



# DAILY PRAYER GUIDE

EPIPHANY SEASON 2022

JANUARY 9 TO MARCH 1

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### Cover Art

*Visitation of the Magi* by Sadao Watanabe  
hand colored stencil print on handmade washi paper, 1971

At age 17, Sadao Watanabe (1913-1996) was baptized. He eventually combined his desire to preserve *katazome* (Japanese traditional stencil dying) with his faith; he chose to focus on portraying stories from the Bible.

Over the course of his life, Watanabe earned international acclaim and his pieces are part of many museum collections. Nevertheless, his desire has always been to have his work displayed where ordinary people could enjoy it for the glory of God.

**Introduction.** At Grace Pasadena, we believe God calls us to himself as individuals and as a community. This means our private devotion is tied to our common devotion. As the Apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 12:5, though we are many, we “*are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*” This means the depth of our individual experience of God’s love for us in Jesus Christ depends on our life together and our shared spiritual rhythms and habits. To that end, Grace Pasadena offers prayer guides throughout the year that move us through the liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time.

In these pages, we offer daily scripture readings, questions for contemplation, prayers, and practices to help us as individuals and as a community develop a pattern of prayer and deep abiding with God. Elements of this guide are taken from Christian traditions and communities around the globe with the aim of extending our common life beyond Grace Pasadena. We hope you use this guide on your own. We encourage you to find a partner or two to pray through the guide together on a periodic basis. We hope you find opportunities to share your responses to readings, questions, and the practices with one another. May this guide aide us in learning to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17) each day and throughout the year.

**The Epiphany.** The liturgical (or church) calendar invites us to mark the passage of time through the redemptive story of God’s love in Jesus Christ. The liturgical year began with Advent, during which we turned our attention to the promises of God to send a Messiah. At Christmas, we celebrated the fulfillment of God’s promises, past and present. Now in Epiphany, we are called to contemplate the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. In doing so, this season calls us to be *incarnational*; just as God took on flesh to make his dwelling among us, we are to take on the Good News of Jesus Christ and proclaim it in all we do and say.

Some of you may be asking, “*So, what exactly is the Epiphany?*” The 12-day Christmas season starts on December 25 and ends the evening of January 5. Celebrated on January 6, Epiphany Day commemorates the visitation of Jesus Christ by the three Magi. This moment is recorded in Matthew 2:1-12. The Church has long observed the Epiphany, and different Christian traditions and cultures influenced by them celebrate the day with great fanfare; it is sometimes called Three Kings Day or Little Christmas.

Many of us, especially from Evangelical traditions, let the Epiphany pass by without much notice. The day gets lost in our Christmas and New Year’s celebrations and the resulting exhaustion. Perhaps it is time to change.

**The Meaning.** There is great value in observing the Epiphany and the season that follows. Let’s start with Scripture. Again, we learn about the Epiphany in Matthew 2:1-12. Matthew tells us that the Magi made their way to Jerusalem in search of Jesus after he was born. They were led by the light of a miraculous star to a house, not the manger recorded in Luke 2. Scripture does not tell us how old Jesus was at the time of the visit, but context tells us Jesus could have been as old as two at the time of the visit. The liturgical calendar takes all of this into account and places the Epiphany well after Christmas Day.

More important than the timing of the Epiphany is its meaning and significance. The word means revelation, manifestation, or showing. When the Magi visit Jesus and worship him, Jesus is *revealed* or *manifested* or *shown* as the Messiah of both Israel and the rest of the world. Recall that the Magi are from the East, which means they are Gentiles, or non-Jews.

Their visit and adoration of Jesus confirm what we see all throughout the Old Testament: Israel’s promised Messiah is also be a saving light to the entire world. Isaiah puts it beautifully:

*“Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.  
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the Lord will arise upon you,  
and his glory will be seen upon you.  
And nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your rising.”* (Isaiah 60:3)

The Epiphany amplifies the Good News of Christmas that Jesus Christ is truly the hope of the nations. In Jesus Christ, the hostilities, or sin, that separate us from God and from one another are made null. In Jesus Christ, Jews and Gentiles come together and are made a new people (Colossians 3:11). In Christ, there is true peace and it is available to all. Not only does the Epiphany amplifies Christmas, it affirms and prepares us for Easter: Christ is born to all and dies for all! Indeed, joy to the world!

The dynamics of the Epiphany unfold further by two other events: the baptism of Jesus and the wedding feast of Cana. Philip Reinders writes: *“Each event unveils the fuller dimensions of the man we call Jesus. He is the worshiped King of kings, the dearly loved Son of God, and the miracle working Lord of the feast.”* Jesus is indeed more than a good man and teacher. Jesus is God incarnate.

**Being Shaped by the Epiphany.** Lasting until the eve of Ash Wednesday (known as Mardi Gras or Fat Tuesday by many), the Epiphany season is relatively short. The color of the season is green, symbolizing the new life Jesus makes possible. Celebrating the Epiphany and observing the season that follows not only amplifies the Good News of Jesus, but it also shapes our love of God and one another in vital ways:

- It helps locate our very selves in the story of God’s love. We are Christian—we can be counted as children of God—because Jesus is the Light to the entire world, not just a few specific people. No matter our backgrounds, Jesus gives himself to us because of love.
- As the Epiphany draws us more deeply into the Good News of Jesus Christ, it challenges us to be peacemakers. Just as Christ takes away the walls of hostility between peoples, we are called to do the same. (Matthew 5:9) In this light, many Christian traditions spend the weeks between the Epiphany and Ash Wednesday to reflect on the ministry, and teachings of Jesus, observing the ways he embodied true peace.

How might we observe the Epiphany? We continue to cultivate and strengthen habits and practices that keep us rooted in God’s great love for us in Jesus Christ. As in seasons past, we encourage you to:

- Continue to make Sunday worship and City Groups top priorities. Our common life starts in worship and is nurtured through City Groups. When possible, meet in-person, remembering Jesus took on our humanity to meet us and dwell with us.
- Take up and nurture a daily habit of prayer. Use this guide to fill your hearts, minds, souls, and bodies with the words of our God. Be filled and then reflect these words back to God and to those around you.
- Consider the mid-week practices offered in this guide. In light of the Incarnation, the practices are centered around the goodness of our bodies. (Just in time for New Year’s resolutions!)

- If you are not in the habit of journaling, make an effort to write down prayers, responses to the passages, and any promptings you feel from the Holy Spirit. We are called to remember and remember well.
- Use this guide with others. It can be easily adapted for families, roommates, prayer groups, etc. If time allows, pray through one of the Daily Offices together. Or simply read a few verses from the daily readings together and let those verses shape your prayers for one another.
- As a season remembering the Incarnation, make an effort to join the work of the Mercy Ministry. Also consider taking up Grace Pasadena’s self-study guide on justice and reconciliation. Ask the Holy Spirit how you can embody the love of God to your neighbors and world.

**Final Encouragements.** Use this guide as you are able and adapt as needed. Start where you are and build the habits of love slowly. As we walk through Epiphany to Lent, may Jesus reveal himself and his love for you in deeper and more tangible ways, and may our God draw us closer to one another.

***With great love for you all,***

Pastor Marc Choi and the Leaders of Grace Pasadena

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“Prayer is a moment of incarnation - God with us.  
God involved in the details of my life.”

**PAUL MILLER** | *A PRAYING LIFE*

## Sunday Mornings

**January 9**  
**Baptism of the Lord**  
 Psalms 146; 147  
 Eph. 1:3-14  
 John 1:29-34

**January 16**  
 Psalms 148-150  
 Eph. 4:1-16  
 Mark 3:7-19

**January 23**  
 Psalms 63:1-11; 98  
 Gal. 2:1-10  
 Mark 7:31-37

**January 30**  
 Psalms 24; 29  
 Gal. 5:13-25  
 Mark 8:22-30

**February 6**  
 Psalms 93; 96  
 2 Tim. 2:14-21  
 Mark 10:13-22

**February 13**  
 Psalms 66; 67  
 1 Tim 3:14-4:10  
 Mark 10:23-31

**February 20**  
 Psalm 118  
 2 Cor. 5:11-21  
 Mark 10:35-45

**February 27**  
 Psalm 148-150  
 2 Cor. 3:7-18  
 Luke 9:18-27

### The Invitation

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." — *John. 6:35*

*Take a moment to consider the hungers of your heart, mind, and body. Offer them to God; what do you notice?*

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through the morning Psalm (or Psalms). Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

Father God, you are the one who leads us from darkness into light, from captivity into freedom, from anxiety into peace, from despair into joy. Yet we long to break free, choosing independence, convinced of our own wisdom, forgetting your love and grace. Forgive us and fix our gaze on you. Fill us anew with your Spirit, the breath of life, and conform us to the image of your Son. **Amen.** (*silence*)

### Listening to Words of Love

*Dwell on a reading from the Gospel or Epistle, or both.*

### Abiding in Love

- What words or phrases jump out at you? What emotions do they evoke and how might the Spirit be speaking to you through your emotions?

### Giving Thanks

- Give thanks for Sunday Worship and your church community.

### Closing Prayers

*On this Lord's Day, pray for deep rest for yourself, neighbor and world. Conclude with the Lord's Prayer or:*

Our Lord and God Almighty, we praise you, for you created us all and made us into many different tribes and nations, that we may befriend one another and that we may not despise each other. Open our hearts, we pray, so that we may respond to the needs of all our brothers and sisters. Oh Lord Jesus, bless all our lands with more lasting peace and fraternal understanding. **Amen.**

*(from a prayer from Tanzania)*

## Sunday Evenings

### Opening Prayer

O God, make speed to save us;  
 O Lord, make haste to help us!

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through the evening Psalm. Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

*Take a moment to consider the day behind you. When did you feel God's presence? When did you welcome it and when did you resist it? After a few moments, pray:*

Lord, have mercy.  
 Christ, have mercy.  
 Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

### Listening to Words of Love

*Read the Old Testament passage or continue to dwell on the evening Psalm.*

### Abiding in Love & Giving Thanks

- How does God Word speak to the day behind you and the day ahead?
- What thanksgivings do these words evoke from you?

### Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself and the world to God's care and receive the rest he gives. Conclude with the following:*

Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love. Keep me, O God, as the apple of an eye; hide me under the shadow of your wings. Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in your peace.

Comfort and guard those who weep, work or keep watch tonight. (*Say the names of those who cannot rest tonight, experiencing need, or in distress.*)

O God our protector, by whose mercy the world turns safely into darkness and returns again to light: we give into your hands our unfinished tasks, our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes; for you alone are our sure defense and bring us lasting peace in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**January 9**  
**Baptism of the Lord**  
 Psalms 112-113  
 Gen. 1:1-2:3

**January 16**  
 Psalms 114; 115  
 Gen. 7:1-10; 17-23

**January 23**  
 Psalm 103  
 Gen. 13:2-18

**January 30**  
 Psalms 8; 84  
 Gen. 18:16-33

**February 6**  
 Psalm 34  
 Gen. 24:50-67

**February 13**  
 Psalms 19; 46  
 Gen. 29:20-35

**February 20**  
 Psalm 145  
 Prov. 1:20-33

**February 27**  
 Psalms 114-15

## Monday Mornings

### January 10

Psalms 1-3  
Heb. 1:1-14  
John 1:1-18

### January 17

Psalms 25  
Heb. 4:14-5:6  
John 2:23-3:15

### January 24

Psalms 41; 52  
Heb. 8:1-13  
John 4:43-54

### January 31

Psalms 56-58  
Heb. 11:1-12  
John 6:27-40

### February 7

Psalms 80  
Heb. 13:1-16  
John 7:37-52

### February 14

Psalms 89:1-18  
1 John 1:1-10  
John 9:1-17

### February 21

Psalms 106:1-18  
1 John 3:18-4:6  
John 11:17-29

### February 28

Psalms 25  
Phil. 2:1-13  
John 19:15-18; 25-27

### The Invitation

"Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." —*John 8:12*

*Turn your face to the sun (or a lamp) and savor the brightness and warmth, remembering that Jesus is "God with us."*

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through the morning Psalm (or Psalms). Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

Almighty Father; we come confessing the things we try to conceal from you and the things we try to conceal from others. We confess the heartbreak, worry, and sorrow we have caused, that make it difficult for others to forgive us, the times we have made it easy for others to do wrong, the harm we have done that makes it hard for us to forgive ourselves. Lord have mercy and forgive us through Christ.

**Amen.** (*silence*)

### Listening to Words of Love

*Dwell on a reading from the Gospel or Epistle, or both.*

### Abiding in Love

- Re-read one of the passages slowly, letting the words and images seep into you. As you move through the passage, pay attention to any reactions you feel in your body. What do you notice? What could God be trying to tell you?

### Giving Thanks

- Give thanks for your body! How can you honor the bodies of others today?.

### Lifting Burdens and Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself, your neighbors, the world and the day ahead to God through the Lord's Prayer or the following:*

Great is, O King, our happiness in thy kingdom, thou, our king. We dance before thee, our king, by the strength of thy kingdom. May our feet be made strong; let us dance before thee, eternal. Give ye praise, all angels, to him above who is worthy of praise. **Amen.** (*A Zulu prayer, South Africa*)

## Monday Evenings

### Opening Prayer

O God, make speed to save us;  
O Lord, make haste to help us!

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through the evening Psalm. Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

*Take a moment to consider the day behind you. When did you feel God's presence? When did you welcome it and when did you resist it? After a few moments, pray:*

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

### Listening to Words of Love

*Read the Old Testament passage or continue to dwell on the evening Psalm.*

### Abiding in Love & Giving Thanks

- How does God Word speak to the day behind you and the day ahead?
- What thanksgivings do these words evoke from you?

### Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself and the world to God's care and receive the rest he gives. Conclude with the following:*

Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love. Keep me, O God, as the apple of an eye; hide me under the shadow of your wings. Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in your peace.

Comfort and guard those who weep, work or keep watch tonight. (*Say the names of those who cannot rest tonight, experiencing need, or in distress.*)

O God our protector, by whose mercy the world turns safely into darkness and returns again to light: we give into your hands our unfinished tasks, our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes; for you alone are our sure defense and bring us lasting peace in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### January 10

Psalms 4; 7  
Gen. 2:4-15

### January 17

Psalms 9; 15  
Gen. 8:6-22

### January 24

Psalms 44  
Gen. 14:1-24

### January 31

Psalms 64-65  
Gen. 19:1-17

### February 7

Psalms 77; 79  
Gen. 25:19-34

### February 14

Psalms 89:19-52  
Gen. 30:1-24

### February 21

Psalms 106:19-48  
Prov. 3:11-20

### February 28

Psalms 9; 15  
Prov. 27:1-6; 10-12

## Tuesday Mornings

### January 11

Psalms 5-7  
Heb. 2:1-10  
John 1:19-28

### January 18

Psalms 26, 28  
Heb. 5:7-14  
John 3:16-21

### January 25

Psalms 45  
Heb. 9:1-14  
John 5:1-18

### February 1

Psalms 61; 62  
Heb. 11:13-22  
John 6:41-51

### February 8

Psalms 78:1-39  
Heb. 13:17-25  
John 7:53-8:11

### February 15

Psalms 97; 99; 100  
1 John 2:1-11  
John 9:18-41

### February 22

Psalms 121-123  
1 John 4:8-21  
John 11:30-44

### March 1

#### **Eve of Ash Wed.**

Psalms 26; 28  
Phil 3:1-11  
John 18:28-38

### The Invitation

"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture."

—*John 10:9*

*Take a moment to reflect on the ways God has been opening the door to deeper intimacy with him and others.*

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through one of the prescribed Psalms for the morning. Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Which desires do you sense the Holy Spirit re-ordering?  
Which secrets do you sense the Holy Spirit wants to bring into the light?*

### Listening to Words of Love

*Dwell on a reading from the Gospel or Epistle, or both.*

### Abiding in Love

- What do you see or hear about God's love? What do you see or hear about yourself? How might you bless someone today with what you hear?

### Giving Thanks

- Take a deep breath and consider the day or hours ahead. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you receive what is to come as a gift and give thanks.

### Lifting Burdens and Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself, your neighbors, the world and the day ahead to God through the Lord's Prayer or the following:*

Eternal God, we say good morning to you. Early in the morning, before we begin our work, we praise your glory. Renew our bodies as fresh as morning flowers. Open our inner eyes, as the sun casts new light upon the darkness. Deliver us from all captivity. Give us wings of freedom like the birds in the sky. Restore justice and freedom, as a mighty stream. We thank you for the gift of this morning.

**Amen.** (a prayer from Masao Takenaka, Japan)

## Tuesday Evenings

### Opening Prayer

O God, make speed to save us;  
O Lord, make haste to help us!

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through the evening Psalm. Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

*Take a moment to consider the day behind you. When did you feel God's presence? When did you welcome it and when did you resist it? After a few moments, pray:*

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

### Listening to Words of Love

*Read the Old Testament passage or continue to dwell on the evening Psalm.*

### Abiding in Love & Giving Thanks

- How does God Word speak to the day behind you and the day ahead?
- What thanksgivings do these words evoke from you?

### Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself and the world to God's care and receive the rest he gives. Conclude with the following:*

Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love. Keep me, O God, as the apple of an eye; hide me under the shadow of your wings. Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in your peace.

Comfort and guard those who weep, work or keep watch tonight. (Say the names of those who cannot rest tonight, experiencing need, or in distress.)

O God our protector, by whose mercy the world turns safely into darkness and returns again to light: we give into your hands our unfinished tasks, our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes; for you alone are our sure defense and bring us lasting peace in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### January 11

Psalms 10; 11  
Gen. 3:1-24

### January 18

Psalms 36; 39  
Gen. 9:1-17

### January 25

Psalms 47; 48  
Gen. 15:1-11, 17-21

### February 1

Psalms 68:1-20  
Gen. 21:1-21

### February 8

Psalms 78:40-72  
Gen. 26:1-6; 12-33

### February 15

Psalms 94-95  
Gen. 31:1-24

### February 22

Psalms 124-125  
Prov. 4:1-27

### March 1

Psalms 36; 39  
Prov. 30:1-4; 24-33

## Wednesday Mornings

**January 12**  
Psalm 119:1-24  
Heb. 2:11-18  
John 1:29-42

**January 19**  
Psalm 38  
Heb. 6:1-12  
John 3:22-36

**January 26**  
Psalm 119:4-72  
Heb. 9:15-28  
John 5:19-29

**February 2**  
Psalm 72  
Heb. 11:23-31  
John 6:52-59

**February 9**  
Psalm 119:97-120  
Rom. 12:1-8  
John 8:12-20

**February 16**  
Psalm 101;  
109:1-4; 20-30  
1 John 2:12-18  
John 10:1-18

**February 23**  
Psalm 119:145-176  
1 John 5:1-12  
John 11:45-54

### The Invitation

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." —*John 10:11*

*You are God's beloved. You are so beloved, God laid down his life for you. Let this good news wash over you.*

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through one of the prescribed Psalms for the morning. Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

Lord forgive us, for we are fragmented persons. We go many directions at once. We seek opposite goals; we serve contradictory causes. We mouth liberation, we live oppression. We shout peace, we practice violence. We shout justice, we walk injustice. We preach love, we walk hate. Have mercy and make us whole. **Amen.** *(silence)*  
*(Unknown writer, Philippines)*

### Listening to Words of Love

*Dwell on a reading from the Gospel or Epistle, or both.*

### Abiding in Love

- What words of rest do you hear today? How might you respond? How might you invite others into God's gift of rest?

### Giving Thanks

- Give thanks for Grace's Deacons and mercy ministry. How might you bless them and join them in extending God's mercy to the congregation, city and world?

### Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself, your neighbors, the world and the day ahead to God through the Lord's Prayer or the following:*

Almighty God, your word of creation caused the water to be filled with many kinds of living beings and the air to be filled with birds. With those who live in this world's small islands we rejoice in the richness of your creation, and we pray for your wisdom for all who live on this earth, that we may wisely manage and not destroy what you have made for us. We join all creation and praise your name. **Amen.**

*(A prayer from an unknown author, Samoa)*

## Wednesday Evenings

### Opening Prayer

O God, make speed to save us;  
O Lord, make haste to help us!

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through the evening Psalm. Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

*Take a moment to consider the day behind you. When did you feel God's presence? When did you welcome it and when did you resist it? After a few moments, pray:*

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

### Listening to Words of Love

*Read the Old Testament passage or continue to dwell on the evening Psalm.*

### Abiding in Love & Giving Thanks

- How does God Word speak to the day behind you and the day ahead?
- What thanksgivings do these words evoke from you?

### Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself and the world to God's care and receive the rest he gives. Conclude with the following:*

Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love. Keep me, O God, as the apple of an eye; hide me under the shadow of your wings. Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in your peace.

Comfort and guard those who weep, work or keep watch tonight. *(Say the names of those who cannot rest tonight, experiencing need, or in distress.)*

O God our protector, by whose mercy the world turns safely into darkness and returns again to light: we give into your hands our unfinished tasks, our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes; for you alone are our sure defense and bring us lasting peace in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**January 12**  
Psalms 12-14  
Gen. 4:1-16

**January 19**  
Psalm 119:25-48  
Gen. 9:18-29

**January 26**  
Psalms 49; 53  
Gen. 16:1-14

**February 2**  
Psalm 119:73-96  
Gen. 22:1-18

**February 9**  
Psalms 81; 82  
Gen. 27:1-29

**February 16**  
Psalm 119:121-144  
Gen. 31:25-50

**February 23**  
Psalms 128-130  
Prov. 6:1-19



## Mid-Week Reflection: Habits of the Body

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### OUR BODIES — CREATION & INCARNATION

In the story of Creation—from the very first page of the Bible—we hear a profound affirmation of matter and the physical world. Like a musical refrain, God looks at his handiwork and says over and over, “It is good.” The sun, stars, oceans, land, plants, birds, and all manner of animals and life are called good.

And on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of Creation, God makes male and female after his own image and says humanity “is very good.” (Genesis 1:31). God doesn’t look at our souls only and then says we are very good. God looks at our entire beings—our hearts, souls *and* bodies—and says we are very good. Let this sink in for a moment: God sees *all* of you and says you are very good. The Psalmist echoes this fact, proclaiming: “*I will praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*” (Psalm 139:14)

God’s affirmation of the physical world and our bodies continues in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. In the Incarnation, Jesus comes to us as one of us. This is astounding when we remember who Jesus is. Echoing the language of Scripture, the Nicene Creed reminds us that Jesus is the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity. He is “God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God” and eternally one with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

In the Incarnation, the God of the universe takes on human flesh! He becomes like the people he comes to save. He doesn’t come as an untouchable disembodied spirit, but as a person who chooses to dwell among his creation (John 1:14). Human bodies are frail and insignificant compared to the ineffable glory of God, but Jesus doesn’t look at our bodies with scorn or disdain. He becomes one of us, affirming the value he imbued in us at creation.

In his life and ministry, Jesus affirms the values and goodness of our bodies by embracing us and allowing himself to be embraced. He’s critical of those who would keep children from playing with him (Mark 10) and who looked at his anointing with perfume and tears with disgust (Luke 7). He touches the untouchables of his society and brings them close (Luke 17).

Jesus not only embraces, he also heals bodies and feeds them. In the Gospels, Jesus is deeply concerned with our souls, hearts and minds. His concern, however, is not at the expense of our bodies. He sees the affects of sin manifesting in our bodies through hunger, disease and death; his response is to feed, heal and restore. In his life and ministry, Jesus shows over and over again that his aim is to bring life not just in a spiritual or emotional sense, but physically as well. As John writes, Jesus comes to bring us *life to the full*. (John 10:10).

### SIN AND THE DISTORTION OF GOD’S AFFIRMATION

God’s affirmation of our bodies is loud and clear, but many of us have trouble

hearing it and receiving it. Many of us, if not all of us, struggle with our bodies. We see our bodies as sources of shame and weakness. We treat our bodies as something to master so that we can be truly free. We struggle to maintain youthfulness and shun aging as the enemy. We commodify and weaponize our bodies and those of others for the sake gain. We eat and drink to excess because we see our bodies as temporary and vessels with fleeting value.

All of this is because of sin. When we look back to the Garden of Eden, we see a vision of the way God meant life to be and the ways we were to inhabit our bodies. We see how Adam and Eve lived naked before God and one another. Naked, Adam and Eve were comfortable in their own skin. They lived and worked together without shame. They didn’t fear being truly seen. They could gaze at each other and enjoy each other in ways that reflected God’s great joy in them.

Sin disrupted this way of inhabiting our bodies. It brought physical death and disease, and it made our bodies sources of shame. In Genesis 3, we see Adam and Eve hiding both from God and one another after they sinned. Nakedness and its vulnerability are things they can’t stand anymore. God’s gaze and their mutual gaze no longer brings joy, but fear and anxiety.

And since then, we’ve been inundated with competing stories about our bodies, stories that run counter to or fall short of God’s affirmation. In one way or another, we hear that our bodies are bad and not as valuable as our hearts and minds. We hear how we have to master and transcend our bodies in order to be truly free and happy. We hear bodily pleasure is dirty, or it’s so ultimate that we must be free to pursue it no matter the cost. We hear that we are only our bodies and our value comes from how youthful, strong, and beautiful they are.

In our day and age, we hear a lot about body positivity. In many ways, it’s a necessary pivot to the many destructive stories that shape our relationship to our bodies. There’s much to be learned here. Indeed, we are all unique and wonderfully made as the Psalmist affirms. We ought to respect the bodies around us as God’s creations. But while body positivity pushes for acceptance and celebration, it doesn’t seem to offer redemptive hope for the deep brokenness and death we experience in our bodies. This is true for many of “positive” stories our culture throws our way about our bodies.

### THE RESURRECTION: GOOD NEWS FOR OUR BODIES

On Easter Sunday, Jesus is *bodily* resurrected and the Gospels give us a sense that the resurrected body of Jesus has a different quality than before. It has, for lack of a better adjective, a heavenly quality. His body is somehow newly mysterious to the degree his disciples have trouble recognizing him (Luke 24, John 20:13ff). Jesus travels great distances in a flash (Luke 24:31). He seems to be able to walk through walls (Luke 24:36).

No matter how heavenly, Jesus has a real body! The earthy physicality of Jesus cannot be denied. In the post-resurrection accounts, Jesus talks, eats, walks, and embraces his disciples (John 21). His resurrected body even continues to bear the scars of his crucifixion. In John 20, Jesus invites Thomas to touch his wounds and to examine them up close. As heavenly as his new body is, Jesus remains rather earthly.

This is all good news for us, and the Apostle Paul presses this point in his Epistles. In Romans 5-6, Paul states that if we receive Jesus Christ and are baptized in his name, then we are united to him in his death and resurrection like his. The implication is that this is not just a spiritual reality, but a physical one. We will die, but one day, we will be resurrected in both body and soul just like Jesus Christ. We will be made new. The very things we struggle with in our bodies and the scars we bear in our bodies will be transformed into signs of glory.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul continues to expound and make explicit this expansive hope of the Gospel. He urges the Church to embrace the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. For Paul, it's the cornerstone of Christian faith. He says the resurrection is good news of our bodies and spirit. To say anything else is to lessen the Good News of Jesus Christ. To reject the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and to denigrate our bodies as less valuable than our souls is unchristian!

#### **HABITS OF BODY AND SOUL.**

There is future hope for our bodies, but also present hope. Although our bodies are subject to disease and death until our resurrection, our bodies have an important role in our present spirituality and Christian life. In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, the Apostle Paul asks: "[Do] you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?" Furthermore, Paul uses the human body to describe our relationship to Jesus and to his people (1 Cor. 12). By faith, we are temples of the Holy Spirit. God by his Spirit lives inside our bodies, though imperfect and broken. By faith, our bodies are given new dignity and we are incorporated into the very body of Christ.

In this light, Paul urges us to live in ways that reflect this hope and reality. We can be sensual and sexual, but in ways that honor the image of God in us and others (1 Cor. 6). Whatever we eat or drink, whatever we do in and through our bodies, we do to the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31). And like Jesus, we are to proclaim the new life of God by feeding, healing and honoring the bodies around us.

So, over the Epiphany season, would you consider your physical habits, practices and attitudes?

- Which habits and practices honor your body and those of your neighbors? Which ones dishonor them?
- When you hear that "you are wonderfully and fearfully made" (Ps. 139:14), what is your reaction? Why?
- What stories about your body do you believe? Where do they come from? Parents, what kinds of stories about their bodies are they hearing from their shows and books?
- What practices can you nurture or take on that nourish the bodies of your neighbors?
- How might corporate worship and the different aspect of our liturgy cultivate a deeper regard for our bodies?
- How might you engage your body in prayer and worship? When you pray or read scripture, what responses and feelings do you notice in your body?

We hope the Holy Spirit will use this season to (1) nurture new freedom and habits that reflect that freedom; (2) give us new hope for ourselves and others; (3) help us receive our bodies and bodies of others as precious gifts; and (4) move us closer to one another as the Body of Christ.

*A note of caution and encouragement:* This is not easy or light work. Some of us don't think about our bodies at all. Others think too much about our bodies. Our bodies may carry the scars of disease or violence inflicted by ourselves or others.

Please remember that God's desire is to bring all these things into the light to redeem and renew you. Also, remember that you are not alone. Your church family is here to walk with you. Discuss the questions in this guide with your brothers and sisters. Pray about them together. Reach out to the pastors and staff for support, especially if you sense the need for therapy or counseling as different issues come to light.

Let us receive God's new life for our bodies together as the Body of Christ.



## Thursday Mornings

**January 13**  
Psalm 18:1-20  
Heb. 3:1-11  
John 1:43-51

**January 20**  
Psalm 37:1-18  
Heb. 6:13-20  
John 4:1-15

**January 27**  
Psalm 50  
Heb. 10:1-10  
John 5:30-47

**February 3**  
Psalms 70-71  
Heb. 11:32-12:2  
John 6:60-71

**February 10**  
Psalms 83; 146  
Rom. 12:9-21  
John 8:21-32

**February 17**  
Psalm 105:1-22  
1 John 2:18-29  
John 10:19-30

**February 24**  
Psalms 131-133  
1 John 5:13-21  
John 11:55-12:8

### The Invitation

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.  
Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,  
and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.  
—*John 11:25-26*

*Rejoice in the tenacity of God's love: even death cannot keep us from God's love!*

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through one of the prescribed Psalms for the morning. Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

God of grace, you have given us Jesus, the light of the world, but we choose darkness and cling to things that hide the brightness of your love. Immersed in ourselves, we have not risen to new life. Baptize us with your Spirit, that, forgiven and renewed, we may preach your Word to the nations and tell of your glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our light forever. **Amen.** *(silence)*

### Listening to Words of Love

*Dwell on a reading from the Gospel or Epistle, or both.*

### Abiding in Love

- How do today's words re-direct your heart to God and to others? What might the Spirit asking you to let go of so that you can be re-directed?

### Giving Thanks

- Give thanks for the work of your hands. Give thanks for the work of others.

### Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself, your neighbors, the world and the day ahead to God through the Lord's Prayer or the following:*

O God, our Father, Creator of the universe, whose Son, Jesus Christ, came to our world, pour your Holy Spirit upon your Church, that all the people of the world, being led by knowledge of your truth to worship you, may offer the gold of intellect, the frankincense of devotion, and the myrrh of discipline to him who is with you and the Holy Spirit who lives and reigns forever one God. **Amen.**

*(Church of Ceylon, Sri Lanka)*

## Thursday Evenings

### Opening Prayer

O God, make speed to save us;  
O Lord, make haste to help us!

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through the evening Psalm. Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

*Take a moment to consider the day behind you. When did you feel God's presence? When did you welcome it and when did you resist it? After a few moments, pray:*

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

### Listening to Words of Love

*Read the Old Testament passage or continue to dwell on the evening Psalm.*

### Abiding in Love & Giving Thanks

- How does God Word speak to the day behind you and the day ahead?
- What thanksgivings do these words evoke from you?

### Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself and the world to God's care and receive the rest he gives. Conclude with the following:*

Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love. Keep me, O God, as the apple of an eye; hide me under the shadow of your wings. Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in your peace.

Comfort and guard those who weep, work or keep watch tonight. *(Say the names of those who cannot rest tonight, experiencing need, or in distress.)*

O God our protector, by whose mercy the world turns safely into darkness and returns again to light: we give into your hands our unfinished tasks, our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes; for you alone are our sure defense and bring us lasting peace in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**January 13**  
Psalm 18:21-50  
Gen. 4:17-26

**January 20**  
Psalm 37:19-42  
Gen. 11:1-9

**January 27**  
Psalm 118  
Gen. 16:15-17:14

**February 3**  
Psalm 74  
Gen. 23:1-20

**February 10**  
Psalms 85-86  
Gen. 27:30-45

**February 17**  
Psalm 105:23-45  
Gen. 32:3-21

**February 24**  
Psalms 134; 135  
Prov. 7:1-27

## Friday Mornings

### January 14

Psalms 16-17  
Heb. 3:12-19  
John 2:1-12

### January 21

Psalms 31  
Heb. 7:1-17  
John 4:16-26

### January 28

Psalms 40; 54  
Heb. 10:11-25  
John 6:1-15

### February 4

Psalms 69  
Heb. 12:3-11  
John 7:1-13

### February 11

Psalms 88  
Rom. 13:1-14  
John 8:33-47

### February 18

Psalms 102  
1 John 3:1-10  
John 10:31-42

### February 25

Psalms 140; 142  
Philemon 1-25  
John 12:9-19

### The Invitation

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

—*John 14:6*

*Take a moment to reflect on your story, specifically a time when you became aware of Christ's presence and his leading of you into love.*

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through one of the prescribed Psalms for the morning. Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

Eternal Light, shine in our hearts; Eternal Goodness, deliver us from evil; Eternal Power, be our support; Eternal Wisdom, scatter the shadows of our ignorance; Eternal Compassion, have mercy on us, that with heart and mind and soul and strength we may seek your face and be brought by your infinite mercy to the Holy Presence, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.** *(silence)*

### Listening to Words of Love

*Read the prescribed Gospel or Epistle, or both.*

### Abiding in Love

- What decisions have you been trying to discern? What assurances of God's presence might you hear in today's words? What wisdom do you hear? How might you share this assurance and wisdom today?

### Giving Thanks

- Consider ways God has answered your prayers. Give thanks for God's answers of "yes" and "no" and "wait."

### Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself, your neighbors, the world and the day ahead to God through the Lord's Prayer or the following:*

Almighty and everlasting God, you govern all things both in heaven and on earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of your people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Amen.** *(from the book of Common Prayer)*

## Friday Evenings

### Opening Prayer

O God, make speed to save us;  
O Lord, make haste to help us!

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through the evening Psalm. Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

*Take a moment to consider the day behind you. When did you feel God's presence? When did you welcome it and when did you resist it? After a few moments, pray:*

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

### Listening to Words of Love

*Read the Old Testament passage or continue to dwell on the evening Psalm.*

### Abiding in Love & Giving Thanks

- How does God Word speak to the day behind you and the day ahead?
- What thanksgivings do these words evoke from you?

### Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself and the world to God's care and receive the rest he gives. Conclude with the following:*

Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love. Keep me, O God, as the apple of an eye; hide me under the shadow of your wings. Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in your peace.

Comfort and guard those who weep, work or keep watch tonight. *(Say the names of those who cannot rest tonight, experiencing need, or in distress.)*

O God our protector, by whose mercy the world turns safely into darkness and returns again to light: we give into your hands our unfinished tasks, our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes; for you alone are our sure defense and bring us lasting peace in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### January 14

Psalms 22  
Gen. 6:1-8

### January 21

Psalms 35  
Gen. 11:27-12:8

### January 28

Psalms 51  
Gen. 17:15-27

### February 4

Psalms 73  
Gen. 24:1-27

### February 11

Psalms 91; 92  
Gen. 27:46-28:4

### February 18

Psalms 107:1-32  
Gen. 32:22-33:17

### February 25

Psalms 141; 143  
Prov. 8:1-21

## Saturday Mornings

**January 15**

Psalms 20-21  
Heb. 4:1-13  
John 2:13-22

**January 22**

Psalm 30  
Heb. 7:18-28  
John 4:27-42

**January 29**

Psalm 55  
Heb. 10:26-39  
John 6:16-27

**February 5**

Psalms 75-76  
Heb. 12:12-29  
John 7:14-36

**February 12**

Psalms 87; 90  
Rom. 14:1-23  
John 8:47-59

**February 19**

Psalms 107:33-43;  
108:1-13  
1 John 3:11-19  
John 11:1-16

**February 26**

Psalm 137:1-9; 144  
2 Tim. 1:1-14  
John 12:20-26

### The Invitation

"Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning." — *Ps. 30:4-5*

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through one of the prescribed Psalms for the morning. Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

Almighty and merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you and one another in both our actions and our inactions. We recognize that in Jesus Christ our light has come, yet often we choose to walk in shadows and ignore the light. Gracious God, forgive our sins and remove from us the veil of darkness that shrouds our lives. Illumined by your Word and sacrament, may we rise to the radiance of Christ's glory. **Amen.** *(silence)*

### Listening to Words of Love

*Read the prescribed Gospel or Epistle, or both.*

### Abiding in Love and Extending Love

- How might the Spirit be using today's words to speak to your heart, soul and mind? To a situation or circumstance you're in?
- Consider carving out time to pray with someone today. Read the passage together and ask the question above together.

### Giving Thanks

- Think about the neighbors on your street or in your condo or apartment building. Give thanks for them.

### Lifting Burdens and Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself, your neighbors, the world and the day ahead to God through the Lord's Prayer or the following:*

God of mystery, draw us nearer to you. God of relationship, draw us nearer to each other. God in Trinity, draw us into deeper understanding through your gift of faith and the outpouring of your love. **Amen.**

*(from Joy Tetly, England)*

## Saturday Evenings

### Opening Prayer

O God, make speed to save us;  
O Lord, make haste to help us!

### The Song of Response

*Lift up your hearts through the evening Psalm. Pray the whole Psalm or focus on a part.*

### The Confession

*Take a moment to consider the day behind you. When did you feel God's presence? When did you welcome it and when did you resist it? After a few moments, pray:*

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

### Listening to Words of Love

*Read the Old Testament passage or continue to dwell on the evening Psalm.*

### Abiding in Love & Giving Thanks

- How does God Word speak to the day behind you and the day ahead?
- What thanksgivings do these words evoke from you?

### Closing Prayers

*Entrust yourself and the world to God's care and receive the rest he gives. Conclude with the following:*

Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love. Keep me, O God, as the apple of an eye; hide me under the shadow of your wings. Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in your peace.

Comfort and guard those who weep, work or keep watch tonight. *(Say the names of those who cannot rest tonight, experiencing need, or in distress.)*

### Conclude with the following prayer for Saturday night:

O God our rest, give us rest. Prepare us, even as we sleep, to receive the gift of the Lord's Day and to worship you tomorrow with our brothers and sisters. In our sleeping and waking, help us to remember the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**January 15**

Psalms 110;  
116; 117  
Gen. 6:9-22

**January 22**

Psalm 42-43  
Gen. 12:9-13:1

**January 29**

Psalms 138; 139  
Gen. 18:1-16

**February 5**

Psalms 23; 27  
Gen. 24:28-38;  
49-51

**February 12**

Psalm 136  
Gen. 29:1-20

**February 19**

Psalm 33  
Gen. 35:1-20

**February 26**

Psalm 104  
Prov. 8:22-26

## A Short Noonday Liturgy - Pausing to be Refreshed

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OPENING	Oh God, make speed to save us. Oh Lord, make haste to help us.
SCRIPTURE	<i>Re-visit one of the passages from this morning. Savor a few verses that grip your heart and imaginations.</i>
CLOSING	<i>Conclude with one of the following prayers:</i>  Heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit into our hearts, to direct and rule us according to your will, to comfort us in all our afflictions, to defend us from all error, and to lead us into all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. <b>Amen.</b>  Or  Blessed Savior, at this hour you hung upon the cross, stretching out your loving arms: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may look to you and be saved; for your tender mercies' sake. <b>Amen.</b>  Or  Almighty Savior, who at noonday called your servant Saint Paul to be an apostle to the Gentiles: We pray you to illumine the world with the radiance of your glory, that all nations may come and worship you; for you live and reign for ever and ever. <b>Amen.</b>  Or  Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my peace I leave with you:" Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly city, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and for ever. <b>Amen.</b>

## People to Remember in Prayer at Noon

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*Use this space to help you pray for the people in your life by name.*





