

OUR VISION

We believe the world should be different and so we are a space of radical hospitality connecting people to God and one another in everyday life.

HOSPITALITY

We believe in a living sanctuary: open and authentic all the time. From local milk to reclaimed wood tables, whether for worship or the Farmers Market we want to welcome everyone just as they are. We are a space of authenticity, engaging God's presence in the real stuff of life.

CONNECTION

We reach out to our community from a place of deep faith. We connect with God to go out and change the world. We are not waiting for people to find us; we want to meet as many people as we can, connect and share love.

GENEROSITY

We believe that to explore generosity we must practice it. It is risky, but we give 10% of our coffee bar sales to local nonprofits. Every month we have a different partner. Our giving is more than in-kind goods; we provide significant financial resources to do life-giving work in the community.



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READING THE BIBLE CRITICALLY

Reading the Bible critically means that we acknowledge that the Bible is complicated. The way it was assembled is complicated. Textual criticism explores how a biblical text was constructed, asking questions about the ancient sources from which it came. Discerning its original meaning is complicated. Historical criticism seeks to do so by examining its authorship, original audience, and the nature of the time and culture in which it was written. Understanding its motivations is complicated: redaction criticism analyzes the changes that have been made to a text over time and what theological or social agenda those changes reveal. Narrative criticism invites contemporary readers to engage the biblical narrative as literature or story. Contemporary post-colonial and liberationist approaches invite women, people of color, queer people, poor people, and other oppressed groups to read in ways that challenge the assumption that the traditional male and Euro-centric perspective is the only authoritative one.

Hebrew Bible

The Hebrew Bible (HB) is sacred scripture to both Jews and Christians. Broadly, the HB contains the story of the people of Israel and their covenant with God. This story is not always expressed in straightforward narrative fashion, but we can see its complexity and richness through the variety of writings in the HB's thirty-nine books. Often called the "Old Testament" by Christians, contemporary scholars prefer the term "Hebrew Bible" or "Hebrew scriptures" as a way of honoring the continuing relevance of the text and avoiding the temptation to treat it as "less than" or superseded-by the New Testament.

Christian Scriptures

The Christian Scriptures are commonly called the New Testament. The NT contains theological narratives called gospels that tell stories of Jesus Christ. Three of the gospels (Mark, Matthew, and Luke) are called the "Synoptic Gospels" because of their similarities. The Fourth Gospel is John. Another theological narrative called Acts of the Apostles likely was written by the author of Luke and contains stories of early Jesus-following communities and the missionaries who spread the Good News. The rest of the NT is comprised of letters written to various early Christian communities and their leaders. The Book of Revelation is an apocalypse – a document that claims to share divine secrets, especially regarding the end of the world. (This controversial book almost didn't make the cut to be part of the NT!)

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So What?

How we read the Bible matters. For millenia and to this day, these texts have been employed in ways that gave hope or dealt death, that demanded justice or upheld oppressors. The way we read these text matters. The Holy Spirit is at work in our reading, as She was in their writing. And yet, we are all fallible humans. Perhaps that is why it is best to read and study scripture in community, so that we can hear and share interpretations to best understand what kind of reading breathes love and life into the world.



SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Why does Spiritual formation matter?

Spiritual Formation is the avenue for God to transform us. In prayer and meditation we listen to God. We pause for communion. We begin to long for God, to begin to think God's thoughts, we begin to love as God loves and to will as God wills. When we see as God sees or listen as God listens, we connect with that deep love seeded within our very being. We practice connection with God and we grow in our ability to love the world around us.

Contemplative/Meditative Prayer

When we practice meditative prayer, we are entering into a relationship with God that goes beyond words. We are gazing upon God. We are resting in God.

In 1986, journalist Dan Rather interviewed Mother Teresa and asked her about her prayer life:

(Dan Rather, journalist): "So when you pray to God, what do you say?"

(Mother Theresa): "*I listen.*"

(Dan Rather, journalist): "And what does He say to you?"

(Mother Theresa): "*He listens.*"

CBS interview, 1986

Silent prayer is a way of looking at God while God is looking at you. Looking at God should be like gazing at the person you love most. Because that is how God is looking at you as well.

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How to Write a Breath Prayer

An early version of a breath prayer is called "The Jesus Prayer." It goes: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner. This language may not resonate with you. That is perfectly okay.

Here is a *process for writing your own*:

First, think of your preferred way of addressing God. Write it on a piece of paper in front of you with a comma after it. (You might write, "Loving God, ... Eternal One, ... Lord Jesus, ... Heavenly Father, ... Heavenly Mother,...") Whatever is most personal to you..

Second, visualize yourself in the presence of the divine. You can think of Jesus standing right in front of you saying, "Name ... what do you want from me?" "Let your response surface from deep within. If more than one thing comes to mind, identify the root desire beneath all the others" (*from Thompson, SoulFeast*). Strive for a short phrase. Easy to remember, easy to repeat. Write that phrase down after the comma.

Finally, say the two parts of your prayer together like this: Your Name for God, your deepest desire for God. (For example, one of my breath prayers is: Holy One, bring me peace.)

To use your prayer, you could dedicate a certain amount of time in silence repeating the prayer as a meditative practice or you could simply repeat your prayer to yourself as you go about your daily life.

WRITE YOUR BREATH PRAYER HERE:



Suggested Reading

Bible Study

1. *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time: Taking the Bible Seriously, But Not Literally* by Marcus Borg
2. *Women's Bible Commentary* Edited by Carol Newsom and Sharon Ringe
3. NRSV Study Bibles (Harper Collins, NIB and Oxford Study Bibles)

Spiritual Formation

1. *Soul Feast* by Marjorie J Thompson
2. *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster
3. *Psalms for Praying* by Nan C. Merrill

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Intercessory Prayer by Rev. Susan Davies

"Praying for friends and enemies is intercessory prayer. In intercessory prayer we pray on behalf of others. We ask not for ourselves but for them," says Jane Vennard in the opening of her book, *Praying for Friends and Enemies*. For me, intercessory prayer is about relationship—relation with God and with those for whom I care and am concerned—whether it's a brother-in-law undergoing cancer treatment or the folks of the Middle East amidst their fear, violence, and hopes.

I have discovered that one of the most healing and wholeness moments for me is the experience of the sun warming my back—it creates such a sense of well-being and the presence of the Divine. So when I want to pray for others, I find myself holding them in the presence of sacred sunlight—warming, healing, infusing them with the Divine—not speaking, not requesting, just holding—letting God do the rest.

WHO ARE YOU PRAYING FOR?



Abbey Expectations

1. Pray for the mission and vision of the Urban Abbey. Pray for our community.
2. Be present in worship weekly.
3. Intentional Giving, tithing or moving toward tithing
4. Serving at the Abbey and in our community.
5. Participate in small group
6. Investing in others and bring them to worship, events and coffee.

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Creation Narrative Scripture for Comparison

Genesis 1:1-30

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.³Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.⁹And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good.¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth,¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." ²¹So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.²⁴And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."²⁷So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

²⁹God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

Genesis 2:4-25

⁴These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,⁵when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; ⁶but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground—⁷then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.

⁸And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. ¹¹The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; ¹²and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. ¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." ¹⁹So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." ²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

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Team Genesis 1 Answers

Team Genesis 2 Answers

- 1) How long did creation take?

- 2) Where did creation take place?

- 3) When in the process was man created?

- 4) When in the process was woman created?

- 5) From what "substance" are man and woman created?

- 6) What is the relationship between male and female?

- 7) What is the relationship between human beings and God?

- 8) What is the main point or message of the narrative?

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Mark/Luke Anointing Scripture for Comparison

Mark 14:1-9

It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; ²for they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

³While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. ⁴But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way? ⁵For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her. ⁶But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. ⁷For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. ⁸She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. ⁹Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

Luke 7:36-50

³⁶One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. ³⁷And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. ³⁸She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." ⁴⁰Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "Speak." ⁴¹"A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." ⁴⁴Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. ⁴⁵You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." ⁴⁸Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

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Team Mark Answers

Team Luke Answers

1) What is the woman's emotional state?

2) With what substance does the woman anoint Jesus?

3) What part of Jesus' body did the woman anoint?

4) What does Jesus say to/about the woman at the end of the scene?

5) Is the woman a sinner / in need of repentance?

7) How does Jesus respond to the disciples' criticism of the woman?

8) What is the main point or message of the narrative?