

THE RADIX PROJECT
small groups / deep roots

HEALTH, HEALING, AND SHALOM

Stories in Scripture

SPRING 2025



SAINT MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL



THE RADIX PROJECT

saintmarks.org/radix

Since early 2020, Radix has offered the opportunity for small groups to meet over the course of six weeks to share stories, study scripture, and pray for one another.

A small group is a cohort of people who gather to get to know one another against the backdrop of shared stories, scripture, and prayer. This is not a working group; there is no task to be accomplished. It is about knowing one another, and being known, as we are known by God. And that is the root of spiritual transformation.

The name for this communal effort, *radix*, is the Latin word for “root.” Jesus modeled small group relationships in his life and ministry, and the early Church was structured on small groups who worshipped, prayed, and cared for one another. Those are our roots, and in our time, when so many pressures of modern life leave us feeling alone and isolated, Christian community offers us a tangible way of entering into relationships rooted in trust and mutuality.

The root word, *radix*, also gives rise to a word we hear a lot these days—radical. A radical is not one who goes their separate way, doing their own thing. A radical is one who is so well-grounded with deep roots that they are able to stretch out to the fringes of existence and offer us all a different way of being in the world. We speak of radical hospitality or radical welcome because we claim our deep roots of this life in Christ, and we are willing to claim a radical vision for our lives and for the world.

We don’t always agree—politically, theologically, and we have different life experiences—but we care for one another, we pray for one another, and the blush of life is fuller because of those relationships. It is our hope that as you reflect on these stories, you might discover how God’s graceful activity is revealed in your own life as well, and in those of your group members. ♦

THE RADIX PROJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE

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Please feel free to contact radix@saintmarks.org if you have any questions or concerns along the way. Thank you for your participation.

OVERVIEW FOR SMALL GROUPS

Small groups are designed to gather people of faith in settings that foster trust so that our relationships with God and one another are strengthened. When we meet each other for earnest conversation, sharing, and prayer, we deepen the bonds of affection by which we learn how to love ourselves, each other, and God more fully. In this way, small groups are intentional about providing space for prayerful support and accountability, guided by the One we know as Jesus the Christ.

For our purposes in the Radix Project, we have created a process for guiding 6–10 people in their season together, designed as six 90-minute sessions, with a plenary gathering before the first session. Each small group gathering is structured to open with prayer, to have time for check-in, scripture reading and reflection, sharing of stories, and check-out with prayer.

SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

OPENING PLENARY

Sunday, April 27, 2025
7–8 p.m., online via Zoom only

SESSION 1:

ISAIAH 58:6-14 week of April 27, 2025

SESSION 2:

MARK 5:21-43 week of May 4, 2025

SESSION 3:

PSALM 23 week of May 11, 2025

SESSION 4:

LUKE 5:17-21 week of May 18, 2025

SESSION 5:

LUKE 22:47-51; JOHN 18:10, 12 week of May 25, 2025

SESSION 6:

REVELATION 21:4, 22:1-5 week of June 1, 2025

**Sunday groups begin May 4 and conclude on June 8.*

RADIX 14

HEALTH, HEALING, AND SHALOM: STORIES IN SCRIPTURE

If I say the phrase “health care,” I am willing to bet that for many the image conjured has something to do with hospitals and traditional white-coat-clad professionals. The “medical model” has become the dominant model for the delivery of health care in recent decades, and approaches to illness and to therapeutic interventions necessarily follow this model’s construct which narrowly defines health as an absence of organic disease, and disease as a biological, chemical or physical aberration caused by an independent agent that attacks the body (traditionally intending the physical body).

Enter the Church...

Broadly stated, health can be defined as “a dynamic state of well-being of individual and society; of physical, mental, spiritual, economic, political and social well-being, of being in harmony with each other, with the material environment, and with God.” (World Council of Churches). It is biblical in its origins; it is foundational to our understanding of God’s design and purpose for creation; it is the idea and ideal of *shalom*.

Healing, then, is the process that leads to experiencing something of the essence of shalom and wholeness; it is a naturally occurring resource in creation such that reconciliation can occur—even if “cure” (defined medically as absence of organic disease) does not happen. Cure is a biological process; healing is ontological, existential. The Church, informed by biblical stories of healing and an existential reliance on God’s mysterious ways, has as healthy perspective on healing in the face of incurable disease as any I know.

That suffering exists is not denied—indeed, Jesus’ very incarnation into the human condition is a model for us to ponder what it means to “suffer with.” Recall that the etymological root of our medical word patient is “to suffer.” But similarly, compassion means literally, “to suffer with.” Caring is a moral act that engages the Christian in such a manner that their life is changed based on the values of caring—namely, compassion, activity replacement (i.e., to do for another what they cannot do for self), assurance that one’s care is consistent, preserving of one’s dignity, and is ultimately healing in nature.

The conflation of “health” with the narrower concept of “medicine” as the dominant model in western industrialized nations is a thoroughly modern phenomenon. The vast majority of human history has functioned with a different model, and although the scientific contributions of modern medicine cannot and should not be forsaken, there is a role for the church in the societal discourse about how health might be redefined in broader terms—not in a call for nostalgic return to premodern practices, but because much of that heritage can lay the foundation for us to begin to think about health in more wholistic terms.

All of this is to say, the biblical stories of healing have a great deal to teach us. As you and your Radix group engage these stories, I encourage you to leave room for the mystery. We don’t have to explain it all in modern medical/technical terms. Look for the healing that comes in community, even in all creation, when *shalom* crosses the threshold of the story. Situate yourself there in the story: have compassion, locate God, practice resurrection, experience *shalom*. Bless you all in the journey.

—Dean Steve Thomason

ESTABLISH GROUP NORMS

To foster trust, it is essential to establish group norms, a shared set of expectations for these sessions, ensuring everyone agrees on how they will spend this time together. Plan to revisit these norms as needed. Here are some aspects of relational group culture that all group members should discuss before they begin their work.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- ◆ What is allowed to be shared outside the group?
- ◆ What may be shared on social media?

RESPECT AND MUTUALITY

- ◆ Let others finish without being interrupted.
- ◆ Resist the temptation to problem-solve.
- ◆ Mutual respect is essential.
- ◆ Give everyone a chance to speak.

LOGISTICS

- ◆ What are expectations about beginning and ending on time?
- ◆ ...about informing others of an expected absence?

ATTENDANCE

- ◆ Be punctual.
- ◆ Commit to regular attendance and participation.

PREPARATION

- ◆ What, if anything, are group members expected to do to prepare for their meetings?

COMMITMENT TO PRAYER

- ◆ What are expectations that each group member commits to pray for the others daily during this time as a small group?

ZOOM ETIQUETTE

Keep your microphone on mute when not speaking.

Take responsibility to practice using the technology ahead of the meeting, and ask for help as needed. Zoom resources are available at support.zoom.us

FLOW OF THE SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

Consistent weekly meetings are crucial for the flourishing of small groups, allowing participants to know what to expect. While the facilitator guides and encourages the group, everyone shares responsibility for staying on track. The following format is suggested for all 90-minute Radix group sessions:

GATHER AND OPEN IN PRAYER	.10 minutes
CHECK-IN QUESTION	.10 minutes
SCRIPTURE REFLECTION	.15 minutes
GROUP DISCUSSION	.20 minutes
CREATIVE CONNECTION CONVERSATION . .	.15 minutes
LOOK AHEAD AND PRAYER REQUESTS	.10 minutes
CLOSING PRAYER/WORSHIP	.10 minutes

IDEAS FOR CHECK-IN QUESTIONS

Pick one for each week.

1. What image comes to mind when you hear the word “healing”?
2. What small thing has someone done for you that’s made you feel better?
3. What does it mean to feel whole?
4. Who in your life has brought you a sense of healing?
5. When you are unwell, what brings you comfort or relief?
6. What color is healing, and why?
7. What place do you associate with well-being and connectedness?
8. Are you better at taking care of yourself, or others? Why do you think that is?
9. Tell about a time when you experienced being restored.
10. What do you wish more people understood about healing or health?
11. What do you listen to when you seek healing?
12. Who or what has made you think differently about healing?

OPENING PRAYER

Leading prayer is a responsibility that is meant to be shared among the group—it's not just for the facilitator. Decide how your group will share taking turns with opening and closing prayers. Prayers may be extemporaneous, or from a rich variety of resources, including those suggested here:

- ◆ Thanksgivings, BCP, p. 836–841
- ◆ Daily Devotions, BCP, p. 137–140
- ◆ Compline, BCP, p. 127
- ◆ A brief hymn, chant, or Taizé prayer
- ◆ A poem that connects to a theme in the scripture selection
- ◆ Lectionary-based Prayers from Vanderbilt Divinity School
lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/prayers.php?id=154
- ◆ The Book of Common Prayer Online
bcponline.org
- ◆ The New Zealand Prayer Book Online
anglicanprayerbook.nz
- ◆ The Work of the People
theworkofthepeople.com/visual-liturgy
theworkofthepeople.com/be-still

CLOSING PRAYERS & CHECK-OUT

- ♦ The closing prayer is an opportunity for each member of the group to reflect on the time together, to name what they learned, and to ask the group to hold them in prayer with special intention for something in this time together, or something in their personal lives or in the lives of those they hold dear. The important thing is that the prayers of the group gather up those intentions as the meeting comes to an end, AND that each person commits to holding those prayers through the week, until you meet again.

In addition to including a prayer from one of the resources on the previous page, consider the following:

- ♦ The group may choose to go around and allow each person to pray for the person sitting to their right, with the facilitator opening and closing.
- ♦ Alternatively, after the intentions are named, sit in silent prayer, centered on God's mercy and presence.

SCRIPTURE STUDY GUIDES



WEEK 1

SCRIPTURE *Isaiah 58:6–14*

IS NOT this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your rearguard.

Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

The LORD will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

If you refrain from trampling the sabbath,
from pursuing your own interests on my holy day;
if you call the sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the LORD honourable;
if you honour it, not going your own ways,
serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs;
then you shall take delight in the LORD,
and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth;
I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken. ♦

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. This passage suggests that healing is brought about when we tend to the needs of those around us. How might you contribute to support those around you to bring about collective healing? How might you lean on your community in this time to ask for healing?
3. What challenges you when trying to connect to communal healing? What barriers, either personal, structural, societal, or cultural keep you from engaging with your neighbor in the ways outlined in this passage?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In what ways do you see this passage connecting to our current times? How do you see these holy words impacting both individuals and communities in the days to come?
2. How have you witnessed communal healing? What community efforts have you witnessed that allow you to see the saving work of Christ among your neighbors?
3. This passage is filled with imagery of the ways God will provide healing when we engage in caring for one another. Which images speak to you?

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

The mural below juxtaposes a quote from Dr. King with a portrait of Trayvon Martin. It is located on Detroit's east side, just off the Eastbound I-94 exit ramp at Gratiot. The artist, Katie Yamasaki says, "Painting this mural felt like getting a two-day hug from the residents of this community. Thank you for showing so much love and solidarity, Detroit. Thank you to the Detroit Catholic Pastoral Alliance for your constant support, finding the wall and making all logistical arrangements."

The full quotations follows:



Mural of Trayvon Martin in Detroit by Katie Yamasaki

“**M**OREOVER, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

—Excerpt from Martin Luther King Jr.’s *Letter From Birmingham Jail*

In August of 1963, where he was imprisoned as a participant in nonviolent demonstrations against segregation, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote in longhand this letter. It was his response to a public statement of concern and caution issued by eight white religious leaders of the South. The full letter can be accessed at: <https://letterfromjail.com>



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What does the juxtaposition of this quote and this image stir up in you?
2. How have you experienced suffering in witnessing the pain of others? How have you seen aid or solace provided to others bring a sense of healing for you?
3. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Is an outstanding example of an individual who worked to “loose the bonds of justice” and bring Scripture to the streets. What other leaders, either in your personal life or on a larger scale, do you see as example of this work?

WEEK 2

SCRIPTURE *Mark 5:21-43*

WHEN Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.” So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.

Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.” Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’ ” He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James,

and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha cum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat. ♦

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. There’s a lot of detail describing the crowds; the people making up the crowd, and the effects the crowd has on the story, the disciples, and on Jesus. Why do you think that is? Place yourself in the scene. Which character would you be? How would you react? What would you make of all this?
3. Both Jairus and the hemorrhaging woman went against the customs of their community and cultural norms to turn to Jesus in faith for restoration and healing. Why do you think they did so? What resonance does this have in your life?
4. How do you think it felt to be Jairus that day, during the beginning, middle, and end of this passage? Imagine his inner dialogue and emotions. What of his experience correlates with your own life?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In her book *A Faith of Many Rooms* Debie Thomas highlights the portion of this text in which the woman who had suffered with hemorrhages directly speaks to Jesus, and “told him the whole truth.” What healing was there for her in that act, beyond her physical cure? What would it sound like if you were to tell Jesus the whole truth of your life? What kind of healing could be found for you?ⁱ
2. Think about a time in your life when you have exhausted all secular options, and then turned to God, putting the situation and yourself entirely in God’s hands. In what way were you restored, to your health, to your community, to your faith, or to your sense of self? To the extent that you are comfortable, share your story.
3. Why do you think these two instances of healing are told together, as a pairing of events? What are the differences? What are the similarities?

i. *A Faith of Many Rooms: Inhabiting a More Spacious Christianity* by Debie Thomas (Broadleaf Books, 2024). Chapter 7, “Consenting to Brokenness: Lament,” p. 116–119.

NOTES



Encounter, a mural in the Encounter Chapel in Magdala, by the artist Daniel Cariola.

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

This photo by Jen Younggren was taken while on pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Dean Steve and fellow pilgrims from Saint Mark's, in March of 2023. Jen says, "I love the focus on the moment of healing, and the close up of feet and hands."

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Why do you think the artist chose to depict this famous miracle in this way?
2. What emotions arise when you look at this image? What do you feel or imagine to be the mood of the crowd, of the woman, of the disciples, or of Jesus himself?

WEEK 3

SCRIPTURE *Psalms 23*

King James Version

THE LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me
beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of
righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and
thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine
enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth
over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of
my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. ♦

New Revised Standard Version

THE LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long. ♦

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. This is perhaps the most universally beloved psalm, one that many people know by heart, and one often spoken at bedside and read at funerals. Why do you think that is?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What does “I shall not want” mean to you?
2. How have you experienced God’s care for you in a dark place?
3. This psalm is replete with images of restoration and provision. What might green pastures and still waters be for you right now? Describe the table God sets for you in the presence of your enemies. What does it look like, and how does it feel?

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

The fourth Sunday of Easter is known as “Good Shepherd” Sunday, when the Gospel passage of the Good Shepherd in John is read, and the 23rd Psalm is heard or sung in some variation in all churches that follow the Revised Common Lectionary.

Listen to this setting by Bobby McFerrin, which he composed as a tribute to his mother Sara (1924–2019), an accomplished singer and veteran music educator: <https://youtu.be/cn2zKKhhF3I>



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What does this music evoke in you?
2. What is your favorite musical setting of the 23rd Psalm?
3. When you have a longer time to listen, enjoy this compilation of eight different settings from the choirs of Saint Mark's Cathedral: https://youtu.be/7KvEgyY_YcY



NOTES

WEEK 4

SCRIPTURE *Luke 5:17–21*

ONE day, while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting near by (they had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem); and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. Just then some men came, carrying a paralyzed man on a bed. They were trying to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; but finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus. When he saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.”♦

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. In this passage, we see Jesus heal the man spiritually—“your sins are forgiven”—before healing him physically (Luke 5:24–25). Why, do you think? What does this make you wonder about the term “healing”?
3. Luke writes that Jesus forgave the man’s sins “when he saw their faith...” Imagine yourself as a bystander at this scene. How might “their faith” have shown itself to you? Describe it as much detail as possible: facial expressions, body language, et cetera, and include the five senses if you can.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. When have you needed to be carried, literally or figuratively, for the sake of your health? How did that experience feel? What wounds and/or gifts did you receive from it?
2. When have you carried someone else who needed healing, literally or figuratively? How did that experience feel, and what wounds and/or gifts came from it?
3. How do you think this community of Saint Mark's might be called to carry, or be carried, toward healing? What are ways this community offers and/or asks for help, through direct service, advocacy, forming partnerships?

NOTES



Jesus Healing the Paralytic.
From the baptistery excavated at Dura-Europos, Syria, c. 232 C.E.

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

“In a scene from the baptistery that depicts Christ’s miraculous works, Christ heals a bedridden man. The man appears twice: in the foreground, he is shown paralyzed, and on the left, he joyfully carries his bed away. The scene signified to viewers the healing quality of baptism in the nearby font, where initiates received forgiveness for sins and began new lives as Christians.”

— Yale University Art Gallery

This image, from the Yale-French at Dura-Europos, located along the banks of the Euphrates River, is one of the earliest known examples of Christian art ever found anywhere in the world. Why do you think this story was so treasured by these early followers of Jesus? What strikes you about this fresco?

REFLECTION

Pick a character from this story (but not Jesus), and retell this story in first person: as the healed man, one of his friends, a bystander, a Pharisee, or someone else who might have been an eyewitness to this scene.

What happened, not only on a “play by play” level, but on the sensory and spiritual levels as well? What did you experience in the moment, and how has it changed you (as the character in the story) since?

WEEK 5

SCRIPTURE *Luke 22:47–51*

WHILE he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus said to him, “Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?” When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, “Lord, should we strike with the sword?” Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him. ♦

John 18:10–11

THEN Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?” ♦

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. In the first passage (from the Gospel of Luke), we enter the scene of a shocking act of violence: an agitated crowd; a sudden betrayal; confusion; and the violent act itself. It seems predictable that in the moments that follow, more swords will be drawn, and a battle will follow. But Jesus does the unexpected: he heals the servant's severed ear. How do you imagine the various participants processed this surprising display of love and compassion for an enemy?
3. In the second passage (from the Gospel of John), the focus shifts. It begins with the violent act and names both the perpetrator (Simon Peter) and the victim (Malchus). Jesus gives Peter a clear order to sheath his sword. But what does he mean by "Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?" What does this tell us about healing?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What role has faith had in your—or a loved one's—healing after a frightening or violent incident?
2. At this time of great confusion, fear, anger and conflict, it feels like the potential for violence is increasing. What are you doing to show compassion and promote healing in your community?
3. What is a favorite scripture passage, poem, or quote that fortifies and calms you when rage or fear threaten to overtake you?



Loaded Menorah by Boris Bally [borisbally.com]
Photo courtesy of the Society for Contemporary Craft

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Boris Bally, a Swiss-trained goldsmith, works as a metalsmith and designer in Rhode Island, where he maintains his studio business, Bally Humanufactured. “Loaded Menorah” is a large-scale menorah sculpture, a symbol of light and healing. In 2018 Bally received the Partner Organization Recognition Award from the Rhode Island Coalition Against Gun Violence for his advocacy.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. A menorah is traditionally a symbol of hope, resilience, and faith in God. What emotions does this menorah stir up in you?
2. How does the fact that the “Loaded Menorah” was created from guns collected by municipal buyback programs affect the way you experience this sculpture?

NOTES

WEEK 6

SCRIPTURE *Revelation 21:4 & 22:1–5*

The New Heaven and the New Earth

HE WILL wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.

The River of Life

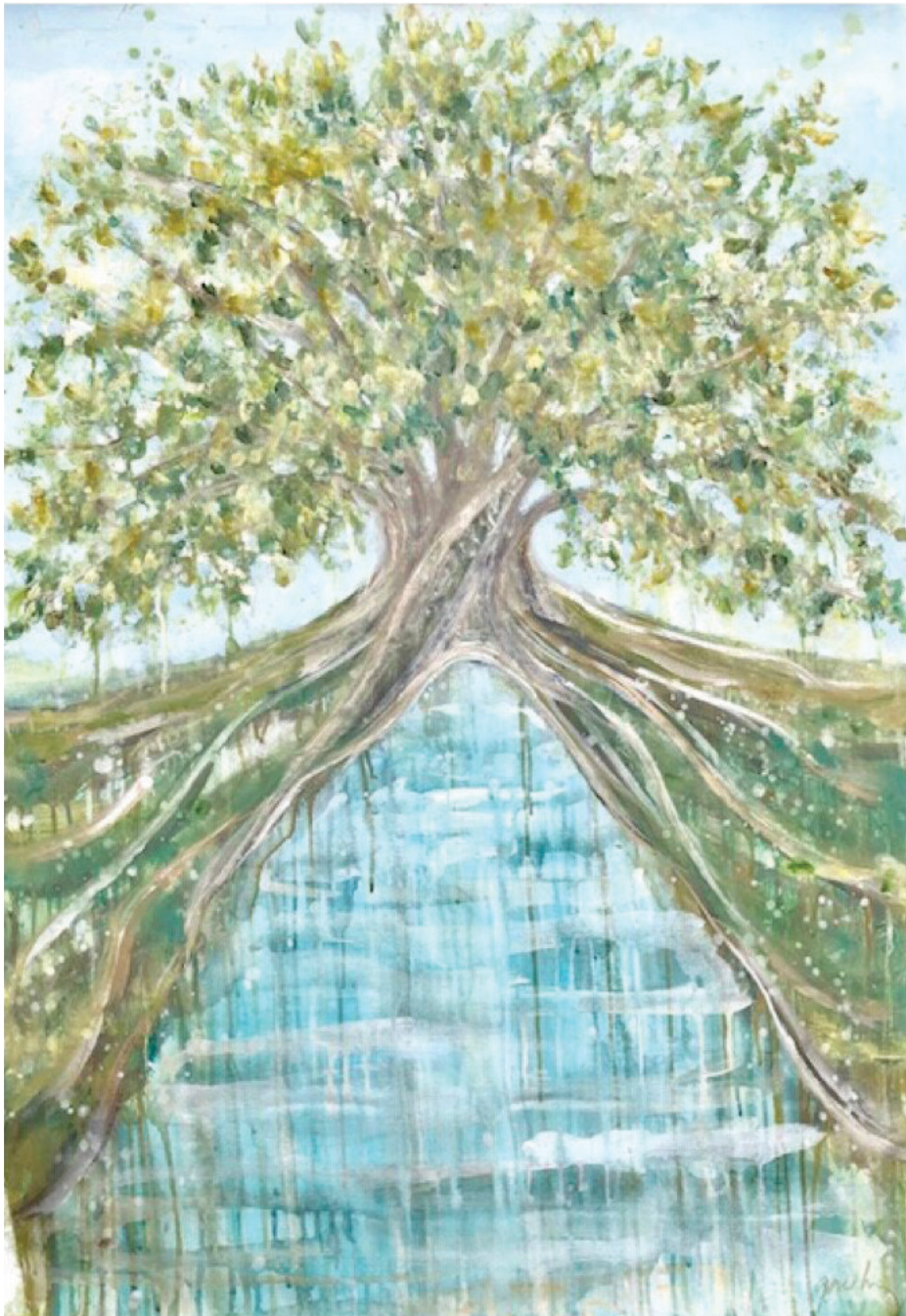
THEN the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. ♦

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about these passages?
2. The arc of the Judeo-Christian biblical story may be framed as a narrative that begins in a garden (Eden), continues through to another garden (Gethsemane), and culminates in a garden in a city (the New Jerusalem). What do you notice about these images of from Revelation as they describe the healing of all harms? How does this sync (or not) with how you imagine the future?
3. Considered from this sweeping perspective, imagine the significance of Nature (the whole of the created order) as an integral part of this cosmic story. How is our healing inextricably connected, bound together?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Describe a time when immersing yourself in nature—hiking, swimming, boating, camping, “forest bathing,” etc.—proved to be an experience of healing and wholeness.
2. How do you understand and experience the connection between your faith and actions in ministries of Creation Care?
3. When you think about the future—the big picture—what gives you hope?



Eden Restored by Gina Hurry

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

“I believe beauty is meant to be a gift that reflects the kind heart of god. i’m humbled and privileged to play my part in the bigger story of redemption as an artist just responding to life as i am compelled. beauty and “art making” are restorative and part of sharing god’s heart in the world. artists are called to stir imagination of what heaven is like. from a young age my heart has been shaped by the beauty of the world around me and i am a product of others who have poured their lives and gifts into me.”

—artist Gina Hurry

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. As you study the painting, what echoes of our scripture readings do you hear?
2. From the river water to the roots and branches and leaves, as your eyes and imagination are drawn into this scene, what are you feeling?
3. If you could be in this place, where would you most like to be, and why?

NOTES

RADIX TEMPLATE

Is there another scripture selection that your group would prefer to discuss?
Use this template!

SCRIPTURE

Please name the scripture chapter and verse. Use the NRSV or NRSVue as the primary translation. If you would like to use a different translation, please also include the NRSV version and note the name of the alternate translation.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Questions in this section relate primarily to the content or context of the scripture passage and are intended for individuals to reflect on in advance of the group meeting.

1. *We always start with this question: What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?*
2. Your question here
3. Your question here

GROUP DISCUSSION

These are open-ended questions that are designed to generate discussion among participants that connects to their personal experience.

1. Your question here
2. Your question here
3. Your question here

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Select a piece of artwork, poetry, or song that connects to the passage. Provide the name and dates of the artist, along with the year the work was created, if known.

Provide no more than two questions for reflection.



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