



Creation Meditations

Elisabeth Jones, Darryl Macdonald, Martha Randy

Creation Meditations

Introduction	6
Acknowledgements	8
Meditations for Daytime	9
Air	10
Clothing	12
Creatures	14
Food	16
Garden	18
Light	20
Morning Coffee	22
People	24
Plants	26
Soil	28
Stones	30
Trees	32
Water	34
Meditations for Evening	37
Air	38
Clothing	40
Creatures	42
Evening Among The Weeds	44

Evening Tea	46
Food	48
Light	50
People	52
Plants	54
Soil	56
Stones	58
Trees	60
Water	62
Meditations for Any Time	65
Practising Gratitude	66
Anytime Meditations	68
About the Authors	72

Introduction

Nature is an integral part of the Sacred Story of the Judeo-Christian tradition to which we (the authors) belong. The Bible begins (in Genesis) with a spectacular and beautiful poem celebrating God's act of creating the universe, and ends (in Revelation) with a vision of a beautiful garden through which the river of life flows. God is often imagined as a component of creation/nature: a tree, fire, earthquake, a breeze or whirlwind, a mountain, water, a mother hen, a dove, and so on, to name a few. In the biblical creation narratives, the name for the human being, "Adam," means "earthling;" we are created from the dust of the earth. Modern science now tells us this is so: we are atomically identical to the matter of both Earth, and the stars!

Most of the world's religious traditions share a common wisdom: that our human life is healthier – physically, emotionally and spiritually, and ethically – when we engage in a daily spiritual practice of prayer or meditation. Our own scriptures are filled with examples of individuals and communities engaging in daily prayer in their homes, and in quiet places in nature, alongside the festivals that punctuate the year. However, it is a sad truth that many today find it difficult to make this into a daily practice. "Spirituality" has been reduced, for some, to the Sunday hour of public worship, and many more have never learned how to develop a "home-based" practice of daily prayer. This book aims to help with that!

The meditations that follow are designed to help you create small moments to worship God in the garden, or by a lake, or during a walk. We hope they will become a resource you can use to develop your own daily prayer routine. We've created meditations for morning and evening, because we have found that "bracketing" our day with moments of mindfulness and attention, and prayer has helped us to feel grounded in God's presence throughout our day and our week. They are short. It's possible to spend as little as 5 minutes on each meditation – but it's also possible you'll want to spend longer!

You'll also see that we've focussed these meditations on elements within the natural world around us, rather than using a calendar, or the days of the week. (This removes the shame of "missing a day" that a calendar approach often engenders!). This also means you can choose any one for any day, depending on where you are. (It's easier to do the water meditations if there's actually a body of natural water nearby!) We've discovered that by focussing on these tangible objects found in nature, it has taught us to follow Mary Oliver's advice to "pay attention, be astonished" and to become more literally "grounded" as one of God's many, beloved creatures, within a community of Creation.

Another feature of the electronic version of this book is the inclusion of musical suggestions. We've shared enough information for you to be able to find the music on various streaming platforms (some of which are free), or even in your own library. You'll notice that the range of musical suggestions is wide, reflecting the often quite different musical tastes of the contributors to this book! Bringing music into the meditative practice is often a game-changer for people who've "tried and failed" to meditate before, so give it a try, and allow yourself to try new moods of music, as suggested, or add your own choices.

Taking time to reflect and meditate is foreign to many of us, and we can often feel that we are no good at it. So, start simple! On your first day, simply take five minutes to do one of the meditations. You can add time when you feel ready. Here's a simple process:

- In the first minute, light your candle and read the Prayer.
- Focus on your breathing for another minute (about 14 -18 slow breaths).
- Read the Daily Reflection (that takes about 3 minutes to read, and ponder).
- If you're going to use music, turn it on now, and use the book to write (or draw) your feelings. (Note: try to go with the gut, not the head, if you can.)
- If you need to move or walk, do so.
- Close your time (the last 30 seconds) by reading (and praying) the Closing Prayer.

Try to use one meditation a day (a “daytime” or “evening,” or one of the “anytime” meditations). You may find as you go along, you want to add another time of meditation to your day. On busy days, it’s better to include a short time of prayerful meditation, than to skip altogether, so we’ve deliberately kept them brief enough to do in 5 minutes, but deep enough to take more time if you wish.

It's our hope and prayer that you will find moments in your summer to try this beautiful, healthy practice of paying prayerful attention to God’s goodness and love hidden in plain sight in the natural world that nurtures us, and that, in your astonishment, you will find joy and peace.

Elisabeth, Darryl, Martha

Acknowledgements

All scripture readings come from The New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition, Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

The music suggestions are simply that: suggestions. Feel free to use your own playlist or find inspiration pieces on your favourite streaming service.

All photographs were taken by the authors.

Meditations
for
Daytime

Air

Centring Prayer

Holy Spirit of Freedom, you are my breath.
Sacred Wind of Promise, you are my being.
Numinous Breeze of Life, you are the wind beneath my wings.
*Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.
Take as much time as you need.*

Reading

And when I was born, I began to breathe the common air and fell upon
the kindred earth; my first sound was a cry, as is true of all.
Wisdom of Solomon 7.3

Meditation

Breathe in and out normally.
Close your eyes and observe your breath.
Open your eyes and observe your breath.
Keep a soft focus.
Observe how your body responds to your breath.
Reread the quote above in the rhythm of your breath.

Closing Prayer

Holy One, you are in the air I breathe;
you are in the pause between each breath.
You are my speech, you are my song,
you are my silence.
Release me to experience you in your world this day.



Music Suggestions

Quiet Place *Stanton Lanier*

Breathe In *Peter Mayer*

Morning Song *Joy Harjo*

Clothing

Centring Prayer

Arise, my flesh, and feel the morning waking on my soul and body.

Arise, my eyes, my hope, to the dawn, and to the day.

Arise, my skin, to the touch of clean clothes,
the folds of fabric, the colours that echo creation.

Arise to the purpose of this day.

Clothe my body to meet and greet both neighbour and stranger.

Arise, be clothed with cloth, and with the love of God.

Reading

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. And consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these." *Luke 12.22-27*

Meditation

What did you choose to wear today? Why?

Is there purpose for your clothing?

Is there comfort in the clothes you choose?

What about the texture or colour gives you comfort or joy?

What will you do when this clothing wears out?

Will you re-make it into something useful? Gift it to another?

How does clothing shape your mood as you move through your day?

Closing Prayer

Clothe my soul with your encircling Spirit, Loving God.

Clothe my mind with the remembrance of
your holy purpose for my life,

Clothe my body with the actions of the Gospel:
caring, creating, seeking, finding, rejoicing, loving.

And clothe my heart in love for you, me, and all.



Music Suggestions

Morning Sarah Jarosz

Morning Color Paper Planes

Creatures

Centring Prayer

Dogs are loyal, Cats are intelligent,
Elephants remember, Whales sing, Eagles soar,
Bees, Butterflies and Humming Birds pollinate,
Cattle, Sheep and Goats graze.

The whole earth is filled with creatures:
our siblings and companions.

God calls us to love and respect them.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind."

And it was so. *Genesis 1.24*

Meditation

If you have pets, spend time with them;
dogs and cats love to play.

What can you learn from your animal companions?

How does God speak to you through them?

Observe birds at the feeder or in flight wherever you are.

Go to a park and see how many different insects are around you.

Closing Prayer

God, you have filled the earth with creatures of every kind.

Help me protect them, nurture them and respect them
with the love and freedom they need and deserve.

Help me recognize myself in them.



Music Suggestions

Wondering Where The Lions Are *Bruce Cockburn*

Blackbird *The Beatles*

Everything Reminds Me Of My Dog *Jane Siberry*

I Was a Bird *Mary Chapin Carpenter*

Food

Centring Prayer

Nourishing Host of the Great Feast of Heaven,
you provide me with all I need to sustain my life.
The abundance of food on the earth inspires me
to let go of innate fears and insecurities
and enjoy the sumptuous feast you lay before me.
*Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.
Take as much time as you need.*

Reading

God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon
the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall
have them for food."

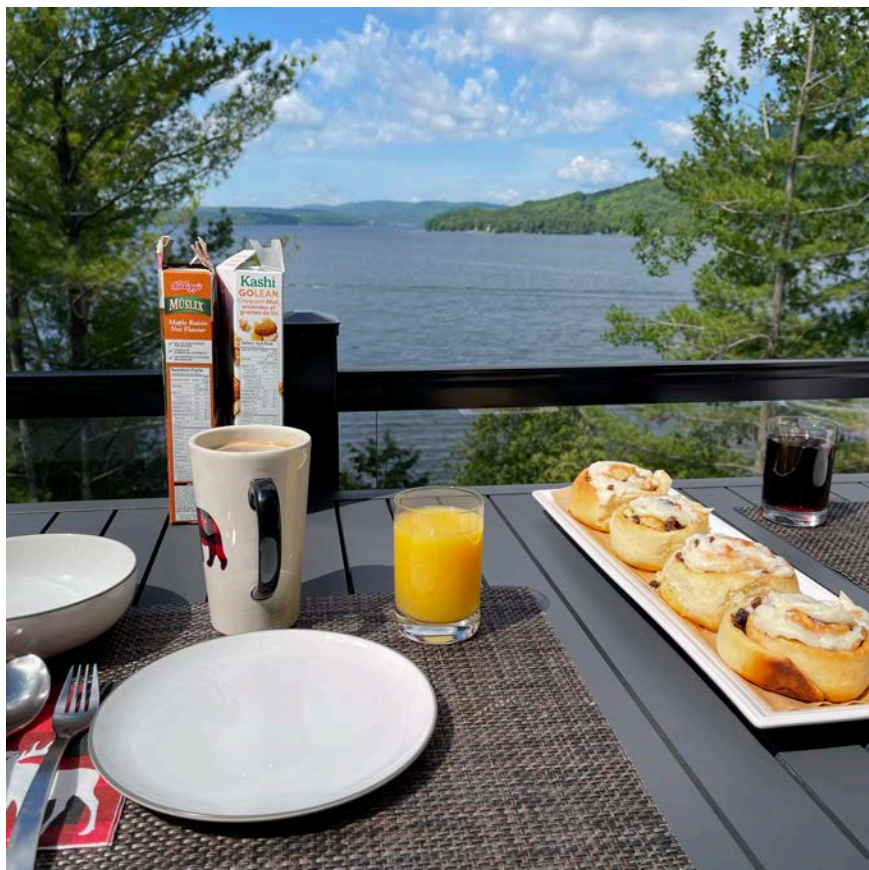
Genesis 1.29

Meditation

Give thanks for the food you eat.
Find out where it came from.
Learn of its nutritional value.
Give yourself permission to savour your food.
How does this make you feel?

Closing Prayer

With the food I need for the day, feed me.
With the wisdom I need for the day, nourish me.
With the spirit I need for the day, fill me
and make me whole.



Music Suggestions

Grace *U2*

Feed The Birds (Tuppence A Bag) *Julie Andrews*

Room at the Table *Carrie Newcomer*

For Everyone Born (A Place at the Table) *Shirley Erena Murray*

Garden

Centring Prayer

Creator, I noticed a dead flower this morning.
She was spent, her once-white petals carpeting the soil,
browned and wrinkled, and in no way pretty any more.
Hold me in this second of sadness,
and teach me the ways of life, and death, of purpose and of love.

Reading

You turn us back to dust, and say, "Turn back, you mortals."
...like grass that is renewed in the morning; in the morning it flourishes
and is renewed; in the evening it faces and withers.

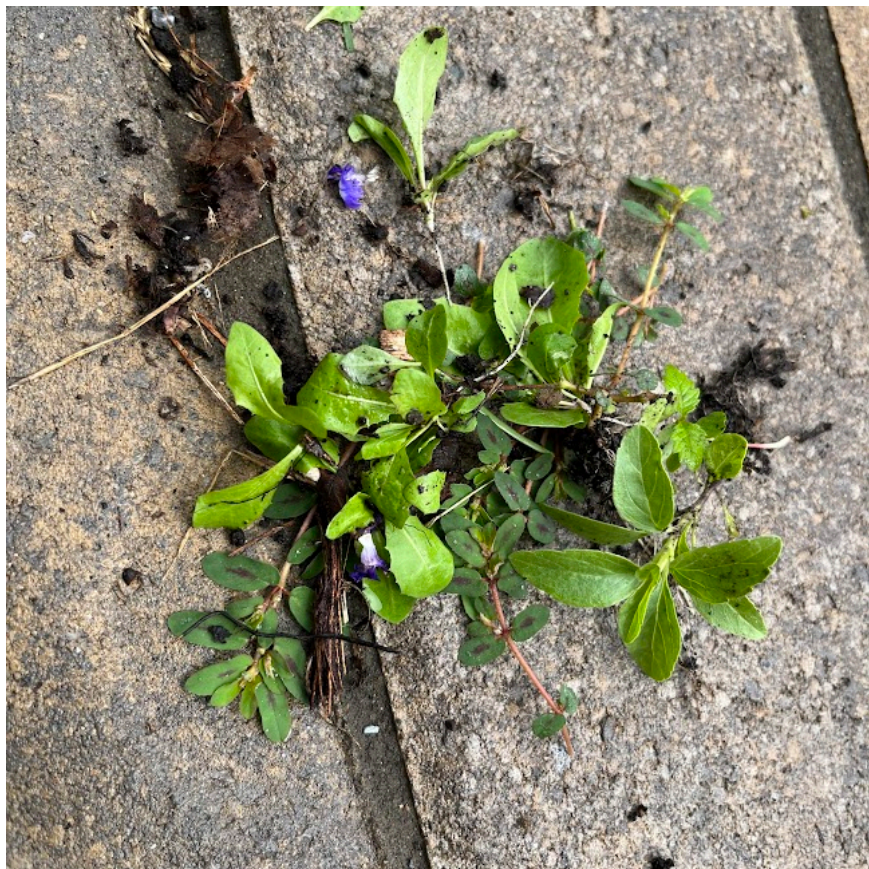
Psalm 90.3, 5-6

Meditation

Find a dead bloom in your garden, or anywhere, and sit near it, or with it.
Look at this flower, and notice how it holds its colour (or not).
Does its scent linger? Or has it gone?
Are there signs of seeds? Or is it completely spent?
What do you want to do with it?
How do you feel, looking at nature's decay?
Is there sadness or longing, or gratitude, or regret?
How will you value the life that is done in this dead flower?

Closing Prayer

Life at the Heart of all living,
let this flower teach me to value the shortness of life,
and its fullness and completeness.
I give you today, a promise to bloom and to delight, and be delighted, at
life's beauty, and its brevity.



Music Suggestions

Leaves Don't Drop *Carrie Newcomer*

Gardening *Benjamin Wallfisch*

Light

Centring Prayer

Light a candle and place it in a safe place.

I light a light in the company of the Creator of life;
in the friendship of the Light of life;
in the presence of the Fire of life.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has
risen upon you. *Isaiah 60.1*

Meditation

Observe your candle,
how it moves and dances, its colours,
how it affects what is around it.

How is this like God?

Observe the light of the day,
how it changes as the sun journeys across the sky;
notice the shadows and how they change.

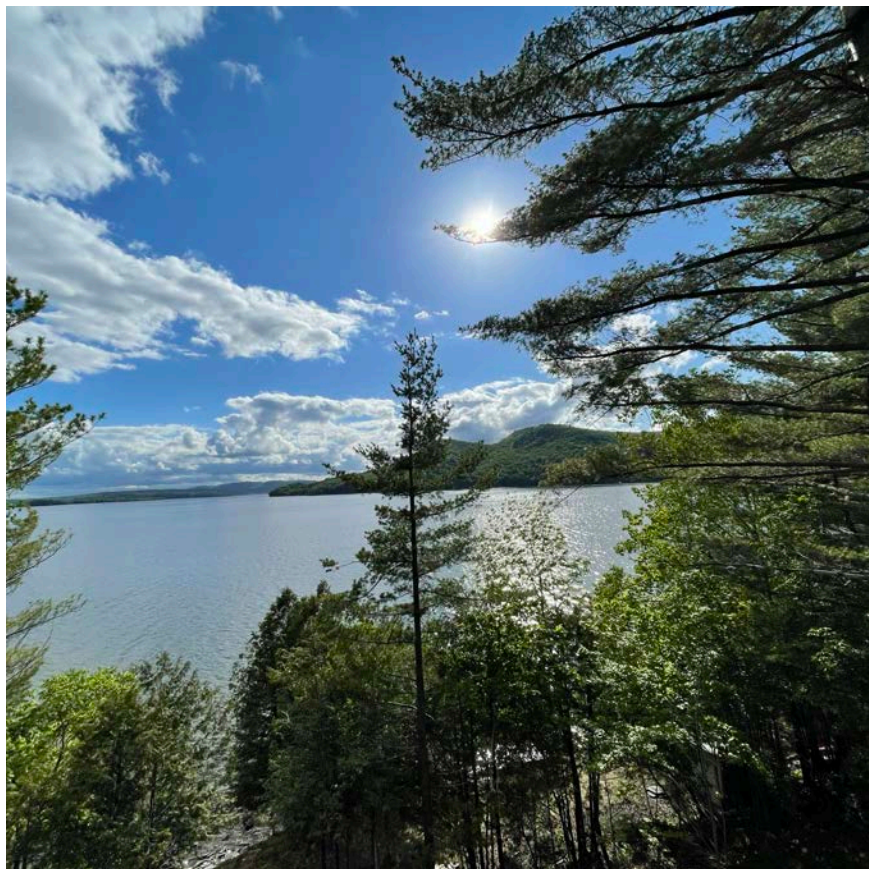
Reread the Isaiah quote.

What does “glory” mean to you?

Close your eyes and, as you breathe, imagine light surrounding you and
emanating from you.

Closing Prayer

O Sun behind all suns, who pours out the morning light
from open palms of compassion and hope,
fill me with your light, guide me on your way,
that I may be a reflection of you.



Music Suggestions

Here Comes the Sun *The Beatles*

Sunshine On My Shoulders *John Denver*

Cloudy *Simon & Garfunkel*

Sunday Sunrise *Anne Murray*

Morning Coffee

Centring Prayer

Brew your coffee.

Cup of Creation flowing through me and around me,
filling my senses with your sacred goodness,
I am warmed by your love, I am awakened to your presence.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

You prepare a table before me... you anoint (me);
my cup overflows. *Psalm 23.5*

Meditation

Hold your mug of coffee and close your eyes. Smell its aroma.

How does this make you feel?

Pour out a bit into the ground before you drink.

Give thanks to the Creator.

Take your first sip.

Savour the flavour.

How does this moment feel?

Closing Prayer

Flavour of Sacred Goodness, as I begin my day,
help me to be aware of the life that is around me,
help me to enjoy the tasks that are before me,
help me to respect the moments of Sabbath
that are gifted to me,
that I may be a flavour in your Creation.



Music Suggestions

You're The Cream In My Coffee *Nat King Cole*

Coffee Cantata *Johann Sebastian Bach*

Black Coffee *Ella Fitzgerald (or K.D. Lang)*

Beauty in the Mundane *Bird of Fig*

People

Centring Prayer

My eyes open to colour and light, God's face.
My ears open to music and silence, God's voice.
My nose opens to the scents of creation, God's fragrance.
My hands open to hold, my arms open to embrace.
My feet connect to the sacred ground beneath me
and the life within me.
*Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.
Take as much time as you need.*

Reading

I will be your God, and you shall be my people. *Leviticus 26.12*

Meditation

Are you open to what you may learn about yourself today?
How will you connect with God?
What might keep you from connecting with God?
Breathe in "I am"; breathe out "sacred."
Go to a public place and people watch.
(Be discrete and no judgements)

Closing Prayer

My heart is open to the possibility of love.
My mind is open to the possibility of creativity.
My body is open to experience the abundance of life.



Music Suggestions

Beautiful *Gordon Lightfoot*

A Case Of You *Joni Mitchell*

Everything You Knew As A Child *Jane Siberry*

Plants

Centring Prayer

Creative Designer, you dress the fields with wild flowers,
your rainbow of fragrance sweetens the breeze
and lightens the heart.

You care for the lilies and you care for me.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And

it was so. *Genesis 1.11*

Meditation

Spend some time with plants:
flowers, herbs, weeds, grasses.

Observe the character of the plants you see.

What draws you to certain plants?

Can you see the sacred in all plants?

Reread the Genesis quote; reflect on your relationship with plants.

Closing Prayer

Awesome Weaver of the tapestry of life,
you have grown a variety of living beings from the soil
and adorned them with colour, texture, fragrance, size.
Help me, like them, to be a reflection of your Creation.



Music Suggestions

Bound By The Beauty *Jane Siberry*

Wildflowers *Stanton Lanier*

Pointing at the Sun *Cheryl Wheeler*

Soil

Centring Prayer

Grounding Provider, plant my feet on firm ground.

Nurturing Protector, till the soil of my soul.

Supporting Spirit, enrich me on my way.

Creator God, Sacred Humus, Holy Ground of Being,
accompany me this day.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold. *Mark 4.8*

Meditation

Dig in the ground with your hands;
feel the texture, the humidity; notice the colours, the smell.

Become aware of the nutrients that come from soil
to make you who you are.

Reread the quote from Mark.

What in you is “good soil”?

Closing Prayer

As the Spirit nurtures the earth
so the Spirit nurtures me.

Holy One, you are in earth, soil and sand.

Help me to be in step with you and your world.



Music Suggestions

Earth's Unfolding Cords *Daniel Otsuka*

Dance Of The Earth *Sacred Earth*

Oh Earth *The Brilliance*

Turn Me Earth *Peter Mayer*

Stones

Centring Prayer

Hold a stone in your hand.

Grounding Provider, guide my feet on solid rock.

Nurturing Protector, smooth the rough places of my soul.

Supporting Spirit, roll away the stone of my despairing.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

Like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house.

1 Peter 2.5

Meditation

What I hold in my hand is older than me,
as old as the earth, the sea, the sky,
but younger than the Eternal Sacred Presence.

What I hold in my hand is a part of me,
part of the land in which I dwell,
part of the life through which I walk,
part of the sacred, eternal cycle
of living and dying and rising again.

Meditate on the stone you are holding; feel its size, its weight, its shape.

What is your relationship with this stone?

Closing Prayer

Holy One, you are in the ground beneath my feet;

you are in the solid rock and rich loam;

you are in earth, soil and sand.

Help me to see you in me,

that I may be in step with you and your world.



Music Suggestions

Shadows *Gordon Lightfoot*

Both Sides Now *Joni Mitchell*

Anthem *Leonard Cohen*

Stones in the River *Carrie Newcomer*

Trees

Centring Prayer

Root of Being, you nurture my soul.
Sacred Sap that flows, you give me life.
Sheltering Branch of protection, in you I find a home.
*Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.
Take as much time as you need.*

Reading

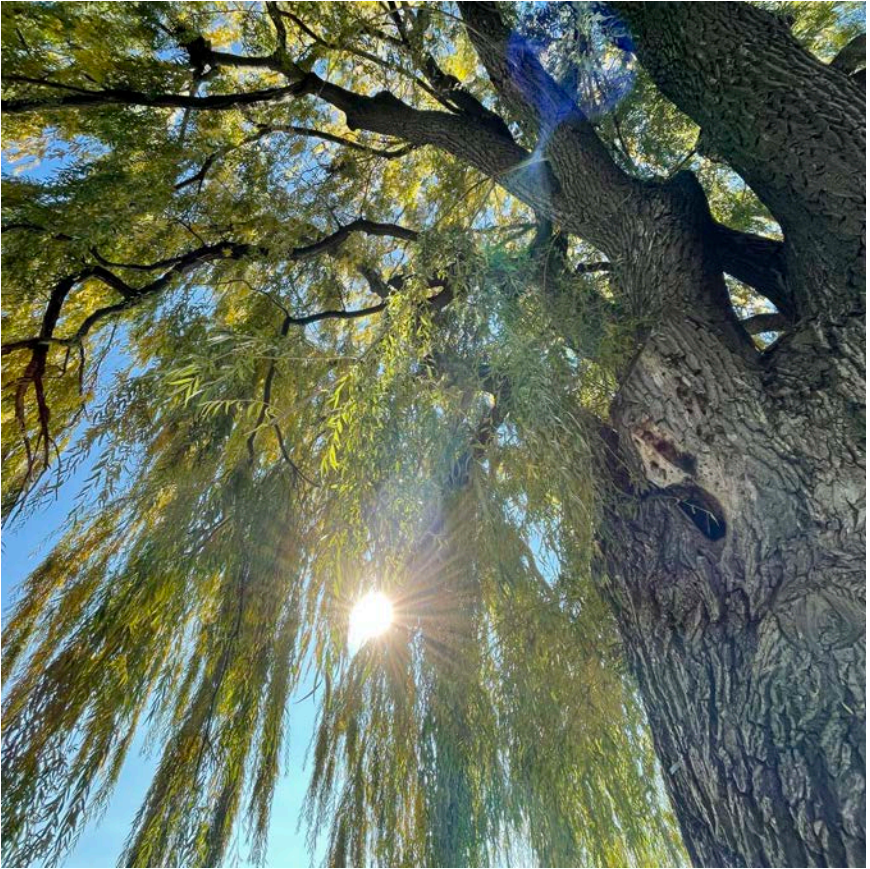
For you shall go out in joy and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. *Isaiah 55.12*

Meditation

Trees are the longest living organisms on the earth.
Different parts of a tree grow at different times throughout the year.
Think of the different types of trees you know.
What do they look like? What do they feel like?
What is your relationship to them?
What is it like to witness the trees clapping their hands?
Spend some time with trees. Notice the differences. Can you hear them?

Closing Prayer

As roots run deep in forest soil,
as sap flows through sturdy limbs
as leaves unfold to breathe and shelter,
so may I stand in the presence of the Sacred One.



Music Suggestions

If A Tree Falls *Bruce Cockburn*

Grey and Green *Cheryl Wheeler*

Beauty of the World *Peter Mayer*

How Love Blows Through the Trees *Joy Harjo*

Water

Centring Prayer

I join with the ebb and flow.
Living water wells up within me
and I am carried on the currents of promise and presence.
The Wellspring of life fills me to overflowing.
*Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.
Take as much time as you need.*

Reading

The words of the mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a gushing stream. *Proverbs 8.14*

Meditation

Water your plants, garden; swim or sit by moving water.
Take a drink of water.
Reflect on the following:
Water is sacred.
Streams and rivers shape the land and oceans cleanse the soul.
All water is holy.
The water cycle and the life cycle are one.
I am mostly water.
Water creates a new path over time to get where it needs to go.
Human nature is like water; it takes on the shape of its container.
What is my relationship with water?

Closing Prayer

Holy Spirit, move within me
as you move over the waters of creation.
Bathe me in the ebb and flow of the Creator's wisdom.
Baptize me with your love this day that I may be fully alive.



Music Suggestions

Rainy Day People *Gordon Lightfoot*

Rivers Run Deep *Jean-Claude Besimon & Stevan Pasero*

Waves Of The Sea *Sacred Earth*

Bridge Over Troubled Water *Simon and Garfunkel*

Meditations
for
Evening

Air

Centring Prayer

I lay myself down in the soft evening breeze.

I lay myself down in the breath of being.

I lay myself down currents of God's love.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; round and round goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. *Ecclesiastes 1.6*

Meditation

Breathe in and out normally.

Close your eyes and observe your breath.

Open your eyes and observe your breath.

Keep a soft focus.

Observe how your body responds to your breath.

Reread the quote above in the rhythm of your breath.

Closing Prayer

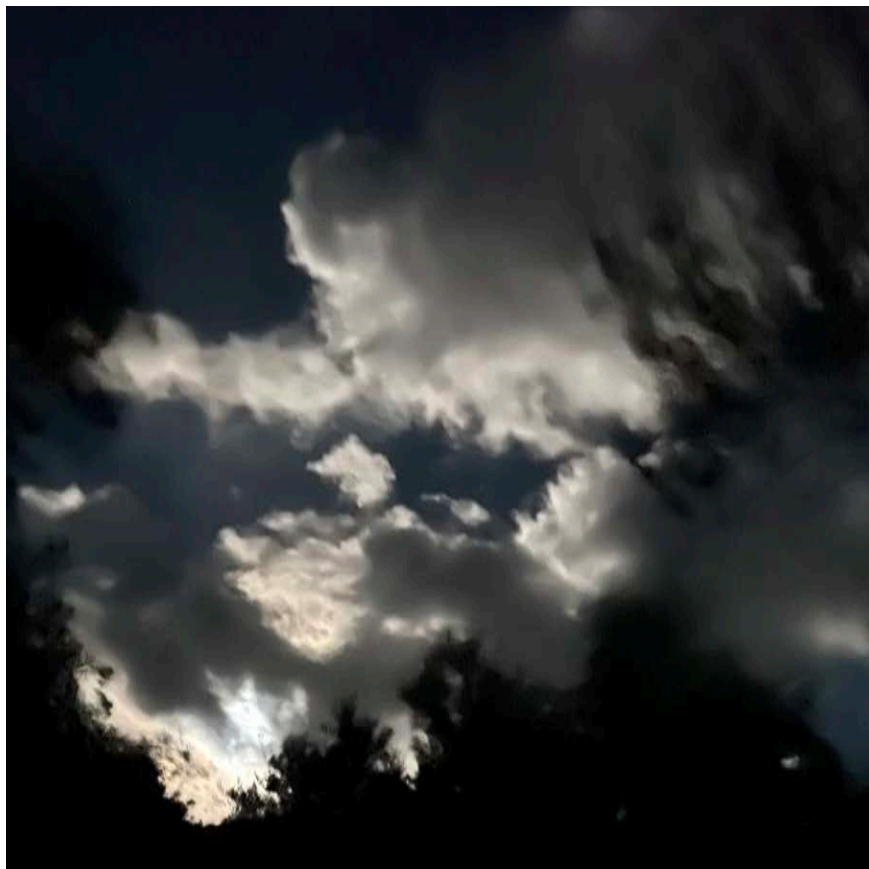
Holy One, as this day is ending,

I acknowledge you in every breath I breathed.

I celebrate your song in the chorus of creation all around me.

That song continues as a lullaby guiding me to dream;

each breath a sacred prayer.



Music Suggestions

Breathe *Stanton Lanier*

Breathing Space *Sacred Earth*

Breathe in, Breathe Out *Carrie Newcomer*

The Air that I Breathe *Olivia Newton-John*

Clothing

Centring Prayer

The day is done, the deeds, the work, the play.
I take these day-worn clothes, one by one, and lay them down,
thanking each for their part in creating this day of blessing
for me, for others, and for the making more real God's Dream
for heaven on earth.

Reading

God will not let your feet stumble;
God who keeps you will not slumber.
The Holy One is your keeper: your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.
Psalm 121.3, 5-6

Meditation

As you lay down each piece of your clothing,
recall the events of your day,
reflect on God's guiding presence,
recall God's shade and protection at the height of the day,
anticipate God's enfolding safety as you clothe yourself for the night.
Linger as long as you can in God's embrace.

Closing Prayer

As with these clothes, dear Parent God, so with my life:
Let us launder together all that is grubby from the living of this day.
Let us fold all that is complete.
Let us mend what is torn, and smoothe what is wrinkled.
And may I rest in your safety, and rise to a new day,
of hope, and promise, and love.



Music Suggestions

Sanctuary *Carrie Newcomer*

When Evening Falls *Enya*

Still Mind Still *Peter Katz*

Creatures

Centring Prayer

Many creatures roam at night:
the Owl, the Bat, Racoons and Foxes,
the Firefly, the Cricket, the Bobcat and Beaver.

As my day ends and theirs begins,
I am mindful of the eternal presence of God
in all times and beings.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them
all; the earth is full of your creatures. *Psalm 104.24*

Meditation

What animals come out at night around your dwelling?

Are you a "night owl"? How does this affect your life experience?

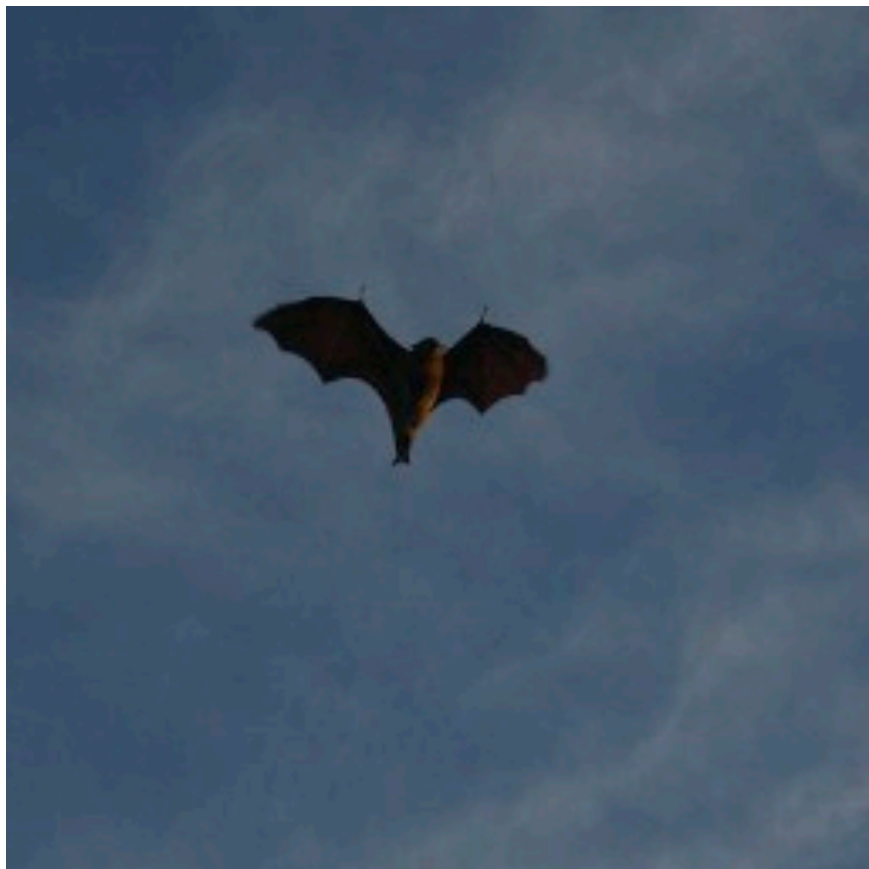
Are you frightened of night creatures?

What can you do to nurture the life of night creatures?

Closing Prayer

God of the darkened skies and nocturnal movements,
you bless the night with life in abundance.

As I rest and dream, your night creatures are tending the earth.
Protect them, nurture them and bless them, O Holy Trinity of Love.



Music Suggestions

A Thousand Beautiful Things *Annie Lennox*

A Thousand Years *Christina Perri*

Stay *Rihanna*

Heal *Tom Odell*

Evening Among The Weeds

Centring Prayer

If in your garden, get close to the weeds.

Am I in the wrong place, too, Gardener God?

Will I be plucked and put aside so that others can grow in my place?

Centre me deep into the blessed necessity of these
nourishing creatures, even if they teach me
my life is less heroic than I might have imagined it to be.

Reading

When they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him, and they raised their voices and wept aloud; they tore their robes and threw dust in the air upon their heads. They sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great. *Job 2.12-13*

Meditation

Spend time with the weeds, or the pile of plucked weeds,
or the compost that is made with them.

What do you notice about them?

Do you wonder why we consider them to be weeds?

What do they teach you about persistence or resilience, or surrender?

What feelings are provoked? (Frustration, sadness, pragmatic
surrender? Gratitude?) Imagine their future -- is there new life?

New purpose? What about you?

Closing Prayer

Let me sit awhile with these once-living beings, Life-Giver.

Let me cherish their complexity, their tenacity,
and consider the mystery – to me – of their purpose.

So that, Life-Maker, I can value the tangled
messiness of my own being, and know that nothing,

not me, not the weeds,
is ever useless in this web of beauty we call life.



Music Suggestions

Look Up *Joy Oladokun*

Holy As A Day Is Spent *Carrie Newcomer*

Wheat and Tares *The Windtalkers*

Evening Tea

Centring Prayer

Brew some tea and sit.

As I hug my mug, breathe in this tea's aroma,
relax my body into this chair,
so my soul finds rest in you,
Grace, Life, DaySpring, Night-Protector, God.
Soothe me into this moment of
communion, connection, reflection.

Reading

O taste and see that the Holy One is good;
happy are those who take refuge in God. *Psalm 34.8*

Meditation

Hug your mug, close your eyes,
breathe in the scent of your tea,
savour the taste on your tongue,
feel the warmth on your fingers.
As you notice the tea with your senses,
recall moments in your day.
What was warm, comforting,
what was bright, or delicious,
what filled your heart with warmth,
for what do you feel gratitude?

Closing Prayer

As I drink deep of the day, relish its joys,
settle from its busyness, and relinquish its worries and cares
into your waiting, healing, soothing heart,
good God, guard my rest
so that I may wake renewed when morning dawns.



Music Suggestions

Bird In The Thyme *Tiny Ruins*

Rest *Leif Vollebeck*

Till We Have Faces *Heath McNease*

Food

Centring Prayer

Nourishing Host of the Great Feast of Heaven,
you provide me with all I need to sustain my life.
The abundance of food on the earth inspires me
to let go of innate fears and insecurities
and enjoy the sumptuous feast you lay before me.
*Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.
Take as much time as you need.*

Reading

Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that I need. *Proverbs 30.8*

Meditation

Give thanks for the food you eat.
Find out where it came from.
Learn of its nutritional value.
Give yourself permission to savour your food.
How does this make you feel?

Closing Prayer

You have filled me to overflowing.
There is nothing else that I need.
All is provided and I am satisfied.



Music Suggestions

Give Me Love *George Harrison*

Secret O' Life *James Taylor*

Let It Be Me *Ray LaMontagne*

Bountiful *Peter Mayer*

Light

Centring Prayer

Light a candle and place it in a safe place.

I light a light in the lengthening of shadows;

in the comfort of the moonlight;

in the embrace of the Comforter of life.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

Even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you. *Psalm 139.12*

Meditation

Observe the night sky;

what can you see?

How does the evening make you feel?

Can you see any stars?

Notice your street or yard;

what changes from day to night?

Where do you find God in the night?

Reread the Psalm quote.

Find a comfortable lying position, close your eyes and let the darkness embrace you. Breathe slowly and deeply.

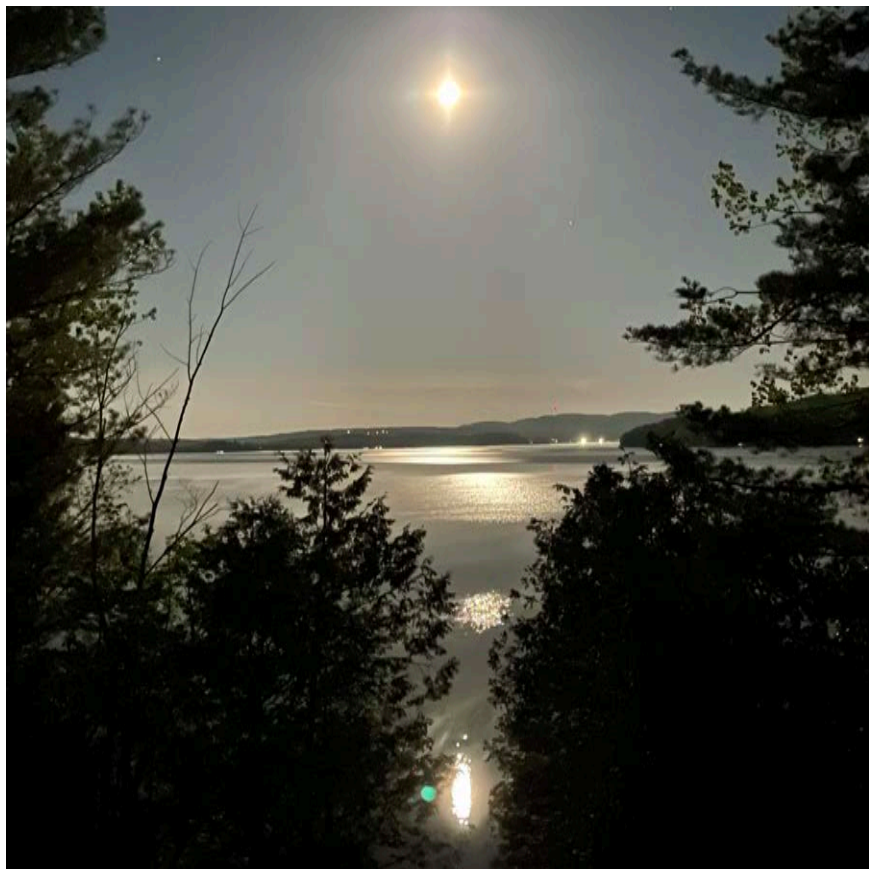
Closing Prayer

Moon Burnisher,

you soften the evening air gently embracing the earth in its slumber.

Be in the slowing of heartbeat and breath,

pillow of rest and weaver of my dreaming.



Music Suggestions

Dreams In The Night *Stanton Lanier*

Trip the Light *Gary Shyman/Alicia Lemke*

Every Little Bit Of It *Carrie Newcomer*

I Hope You Dance *LeeAnn Womack*

People

Centring Prayer

My eyes adjust to darkening skies, God's face.

My ears hear the evening song of creation, God's voice.

My nose inhales the scents of the evening breeze, God's fragrance.

My hands relax from their work, my feet, from their journeying,
and God lays down with me in my resting.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, Earth itself."

Genesis 1.26

Meditation

What did you learn about yourself today?

How did you connect with God?

What kept you from connecting with God?

Breathe in "I am"; breathe out "the image of God."

Closing Prayer

My body is open to rest and healing.

My mind is open to peace and dreaming.

My heart is open to the presence of the sacred
within and all around me.



Music Suggestions

Abide *Carrie Newcomer*

Into the Night *Peter Mayer/Brendan Mayer*

Night *Ola Gjeilo*

Primitive *Annie Lennox*

Plants

Centring Prayer

As shadows deepen the petals of the roses,
and moonlight drapes the dappled leaves,
I open my heart to hear the wisdom of the plants this evening,
for they sing of the beauty of God.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

Ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you. *Job 12.8*

Meditation

Meditate on the following:

The strawberry is the heart berry.

Plants talk to each other and recognize their siblings.

Plants react to sound and sense gravity.

Plants know their season.

The head of a sunflower is composed of hundreds of tiny flowers.

The smell of freshly-mown grass is actually a plant distress call.

It has been estimated that 64% of the world's plant species are endangered.

Closing Prayer

Blossoms close as night brings sleep.

The flowers of the field doze; the herbs, still fragrant, rest.

God, help me to learn from the plants in abundance around me.

Deepen my rest and my dreaming.



Music Suggestions

Everything's Beautiful (In Its Own Way) *Dolly Parton & Willie Nelson*

Night Star *Alexis Ffrench*

Through the Woods *Yasmin Williams*

Soil

Centring Prayer

Grounding One, lay me down in soft ground.

Nurturing One, bury me in the soil of my soul.

Supporting One, embrace me in the earth.

Creator God, Sacred Humus, Holy Ground of Being,
weave me into the fabric of creation.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

Those who cultivate the soil heap up their harvest, and those who please the great atone for injustice. *Sirach 20.28*

Meditation

Reflect on any of the following:

Soil is alive.

1 tablespoon of soil has more organisms in it
than there are people on earth.

Soil can die.

It takes up to 1000 years to form 1 centimetre of soil.
From the earth you came, to the earth you shall return.

Closing Prayer

As the Spirit breathed life into the humus
so the Spirit breathes life into me.

Holy One, you are in earth, soil and sand.

Lay me down in you and enrich the soil of my soul.



Music Suggestions

The Valley *K. D. Lang*

Sacred Ground *Sacred Earth*

Ancient Mother *Sacred Earth*

A Shovel Is A Prayer *Carrie Newcomer*

Stones

Centring Prayer

Hold a stone in your hand.

Grounding One, lay me down on firm rock.

Nurturing One, find me as a standing stone pointing to life.

Supporting One, be my foundation.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

Jacob came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. *Genesis 28.11*

Meditation

What I hold in my hand is part of the foundation of the earth;
it has known the forces that shaped it,
it has survived wind and water, heat and freezing.

What I hold in my hand is a part of me;
part of the land in which I dwell,
part of the life through which I walk,
part of the sacred, eternal cycle
of living and dying and rising again.

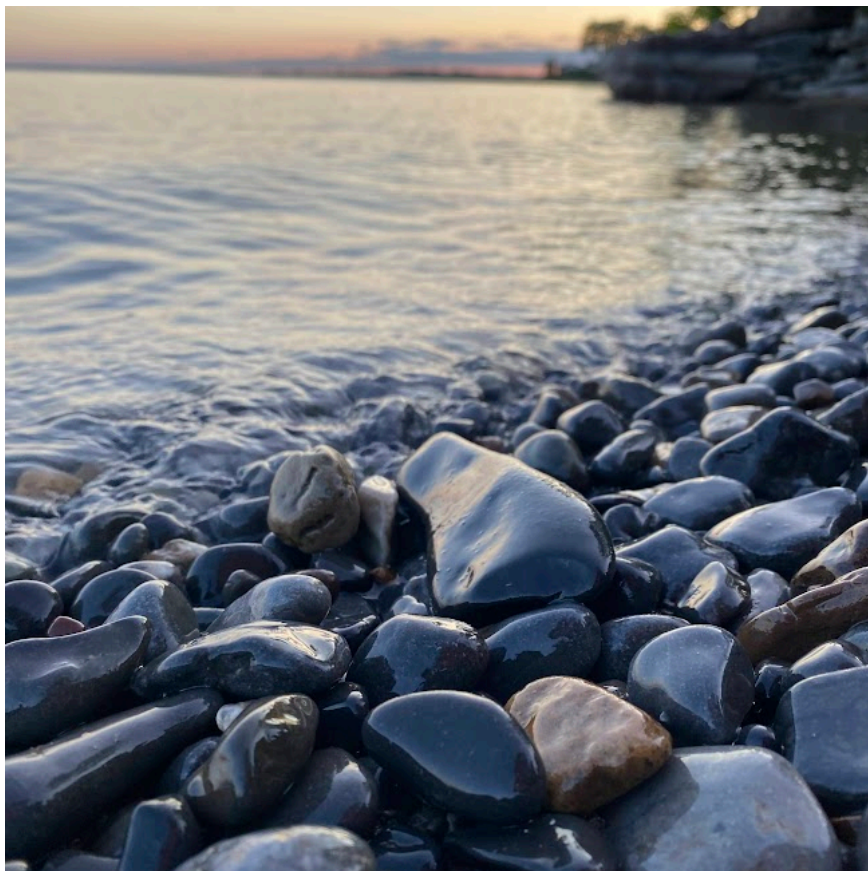
Meditate on the stone you are holding; feel its size, its weight, its shape.

What is your relationship with this stone?

Closing Prayer

Dream Weaver, you are in the setting of the sun;
you are in the soft glow of moonlight and the twinkling of stars;
you are in heartbeat and breath, pillow and slumber.

Deepen my rest and my dreaming.



Music Suggestions

Blessings *Hollow Covers*

Just Be *The Brilliance*

Follow the Sun *Xavier Rudd*

Trees

Centring Prayer

Lengthening shadows of canopied wonder,
sentinels that whisper through leaf voiced breezes,
wise spirits stand in creation's choir formation.
The trees are singing to God a hymn of evening promise.

My heart is open to this song.

Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.

Take as much time as you need.

Reading

Let the field exult and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy. *Psalm 96.12*

Meditation

Notice the trees at night.

Trees can help reduce stress.

Trees block noise by reducing sound waves.

What can you see with your eyes?

What can you see with your inner vision?

What does a tree's voice sound like?

Closing Prayer

Bless me with the strength of the oak.

Bend me with the suppleness of the pine.

Infuse me with the fragrance of the cedar.

Inspire me to be rooted in your love this night.



Music Suggestions

Hide And Seek *Imogen Heap*

Deep Rest *Mary & Richard Maddux*

Guardian *Hamish Lang*

The Tree Of Life-Lacrimosa *Zbigniew Preisner*

Water

Centring Prayer

Ocean Depth of Happiness, I meditate on you.
Droplet of mist, suspend me in your dreaming.
River of Life, you flow through me and I flow through you.
*Be still and aware of the Sacred within and all around you.
Take as much time as you need.*

Reading

Just as water reflects the face, so one human heart reflects another.
Proverbs 27.19

Meditation

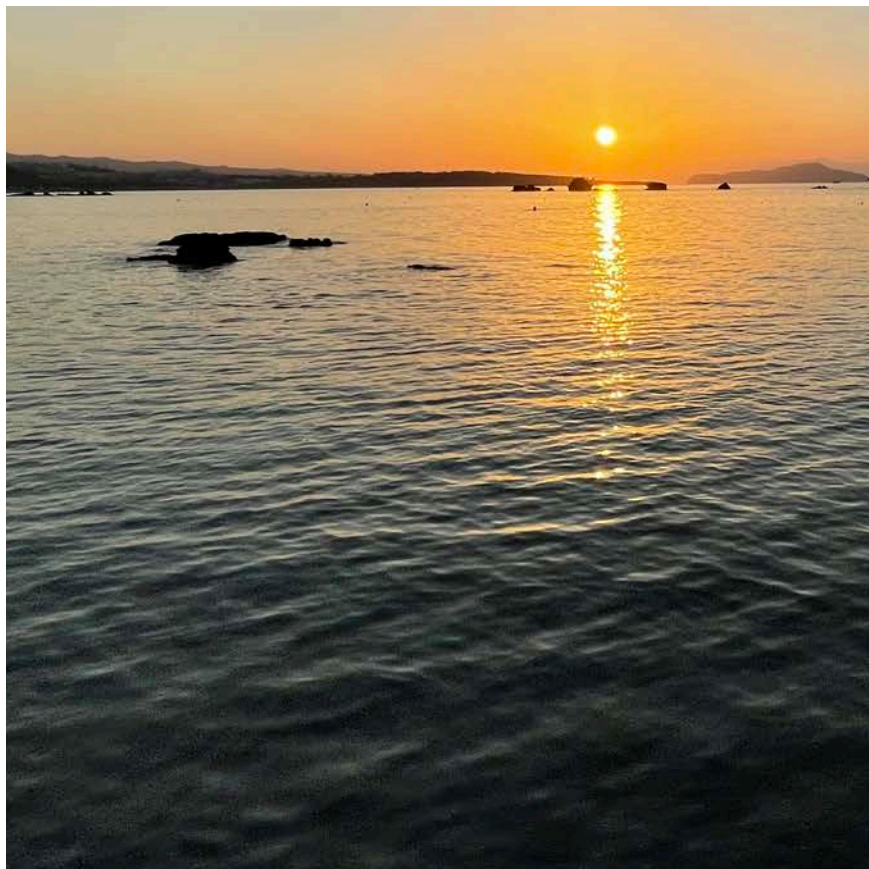
*Water your plants, garden, swim or sit by moving water,
take a drink of water.*

Pick one of the following statements and meditate on it.
Reread the above quote from Proverbs and reflect on the following:

Water soaking leaves and soil
winds its way past stones to root; so it is with God.
In one drop of water are found all the secrets of all the oceans.
The cure for anything is salt water: sweat, tears or the sea.
I breathe with the ebb and the flow.
I flow with the river of life.

Closing Prayer

Holy One, let the night fall on me like a gentle evening rain.
Visit my little hide-a-way beneath your waves of love.
Rest me in the ebb and flow of your presence.



Music Suggestions

It Can't Rain All The Time *Jane Siberry*

Nightswimming *REM*

The Circle Game *Joni Mitchell*

River Of Tears *Eric Clapton*

Meditations
for
Any Time

Practising Gratitude

And what if you're in a stage or phase of your life when the mere idea of sitting down for five minutes seems impossible? What if bracketing your day with a more formal meditation practice just isn't something you can handle right now? Well, you could try taking bite-sized meditative moments at any time by practising gratitude.

Brother David Steindl-Rast, the master of grateful living, says, "People ask, 'Can you be grateful for everything? No, not for everything, but in every moment.'" In every *moment*. Which means that no matter what you're doing or where you are, you can still choose to stop, become fully present to the moment and seek out something that inspires gratitude in you. And since practising gratitude is like a muscle, the more you practise, the more you'll find to be grateful for!

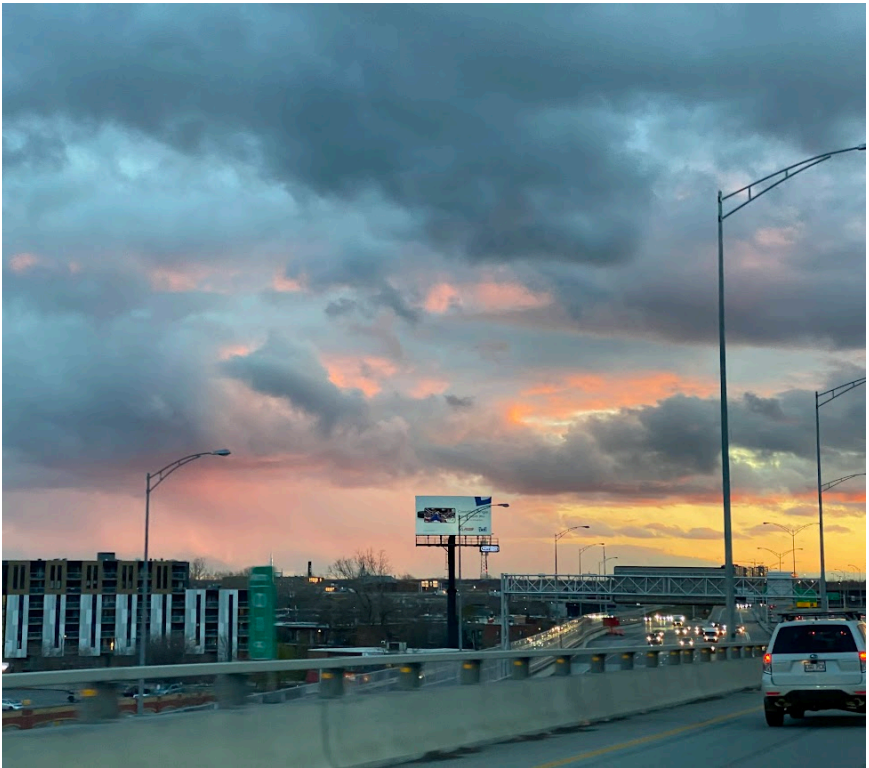
This form of "mini-meditation" is always right there for you, offering moments of peace, surprise and joy, as you become aware of the incredible gifts (tiny and momentous) that God is, and always has been, giving you. Just stop, become fully present to the moment, and choose to notice them. (If you could use some inspiration, watch Brother David's beautiful video, [A Grateful Day](#).)



Anytime Meditations

Stuck in traffic

Lift up your eyes (while staying aware of the road...)! Notice the sky, notice the light, notice the joyful birds swooping across the lanes of cars, the line of pigeons perched along the concrete wall. Look to the median and allow yourself to be amazed by the colourful wildflowers and hardy plants that have sprouted right there in that most inhospitable of places. Observe the faces of the people and creatures in the cars around you—be delighted by that dog hanging out the window, panting happily. Notice the people in your vehicle with you. Even if you know them well—especially if you do—let gratitude for them bubble up. Maybe go so far as to tell them!



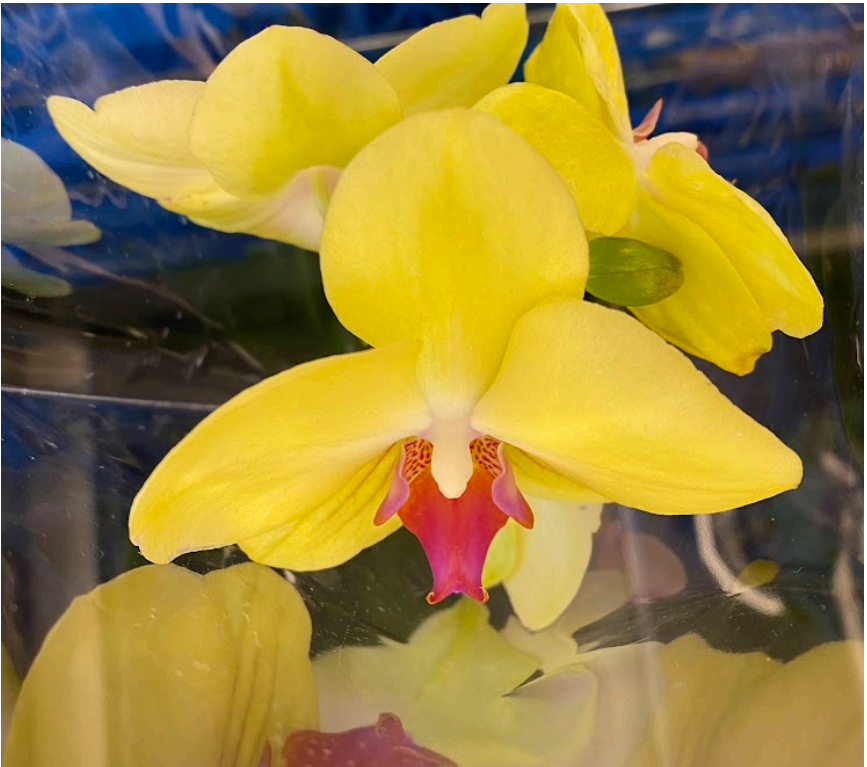
Facing a household chore

Author Barbara Brown Taylor says, “Sometimes, when people ask me about my prayer life, I describe hanging laundry on the line.” Washing dishes, folding clothes, hanging wet sheets on the line—can you stop long enough to notice, to be grateful for something...? Like for the clean water that came out of the faucet, for the miracle of your household appliances, for the chance to feel the wind on your face, for your hands that are still nimble enough to manipulate clothespins or dishes...? You can turn that mundane moment into a meditational one simply by harnessing your grateful attention.



At the grocery store

In these days of empty shelves and inflation, this may seem an unlikely place to be able to carve out any sort of meditational moment—and yet. That supply chain stretching around the globe includes so much you can choose to be grateful for: from the person in Costa Rica who harvested the coffee beans that became your coffee, to the truck driver who delivered it to the store to your neighbour’s teenager who just put it on the shelf. Let that sink in. And then notice the beings around you, from the cashier working long hours to serve you, to the hothouse flowers standing as tall and as proud as they can in that artificial lighting to the child giggling in the cart in front of you—you can choose to see this all as gift. God’s good Creation is always right there in front of you, just waiting for you to notice.



In the waiting room

When you have no control over the macro situation (hello, medical appointments), choosing to practice micro-moments of gratitude--that is still within your control. Can you get curious about your surroundings and look for the light--literally? Is there a skylight overhead that you hadn't noticed yet? Can you see the golden sunset or waving tree branches through a window? Scan the room for a potted plant whose presence adds oxygen to the room, or a piece of art that adds beauty. Notice the amazingly diverse and beautiful faces of the other humans waiting along with you. And if all you can muster is gratitude for the breath in your lungs, then do that. It's enough.



About the Authors



Elisabeth Jones is an ordained minister in the United Church of Canada (serving with the people of Cedar Park United, in Pointe Claire, Quebec). She is also a wife, a mother and grandmother, a gardener, a baker, a scholar, a bibliophile, and a writer about all these things. Meditation, in various forms, is a golden thread that helps Elisabeth to connect and make sense of these multiple vocations within a

world where such occupations are a privilege too few women enjoy. Her writing, often wry, sometimes poetic, at times political, draws from the deep wells of her British (Welsh) bardic ancestors to reflect upon contemporary, changing landscapes of the world and the soul.



Darryl Macdonald comes from Sydney, Nova Scotia, found on Cape Breton Island and has Scottish and French ancestral roots. He is also an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada and presently serving the Faith Community of Roxboro United Church, on the West Island of Montreal. He studies Celtic Spirituality and practices daily meditation, sharing sessions weekly, live on [Roxboro's Facebook Group Page](#), Monday to

Thursday at 9AM EST. He also incorporates Celtic Spirituality into his weekly worship at Roxboro. Darryl is happily married to his husband Chris Maragoudakis, sharing their lives for 30 years.



Martha Randy serves as Family and Youth Ministries Coordinator alongside Elisabeth at Cedar Park United. In 2017, having recently begun a morning meditation practice, Martha took on what she *thought* would be a five-week, semi-public gratitude practice on her Facebook page. It's six years later, and this daily practice of seeking, finding, and putting words to gratitude has continued, re-forming and informing her heart, soul and mind in ways she couldn't possibly have imagined. After years of international meandering far from her native New York State, Martha now lives with her family and cat, Hildegard, by the shores of the Saint Lawrence--where she can invariably be found at sunset, camera in hand.