry is pure gift! It is one more way to know God’s love. And ultimately, it is what I... we... as Jesus-followers, are called to do: pursue passionately—humbly—the unfailing love of our Lord in the many different ways that bring us, and Him, unmatched joy.

Oh Lord, thank you for the opportunity to express, in countless different ways, my love for You, and to discover, in a million ways more, your unending love for me. Amen!

1 KINGS 19:11-13, PROVERBS 3:5-6 ENCOUNTERING AND DISCERNING GOD'S WORD IN PRAYER

by **Stephen Graber**

sophomore Biology major, Ministry Leader

¹¹“He said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; ¹²and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”
– 1 Kings 19:11-13

With the busy schedules that so many of us have today, it is often difficult to find time to come to God in prayer. As a college student busy with homework, relationships, music, sports and many other activities, I often find myself cramming my “God time” into the five minutes that I can stay awake when I lay down to go to bed. And in this time my prayers usually consist of simple lists of things that I am thankful for and concerns that I have before dozing off to sleep.

But this is not what prayer is and this is not a way to encounter God’s presence. Prayer is a conversation with God that must be more than going through the motions: it requires just as much listening as it does talking, and this requires coming to God in silence with an open heart and quiet mind to hear God’s word. Consider Elijah in 1 Kings 19: he does not encounter God in the wind, earthquake, or fire; instead, he encounters God through a whisper in the silence. Elijah brings his concerns to God with the faith and trust that God will help him discern how to act in his current situation. We too must have this trust and mindset when we come to prayer with God. But this will require a different type of prayer. This requires a type of prayer in which we set aside time from our busy schedules to clear our minds of the everyday thoughts that clutter it, abandon our own insights, share our concerns and joys with God, and inquire God’s will in our lives through silent listening. So next time you come to God in prayer, pray in this way: “Ever-present God, you have heard my joys and concerns. Enlighten me with your word and make straight my paths before me. I trust you, and I desire to live my life according to your will.” You may be surprised at what you will hear.

EZEKIEL 37:5B

MAKING SPACE FOR GOD TO WORK

by **Emily Grimes**

junior Music Education major

⁵“I will put breath in you, and you will come to life.”- Ezekiel 37:5 (NIV)

This past summer I went to Peru for Goshen College’s SST program. Before I went, I was uncertain and scared of how I would survive being separated from my loved ones for so long. I was also anxious about the unknowns and how they would affect me. Looking back, going on SST this summer was probably the best thing I could have possibly done for myself. During my time in Peru I slowly learned how to loosen my grip on my need to control my life, and slowly trust more and more in God. Even though SST was extremely difficult at times, I had an overwhelming sense of peace through it all. God was breathing new life into me in slow but steady ways. It wasn’t until after I got home that I realized how much I had changed for the better.

I like to think of the Holy Spirit as God’s breath that moves around and through us. God is the only one who can bring life to the dust of our inmost being. However, allowing God to fill us isn’t easy; we have to first make space in our lives for God to work. For me, that meant going on SST, pushing myself out of my comfort zone, and learning to give God access to parts of me that I’d rather control myself. Although it wasn’t easy, doing so has left me feeling refreshed and revived in a million different ways. Do you ever feel like something in you has dried up? Perhaps it’s patience, hope, joy, or a dwindled awareness of God’s presence. Ask God to breathe new life into an area of your life that may be lacking.

Prayer: I recommend praying through song. O breathe on me, O breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love the things you love, and do what you would do. (STJ 46)

ROMANS 12: 6-16

ENCOUNTER, DISCERN, RESPOND

by **Hillary Harder**

sophomore Music & Spanish major, Ministry Leader

⁶We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. ⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. - Romans 12: 6-16

When trying to determine what a “spirited life” looks like, this passage immediately jumped out at me. Paul’s letter seems almost like a how-to essay, instructing us on the steps to living a good life in the Holy Spirit. In fact, this passage has always been a comfort and inspiration to me in my faith journey. Everyone has a gift, Paul says. Everyone has a niche, their own secure spot in the body of Christ.

However, I cannot deny a nagging feeling of discomfort when I read this passage. Paul’s faith-and-life laundry list makes living a spirited life seem so simple, when that is far from true. What if someone feels inadequate for the niche in which they are placed? Worse yet, what if someone feels they don’t have a niche, or any gifts to offer the body of Christ?

As young people struggling to find our way in the world, I think we experience this doubt and worry a lot. We are encouraged to choose something we’re good at, to study and work hard at it, and to spend the rest of our lives doing it. But oftentimes, tendencies toward competition, feelings of inadequacy, and the panic of having to choose threaten to overwhelm us.

This is where the Holy Spirit comes in. A few verses before this passage begins, Paul tells us to offer our whole selves as a living sacrifice, which is our “spiritual worship”. He encourages us not to “conform to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we may discern what is the will of God”. To me, this says: Learn. Explore. Know that your life, whatever path it may take, is a living offering to God. Through discerning what we learn, with the help of others a long the way, we can come to know God’s will for us.

JOHN 3:5 BREATHE

by Sara Klassen

junior Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies major

⁵Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.” - John 3:5

If Spirit is read as breath as the Greek, Numa, allows, we are born of breath and water. Makes sense, the two elements we absolutely cannot live without. For the sake of space I will focus on breath.

Take a moment to feel your breath, the rise and fall of your belly, the expansion of your ribs. Feel the energy of oxygen refreshing cells, rushing into arms, legs, fingers and toes.

Aware of each breath we become aware of how, in each moment, the life in us is born again. Born as in renewed—filled with new life—but born also as in carried. With each breath we are carried by the Spirit, carried by the moment, in the arms of our mother Wisdom, Sophia.

Life is made new in the Spirit. Just like an infant, each moment is a world met by our awareness for the first time. We are drawn by this mindfulness to listen to the sounds off’ unheard travelling to our ears but unnoticed, tuned out. With the wisdom brought by our breath we hear anew the depth and richness of a forgotten soundscape.

Awareness, spiritedness draws us back to our bodies, these good vessels, lungs and chest and veins housing the Spirit. Spirit, Numa, welcomes us home to our body, to the earth, to feel our toes on warm cement or squishing in spring mud, sloshing through January snow or crackling in Autumn’s offerings. So, through our breath, the Spirit, we enter the Kingdom of God, the earth made new by our new presence in it: our new sight, new listening, new being.

Born of the Spirit, we are invited to be carried and to carry this Life and breath with gusto, blown by the gusts of the Spirit to encounter these seconds, to listen to and hear the sounds of calling in them, to respond with full-lunged commitment, saying “Yes!” to this moment, “Yes!” to Life, “Yes!” to the Spirit breathing in us.

EZEKIEL 37:1-6 CAN THESE BONES LIVE?

by Micah Miller-Eshelman

senior Physics major and Informatics minor

¹The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” ⁴Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.” - Ezekiel 37:1-6

I like Ezekiel’s response. I’ve found it all too easy to confuse faith with self-confidence: to waver between ‘being rational’ (duh, these bones can’t live) and emulating the bold faith statements of spiritual ancestors whom I admire but seldom understand (yes, of course God will make these bones live!). Truly, we don’t know. We are mortal, our minds limited as much as our years. But we are confident, not that we know, but that God knows. And this is enough.

This past year I led an amateur intellectual group on campus called ‘Thinking on Thursdays.’ I’d send an email out Wednesday night and spend Thursday evening baking cookies and recruiting guys for the late-night meeting. And 10 o’clock would roll around, I’d race back to the dorm room, arms full of food and dishes, a couple minutes late, greeting by the thunderous silence of a half empty room. A couple guys, looking around, uncertainty painted in lines above their brows. Will people come? ‘I don’t know, but let’s get started.’

We persevered. Sometimes five or ten, sometimes over twenty constituted the best discussion group I have ever been part of. Beforehand I would pray, ‘Lord, please bring people tonight, bless our time together. May your spirit be here with us.’ We begin by asking, but end with joyful submission, the acknowledgement that only God knows, and that she alone is trustworthy.

“Lord, as I face the many uncertainties of the coming weeks, satisfy my needs and cravings in ways that only you know best. Give me the confidence in your judgment and joy in the daily patience of life.”

GALATIANS 5:22-23, EPHESIANS 3:16-17 DWELL IN ME

by **Becky Snider**

sophomore Music Education major, Ministry Leader & Worship Assistant

*Gracious Spirit, dwell with me: I myself would gracious be,
and, with words that help and heal, would thy life in mine reveal,
and, with actions bold and meek, would for Christ my Savior speak.
Truthful Spirit, dwell with me: I myself would truthful be,
and, with wisdom kind and clear, let thy life in mine appear,
and, with actions lovingly speak my Lord's sincerity.
Silent Spirit, dwell with me: I myself would silent be,
quiet as the growing blade, which through earth its way has made,
silently, like morning light, putting mists and chills to flight.
Mighty Spirit, dwell with me: I myself would mighty be,
mighty so as to prevail where unaided I must fail,
ever, by a mighty hope, pressing on and bearing up.
Holy Spirit, dwell with me: I myself would holy be,
break from sin and choose the good, cherish what my Savior would,
and whatever I can be, give to him who gave me thee.
- Hymnal: A Worship Book #507, text by Thomas T. Lynch*

Before I sang this hymn in church several months ago, I wasn't at all familiar with it. And I'll be honest, I don't really remember anything else about the service that Sunday, but something about the words to this hymn really struck me, so I went back to my dorm room and read them again. The thought that I would be gracious, truthful, silent, mighty, and holy if the Spirit was dwelling in me because the Spirit is gracious, truthful, silent, mighty, and holy made sense. It's like how Harry Potter can speak Parseltongue because He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named can and Harry is one of his horcruxes. Voldemort is in Harry, therefore characteristics of Voldemort are in Harry; the Spirit is in me, therefore characteristics of the Spirit are in me. I guess that's what it means in Galatians 5 when it says "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (verses 22-23). And as Paul says in Ephesians 3:16-17, "I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong." Let the Gracious, Truthful, Silent, Mighty, Holy Spirit empower you to be gracious, truthful, silent, mighty, holy, and rooted in God's love.

ISAIAH 42:1-9 BRINGING FORTH JUSTICE

by **Bobby Switzer**

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¹Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. ²He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; ³a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

⁵Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: ⁶I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations ⁷to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. ⁸I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. ⁹See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them. - Isaiah 42:1-9

This passage explores the concept of individuals working for God's justice. The passage says that God has called you in righteousness, has taken you by the hand and kept you, and declares new things. Part of hearing what God is saying is opening your life to God. At times, life can be so busy that we shield ourselves from new endeavors, but by doing this we close ourselves to God's calling. If we open ourselves up to hear God's calling by being open during the most monotonous times, we can feel God's push and pull in our lives. After realizing that God has an initiative, we can begin to discern what that initiative may be. This passage illustrates that the one who responds to God's call will work for justice, but the possibilities when God is leading are limitless. The last part of the passage speaks of seeing the former things and learning the new things. God is always creating, and according to this passage God will guide you and inform you to what God's new creation. It may still be a mystery to you, but God will eventually illuminate you with discernment. You will then have the chance to respond. Everyone has the chance to experience God's call, but what makes individuals extraordinary is how they respond to that call. You may not think that you have the capability to achieve what you feel God is calling you to do, but like the passage says, even those who cannot quench a dimly burning wick God will use to bring forth justice.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:8-18

DON'T LET YOUR SETBACKS SET YOU BACK

by Ashika Thanju

sophomore Nursing major, Worship Assistant

⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. ¹²So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you... ¹³All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. ¹⁴Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁵For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁶So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. - 2 Corinthians 4:8-18 (NIV)

Every morning I woke up worrying about what to eat, then what to wear, then how to pass the ever so brutal chemistry class, and then, again, how to wake up the next day early enough to be on time for my 8 am class. My whole life, I had spent worrying so that every little thing went right. There were times when I felt sick to my stomach because everyone around me looked happy with their lives while I struggled to keep things straight, but then one morning upon reading this passage, I got a wakeup call. The part that caught my attention the most was the last sentence: "For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." Yes, it shook me from the ground and slapped me right in the face, while God said to me, "Ashika, trust me." It's true; I had been in panic mode ever since the day I was born. All God was asking me to do was to trust Him. From that day onwards, I tried surrendering to God, and living a life filled with good spirit and enthusiasm. Even in times when I was deep in trouble and there seemed to be no way out, I thought of God's promise for me. He would never leave me nor forsake me. How did I forget that my God is omniscient? Nothing is hidden from Him, not even my future because to Him, time is meaningless. So why worry? Everything I think or do is His plan. So my pain today is temporary, as He said in Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." But my trust is what I have to give in return.

Lord, you are the sole keeper of my future. I am grateful because your blessings for me are eternal. Give me strength to trust you in everything I do. Amen.

JOB 9:11, JOHN 3:8

RUACH

by Natasha Weisenbeck

junior Public Relations & Bible/Religion/Philosophy major, Worship Assistant

When he passes me, I cannot see him; when he goes by, I cannot perceive him.
- Job 9:11(NIV)

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit. - John 3:8 (NIV)

Ruach is the Hebrew word for breath, wind, and spirit-- each an essence which holds great mystery, power, and passing. They are not constant substances, but rather, things which one cannot perceive, but animate what is around them-- they give life, for a time.

Proclamation of God's power surround Job's words above. His own non-perception of God is part of God's power-- his ability to work beyond human sight. Even though Job cannot make out the Lord's movement, he still attest to His action.

When Moses asks whom he shall say has sent him, God replies, "I AM THAT I AM," or I will be what I will be—Ehyeh (Exodus 3:14) Not very concrete, is it?

The deity from Avatar, Eywa, retains similar faithfulness and unpredictability. As Jake ends his prayer for help in their battle, Neytiri tells, him, "Our mother does not take sides. She only protects the Balance of Life." Likewise, God's presence in our life is not determined by victories, but by the relationship that we have with Him-- both in times of presence, and times when he seems absent, as if on call elsewhere, leaving us with our own courage and his heart.

Like an overseas letter correspondence-- you may send letter after letter, only to receive a brief postcard weeks later, reading, "I love you. Hold on." Clinging to the memory, or just a hope, of his presence, we trust that he is working in our emptiness and our fullness.

How does one perceive the wind?

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 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

²Surely 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

¹Be 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...

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

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 pray-er to put her/himself in the presence of God and invite God’s mercy to wash over the pray-er and the world. Three different options are listed here:

1	2	3
<i>Lord Jesus Christ</i>	<i>Lord Jesus Christ</i>	<i>Lord Jesus Christ</i>
<i>Son of God</i>	<i>Son of God</i>	<i>Love of God</i>
<i>Have mercy on me.</i>	<i>Have mercy on me, a sinner.</i>	<i>Have mercy on me</i>
		<i>and on the whole world.</i>

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.”¹

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!”

¹Bass, 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

¹O 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

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

Psalm 131

¹O 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. ²But 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. ³O 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.

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.

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.

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.

- *from 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.

- www.transchurch.org/sguide/praybk.htm

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 Jeuriaens, 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*

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