

Abiding
with God

Day by Day



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Abiding with God

“**A**bide in me...abide in my love...” These words of instruction, given by Jesus in John’s Gospel, invite us to do more than just walk, talk, or live with Jesus. To abide means something altogether more full and fulfilling than simply hanging around. By inviting us to abide with him, to abide in his love, Jesus is offering us the chance to crawl in, curl up, and be willing captives to restoration, redemption, and renewal.

This book of daily meditations offers suggestions to help you find your way to abide with God. We’ve selected twelve spiritual practices and themes. Each month, you’ll find a short introduction highlighting the spiritual practice for the month as well as some helpful hints to engage and deepen your experience. Our hope is that by year’s end, you will learn new ways to pray and to enjoy your daily devotional time—and that you will be encouraged to share some of those new experiences with those you know and love.

I’m fortunate to remember crawling into the laps of my parents and grandparents and feeling encircled by their arms and love for me. When I think about abiding in Jesus and his love for me, I think about those moments of being cradled, of time standing still, of feeling fully loved and accepted. My hope and prayer is that as you spend time with this collection of meditations, you will find your own ways of understanding what it means to abide with Jesus and in his love.

Forward Movement is happy and humbled to offer this resource to the glory of God, to inspire disciples and empower evangelists by encouraging us all to practice our faith daily. We hope that this offering of *Abiding with God: Day by Day* offers you refreshment for your continued journey.

—Rachel Jones, editor

JANUARY



**Meditation
&
Mindfulness**

Be still, then, and know that I am God.

—PSALM 46:11

Be Still and Know

Being still, the idea of undertaking intentional mindfulness and meditation, doesn't come easy for most of us. This month, we are invited to spend a little time each day undertaking this practice. Stillness and quiet are a luxury for many of us; when we can achieve peace in our hearts and minds for even a few minutes, God can fill up that space with creative quiet, contentment, and joy. Consider setting aside a prescribed amount of time this month just for your devotional practice. Set a timer if that helps. It's OK if you struggle to sit still or clear your mind—remember the good advice your coaches, teachers, and parents may have given you when trying a new thing—practice makes perfect. And don't worry too much about the perfect part. Be still, and rest in the confidence that a mighty God loves you very much and is waiting to meet you in those still, small moments of your daily life.

WAYS TO ENGAGE

If you're new to the ideas of mindfulness and meditation, try running a quick Internet search. Spend a while familiarizing yourself with these ideas.

Pick a word on which to focus your meditation time—peace, love, hope, healing, light, etc.

Memorize a verse or passage in the Bible.

Use a chime, bell, or particular piece of music to provide a sound cue for beginning and ending your quiet time.

Set aside space in your home or office to use just for quiet time. Try to practice your quiet time at the same time every day.

It's the very first day of a brand new year. Some of us face this new year with gusto, excitement—chomping at the bit to get into this new and limitless territory. Others of us may find ourselves looking at the new year and wondering how the last one passed so quickly; we may be reeling from hard knocks or difficult transitions and wishing we could put a two-week delay on all things new. All of us are going to need generous portions of grace and mercy to get us through the next twelve months—not to mention the next twelve minutes.

Psalm 46 reminds us to be still and know that God is God. Too many times, we get caught up in our own busy-ness, strategic plans, and life goals. We forget to be still and to remember that the Living God, this Creator, this Love is both the deep root and sweet fruit of all our work, no matter how large or small our tasks may be.

May the God of Peace, who calls us each to be still and to know, find you, fill you, and abide with you today and every day.

—Rachel Jones



O God of peace, who has taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength: By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray you, to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER*, p. 832

Children raised in churches are taught to pray from a very young age. From the Lord's Prayer to "Now I lay me down to sleep," it seems like I have never known a time when I didn't know how to pray. But meditation? That's a different story. I've studied meditation as an adult many times, in many different forms, and I'm still not very good at it. I'm not very good at silence in general. Even in group gatherings, when silence descends, I am the first to try and shatter it. Silence is scary. When I try to meditate, my mind races with my to-do list, my fears, lyrics to the song I heard in the car yesterday, the parts of my body that ache, and on and on and on.

But even in the small spaces between the words of my racing mind, there is a grace and a peace. There is a comfort in not doing but simply being in the presence of the indwelling Spirit. Knowing that I can stop the chatter and still be a beloved child of God is beyond freeing. And Jesus himself tells us that God knows what we are asking before we even say the words (Matthew 6:8). Meditation doesn't have to be sitting cross-legged on the floor for hours on end; it can be simply sitting for a few moments, doing my best to keep my mouth and my mind silent, listening for the still, small voice of God.

—**Holli Powell**

I first read the words, “Be still, and know that I am God,” when I was fifteen. Standing outside on a summer evening, staring up at the stars, there I was, feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, weighed down. As I stood there, staring up at the stars, I was alone, with nothing but a book of psalms to keep me company.

My mother had given me that Psalter only a few days before. Those timeless prayers and songs meant the world to her, were part of her. For me, they had always been just...words. Still, I had grabbed that book of psalms when I stormed out of the campsite that night, so I decided I might as well flip through its pages and see if there was anything in there for me.

And that is when I first read those words, “Be still, and know that I am God.” In the version of the Bible I had, it read, “Stop fighting, and know that I am God.” I froze in my tracks. I had been fighting for some time, it seemed, always trying to be strong enough, clever enough, anything enough to force things to go my way. “All right, God,” I said out loud, “I’ll stop fighting. So where are you?”

In one sense, nothing happened. My problems were still there, still weighing me down. But in another sense, deep in my soul, I suddenly knew. God was indeed present, and God was God, so I didn’t have to try to be. So “be still, stop fighting.” Through prayer and meditation today, I just might find once again that blessed stillness that filled my soul those many years ago and that can fill it once again.

—Chuck Robertson

God shows up in the middle of our lives. It is messy. The presence of God rolls us around in the mud of existence and calls us to walk into the muck and mire of what is—without ever knowing where we will land.

Be still and know. Be still. And know. God asks us the hardest of things in the midst of the hardest of times—the act of presence in the midst of our lives on most days seems a task too difficult to handle.

God calls us to find moments of stillness, silence, and breath. The most mindful act is that of breathing. The first and last act as an expression of humanity and divinity that we do on this earth is breathe—we breathe in the presence of God in our midst; we breathe out all that is not serving us in this moment, place, and time.

God is our waking breath, at the dawn of life. God is our last exhale, the dying breath of a life lived with intention. Every inhale is God. Every exhale is God. Everything in between is our attempt to live out the destiny of sacred breath. May God offer us the strength and resilience given to us, inherently, in breath, each and every day of our lives.

—Teresa Pasquale

In today's fast-paced, instant-gratification, always-updating-and-trending world, we often forget to take time to stop. Stop to smell the roses, stop to look around, stop to take a breath. It's often when we stop and pay attention to those around us that we feel awe at God's creation. When our worries and concerns aren't always at the forefront of our mind. When we engage in intentional conversation and intentional listening instead of thinking about how to respond. When we declutter our hearts and minds of worries and sorrow, and remember that God is there to help us bear our burden.

Meditation has been viewed as something of a new age experience. It has often been seen as a strict regimen of sitting with your legs crossed, eyes closed, and palms to the sky. But how often we forget that when we drop to our knees, close our eyes, and clasp our hands tight, we are meditating. Regardless of how we do it, we all are seeking a deeper and closer experience with God.

When we slow life down a little, we are able to enjoy the blessings we have in our lives. When we take some time to pray, we are able to experience God's nearness to us. But when slowing down and prayer find the perfect harmony, we feel the limitlessness of God's care and love.

—Longkee Vang

Most cities of any size in the US provide opportunities for enjoyment: art museums, restaurants, concerts. People privileged enough to afford these activities are willing to sacrifice valuable money and time to enjoy them. We think of ourselves as going to places like these for the things they provide (art, food, etc.). I believe that we also desire the chance to focus on the experiences. Art museums use careful lighting and quiet rooms to focus our attention completely on the artwork; music venues make choices about volume and seating that encourage people to throw themselves into the musical experience. Good venues provide people not only with high quality products but also with atmospheres that bring mindfulness to people's experiences. Our spending practices indicate that we value the opportunity to pay that kind of attention.

Bringing this level of focus into our daily routine is more difficult. My first cup of morning coffee tastes as good as anything in a high-end restaurant because in the quiet of early morning, I pay wholehearted attention to those blissful sips. Then the day starts, I become distracted, and the coffee fades into the background.

Mindfulness practices, at their best, give us the discipline to bring the focus that we give to restaurant food or concert music into our ordinary lives, where our attention is being constantly funneled away from our experiences instead of toward them. We become more aware of our blessings when we give ourselves the space to pay attention to them.

—Elizabeth Brignac

Several times a month I wake at 4 a.m. Email isn't checked. No tea is brewed. The phone stays off—a huge challenge. There's no early-morning news about war, hate, or injustice to anger or sadden my heart. Like good diet, physical exercise, or nurturing relationships, keeping quiet requires commitment. Sometimes lots of it. If you have pets or children, you may need extra planning to make this work for yourself.

It's easier getting up at 4 a.m. during spring, summer, and autumn than in the unforgiving throes of winter in the Northeast. At this hour, I may begin my morning with reflection, meditation, or standing before a small, dedicated worship space with soft, spoken prayer before icons.

It's what follows, however, that is most elusive and what I hunger for most—stillness.

Sitting quietly as the first rays of hope break in the east to awaken the earth is often when I experience something transcendental. Without the morning buzz of street traffic or noise from folks in my building, there is something mystically intangible for a few moments.

If I'm especially blessed, time stands still for several minutes, and I catch my spiritual breath, feeling strengthened to sojourn again in a cold, unjust, complicated world to make positive, incremental change.

—Paul Jesep

I don't often feel that I am good at mindfulness and meditation. I am easily distracted. I haven't tamed what Buddhists call the "monkey mind." There are many monkeys clamoring for my attention in my head all the time. Thoughts, song fragments, images. For many years, I tried to accept that this is just the way I am. Or at least I tried to accept it when I wasn't beating myself up over it. Because secretly I believed that all those serene contemplative people out there, who clearly did not have monkeys of their own, were vastly superior to me, both as people and as Christians.

And so I seesawed. I'm OK. I'm a failure. I went from defending against suggestions that I try meditation to signing up for contemplative prayer class to feeling bad that I failed at it. Not everyone has to meditate, I declared. I wish I could be more meditative, I whispered.

Finally, I gave up this inner battle. I just let it be. And I discovered that in fact, now that I'm not struggling over it, I often am mindful. I notice things. I'm really good at noticing things, both inwardly and outwardly. It's actually one of the gifts of my monkey mind. I started practicing yoga again. As my kids left home and my daily life started changing, I discovered that I often have silence in my life, and it is good. I've become mindful of that.

If you struggle with meditation, let it be. It is good to spend some time in silence with God, and everyone is not the same in how they can do that. And that's OK.

—Penny Nash

In another life, I was a television news producer. It's imperative that producers book guests who understand that when their lips stop moving and they go quiet for even a nanosecond, viewers start clicking their remotes to another channel. In television news, you must be mindful that silence is never golden.

My survival as a producer hinged on possessing a preternatural revulsion to silence and mindfulness. Then divine intervention changed that. I suffered the equivalent of a traumatic brain injury when a doctor bungled a medical diagnosis and drug treatment. My body and life got pushed off a cliff, and there was no architect, contractor, or toolmaker who knew how to put Humpty Dumpty back together again. I had to become my own DIY designer, engineer, and project manager for a complete rebuild.

Sitting alone for many months, trying to come up with plans and actions I could make and take to recover and get my life back didn't work. Every plan fizzled, and every action ended in the spinning of wheels. Then a new doctor suggested a radical course of treatment: Do nothing. Be still. Wait for guidance to come from the silence.

Moment by quiet moment, my mind stilled, and the answers I needed to rebuild my body and reclaim my soul quietly came. Today, I am fully recovered.

—Charlotte Chere Graham

My Blackberry froze on me as I was using an app during Morning Prayer at my parish. I tried all four tricks:

1) Soft Reset/Press ALT + RIGHT SHIFT(CAP) + DELETE;
 2) Double-Soft Reset/Press ALT + RIGHT SHIFT(CAP) + DELETE & When the screen comes back on, immediately press ALT + RIGHT SHIFT(CAP) + DELETE again; 3) Hard Reset/ take battery out for thirty seconds and then reinsert; and 4) leave battery out overnight. Alas, none of that worked; and next I tried rebooting the entire software suite.

I even went to my service provider to see if they could fix it. They offered me an insurance plan at \$6.95 per month so that I could replace the bad one with a new Blackberry. I said that I thought I would try laying hands on it and praying over it first. The salesperson was not too happy with my response.

I think God was a little annoyed with me for checking my Blackberry during prayer when I heard it buzz. OK, God, I hear you. Be still and know that I am.

—Westina Matthews



*The LORD will fight for you,
 and you only have to keep still.*

—EXODUS 14:14

Two months ago, during my morning commute through New York's Grand Central Station, I saw the thing I fear the most: a backpack with no one around, leaning against a wall.

I wasn't the only person who saw it, of course. All around me, people were stopping in their tracks, some visibly shaken, turning in the other direction to get away as fast as possible. Years of daily reminders to keep an eye out for bombs in backpacks, of being told to say something should we see something, had taken their toll. We were afraid.

And thank God, it was for no good reason. Moments later, as I watched the tourist who'd left her backpack return to pick it up, oblivious to how many people she'd startled, I realized how quickly fear had overtaken me—us. What, then, does it mean to “be still and know that I am God” when we are afraid?

Oftentimes when people think about meditation, we tend to imagine serenity: the breathing exercises in a yoga class, the minimalism of a Zen temple. In contrast, the phrase “Be still, then, and know that I am God” comes from Psalm 46, a tumultuous reflection on taking refuge in God during times of heightened fear. Though “the nations make much ado, and the kingdoms are shaken,” we learn that God is the one remaining place of stillness and that God's version of desolation “breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.”

God is that place of stillness and peace in the midst of frightening times. Let's all breathe and draw near.

—Miguel Escobar

“**D**on’t touch it.”

My friend’s father had bought a theremin and was showing his son and me how to play it. He moved his hand up and down beside—but not touching—the antenna on the electronic instrument, producing the sort of tremulous, spooky tones that haunted many horror movies of the 1940s and 50s.

I often think that meditation is a bit like playing the theremin. As a person with way too many words bursting to be spoken, written, or at least, thought, I find contemplative silence difficult. I want to “touch” it, to poke at it with questions and demands, when what I need is simply to come near the holy, to be, as a former rector always reminded us, “in the Presence.” Trying to touch won’t make music.

A theremin you play by standing back,
moving your hands across the empty air.
It must be difficult to learn the knack
of just not touching, with exquisite care.

Bodies learn early: Music’s made by touch
fingers that strike the keyboard, pluck the string;
lips that enfold vibrating reed with such
a firm embrace that even wood must sing.

Now this contrary instrument confounds:
Grasp, and it groans complaint discordantly,
but lift your hands, and sweet, ethereal sounds
rise from your new restraint in harmony.

Perhaps, with practice, one might come to know
how to make music out of letting go.

—Mary W. Cox

Every year I have the same New Year's resolution. It is not to eat breakfast or exercise more. It is not to be more organized or to avoid procrastination, although all of these things would be worthy pursuits for me. No, my resolution, year in and year out, is to be more mindful, to pay attention.

I don't want to skim the surface of all life offers each day. I want to wake and taste that first breath, to recognize and give thanks for another day of God's animating grace. I want to truly see the people I encounter each day: the barista, the bank teller, the colleague, the kids at the bus stop, the messenger on the bike, my husband, my friends.

I want to notice the change in the winter light, the lengthening of each day, the glacial blue in the crevasses of white snow shoveled off the driveway, again. I want nothing to go unheralded, unnoticed, unappreciated.

The spiritual life tempts my thoughts heavenward. But God made the earth and called it good. Made the plants and the animals, the birds and the fish, and called them good. God made you and me. And called us good. I don't want to miss that, any of it, any of you. I want to taste and see it all. I want to pay attention.

Lord, make me mindful, literally. Fill my mind with all your wonders that my heart might be exceedingly thankful. Above all, keep me mindful of you. Amen.

—Susan Wyper

I'm nursing an imaginary knot the size of a tennis ball that sits on the top of my head. This knot is the result of the two-by-four boards that God is constantly beating me over the head with. I'm stubborn, which is why the knot is so large. I have no hope of living without it but I long for a day when it will shrink. When I tell people my two-by-four theory on relationships with God, I usually find I am not alone in this approach.

In an effort to shrink this knot, I've been trying to be more present with the Holy Spirit. I'm more open to the things being offered to me, trying to follow my gut more and act accordingly. It takes me on wonderful adventures; I feel more complete. I think the Holy Spirit speaks to and guides us daily. We only have to be quiet enough to hear it. It can lead to some beautiful places but most importantly, it keeps God from having to swing that two-by-four so often.

—Lauren Caldwell



“This battle is not for you to fight; take your position, stand still, and see the victory of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.” Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you.

—2 CHRONICLES 20:17

January takes its name from Janus, a Roman god. Janus possessed two heads looking in opposing directions, the past and the future. January reminds us to reflect on the past, not in an obsessive way or by being possessive of the past. Mature Christians who seek the time to meditate offer the past to God. They ask only one thing: how may I know God more deeply and serve God more faithfully because of the activities and experiences of my past?

The past can catapult us into a more prophetic, compassionate, and Christ-like living. As Socrates reminds us, the unexamined life is not worth living. When we examine our sins, the evil powers that worked against the good news of God, and when we examine our selfishness, our lies, and our choices of ego over the cross, we open ourselves to a more abundant life.

When we bring our sins of racism, sexism, unloving thoughts, words, or actions to God, God calls us to recommit to a life that respects the dignity of every human being. Reviewing calls from God we heard over the past year, we are challenged to live lives that make a difference. We are challenged to live out our belief that all lives matter.

January reminds us that God's call for us to know and do the will of God requires mindfulness. We are called to be still and know Jesus Christ by serving others and loving our neighbors as God loves us.

—**Mark Bozzuti-Jones**

He felt badgered in his mind, writing, “Call off thoughts a while...leave comfort root-room.” English poet and Jesuit priest Gerard Manley Hopkins expressed in the 1800s what people have needed across time: to allow mental room for comfort to take root, instead of permitting worry to thrive, undisciplined.

John the Baptist needed comfort too. After his empowered introductions of Jesus the Savior, the one who would bring salvation, John landed in prison; meanwhile, Jesus was performing miracles all around. With limited root-room for comfort, John sent others to ask, “So—are you the Messiah, or not?”

Haven’t most of us asked God some “why” questions? “I’m struggling with this diagnosis, with finances, with this dilemma, this relationship. If you are God, do something dramatic here.” Or we might beg, “Jesus, free me from imprisonment in my own thoughts.” Jesus’ response to John applies to us all: Blessed is the person who isn’t tripped up in the walk of faith. Take another step. Keep coming to me.

To the overburdened, he says: Come. Come, sit with me. I will give you rest. Learn from me. Jesus might ask if you are carrying weights placed upon you by yourself or by others. Instead, he says, accept my expectations that are lighter. Give comfort root-room, and find rest for your souls (Matthew 11).

—June Terry

When I was a teenager, Master Lee, my martial arts instructor, taught us how to meditate. Focus on your heartbeat, he would say. We knew that meditation was intended to clear the mind of all thoughts. Master Lee knew, however, that just jumping into such a thing was nearly impossible, especially for a bunch of teenagers. So we started off small, by focusing on just one thing, our heartbeats. Keeping that as the sole object of my attention was hard.

Later, I learned about Buddhist monks who attempt to achieve enlightenment through meditation. They spend years clearing their minds of thoughts and worldly desires. I can only keep my focus on one thing for about fifteen seconds; the feat these men achieve boggles my mind. When I met a Buddhist monk in person, he told me that he didn't try to erase every thought. Instead, he tried to be "in the now." He seemed to say, "Focus, instead, on everything, from the stirring of air currents to the light of the sun, the buzz of insects to the pressure of our blood vessels." This, too, I found nearly impossible to do.

As a Christian, meditation has taken on a new facet for me. When I meditate, I try instead to take the focus off of myself and my surroundings and think only of God and of those in need.

—Spencer Hixon



*He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.*

—PSALM 23:2

“**N**oah, do you have ants in your pants?” He instantly froze. He looked at me with dumbfounded confusion, which gave way to juvenile panic. I stifled a giggle as he jumped to his feet, while simultaneously dropping his pants to his ankles. I heard a whispered, “I hope not!!” as he checked to make sure. I spent the rest of the morning talking about figures of speech and treating our house for an ant infestation that existed only in his five-year-old imagination.

Lately, I have been fluttering between tasks, chores, appointments, responsibilities, and locations so haphazardly that I’ve been making myself dizzy. There never seem to be enough hours in the day, money in the bank, or gas in the tank to get the jobs done. Yet, I spin my wheels as fast as I can, trying to make it all happen anyway. I have developed a bad case of ants in the pants!

Sometimes it’s hard to hear anything above the noise. Jesus whispers while my to-do list screams. The Holy Spirit beckons, but my toddler demands. God pursues, but sometimes the only thing that overtakes me is sleep. My soul has grown weary, and my spirit is parched. What I truly need is quiet rest and a few moments each day where my undivided attention is set on God, who sees me through the tumultuous whirlwind of chaos.

Today, I will choose a retreat. It won’t be on a glorious beach or among majestic mountains. In fact, it will most likely be a stolen moment hiding in the closet or waiting in the carpool line after school. But I will choose to be still for a brief respite and listen only to the God who made me. For just a few moments, I refuse to let the ants rule my pants!

—Bree Combs

Where I live, it gets very cold in the winter. Getting out of a warm bed in the middle of January is a pretty miserable experience. I venture out each morning in expectation of two things—the inevitable arrival of spring and the hot cup of coffee waiting in the kitchen. The hot cup of coffee happens because I set the timer on the coffee maker every night before I go to bed. I am diligent about this. If I don't set the timer, the wait for the hot cup of coffee makes the cold morning all that much more miserable. There is absolutely a cause and effect to this daily discipline. Spring, however, comes without any effort on my part. It is a miracle that unfolds around me and I am reminded that God really can make all things new. The seasons change.

Warm weather comes and cold weather goes and the cold weather comes again. Week in and week out, through it all...the good and the bad...God, in whom we live and move and have our being, is not only present but also sustains us and everything around us. Perhaps when I set the timer every night on my coffee pot, I should take a moment to be mindful of who really gets me through the day and who does more for all of us than we could ever ask for or imagine.

—Jason Leo

Whenever I have a chance, I try to be mindful and responsive to what my dad exhorts and encourages every Sunday in his sermon—“Read the Bible!” I know that we all want God’s promises fulfilled. We all want to obtain the promise, whatever promise that might be, tailored to our needs and utterly fulfilled. The only way to know what the promise might be is to read God’s Word.

When I read and meditate on scripture, the love letter God inspired, I can see one more promise that I want and to which I will hold. I will write it out and post it where I can see it daily. And I will wait—sometimes patiently, sometimes crying, sometimes screaming, sometimes doubting. But I will wait. I can be impatient. But when I know I will get something if I wait, it’s easier.

When I waited almost nine months for my son to be born (and to find out if he was going to be a girl or a boy), I knew that the promise was worth the patient wait, because shorter than that time wouldn’t be good for my baby! It’s the same with the promises God has for us. They might take a few days, weeks, hours, or even years, but they are worth the wait.

—**Sandra Montes**

My grandson goes through his usual ritual: turning off the canned music playing in the lobby of his apartment building, propping up the lid of the baby grand piano, and extracting his music books from his bag. After a series of scales, he begins playing increasingly complex and beautiful music.

Recently, my grandson has added an additional practice. He has begun using a new set of junior golf clubs given to him as a gift. He spends an hour or two at a nearby driving range while we patiently wait under the shade of a nearby live oak. He listens to advice and encouragement and then asks the person who gave him his clubs how soon it might be before he can begin to play on a “real course.” He knows that the quality of his practice will hasten that experience.

One of the things that strikes me is how joyfully my grandson practices what he loves. He rarely pays attention to the clock. We who profess faith are also invited to practice—through prayer and meditation; through attention to nature, to others, and to that guiding inner voice; through active works of creativity, kindness, and justice. I ask myself: am I as unselfconsciously joyful in my spiritual practices as my grandson is at the piano and the driving range?

—Joan Bowers

The machines are anything but still; they clang and clack, swoosh, and, in the case of the MRI, thump loudly and rhythmically. The disembodied voice of a technician comes through headphones or over speakers: “Take a breath, and hold it...hold it...Now you can breathe.” Eventually the scan is done, and the mechanized gurney slides me out of my narrow tubular tomb.

The first cancer, stage 3 inflammatory breast carcinoma, was diagnosed in November 2010; IBC is nasty and aggressive and so is the treatment. I beat the odds. The second, discovered with a mammogram in November 2012, was early stage. Surgery eliminated that one. In November 2014 (I have grown nervous about that month in even-numbered years), scans revealed that the first cancer had returned as Stage 4, attacking my sacrum and eating arches into the bone.

Post-radiation, I pop a pill, take part in a clinical trial involving another pill, have a monthly infusion of a bone-builder, and get scanned every quarter. Last time, there was good news: the spots found on my lungs during the initial Dance of the Seven Scans were gone. (Maybe I have the real drug; maybe it’s all the prayer offered up for my healing; maybe it’s a combination thereof.)

The machines are not still, but I am still lying within them, listening, waiting, hoping. I am freed to be open to God and to all that God is and was and shall be to me, now and for eternity.

—Sarah Bryan Miller

If we choose to practice meditation, it's good to remember that God's time is not our time.

I was first jarred into realizing this at a party some years ago. When someone spoke of a friend who'd just come back from a meditation retreat, some listeners nodded in empathy. Comments ranged from "That's really cool!" to "I wish I had the time to do that!" And then one person said, with a laugh, "Yeah, but what if she spent all that time and then nothing happened?"

His cynicism shouldn't have surprised me. We live in a fast food culture, bombarded by ads trying to persuade us that instant gratification is our natural right. Even if we know better, it's easy to let this mindset affect our attitude toward meditation—or any spiritual practice, for that matter. But whether we are snatching fifteen minutes before work or settling into a week-long retreat, we are on God's time, not our own. The times we struggle, the times we wonder what the point of it all is, may be the very times God is doing the deepest work within us. And that work can change us so subtly that we may not recognize it till much later.

It can be a real challenge some days to find time to meditate, let alone to make time for a quiet day or weekend retreat. But if we are faithful and let God set the agenda, we can relax—and trust that something is happening.

—Kathleen M. Flanagan

I am “trapped” in one of those happy marriages you sometimes read about. One of the few negative things I can say about my husband is that he insists on driving every time we go somewhere. Every time.

When we drive in our big, red, Texas pickup truck, I’m relieved that he’s behind the wheel. My skill set and depth perception are far more suited to my much smaller car. Sitting in the passenger seat of the big truck also affords me the opportunity to use that invisible passenger side brake and horn. You know the ones... moms and dads use them when they are teaching their kids to drive. My fifty-three-year-old husband loves it when I employ those invisible devices.

It finally dawned on me one day that my perspective in the passenger seat was different than his in the driver’s seat. On occasion...I was wrong! There, I admit it, and it’s in print. (My husband will order 100 copies of this book now). He wasn’t (always) too close to the dividing line or a motorcyclist. From where I sat, it looked like we were headed for trouble, but it was a false perception on my part.

That revelation made me think about God...and the big picture... and where we, finite creatures, sit. It is my prayer in this new year that I can remember “my place” in God’s universe—and that I can trust...

—Rhoda Montgomery

Stare into the quiet spaces of your home: the nooks and crannies of daily life that your amazing brain glosses over and fills with the knowing of memory and familiarity. A vase, a picture frame, a rug, a pillow: when was the last time you held it in your gaze, remembered where it came from, noticed its imperfections and character? When is the last time you filled your house with your looking, peering around and appreciating everything as though it were new, as though you had just moved in?

There are moments when I am struck by the visual world around me, the colors and movement, shape and line, moments when I know I should pay attention: a sunset, a formal occasion when my partner dons his best suit, a walk through a flower garden or an art museum. But for each of these, there are countless others when I fail to pick up on the beauty and complexity of the visual world that constantly surrounds me. I'm just too busy.

I've read that, depending on the study, our brains are only capable of processing between 60 and 110 bits of data per second. That means if we're trying to carry out any complex task, if we are multitasking or carrying on a conversation, we barely have enough processing power to make sure we keep breathing, walking, chewing. We crowd out the stimuli from the world around us with the busy-ness of the world inside us.

And the truth is, sometimes God doesn't knock. Sometimes God just surrounds us with a wondrous and complex reality and waits for us to look up, to be still, to see, and to marvel.

—Jason Sierra

If you are like so many of us today, your life gets busy and your energy scatters. You might benefit from some kind of mindfulness practice, you hear it is good for you, but you think you can't settle down long enough to do it. A practice that works for me uses what I call "mindful moments," short spans of time of being still, of deeply paying attention. One practical way I like to experience this is in the shower.

First, I'll confess that sometimes there is a lot of chatter going on in my head. I'm thinking about what I need to get at the store, what I'm going to wear, or how the shower needs a good scrubbing. There have been a few times my mind is so busy I've nearly completed my shower and wondered if I washed my hair. When this happens I'm abruptly reminded to practice a mindful moment.

In this brief practice of mindfulness, I pay attention to the water. I notice how it feels on my skin. I notice the temperature, whether the spray is light or pulsing; I feel the water on my face and the back of my neck and head and let it run down my body. My breath deepens when I focus totally on the sensation of the water, and for this brief time, I am not scattered. If I have a couple more minutes in the shower, I like to think of water as a gift, giving thanks for the stream of water, for the plumbing that brought it to our home, and offering thanksgiving to the Source of all water.

—Linda Gelbrich

Speak peace to the chaos, Lord, where the madness continues to swirl. Speak peace to the chaos, Lord, whether within or outside of me...Let it cease to be. Call back order to the world, my world, our world, your world!

Where reason lies sleeping, with weary ones weeping, mend the brokenness that is so very much in need of repair...Breathe fresh breath upon us and clear the air that we might b-r-e-a-t-h-e again! Renew our hope; dispel our despair. The world and all that's in it are in your hand. Make what's upside down right-side up again, as only you and you alone can!

Speak peace, O Lord. Speak peace to the chaos, within us and among us, and in the whole world, lest it consume. Don't let it consume us. As you did in the beginning, speak your "Let-it-be" to the chaos and let it be so. Let peace resume. Peace, we know, does not mean that all around us is still, but just as the eye in the midst of the storm is where peace is found, may your peace surround. And may it fill. May we find ourselves in the stillness, amidst the calm at the center of your will. Help us to find and let us be...still...and know that you are God!

—Kathy H. Culmer

When I read the portion of the morning collect that says, “You have brought us in safety to this new day,” I sometimes can barely finish the rest. And on some days, that is enough for me. There is so much to be mindful of in that one sentence.

We have been brought.

Everyone has seen the ubiquitous poem “Footprints in the Sand” hanging on the wall of a doctor’s office or sitting on someone’s desk. I think the sentiment is true, though it has been used so many times that I am afraid those footprints are about seven feet deep by now. Through the night, for those of us who get to rest (God bless the emergency responders and new parents), the secret inner workings of our bodies cycle in and out of REM sleep. The systems that keep us alive pump blood, send electrical impulses to neurons, and breathe in oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. This symphony (or cacophony if you snore like I do) is conducted without us knowing a thing about it as we lie vulnerable in our beds.

This morning, know that you have been brought. Breathe in the safety of the new. The fulfilling of your unique part of God’s purpose is right here, right now, right where you live. Thanks be to God.

—Charles McClain

God's stillness comes from within God's changeless nature. God is "the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17). God's existence has no beginning and no end. The very name God gives Moses to use says it all, and says it with such beautiful economy of word, "I AM." But even as CEO of all creation, God still took a day off and blessed the sabbath as a time of special stillness—for God and for us.

Our stillness is pausing to reflect on the fact that we are merely created beings. It can be the stillness of a meditation at sunrise, or the stillness of waiting upon God, praying to God, and believing that God is working in an omniscient manner to help us in ways we could never envision. It is the stillness of having faith to believe that even before our petitions leave our lips, God is busy knitting us blessings with an endless supply of invisible and miraculous yarn.

—Susan Taylor Block



*Jesus stood still and called them, saying,
"What do you want me to do for you?"*

—MATTHEW 20:32

In the morning, I get up already thinking about the demands of the day. I wake with plans, the tasks and challenges of the day on my mind. My mind is filled with how I will meet those challenges. I often turn on the news and hear the challenges and difficulties in the community and the world. In the distance, I hear the sounds of birds singing their morning song. The bird song invites me to be still for a moment and listen.

That invitation calls me to notice the different songs. Some are close by and some seem to answer from far away. Their song invites me to savor the moment. What is the true song that the morning brings? So I begin the day in another way. What delight! The invitation is to still my internal urgings and to turn to listening, to be still.

In those few moments of listening, my mind finds a sense of quiet. I want to spend more time like this. My breathing slows. I can hear the great opportunity the day brings in the songs of the birds. Periodically during my busy day, I hear them again. Perched on a tree above my head or in the distance, I am reminded. I am filled with the calming voice of God in birdsong.

—Karen Montagno

Psalm 122 speaks of the unity and strength of Jerusalem. This unity has benefits for those in Jerusalem and those outside. Mindfulness meditation works similarly, providing unity within oneself.

I have engaged in martial arts training for several years, and an important part of the training is meditation. My teacher fosters in his students the ability to cultivate unity in the mind, body, spirit, and emotion. The whole of the program works to improve your breathing, blood flow, mental clarity, and emotional maturity. My pain tolerance is higher than when I began. My weight is better, and my blood pressure is great.

These are the first fruits of mindful meditation. We begin to feel the flow of blood and air through us. Our health (emotional and physical) improves. We begin to know ourselves better as we cultivate unity within ourselves.

The second benefit is an exterior one. We share and manifest our unity of self with others. A mindful person can share their peace, their unity with others. As Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you” (John 14:27).

—Carl Fosnaugh



*[Jesus] woke up and rebuked the wind,
and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!”*

—MARK 4:39

Contributors

ALLISON ZENT BLANKEMEYER worked for many years in the textile industry before earning her master's degree in Montessori education. She taught for fifteen years and then retired early to be a full-time caregiver to her husband and mother, who both have Alzheimer's.

*April 24, May 24, June 24, July 24, August 24,
September 24, October 24, November 24, December 24*

SUSAN TAYLOR BLOCK is a native and resident of Wilmington, North Carolina, where she works as a freelance writer. Though most of her writings are on the topic of Wilmington's rich history, she has published light verse, heavy verse, cartoon texts, and essays as well. Spending time with her two grown daughters is Susan's greatest delight.

*January 29, February 29, April 29, May 29, July 29,
September 29, October 29, December 29*

JOAN BOWERS is a spiritual director and writer who lives in New Hampshire. She is a companion in The Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross. The SCHC operates Adelynrood, a retreat and conference center near Newburyport, Massachusetts, where Joan loves to spend time. She values good friends and good conversation!

*January 21, February 21, March 21, April 21, May 21,
June 21, July 21, August 21, September 21, October 21,
November 21, December 21*

THE REV. MARK BOZZUTI-JONES is the priest for pastoral care and nurture at Trinity Wall Street in New York City. Trained in the Jesuit tradition and discipline, Mark's work in pastoral care, liturgics, spiritual direction, Christian formation, and group facilitation keep him engaged in actively spreading the gospel of Jesus.

*January 15, February 15, March 15, April 15, May 15,
June 15, July 15, August 15, September 15, October 15,
November 15, December 15*

Contributors

ELIZABETH BRIGNAC is a freelance writer and the mother of two adventurous boys. She writes and edits material for ChurchNext, an online Episcopal Christian education company. A cradle Episcopalian and priest's kid, she grew up steeped in the middle way in New Orleans, Louisiana, and has spent most of her adult life in Cary, North Carolina.

*January 6, February 6, March 6, April 6, May 6,
June 6, July 6, August 6, September 6, October 6,
November 6, December 6*

LAUREN CALDWELL is a writer, advocate, mother, and wife living in Atlanta, Georgia. A cradle Episcopalian, Lauren is devoted to deep conversations about Jesus, hospitality, and kindness.

*January 14, February 14, March 14, April 14, May 14,
June 14, July 14, August 14, September 14, October 14,
November 14, December 14*

BREE COMBS is a blessed mama, a treasured wife, and a grateful daughter of the Most High King. She loves writing, cooking, reading, and eating macaroni and cheese more than any person should. She lives on a farm in Kentucky, but her soul craves salty ocean air with every breath she takes.

*January 18, February 18, March 18, April 18, May 18,
June 18, July 18, August 18, September 18, October 18,
November 18, December 18*

MARY W. COX retired in 2012 as director of communications for the Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida. She lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, where she and her husband enjoy singing in the choir at the Church of the Holy Comforter. She writes light verse and haiku and takes a camera on her daily walks, practicing to become a more skilled photographer.

*January 12, February 12, March 12, April 12, May 12,
June 12, July 12, August 12, September 12, October 12,
November 12, December 12*

Contributors

KATHY H. CULMER is a storyteller, teacher, and writer. A member of St. James' Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas, Kathy serves as a lector, worship leader, and director of religious education. Kathy is a former mission funding coordinator for the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, is the editor of a collection of personal narratives called *Yes, Jesus Loves Me: 31 Love Stories* and author of the January 2014 meditations for *Forward Day by Day*.

*January 27, February 27, March 27, April 27, May 27,
June 27, July 27, August 27, September 27, October 27,
November 27, December 27*

MIGUEL ESCOBAR serves as senior program director of Leadership Resources at Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF). A lay Episcopalian, he is a man of many practices, regularly making bread, playing piano, writing, and drawing from Brooklyn, New York. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in 2007.

*January 11, February 11, March 11, April 11, May 11,
June 11, July 11, August 11, September 11, October 11,
November 11, December 11*

KATHLEEN FLANAGAN is a native New Englander who currently lives in Cincinnati, Ohio. She has worked in libraries and religious publishing for much of her life, and has published poems and essays on spiritual themes. She holds a Master of Divinity degree and has been a Benedictine oblate since 2008.

*January 23, February 23, March 23, April 23, May 23,
June 23, July 23, August 23, September 23, October 23,
November 23, December 23*

CARL FOSNAUGH is a member of Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church in Westerville, Ohio. He is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity degree from Bexley-Seabury seminary and licensure to teach social studies in middle and high schools. Carl is an associate of the Community of the Transfiguration and a former member of Brendan's Crossing, an intentional young adult community in the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio.

January 31, March 31

Contributors

LINDA GELBRICH is a retired clinical social worker who worked as a therapist and educator in integrative medicine focusing on mind/body/spirit health. A spiritual director, formation facilitator, poet, writer, and grandmother, Linda is also an active member of the laity at the Church of the Good Samaritan in Corvallis, Oregon, where she lives with her husband, Keith. She loves music, birding, designing and producing notecards, and hiking, especially in the red-rock country of the southwestern United States.

*January 26, February 26, March 26, April 26, May 26,
June 26, July 26, August 26, September 26, October 26,
November 26, December 26*

CHARLOTTE CHERE GRAHAM is the founder and chief voice fanatic of 360 Speaking LLC. She guides people in uncovering their Signature Note. Charlotte's first book, *Inside the Light—Hope & Transformation*, was recently published. You can read more from Charlotte by visiting her blog at charlottecheregraham.com.

*January 9, February 9, March 9, April 9, May 9, June 9,
July 9, August 9, September 9, October 9, November 9,
December 9*

THE REV. CANON SCOTT GUNN is executive director at Forward Movement and canon to Christ Church Cathedral in the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio. He is passionate about proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ for our time. An avid technophile, he is a blogger and social media devotee. When not at home in Cincinnati, Ohio, he is traveling throughout the church as a speaker and workshop leader.

December 31

SPENCER HIXON is a stay-at-home dad and aspiring author who lives near the University of Notre Dame. When not wrangling his daughter, he spends his time working on his first novel, fixing up his house, playing the guitar, and wearing interesting hats. Some of his short stories are available for viewing on his blog at yetanotherwritersblog.blogspot.com.

*January 17, February 17, March 17, May 17, June 17, July
17, August 17, September 17, October 17, December 17*

Contributors

THE REV. PAUL P. JESEP identifies as a Sophiologist, believing Holy Sophia (Divine Wisdom) is the Holy Spirit. He is an Eastern Orthodox priest and a New York attorney specializing in ethics, compliance, and public policy. He also serves as a corporate chaplain working with professionals on ways to integrate their public lives and spiritual understandings. Paul is author of the book, *Lost Sense of Self & the Ethics Crisis*.

*January 7, February 7, March 7, April 7, May 7, June 7,
July 7, August 7, September 7, October 7, November 7,
December 7*

RACHEL JONES loves Jesus, her husband, Bob Dylan, the book of Jeremiah, and Texas barbecue. Her hobbies include playing music, practicing yoga, squeezing her friends' chubby babies, and looking for her car keys. Rachel is the associate editor for Forward Movement. She and her husband reside in Cincinnati, Ohio.

*January 1, February 1, March 1, April 1, May 1,
June 1, July 1, August 1, September 1, October 1,
November 1, December 1*

THE REV. JASON LEO is the rector of Calvary Episcopal Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. Married to the fragrant and lovely Jeanne, they have three beautiful children. When not preaching or presiding, Jason enjoys spending time at the Procter Center, the camp and conference center for the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio.

*January 19, February 19, March 19, April 19, May 19,
June 19, July 19, August 19, September 19, October 19,
November 19, December 19*

CHARLES McCLAIN lives in Sewanee, Tennessee, where he enjoys life with his wife, Janna, and two children, Samson and Vera. He enjoys writing poetry, playing the guitar, sitting on the back porch, and organizing a campaign to make "And also with y'all!" a recognized appropriate liturgical response for the worldwide Anglican Communion.

*January 28, February 28, March 28, April 28, May 28,
June 28, July 28, August 28, September 28, October 28,
November 28, December 28*

Contributors

MIRIAM MCKENNEY is wife to David, and mom to Nia, Kaia, and Jaiya. A lifelong Episcopalian, she currently works as the development director at Forward Movement after a twenty-year career as a librarian.

March 29, April 17, June 29, August 29, November 17

WESTINA MATTHEWS is a retired corporate executive, author, inspirational speaker, retreat leader, and spiritual director whose practice reflects contemplative living through “holy listening.” A member of Trinity Wall Street, she teaches contemplative spiritual direction at General Theological Seminary as an adjunct professor.

*January 10, February 10, March 10, April 10, May 10,
June 10, July 10, August 10, September 10, October 10,
November 10, December 10*

SARAH BRYAN MILLER is a member of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in St. Louis, Missouri, where she sings in the choir, serves as a lector and licensed preacher, and runs a blog. A former professional opera singer based in Chicago, she joined the St. Louis Post-Dispatch as classical music critic in 1998. Bryan lives in west St. Louis County with her younger daughter, a college student, and a brace of cats.

*January 22, February 22, March 22, April 22, May 22,
June 22, July 22, August 22, September 22, October 22,
November 22, December 22*

THE REV. KAREN B. MONTAGNO is an Episcopal priest and director of congregational resources and training for the Diocese of Massachusetts. Karen finds joy in ministry that connects her in deep ways with others. She has three adult children and being a part of their lives is more than rewarding. Gardening, cooking, camping, and relaxing with friends is big fun for her. Two cats keep her guessing about what life is up to next.

*January 30, March 30, April 30, May 30, June 30,
July 30, August 30, September 30, October 30,
November 30, December 30*

Contributors

SANDRA T. MONTES is a doctoral student at the University of Houston. Her projected graduation date is spring, 2016. Her passions include family, music, writing, movies, and traveling. She serves as a lay leader at Iglesia Episcopal San Mateo in Houston, Texas. She is a teacher and a consultant for Episcopal Church Foundation.

*January 20, February 20, March 20, April 20, May 20,
June 20, July 20, August 20, September 20, October 20,
November 20, December 20*

THE REV. RHODA S. MONTGOMERY serves as the rector of St. Thomas in College Station, Texas. She has also served churches in Austin and Houston. Prior to her life as an ordained person, Rhoda was the live-in resident manager and bereavement care coordinator for the Austin Ronald McDonald House. She and her husband, Rob, love Texas football and long country drives.

January 24, February 24, March 24

THE REV. PENNY NASH is proud to serve as associate rector at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia. An amateur photographer, she posts her photographs along with prayers and reflections on her blog, "One Cannot Have Too Large a Party" at penelopepiscopal.blogspot.com.

*January 8, February 8, March 8, April 8, May 8,
June 8, July 8, August 8, September 8, October 8,
November 8, December 8*

TERESA B. PASQUALE is co-facilitator of Seekers Dinner Church at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Delray Beach, Florida; she is also co-founder and clinical director of RECO Intensive, an addiction recovery center. She is the author of *Mending Broken* and *Sacred Wounds* and co-curates the "Emerging Voices" blog at patheos.com. She loves to teach, preach, speak, and facilitate dialogue as well as practice connecting contemplation and action and healing and reconciliation.

*January 4, February 4, March 4, April 4, May 4,
June 4, July 4, August 4, September 4, October 4,
November 4, December 4*

Contributors

HOLLI POWELL is an active lay Episcopalian who occasionally preaches. She records a weekly podcast called “The Collect Call,” during which she and her co-host discuss the appointed collects of the week and how they interface with our daily lives. In discharging the duties of her day job, she serves as the finance director for a nonprofit organization working in Appalachia. She and her daughter attend Christ Church Cathedral in Lexington, Kentucky.

*January 2, February 2, March 2, April 2, May 2,
June 2, July 2, August 2, September 2, October 2,
November 2, December 2*

THE REV. CANON CHUCK ROBERTSON is canon to the presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church and distinguished visiting professor at General Theological Seminary. A member of the Council on Foreign Relations, he also serves on the board of the *Anglican Theological Review* and as general editor of the *Studies in Episcopal & Anglican Theology* series. Chuck has authored over a dozen books, including his recent *Barnabas vs. Paul* and *The Book of Common Prayer: A Spiritual Treasure Chest*.

*January 3, February 25, March 25, April 25, May 25,
June 25, July 25, August 25, September 25, October 25,
November 25, December 25*

JASON SIERRA is a lifelong Episcopalian living and working in Washington, DC. He has a passion for vocational discernment and leadership development and especially explored that during his four and a half years working for The Episcopal Church. He likes to create pretty things and enjoy the pretty things God has already created.

*January 25, February 3, March 3, April 3, May 3,
June 3, July 3, August 3, September 3, October 3,
November 3, December 3*

Contributors

JUNE TERRY taught nurses in South Africa for ten years before returning to the United States. She earned a master's degree in New Testament and met her late husband when they worked as seminary administrators. She has served as a nursing home chaplain and is active in The Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross and in her Rhode Island parish. She is thankful for friends, dogs, music, and the ocean.

*January 16, February 16, March 16, April 16, May 16,
June 16, July 16, August 16, September 16, October 16,
November 16, December 16*

RICHELLE THOMPSON serves as deputy director and managing editor at Forward Movement. Her passion for hearing and telling stories and writing in a way that moves people has guided her vocation, first as a newspaper reporter, then as director of communications for the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio, and continuing with her ministry at Forward Movement. She and her husband, an Episcopal priest, have two children, a horse, a dog, and a rabbit. They all live in God's country in Northern Kentucky.

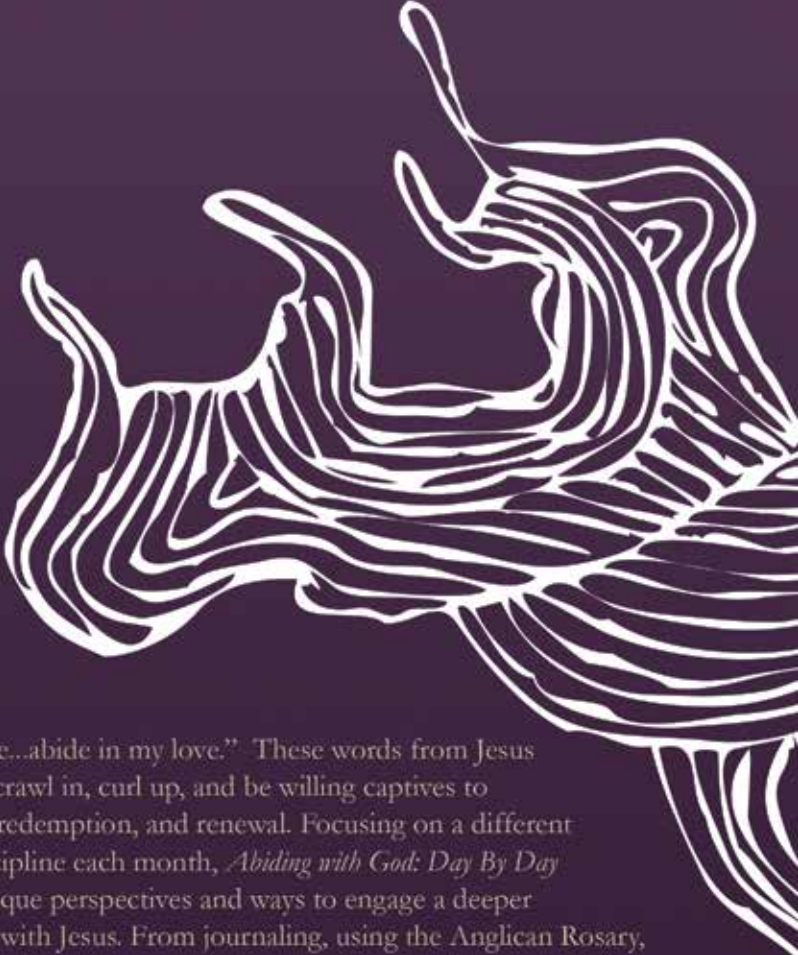
May 31, July 31, August 31, October 31

LONGKEE VANG is a youth minister and young adult facilitator in the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota. He also works for a nonprofit organization located on the east side of St. Paul. When he's not recruiting youth to attend mission trips, he enjoys hiking and playing the video game *Just Dance*.

*January 5, February 5, March 5, April 5, May 5,
June 5, July 5, August 5, September 5, October 5,
November 5, December 5*

THE REV. SUSAN WYPER is an Episcopal priest who currently serves as associate rector of St. Matthew's Church in Bedford, New York. She strives to live her life by having an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love God, and the gift of joy and wonder in all God's works. She and her husband live in Darien, Connecticut, where they raised three wonderful sons.

*January 13, February 13, March 13, April 13, May 13,
June 13, July 13, August 13, September 13, October 13,
November 13, December 13*



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