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PATHWAYS
A CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Six Gestures of Morning Praise

excerpt from *Out of the Ordinary* by Joyce Rupp

Each morning when I arise, I begin the day with these six gestures. I join spirit and body in praising the Holy One and offering my thanks for life. As I make the gestures, I say a one-line prayer and then remain in that posture for a brief time.

1. Offering the Creator praise and gratitude

Stretch your arms high and wide above your head.

"I thank you, Holy One, for the gift of another day of life."

2. Intentionally being aware of my spiritual bond with all of creation

Hold arms out from your sides, a little below shoulder height. Move (pivot) to the left and to the right with your arms stretching outward toward the cosmos.

"I reach out in compassion to my sisters and brothers throughout the universe."

3. Offering my life to the Holy One

Stretch your arms out straight in front of you, slightly apart, palms up.

"I give to you all I am and all I have."

4. Opening to accept what the Holy One offers me this day

Pull your hands close together and cup them as a container.

"I open my entire being to receive the gift that you have waiting for me in this new day."

5. Remembering to be kind to our planet Earth

Bend over, reach down, and touch the floor, or better yet, the ground, if you are outside.

"I touch this planet, Earth, with awe, reverence, and gratitude, promising to care well for her today."

6. Awareness of the indwelling presence of the Holy One

Stand up, cross hands over your heart, and bow to the waist.

"May I be united with you throughout this day, aware of your love strengthening me and shining through me."

Joyce Rupp is well known for her work as a writer, international retreat leader, and conference speaker. She has received awards in the spirituality books category from the Catholic Press Association.

"...join spirit
and body
in praising
the Holy
One and
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life."

A Reminder by Sarah Bessey

You don't have to be productive and you don't have to change the world.
You're already so loved.

You don't have to be smart. You don't have to be simple.
You don't have to read all the right books by the right people.
You're already so loved.

You don't have to conform to someone else's ideas of holy or acceptable. You can be from the wrong side of the tracks or the gated community, suburbs or urban or rural. You can work with your hands and your mind, your back and your brain. You don't have to be educated, not at all. You don't have to have a degree or letters after your name.

(continued on pg. 3)

Personal Reflections

Some personal testimonies received from recent PATHWAYS attendees:

Fractals of Grace (April 2023)

"I had been hesitant to attend but enjoyed the program and meeting other members. The program speaker, Kari Lindholm Johnson, began with prayer and a presentation on fractals (complex geometric curves) found in nature. Many examples of patterns in plants, trees, flowers, and shells were shown to help us see the beauty in nature and God's creation. We used drawing paper, special-colored pencils, and stencils to create a design that showed our connection with God and nature. At the end everyone displayed their picture and talked about the meaning of the design and how it developed."

— Eileen Herring, CLC member

"Within God's creation of us, he has given a precious gift of love and grace that we can express through various forms of art. *Fractals of Grace* drew from our creativity in art how we can take a pattern of shape and emphasize a form of repetition of love in the Spirit. I would highly recommend participating in these classes to enhance your spiritual health."

— Jack Wilson, CLC member

Contemplating the Cosmos (June 2023)

"Thank you to the PATHWAYS committee for hosting another amazing workshop. *Contemplating the Cosmos* was very informative. I was surprised to learn the number of references to stars in the Bible, not just the Star of Bethlehem. Most incredible was realizing the number of stars and galaxies that exist in the universe."

— Paul Larsen, CLC member

Greeting Cards

Have you seen the beautiful greeting cards* for sale in the gathering space at Christ Lutheran Church? Thanks to a generous donation, handmade cards are available for purchase to support the ministry of PATHWAYS. One card sells for \$5; three cards for \$10. A money box is located next to the card display to receive your donations. Be sure to check it out!

*Our supply is being replenished frequently!



Beyond our Walls

In recent weeks, PATHWAYS has hit the road to share its offerings within the community. Following our presentation at the Congregational Resourcing Fair of the Northern Illinois Synod this spring, we participated at the Synod Assembly June 16-17 held at Augustana College (Rock Island, IL). There we introduced ourselves to more individuals, shared about our work and provided resources. Later in June, we enjoyed a successful event at The University Club (Rockford, IL), with CLC member Steve Larsen leading a robust discussion on the biblical history and ancient art of wine making. The evening included wine tasting and hors d'oeuvres.

PATHWAYS has facilitated a number of events at churches and service organizations over the years. If your group would like to hear more about hosting a workshop, please contact us at pathways@makingChristknown.org or 815.885.2522.



seekthepath.org



Centering Prayer

Monthly *Centering Prayer* continues on the first Thursday of every month at 10 am, offering scriptural foundations for a time of silent meditation and prayer. If you are new to *Centering Prayer*, this is a wonderful way to begin a new discipline in your faith practice. If you are a seasoned prayer, our monthly offering will assist you in maintaining your prayer discipline.

Did you know that *Centering Prayer* is now available online? If you can't join us in person, experience this time of centering on your own schedule. Visit seekthepath.org/offerings to access the service.



Diakonia Summer Sampler

You are invited to join in a FREE three-session, online study of "The Universal Christ" by Richard Rohr. Sessions will be held Thursdays, July 6, 13 & 20 from 6:00 - 9:00 pm via Zoom.

Sign up by contacting Doug Wood at dwood1955@hotmail.com.

upcoming offerings

SEP 30: PRAYING WITH ICONS

Led by the Rev. Father Jonathan Bannon, this is a planned morning event at Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church (Rockford, IL). Watch for more details soon at seekthepath.org.



OCT 14: AUTUMN FEST

Join us at the annual Autumn Fest Open House at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC). LOMC has a long tradition of inviting everyone out to their beautiful property in Oregon, IL to celebrate God's ministry in the outdoors. There will be activities to suit just about everyone at any age. PATHWAYS will lead a labyrinth walk as part of the festivities. Full details to be announced soon at lomc.org and seekthepath.org.



(REMINDER continued from pg. 1)

None of that moves the meter of your belovedness. God won't say, *Okay, now I love her just a bit more because, look, she is finally out of debt or powerful or influential or tireless.*

Your family story can be beautiful or terrible — or, like most of us, a bit of both. You don't have to be a mother or a father, you don't have to be married, you don't have to be single, you don't have to want children or raise children. You don't have to be sober or clean. Church or no church or a certain kind of church only, whatever.

You can doubt or feel great certainty (even if that certainty is in your doubt). You can believe in God, doubt God, seek God. You can be someone well acquainted with unanswered prayers. You can carry chronic pain or dance through life. You don't have to love yourself or even like yourself, you are loved. Whether your life looks well put together from the outside while hiding a hot mess inside or vice versa, sometimes on the same day, you are loved.

You have nothing to prove. You have nothing to earn.

Love can and does and will transform us in every way — our ideology, our opinions, our habits, our values, our priorities, our very names. But it's not a prerequisite or a requirement, it's not behavior modification, it never is, not for Love.

Love has happened and it is happening and it will happen. It is kind and patient towards you.

You're already so loved, you aren't earning a breath of love or tenderness more than what you already have just by breathing. Your name is already written in the lines of the hands of the universe. You're star-breath-of-dust, and you are beloved, intimately, faithfully, wholly. You are known. You are loved with delight and abundance, with choice and desire.

You may feel it or not.
YOU ARE SO LOVED.
You are so loved.
You are so loved.

Sarah Bessey is a best-selling Christian author and blogger. She is the co-founder and cohost of the Evolving Faith Conference and podcast.

PATHWAYS


A CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

a ministry of Christ Lutheran Church



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 on Facebook, search:
Pathways: A Center for Spiritual Renewal

Spirit Vibes is a quarterly newsletter designed to inform, inspire, and publicize the ways in which **PATHWAYS: A Center for Spiritual Renewal** is working to deepen relationships with humanity, creation, and the Divine. We hope you find this tool helpful in your spiritual walk; send your feedback or suggestions to pathways@makingChristknown.org. Let's journey!

PATHWAYS TEAM

Karen Glavin, Chair
Pastor Carol Baumgartner
Bill Blackburn
Lee Blackburn
Anna Borchers
Jenny Campbell
Kris Campbell
Deacon Laura Gorton
Jan Hedrick

2023 schedule:



Centering Prayer

JUL 6 / AUG 3 / SEP 7 / OCT 5 / NOV 2 / DEC 7
(first Thursday of every month)



Praying with Icons

SEPTEMBER 30
Christ the Saviour
Orthodox Church
Rockford, IL



Autumn Fest

OCTOBER 14
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center
Oregon, IL



Healing through Ink

NOVEMBER 4



Chanting Workshop

DECEMBER 2

All events will be held at Christ Lutheran Church (Belvidere, IL) unless otherwise noted.
Visit seekthepath.org for more details.