

LITURGY BOOK.

The Office For Spiritual Life

Fall 2025 Vol. III

letter from the dean:

Greetings, students!

As this new semester begins I have found myself praying
Psalm 133:1:

“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people dwell
together in unity.”

These times of worship for which we gather in this beautiful
space are small glimpses of what it means to dwell
together in unity. Together we lift our voices through songs,
through prayers, through the reading of Scripture, and in so
doing, we proclaim our identity as children of God.

This Liturgy Book is a resource for our times of worship, and
yet it is so much more than a tool to guide us. Our hope is
you’ll be encouraged to listen, to seek, and to act in step
with the Holy Spirit so that God’s kingdom may continue to
unfold here on earth as it is in heaven.

Unity, though, is so much more than just spending weekly
time in prayer and worship together. It is also about joining
together in the work of caring for one another, serving one
another, seeking the betterment of one another. If we only
believe that what happens in this room is what matters
most, we will miss so much of what God is inviting us into!

***It is my prayer that our songs, our prayers, our study of
scripture will send us out into our community, into the
world to serve others, to love others, to be co-reconcilers
with Christ of the brokenness we encounter each day.***

In Matthew 6, shortly after inviting us to worry less and to
trust more, Jesus said:

“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these
things will be added unto you.”

I think he was giving us direction for how we are to live in
this world as his followers - not as those satisfied with
simply spending time in worship each week, but as people
who are seeking the kingdom and the righteousness of
God in every facet of our lives.

Sincerely,

Jamie Johnson

Dean for Spiritual Life and University Pastor



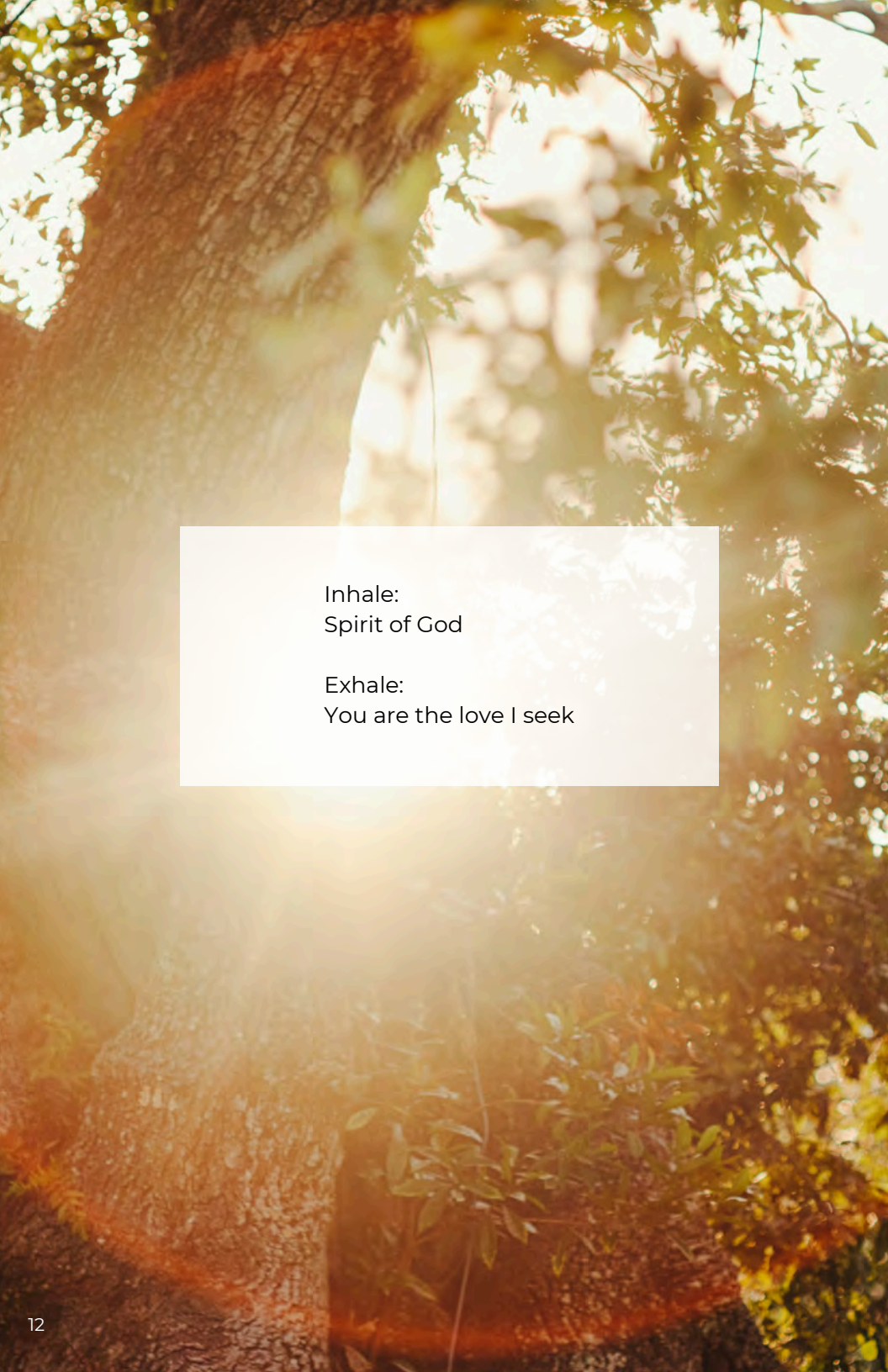
John August Swanson's serigraph of Psalm 23

for times of individual reflection:

DEAR STUDENTS.

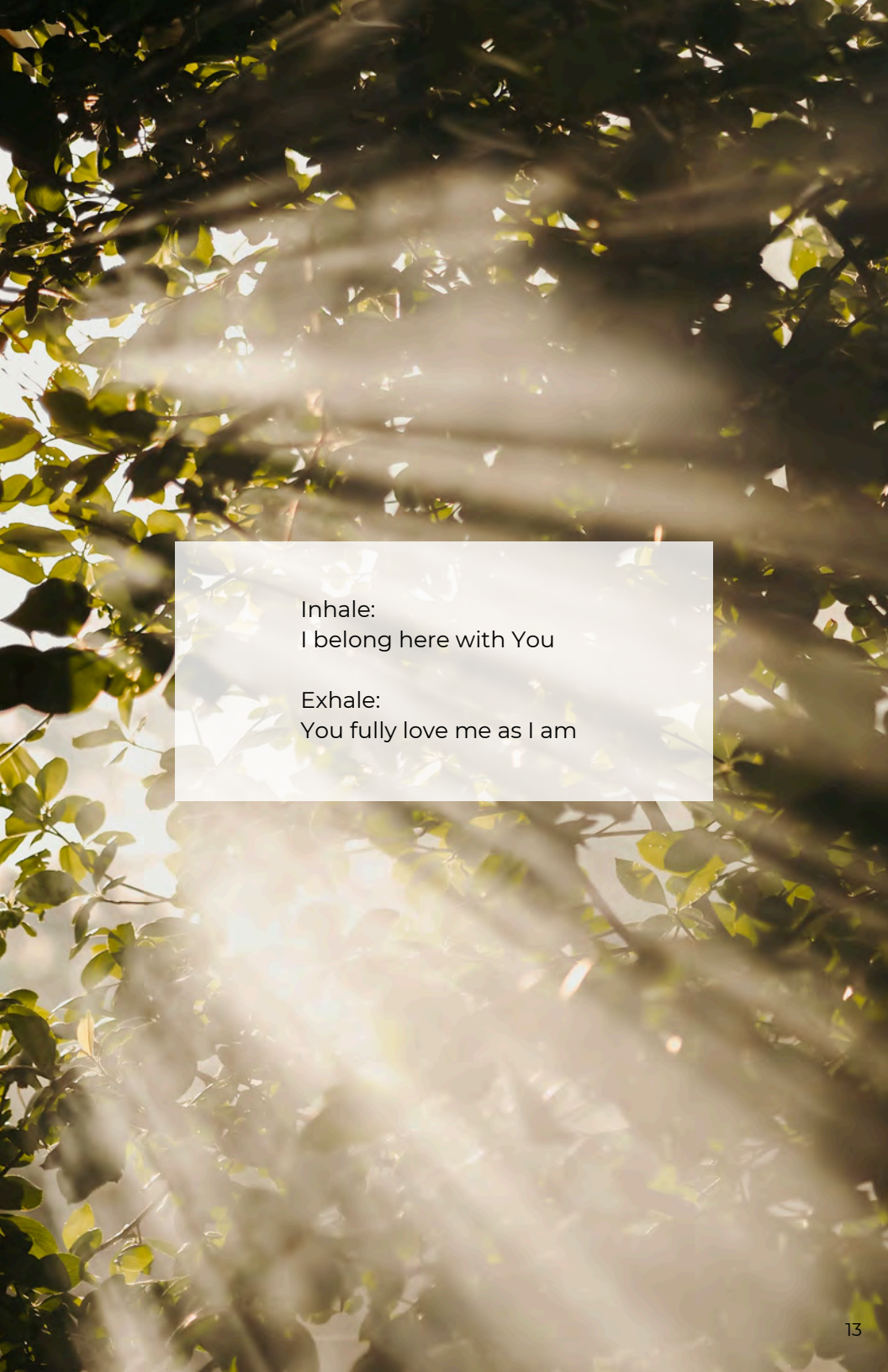
This section is a personal invitation—a sacred place for you to meet with God one-on-one. We pray that as you engage with these practices and prayers, you would be given "eyes to see" God's gentle hand in the details of your life and "ears to hear" God's unique whisper to your heart. May this be a time of peace, quiet, and deep connection.

UNIVERSITY PASTORS



Inhale:
Spirit of God

Exhale:
You are the love I seek



Inhale:
I belong here with You

Exhale:
You fully love me as I am

PASTOR DEVOTIONAL: SEEING

By Debrianna Cabitac-DeBolt:

University Pastor for Chapel Programs and Creative Liturgies

My parents have this sweet practice they do every so often. When they're walking or driving in their hometown, they'll tell each other to close their eyes and then pretend they're seeing their surroundings for the very first time. Suddenly, a normal, mundane setting becomes fresh and vibrant. They can truly see life bursting all around them—the green grass, the wise oak trees, the warm sun peering through the clouds. This practice helps them return to their bodies, awaken to the present moment, and experience the wonder of Divine creation all around them.

Maybe this is something you could try right now as you read this devotional.

Take a deep breath in....

A deep breath out....

And close your eyes for a moment.

When you open them back up, imagine that you are seeing your surroundings for the first time.

Maybe you notice your dorm room, the beauty of the chapel space, maybe you are sitting at a beautiful bench near the canyon, maybe you see a close friend nearby. Whatever you see, allow yourself to **really see** with eyes of wonder and eyes of gratitude, longing to notice the Divine all around you.

Jesus spends a lot of time in the gospels talking about Spiritual Blindness- it's amazing that even if we grew up in the faith, pray every day, and read the scriptures... we can still be absolutely blinded to the Kingdom of God bursting at the seams all around us.

I don't know about you, but I don't want to miss even a moment to dwell in the all encompassing presence of God! But if you are anything like me... I get distracted, I move too quickly, I fall into the trap that producing is better than presence, I get bored of the mundane, I see myself and my own needs above the needs of others, and I often fail to participate in the wonder of the kingdom.

Jesus models this "eyes wide open" type of life so well. He's often walking with his disciples and notices a tree, the soil, the water, the wind. And he also notices the *people* around him who are all carrying different needs, dreams, and desires. **With his eyes wide open, Jesus is able to see the responsibility he has to show up authentically to those around him and participate in this Kingdom of Divine love, inclusivity, justice, and freedom.**

I wonder what life would look like if we could just open our eyes and really see beyond ourselves- maybe we would remember that God is in fact closer than we could ever imagine. Maybe we would be able to see God's Spirit in our neighbors and possibly even our enemies. And maybe, just maybe, we would have clarity and courage to participate in this abundant Kingdom.

Prayer for Seeing:

Holy Spirit, quiet the rush within me. Divine Love, reveal yourself in the ordinary and in every face I meet. Creator God, open my eyes to your reminders of grace. Remove the blindness in my heart so I may see with wonder and respond with love to my neighbor and the sacred world you have made. Amen.

NOTICING PRACTICE

"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." – Psalm 46:10

In the vibrant, often rushed sense of college life, it's easy for our eyes to blur and our ears to dull to the sacred. Yet, God's presence breathes within the quiet hum of the mundane—a gentle light, a shared laugh, the texture of a worn book. This practice is an invitation to pause, to breathe deeply into the present, and with eyes newly opened and ears finely tuned, to discern the subtle, loving whispers of the Divine woven into the very fabric of your day. It's about discovering those "thin places" where heaven feels incredibly close, right here, right now.

Steps:

- **Choose a Moment:** Pick a specific time today—walking to class, waiting for coffee, eating a meal, or gazing out a window.
- **Engage Your Senses:** For 2-3 minutes, intentionally notice what you see, hear, smell, feel, or even taste. Let your senses be your guides.
- **Find the Divine:** As you observe, gently ask: Where in this moment might God's beauty, presence, or love be revealed? Is there a flicker of grace, a breath of peace, a sign of enduring creation here?
- **Offer a Simple Prayer:** Conclude with a brief, heartfelt thanks for that specific observation.

GRATITUDE PRAYER

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." – 1 Thessalonians 5:18

The ancient practice of gratitude is a gentle rebellion. It's not about ignoring struggle, but about intentionally turning the heart's gaze toward the countless, often overlooked, glimmerings of grace that illuminate our path. As we name these small mercies, we begin to "see" with clearer eyes how consistently God's abundant love pours into our lives, transforming our spirit and inviting His very presence to dwell more fully within us.

Steps:

- **Pause and Breathe:** Find a quiet moment. Take a few slow, centering breaths, inviting God's peaceful presence.
- **Recall Your Day (or Week):** Gently bring to mind the moments and interactions of the last 24 hours, or the past few days.
- **Name 3-5 Specific Blessings:** Go beyond generalities. Be tenderly specific! For example: The unexpected text from a friend, the perfect temperature of your morning tea, a melody that lifted your spirit.
- **Offer a Prayer of Thanks:** As you name each one, say a simple, "Thank you, Beloved God, for [specific blessing]."
- **Conclude:** End with a deep breath and a general prayer of gratitude.

PASTOR DEVOTIONAL: LISTENING

By Rusty St. Cyr- University Pastor for Service and Soul Care

The world is loud, isn't it?

Our notifications buzzing, schedules overflowing, and our minds racing past the present preoccupied with the future and regretting the past. It's so easy to get caught in the powerful current of the white-water rapids of the culture around us, paddling and paddling up-stream only to feel like we're getting nowhere and that we keep getting swept back into constant activity and distraction.

In such a situation, how can we possibly develop "eyes to see" and "ears to hear" God?

Jesus' parables are often exactly about this: waking us up to the kingdom of God that is already right under our noses, but still often goes unnoticed in our constant pursuit of everything elsewhere. Recall the Seed-sower in Matthew's gospel (13:1-9). The seeds—God's life-giving truth—are scattered everywhere liberally, but only some fall on good soil, where they can take root and flourish.

The difference isn't in the seed, but in the soil—the state of deep, receptive and uncluttered hearts, our receptivity to truly hear, understand, apply, and be fruitful as a result.

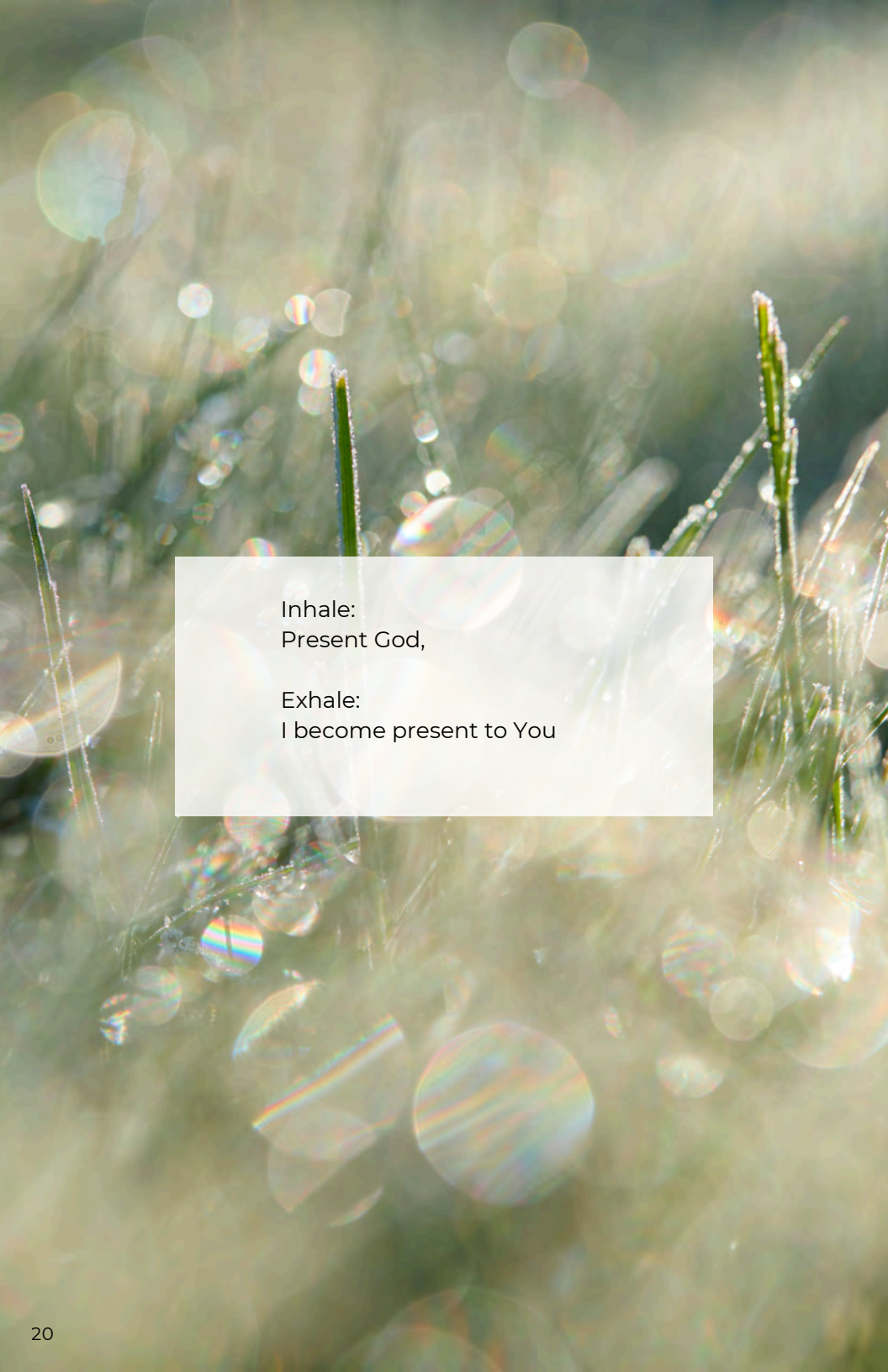
"Listening Beyond the Noise" isn't about escaping the world, but about a courageous inner stillness, a spiritual attentiveness that allows us to perceive even a whisper from God amidst the loudest shouts of what surrounds us.

It's about consciously choosing to practice being inwardly present in both the quiet and loud situations. When we restrain our habitual tendency to chase every noise and wait patiently, we begin to notice the subtle ways God is present—in a kind word, in a moment of unexpected beauty, in both the gifts and needs of our neighbors.

It's in these moments that our eyes begin to truly see and our ears truly hear God's presence and beckon call woven into the fabric of everyday lives and relationships with Self, others and the rest of creation.

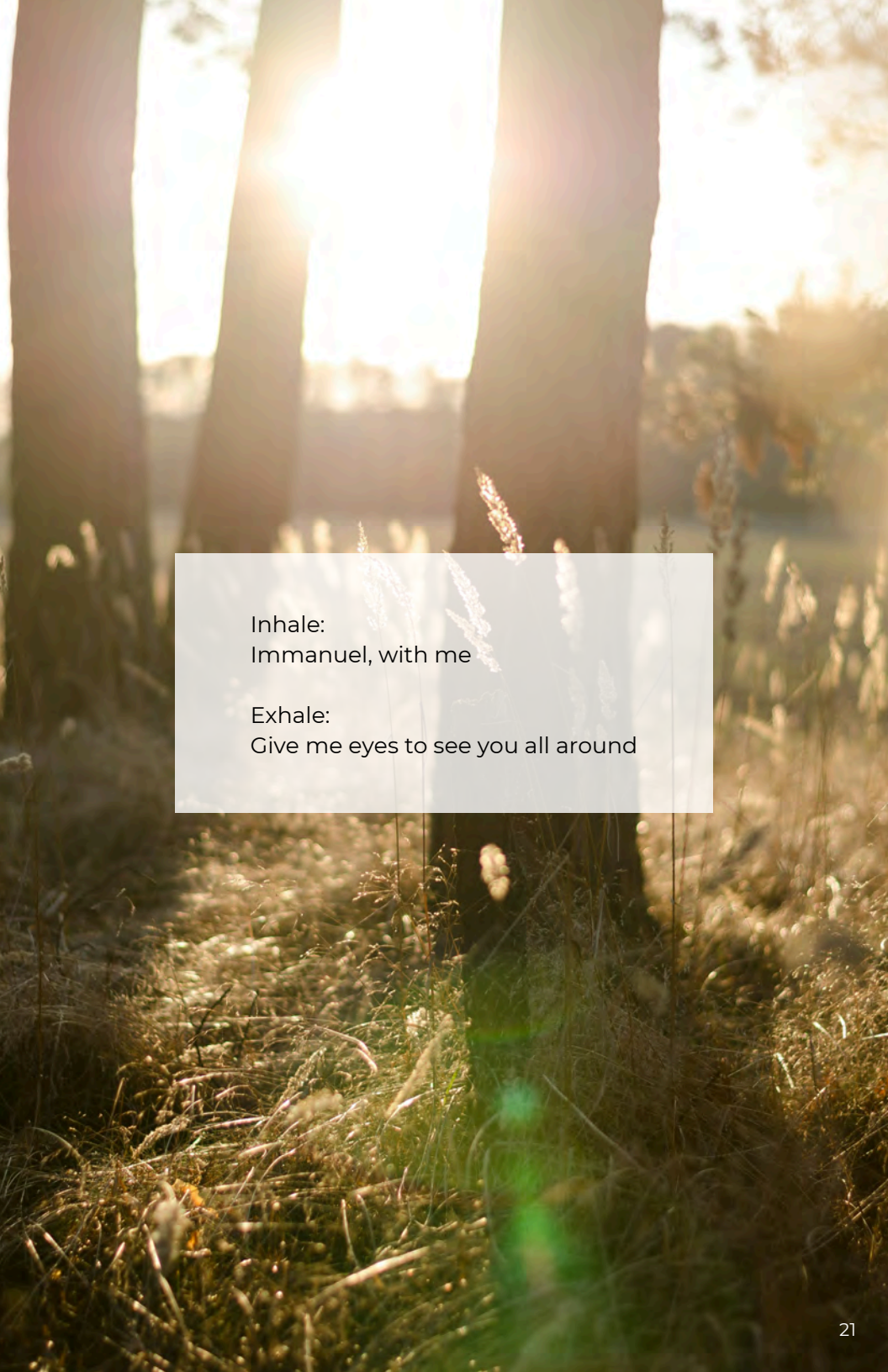
Prayer for Listening:

*Present and Available God,
May your inner quietness cancel-out the unnecessary
noise around us. Open our eyes to see how you see and
open our ears to hear how you hear, so that we might
love how you love. Help us to be patiently present in a
world full of opportunities, to notice You are already at
work, and to be eager to join in that passionate work
alongside You. Amen.*



Inhale:
Present God,

Exhale:
I become present to You



Inhale:
Immanuel, with me

Exhale:
Give me eyes to see you all around

PASTOR DEVOTIONAL: BLIND SPOTS

By Cyndi Murillo- University Pastor for Spiritual Formation

I recently came across an Instagram post that read:

“God spoke today in flowers,
And I, who was waiting on words,
Almost missed the conversation.”

—Ingrid Goff-Maidoff

I'll admit, I often start my mornings by reaching for my phone and scrolling Instagram. Not just in the morning, but between meetings, while waiting in line, at red lights...any spare moment, really. It's become a habit. A reflex. I've done it so often, for so long, and most of the time, I don't even know why I do it.

When it's not social media, it's music, a podcast, or whatever show I'm binge-watching. I rarely pause. I rarely look up to see or listen.

But this week, I challenged myself to reach for my phone less and be more present to what and who was around me. Here's what I noticed:

My daughter making her baby brother laugh with a silly dance.
The trees—suddenly changing colors to match the season.
The warmth of the sun on my skin.
A friend eager to share about how she's doing.

These moments may have seemed small, but they brought contentment. That contentment stirred up gratitude. And that gratitude made me aware:

God is here.

Sometimes I wish I could hear God's audible voice or I imagine that if I'd lived when Jesus walked the earth I'd listen to every single word he'd have to tell me. But the truth is: the Spirit of God is always speaking. Always present. Always available. Not just when I'm in chapel, or reading my Bible, or "doing everything right."

God speaks through an encouraging text. A warm drink on a cold day. A funny moment shared with friends. Creation itself.

Perhaps I lose myself in distractions because I'm trying to escape the present moment. But maybe this is the very moment God wants to meet me. When I numb my feelings, I might be robbing myself of the gift of God's grace and kindness.

Today, may God speak to you in the flowers of your own life.

And may you be aware enough to not miss the conversation.

EXAMEN PRACTICE

"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." – Psalm 139:23-24

The day often sweeps us along in its currents, leaving us breathless. The Examen, a venerable spiritual practice, offers us a gentle moment at day's end to reflect, not in judgment, but with loving curiosity. It's an invitation to retrace our steps and discern where the Divine hand was guiding, where our hearts were open to hear, and perhaps where we might have missed a sacred invitation. Through this reflective journey, we come to "understand" ourselves more deeply in God's loving gaze, growing in wisdom and alignment with His unfolding story in our lives.

Steps:

- **Quiet Your Heart:** Settle into a peaceful space. Take a moment to acknowledge God's loving presence with you.
- **Recall the Day:** With compassion, allow the events of your day to unfold in your memory, from morning's awakening to this moment.
- **Notice Highs & Lows:** When did you feel God's nearness, joy, or peace? (Consolations). When did you feel distant, restless, or drained? (Desolations).
- **Where Was God? How Did You Respond?** In both the sunlit moments and the shadowed valleys, tenderly ask: Where might God have been present? How did I respond to His subtle invitations or challenges? Did my "ears hear" His promptings?
- **Look Forward with Grace:** What is one small insight you've gained? Is there one gentle invitation from God for tomorrow, or one area where you wish to extend more grace?
- **End with Grace:** Conclude with a prayer of humble gratitude for God's enduring presence and for His guiding light for the path ahead.

CREATIVE SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

"Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." – Hebrews 4:12

The parables are living seeds sown by Christ, designed to take root in the fertile ground of our hearts, inviting us to "understand" God's kingdom in fresh, surprising ways. This practice is an invitation to move beyond simply reading, to truly "listen" with the ear of the heart, allowing the sacred words to stir the divine spark of creativity within you. It's not about artistic skill, but about giving form, color, or voice to the Spirit's whispered revelation, allowing the parable to live and breathe through your unique expression, and in doing so, "inviting God's presence" into a deeper, more personal dialogue.

Steps:

- Choose a Parable: Select one of the parables that has recently resonated with you.
- Read and Reflect: Read the parable slowly, perhaps several times. What image, phrase, or feeling "leaps out" at you? What new message does your heart "hear" for your life right now?
- Choose Your Creative Outlet:
 - Drawing/Doodling: Let your hand move freely with pens or pencils. Draw what the parable brings to mind—a symbol, a feeling, a scene, or abstract shapes.
 - Writing: Pen a short poem, a prayer, a journal entry, or a brief first-person account from a character's perspective.
 - Song/Humming: If a melody stirs, hum it softly or jot down a few lyrical ideas inspired by the parable.
 - Simple Craft/Sculpting: Use accessible materials (a small stone, yarn, clay, nature items) to create a tangible symbol from the parable.
- Connect to God: As you create, see it as an act of prayer, an offering. What truths is God revealing through this creative encounter with His Word?
- Conclude: Offer a prayer of gratitude for the gift of God's living Word and for the creative spirit within you that allows for such deep, personal engagement.

PASTOR DEVOTIONAL: THE KINGDOM

By Pastor Jamie Johnson Dean for Spiritual Life and University Pastor

There's an ancient Japanese art called kintsugi in which broken pieces of pottery are glued back together using gold.

As an artform I love it, specifically because it takes what is broken and seemingly useless and resurrects it into something that is useful and beautiful, while still retaining the scars or fractures of the piece. And in doing so, it is actually made stronger than it was before.

When I think about all of the pain, brokenness, and hardship that exists in our lives, I can be quick to let the brokenness overwhelm me, to assume that things are broken beyond repair and all that I can do, as a Christian, is long for the return of Jesus to make things new again.

But Jesus' teaching is more like kintsugi than we often believe or practice.

In Mark 15 Jesus says: "The time has come! The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the good news!" And in his actions, his words, and in everything he did, he lived in the power of this kingdom at hand.

Do we believe these words of Jesus? Do we believe that this kingdom is at hand?

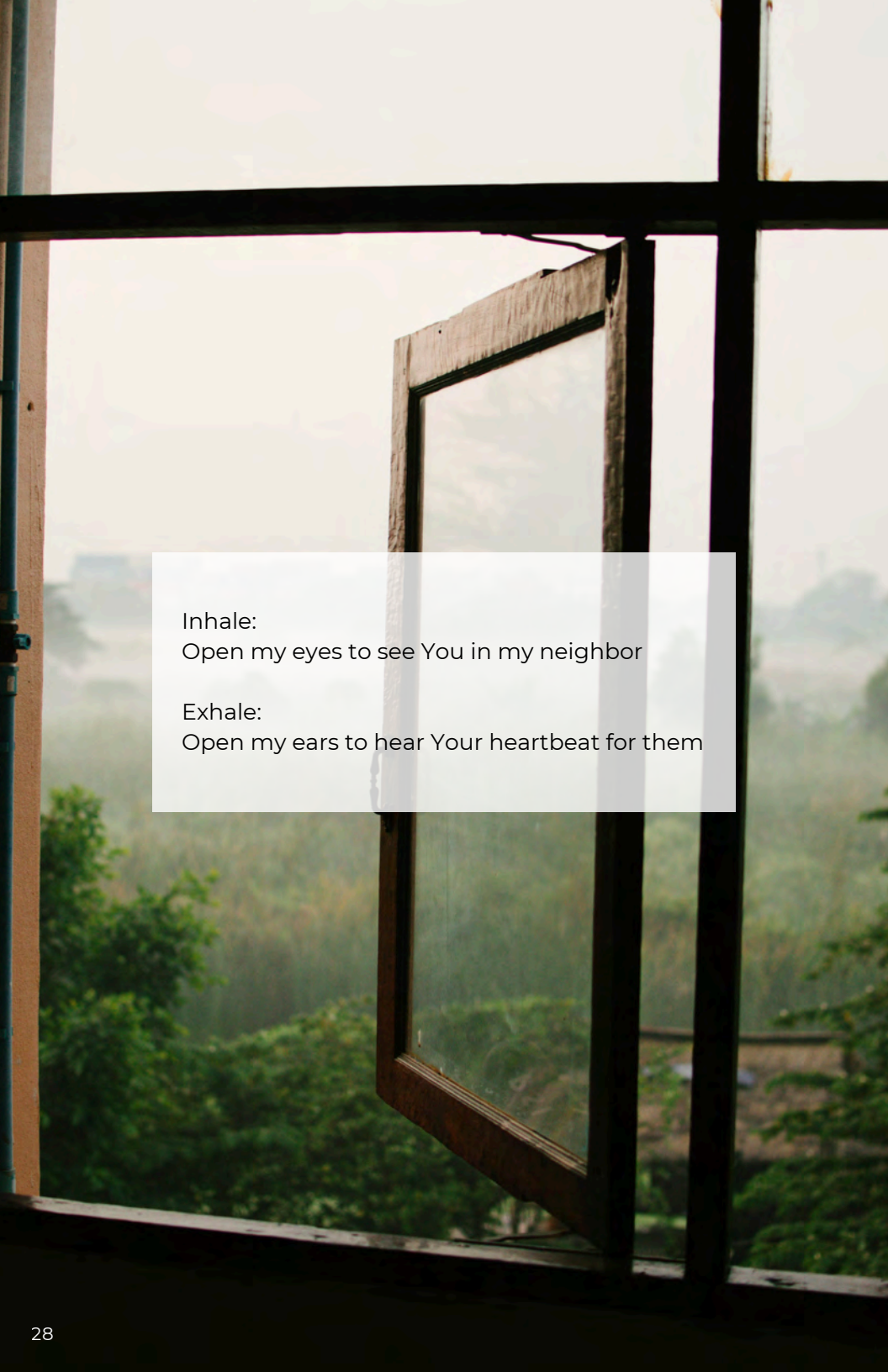
If so, it should change how we live. Our brokenness can be redeemed into something stronger, more beautiful, because of what God is doing.

The kingdom is here!

We see glimpses of it when the wounded healer himself, Jesus, heals our wounds and gives us new life. We see glimpses of it when brokenness does not have the final say, but instead is used to make us stronger, more beautiful.

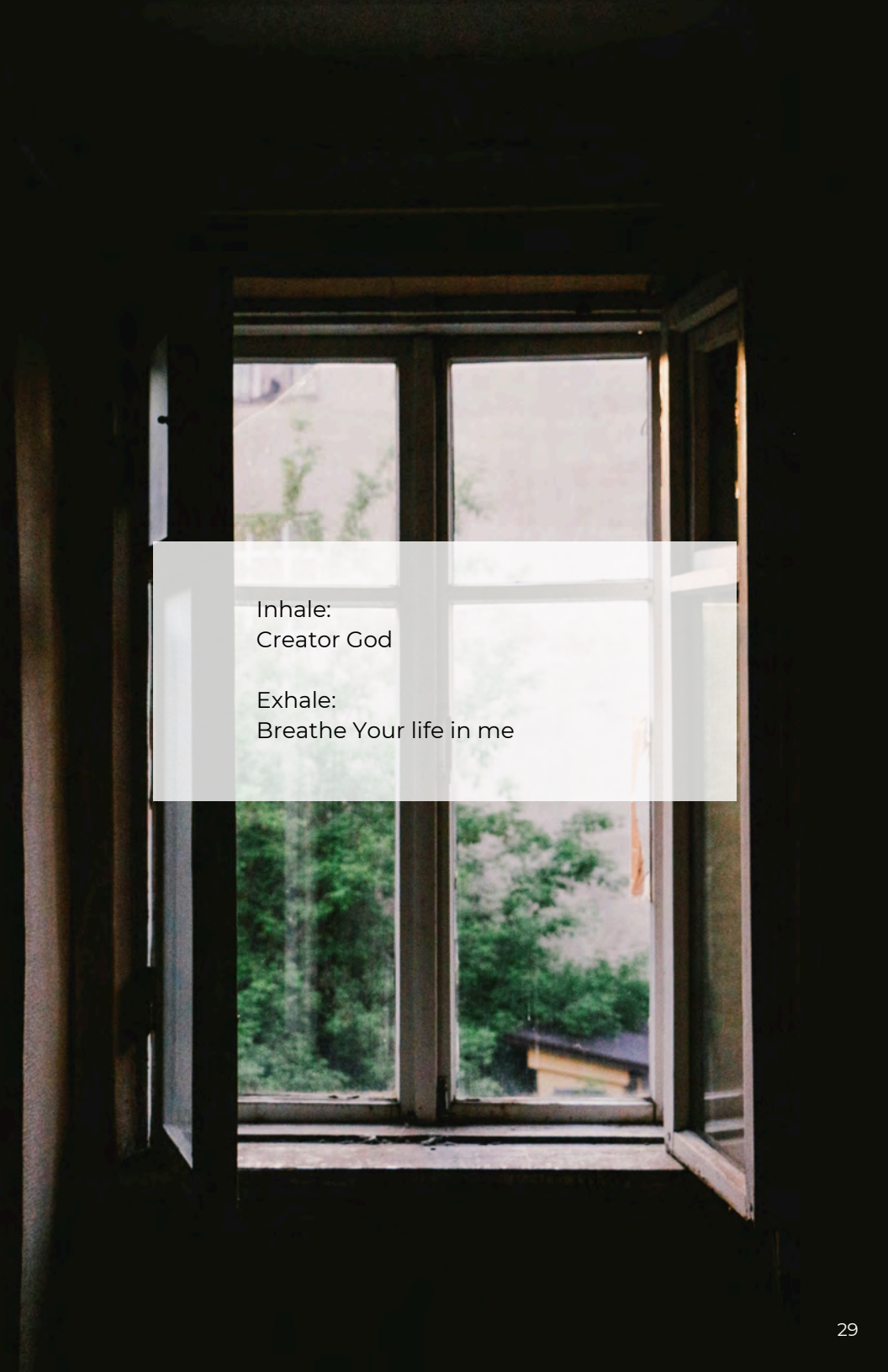
*This is the work of God in us, through us, and for us.
The Kingdom is here, in our midst.*

Amen.

A photograph of a window with a dark wooden frame, slightly ajar, looking out onto a misty, green landscape. The window is set within a larger frame of dark wood or metal. The view outside is hazy, with lush green trees and foliage visible in the foreground and middle ground, and a soft, white mist or fog filling the background. The lighting is soft and diffused, suggesting an overcast day or early morning/late afternoon. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing text.

Inhale:
Open my eyes to see You in my neighbor

Exhale:
Open my ears to hear Your heartbeat for them



Inhale:
Creator God

Exhale:
Breathe Your life in me