

## **Ashes Alive: Easter A Project of Holy Dialogues**

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***Ashes Alive: Easter***  
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**Easter season devotionals written by LGBTQI+ Christians and their friends.**

# Ashes Alive: Easter

Easter Season Devotionals  
by LGBTQI+ Christians  
& their friends.

Ashes Alive: Easter is based on the Revised Common Lectionary, Year C  
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Edited by Tori Allen

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**Introduction to Ashes Alive: Easter  
by Rev. Marian Edmonds-Allen**

*Welcome! We are so glad that you are here with us!*

Ashes Alive: Easter is the third in an ongoing devotional series written by LGBTQI+ Christians and their friends from all over the world, from a variety of religious and spiritual traditions, expressions and points of view.

To preserve as best as possible the unique voices of our contributors their entries are very lightly edited and only for clarity when needed. Our goal is to have multiple writers for each day - we are getting there! For some of the days in Ashes Alive: Lent there are two authors but not every day. If you - are someone you know - would like to be a writer for future devotionals, please email me: [marian@parity.nyc](mailto:marian@parity.nyc)

For many people, devotionals are something they have used before, perhaps for years. For others, this is entirely new concept. What our devotional series intends to do is to share the Scripture passages of the day - currently what is known as Year C in the Revised Common Lectionary. Many Christian faiths and denominations use the Revised Common Lectionary to guide their church services, and many individuals use the Revised Common Lectionary to guide their personal Scripture reading.

Personal Scripture reading can be accompanied by written commentary - a devotional volume, like this one. Devotional compilations are often written by one person or written with a particular theme or perspective.

Our theme is love. We believe that all people are made in the image of God, and dearly loved by God. Each and every person has wisdom to share about God and about Scripture. This project seeks to share and amplify voices that often aren't heard together, and each represents the infinite diversity of God.

You may agree - or you may disagree - with what you read here. That, too, is part of the beautiful diversity of God.

May you be as blessed as we have been as we have worked together to create this for you!

## **How to use Ashes Alive: Easter** **by Rev. Kim Purl**

Ashes Alive: Easter season devotionals are written by LGBTQI+ Christians and their friends. Contributors write from a wide array of Christian conviction and belief at the intersection of faith and LGBTQI+.

Each has freedom to write from their own beliefs and doctrines without harm to another because we believe there is room for all at the feet of Jesus.

This is the heart of holy dialogue.

How you use the devotional guide is up to you.

You may choose to find a time and space to begin with prayer, receive the message of the day's devotional and prayerfully reflect. If you wish, join the conversation with others on our Facebook group: Ashes Alive. Navigate to the Holy Dialogues Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/holydialogues>) and dialogue with us during the Easter season.

We look forward to meeting you!

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Contributor: Uli

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Contributors: Rev. Yadi Martinez-Reyna

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Contributors: Adrian Slonaker

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Psalm 150; 1 Samuel 17:1-23; Acts 5:12-16  
Contributor: Liggera Edmonds-Allen

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Contributors: Nancy Wanja Mwangi

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Contributor: Jimmy

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Contributors: Rev. Kim Purl and Boniface Waweru

Monday, April 25, 2022: Psalm 122; Esther 7:1-10; Revelation 1:9-20  
Contributors: Jacklin Wambui

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Contributor: Alex Slonaker

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Contributor: Jeremy Emmert

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Contributor: Daniel Kihara

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Contributor: Malique Quinn

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Contributors: Rev. Dr. Steven Sprinkle

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Contributor: Uli

Tuesday, May 3, 2022: Psalm 121; Ezekiel 1:26-2:1; Acts  
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Contributor: Elizabeth Moraa

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Contributor: Denise Hamblen

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Contributor: Marie Nganga

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Contributor: Giacomo Liggera

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Contributors: Rev. Kim Purl and David Mwaura

Monday, May 9, 2022: Psalm 100; Ezekiel 37:15-28;  
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Contributor: Uli

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Contributor: Jeremy Emmert

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Contributors: Denise Hamblen

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Contributor: Rev. Roberto Ochoa

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Contributor: Steven Maina

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Contributors: Rev. Dr. Steve Sprinkle and Marie Nganga

Monday, May 16, 2022: Psalm 133; 1 Samuel 20:1-23, 35-42; Acts 11:19-26

Contributor: Giacomo Liggera

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Contributor: Zaweria Hunyu

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Contributor: Ash Mason

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Contributor: Aaron Jackson

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Contributor: David Mwaura

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Contributor: Daniel Kihara

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Contributor: Dorcas Kirwa

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Contributor: Nancy Wanja Mwangi

Tuesday, May 24, 2022: Psalm 93; 2 Chronicles 15:1-15; Revelation 21:15-22

Contributor: Jimmy

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Contributor: Steven Maina

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Contributor: Pelayo Alvarez

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Contributor: Zaweria Hunyu

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Contributor: Josphine Wambui

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Contributors: Rev. Roberto Ochoa and Monica Wambui

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Contributor: Ash Mason

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Contributor: Rufus Mugu

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Contributor: Angela Athey

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Contributor: Lucy Wanjiru

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Contributor: Josphine Wambui

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Contributor: Elizabeth Moraa

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Contributors: Donna Techau and Dorcas Kiki

Tuesday, June 7, 2022: Psalm 48; Joel 2:18-29; 1 Corinthians 2:1-11

Contributor: Ali Lopez-Valcarcel LMSW, M.Div.

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Contributor: Rufus Mugu

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Contributor: Angela Athey

Friday, June 10, 2022: Psalm 8; Proverbs 3:19-26; Ephesians 4:1-6

Contributor: Ali Lopez-Valcarcel LMSW, M.Div.

Saturday, June 11, 2022: Psalm 8; Proverbs 4:1-9; Luke 2:41-52

Contributor: Pelayo Alvarez

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Contributors: Donna Techau and Monica Wambui



**Monday, April 18, 2022**

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**Contributor:** [Uli](#)

**Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Joshua 10:16-27; 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8**

It all starts with the great prophecy of Psalms, the one about “the stone rejected by the builders becoming the cornerstone”. And we end with a “Festival in a community of sincerity and truth” [see: 1 Cor 5:8], and for me - a life in a community of care. Today's story is about making the old (thrown out stones) into the cornerstones of the new.

At the beginning we find ourselves in a safe, sheltered space created for us by God. They protect us, like a good parent does. But They is also a bit misterius, giving us words we are yet to understand: “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” [Ps 118:22 (NIV)] A miraculous reuse, a redoing of being not wanted and not necessary.

Then we dive deep into the most human reality possible: a middle of war, a scene of humiliation (in the name of God, even!), then death. And the stones are placed carefully to hide the bodies, to bury them forever. And we do it too. Everyone has some skeletons in their closets, buried (seemingly) forever under a pile of stones. [see: Jos 10:16-27]

And then suddenly it is after the Paschal doings, a middle of The Festival. The lamb has been slaughtered (and resurrected), the sacrifice is done. We are free and we feast because we've been freed from sin, from death, from fear. A different world - built on some Jewish outcasts, some thrown-away stones that became the cornerstones of Christianity.

Finally we come back to our reality. But what is our world today? Suffering, death, wars. Nothing to celebrate, isn't it? And yet the most christian thing to do is to feast, to dance and to celebrate. To build communities based on care, celebrating 24/7 “with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth”. [1Cor 5:8 (NIV)] A new kind of community, a post-paschal one, a group of free people celebrating together the mere fact of being alive and free thanks to Jesus's sacrifice. Let me clarify one thing: this Festival is not a dismissal of suffering or death. It's about being grateful for living in the best possible world and about hope of it being better tomorrow, someday. We are waiting for a new world to come.

“A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough” Having skeletons in the closet, hidden under a pile of stones, is not sincerity nor freedom. Hiding dark secrets and fearing that someone finds out - that's not the new post-paschal quality we strive for. We have to unpack those secrets, take apart those stone barriers and take care of all the skeletons in all the closets. And hopefully we'll be able to find some new cornerstone in the process. The skeletons we'll find won't be nice. But un-burying them is necessary if we want to have the real, post-paschal, Festival.

So, a little mind-challenge for today: what closets are yet to unpack? What skeletons keep us from living a free, post-paschal life?

**Tuesday, April 19, 2022**

**Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Judges 4:17-23; 5:24-31a; Revelation 12:1-12**

**Contributor:** [Rev. Yadi Martinez-Reyna](#)

The Psalms are often recognized as a song of praise or lament from an individual to God. More often these praises come from the Hebrew Scripture and from David, a man, a king, a chosen one by God. Despite all these titles the Psalms can be understood by those who have found comfort and solace in them. Through many generations the Psalms have been read and reflected upon often against the backdrop of individuals lives. See each reading takes a different tone, and it comes alive as a community reads these ancient words breathing life into them.

For example, Psalm 118:1-7, is a liturgy, a writing to thank God for the people of Israel who were delivered from danger. In this season of Lent, this psalm fits perfect for my community in Texas which was delivered from danger. People of faith in Texas and beyond prayed fervently for children and families of our transgender community who became a target of an attorney general's misinformation and an outdated opinion. Despite this policy's dangerous overreach on an individual's health, the opinion faded away.

The Holy-One's faithfulness and steadfast love that endures forever, shined through the difficult times of uncertainty. Just as in the Psalms opening, the element of procession from hard difficult times to a liberating state can be felt today. As people of faith, we are called to affirm the identities of all children of God as Holy. We are called upon to raise the banner of liberation and call out for justice to prevail when an opinion, a situation or circumstances leads the children of The-Holy-One to an oppressive state.

On this Lent season, be vigilant, be proactive and be the light that shines through the ugliness and fog of despair. Together we will prevail and sing a psalm of praise for The Holy-One's name endures forever.

I invite you to reflect on Psalm 118:1-7, through the lens of a community that holds steadfast to the love of its creator and deliverer.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

The Holy-One's name endures forever.

Let the Queer community say;

The Holy-One's name endures forever.

Let our Allies say;

The Holy-One's name endures forever.

Let those who revere the Creator say;

The Holy-One's name endures forever.

When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord;

The Holy-One brought me into a spacious safe and sacred space.

The Holy-One is with me;

I will not be afraid, what can a mere mortal do to me?

For the Holy-One is with me, my helper, I look in triumph over hate.

It is life giving to sing praise unto the Lord the who calls us to wholeness.

Amen

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 2 Samuel 6:1-15; Luke 24:1-12

Contributor: [Adrian Slonaker](#)

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, I spent a few years in Des Moines, Iowa, USA, where I attended Easter Vigil at St Paul's Episcopal Cathedral. Afterward, I would grab a late-night dinner from nearby Zombie Burger, a horror film-themed diner.

Although trying not to be sacrilegious, I was aware of the jarring juxtaposition of a church service that honors the Holy Resurrection and a secular establishment that pays tribute to terrifying resurrections of a completely different sort.

And yet, according to Luke, when the women bringing the spices to prepare the body of Jesus Christ arrived at his tomb, they found two living strangers in gleaming garments instead of the expected corpse, and "in their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground." (Luke 24:5 [NIV]).

The word "fright" might more readily be associated with a scary movie than with Easter Sunday, yet terror would seem to be a perfectly natural reaction if, for example, I had seen what these women discovered in the silence and dimness of a tomb in the emotionally-and politically-charged atmosphere following Jesus's execution.

It is likely due to their faith and resilience that these women managed to regain their composure quickly and keep their cool when the mysterious male visitors implored them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" (Luke 24: 5-7 [NIV]).

Not only did the women not completely freak out, but they also rushed off to the Apostles to inform them that Jesus is, in fact, alive. In doing so, they performed a key role in the Resurrection.

In a blow to which children and members of marginalized populations, including women, LGBTQIA2S+ folks, people of color, low-income individuals, and those with mental and physical illnesses and disabilities, might unfortunately relate all too often, these ancient ladies were initially not taken seriously.

The Apostles "did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense" (Luke 24:11 [NIV]). To Peter's credit, however, he at least put enough credence in the report to go and investigate the scene, where he, of course found "the strips of linen lying by themselves" (Luke 24:12 [NIV]).

Thursday, April 21 2022

Psalm 150; 1 Samuel 17:1-23; Acts 5:12-16

Contributor: [Liggera Edmonds-Allen](#)

Psalm 150 21st Century King James Version

150 Praise ye the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the firmament of His power!

2 Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

3 Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the psaltery and harp!

4 Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and organs!

5 Praise Him upon the loud cymbals; praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals!

6 Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord! Praise ye the Lord!

When I began attending church, I was overwhelmed by the established rituals.

Everyone knew when to stand and when to sit, and exactly what words to say and when. The words were overwhelming, and so was the Pastor's commentary.

Most stressful of all was the invitation to prayer - everyone went silent, and bowed their heads. Did I bow my head low enough? Should I close my eyes? Should I clasp my hands?

The one thing I've got down is the singing. That has always been my favorite part. Whenever I feel anxious about my faith, prayer, or penitence, I remember: they who sing, pray twice!

I love this psalm because it is more than a story or rulebook. It feels like a promise. It feels like 'everything that hath breath' will sing and rejoice in the end, no matter what hardships, sorrows, or even church anxieties they face now.

It is no coincidence that we are taught prayers through song - they stick with us from childhood on, and are a constant companion of worship and praise.

There are times when I do not feel good enough.

I do not feel holy enough, or reverent enough. I am uncomfortable with my creature comforts, worried about my greed and jealousy. I worry that I am not good enough for God, and undeserving of the religious community I have found.

But then I remember - so long as I have breath, I am able to praise the Lord. Even when I don't know the words, someone will share their book with me.

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord! Praise ye the Lord!

**Friday, April 22, 2022**

**Psalm 150; 1 Samuel 17:19-32; Acts 5:17-26**

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**Contributor: [Nancy Wanja Mwangi](#)**

Praise the Lord!

I have all the reasons to praise God, the savior of my soul.

I have gone through many challenges in this life, I have witnessed His saving power and grace.

I praise and worship all the time, no matter what I am going through, I still praise Him.

David knew that with God on His Side, he could defeat Goliath. David was just a small boy tending his father's sheep and even his own brothers despised him, but David knew there was a God who could fight the battle for the Israelites. He was not afraid to take the challenge, he took a bold step of faith and confronted Goliath.

We face many Goliaths in our lives.

Sometimes we are overwhelmed by day-to-day challenges we face as LGBTQ+ Christians.

It's important to always remember that with God by our side we can climb any mountain. The apostles were persecuted, but God was with them. They were put in a public jail just because they were preaching Christ. But at night God opened the prison doors for them.

It is not in vain to serve God, he will not leave you to suffer alone. Anytime you call upon His name He answers.

I will live to praise and obey His command all the days of my life. May His holy name be praised forever and ever.

Amen.

**Contributor:** [Jimmy](#)

Scripture – what is it and what is its purpose? This has been hotly contested for millennia. There is no way to neatly provide an answer to this question although Scripture clearly appears to stand as a witness, declaring who God is.

When I read today's passages, I'm reminded of the constant need for us to be convinced of who God is, to be convinced that He's real, to be convinced of who we are in relationship to Him.

When I step back to consider this, it's exhausting. Will I be on this journey forever?

The book of Samuel was written to document the intimate relationship of God with Israel. It seems to wrestle with the very same questions I struggle with but in a vastly different context, documenting the highs and lows of the most important king in Israel's history, King David.

In David's fight with Goliath, the author writes that David will defeat Goliath, "so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand." (1 Samuel 17:46b – 47, NRSV).

This is just one story that stands as a witness to who God is in the life of Israel, and who Christians believe He is to us today.

Psalms continues in this principle, acting as a temple for the people of God, especially after the physical temple was destroyed. Psalms shows the human cry grappling with where God is, who He is, sometimes briefly catching a beautiful glimpse and wildly praising God for what is briefly seen.

And then we encounter Jesus in Scripture, my personal favorite.

In this Luke passage, Jesus rises from the dead (spoiler alert) and then visits His disciples who were "startled and terrified" (Luke 24:37, NRSV).

I think it's funny that after all our efforts to encounter God, trust Him, see Him, hear Him, the minute He comes right up to us, it can terrify us.

Even though we know He's God and, in this case, we're told He would raise from the dead, doubts arise in our hearts. (I'm purposely intertwining the disciples' experience with our own).

It reminds me of that exhaustion I talked about earlier – in all our efforts to seek God, the moment He is revealed to us face to face, even there we doubt and fear. It makes me think that the doubts and fears come from something within us rather than the myriad of ways God has revealed Himself to us.

What remains encouraging to me is that even through all this, there is Jesus, still present, still coming to see the disciples, still trying to convince them of who He is. He has the patience and willingness; He said, "Touch me and see" (Luke 24:39, NRSV).

How amazing that Jesus came down from heaven to our world, in human form, for us to see and touch Him knowing we would still struggle with fears and doubts. He continues to reach out to us regardless.

Where is God reaching out to you today, asking you to touch and see?

**Contributor:** [Rev. Kim Purl](#)

“But Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than any human authority.’” Acts 5:29 NRSV

Peter and the apostles found themselves in hot water with the religion of their birth. They were accused of undermining Jewish belief and its leadership authority in their pursuit of obedience to God’s call to share the good news of the resurrected Christ with the world. Our religious systems and beliefs are a mixed bag of belonging and struggle as we dance through life with a holy God who will not be contained by our compartments of belief.

This tension of “Obey God vs. Beliefs” played out in my life when I was a teenage girl with a God-call to ministry. Although my denomination affirms God’s call in the lives of women, my pastor did not agree with our denominational beliefs (Nazarene), but literal Bible readings of 1 Corinthians 14:34 KJV, “Let your women keep silent in the churches,” and 1 Timothy 2:11 KJV, “Let the women keep silent and learn with all subjection,” and other such verses. He rejected me and my God-call because of my gender.

I could have obeyed my pastor, but God’s call would not let me settle for this as a final word. I wrote a letter to my denominational headquarters asking for instructions. Their mailed reply guided me to apply to Nazarene university and complete seminary. In those spaces I found affirmation of my God call, places to minister, and still faced scorn from those who loved their belief more than God.

What I have learned in the face of opposition is I cannot prove God’s call to minister if I do not have love for those who oppose me. The apostles standing before Jewish leaders do not reply with hateful speech, but rather with honest reason and kindness. They must follow God rather than human beliefs. The apostles are truly free in Christ. Free to minister to the world without fear of breaking belief, but rather filling belief until it overflows with the power of God. Love sets them free to love.

Respond: Where do you find tension in your life when you must choose to follow God rather than human belief?

Prayer: Lord, we pray for Your love to fill us full to overflowing so that we can respond with love when we are scorned. Because of your love, set us free to love.

**Contributor: Boniface Waweru**

“We gave you strict orders not to teach in the name of this man,” he said, “but see what you have done! You have spread your teaching all over Jerusalem, and you want to make us responsible for his death!” Peter and the other disciples replied, we must obey God, not men. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from death, after you had killed him by nailing him to a cross” (Acts 5:28-30 GNB).

The disciples chose to obey God and not any human being, they knew their calling was to spread the gospel of Christ. The fact that the apostles were witnessing to Christ is evidence that the Holy Spirit was with them. They preached without fear because they know God was with them and they were obeying His commands.

“It was late that Sunday evening, and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors” (John 20:19 GNB). Even if they had locked themselves inside, Jesus still appeared before them. I believe He had been with them but they could not feel Him because the Holy Spirit was not in them. When they received the Holy Spirit, they recognized Christ. Let us open the doors of our hearts so that Christ can be alive in us.

Who is like our God, there is no one in heaven above nor in the earth beneath like Him? He created us in His own image. Though we rebel against him, He does not abandon us. He sent His only Son to redeem us from death.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Even those who have not claimed Christ as their savior will praise Him when He will be revealed to them. How I pray that I will be one of those redeemed saints of God that will live my entire life praising God, to bring love, light and truth into my little world.

**Contributor: [Jacklin Wambui](#)**

Psalms 122 is teaching me about worshipping the Lord.

I remember when I was growing up my mother used to prepare me very early so that I may not be late for Sunday school which was coming before the main service starts.

She was very serious such that she had questions after every service. She would award me for every good answer I gave to her.

This made me love going to church and involve myself with the services going on in the church so long as there is schools. I have grown enjoying the word of God and preaching it as well. I encourage my friends and relatives to love and read the word because it is the food to our soul.

Esther 7:1-10

This book is teaching us the on time factor, we should be in the right place at the right time always as Christians.

When I think about time, I ask myself one question? Would I do anything without time? It is not possible. I must be guided by time and being disciplined makes one obey time.

God created everything may His Holy name be praised.

Revelation 1:9-20

In this book John is teaching his people to be ready for his vision, he is demonstrating humility. Jesus is proclaimed as the judge, king, ruler of the church. As a Christian, I should imitate John and his good way of living. He taught his people to live like him. He is a leader who led by example.

Prayer: Make me your vessel oh Lord and help me do as you command us to do. Let me preach your word by showing only what is good to you and helpful to the people I lead. Amen.



**Contributor:** [Adrian Slonaker](#)

When you conquer a city and make it the up-and-coming crown jewel of your people's kingdom, what better way to promote it than to create a psalm about it?

And this is exactly what King David did with Psalm 122, "A Song of Ascents of David." "Our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem" (Psalm 122:2 [NIV]) could work even now as a snappy tourism slogan worthy of t-shirts and TV spots.

David stated that "Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together" (Psalm 122:3 [NIV]). The idea here is not so much a claustrophobia-inducing, high-density urban layout, but a settlement that is not only well-organized but also united, with a solid sense of community. In addition, a sense of cozy homeyness pervades the psalm, with references to "the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1 [NIV]), "the house of David" (Psalm 122:5 [NIV]), "within your walls...within your citadels" (Psalm 122:7 [NIV]), "my family and friends" (Psalm 122:8 [NIV]), and "the house of the LORD our God" (Psalm 122:9 [NIV]).

By publicizing Jerusalem as a hub of Judaism and Jewish life, "where the tribes go up—the tribes of the LORD—to praise the name of the LORD according to the statute given to Israel," (Psalm 122:4 [NIV]), the king assured his people that Jerusalem was their home, at least spiritually and symbolically.

David's confession that he "rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD'" (Psalm 122:1 [NIV]) suggested that the Jewish people would also be elated to travel to Jerusalem, with a feeling not unlike the overall sentiment of Paul Simon's folk-pop composition "Homeward Bound":

"Homeward bound,  
I wish I was  
homeward bound,  
Home, where my thought's escapin'"  
(Simon and Garfunkel. "Homeward Bound." Columbia Records, 1966. Single.)

After trumpeting Jerusalem's role as the seat of a fair justice system, as "there stand the thrones for judgment" (Psalm 122:5 [NIV]), David ended the psalm by asking his listeners to pray "for the peace of Jerusalem...I will say, 'Peace be within you'...I will seek your prosperity." (Psalm 122:6-9 [NIV]).

While David was obviously committed to the well-being of Jerusalem, he was also asking the Jewish people to share his emotional investment in the fate of the city.

A peaceful, prosperous Jerusalem would benefit not only David and the residents of Jerusalem, but also all Jews, to which the city rightly belonged. Sadly, thousands of years later, Jerusalem, now a holy city not only of Judaism, but also Christianity and Islam, still needs prayers for peace, as it is continually plagued by tensions and outbreaks of violence in the currently unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Think about a place where you have felt most at home, like a fish in water.

What role has God played in bringing you to that special place and keeping it in your heart and thoughts?

**Contributor: [Boniface Waweru](#)**

“I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.” Psalms 122:1.

We used to sing this psalm every Sunday in church. It became so common that I knew it was a must we sing it.

At a young age, I was introduced to Sunday school by my grandmother. Sundays were very special days because no one was supposed to work. It's the day we all took a shower and wore our best clothes. We all looked forward to Sundays and thus we could sing with joy and gratitude as we headed to church. It's a place where I felt safe because Jesus was the center stage of every preaching.

I always dreamt of the day I would be a grown up and preach just like Jesus did. The day came and I preached, but the challenge I faced when I tried to be true to myself, made me ashamed of going to the house of the Lord.

People would criticize me to my face and some would call me derogatory names. My outer body was contradicting with my inner self. I just had to quit and hide. I created my little world where I could just beg God to forgive me for not being the perfect man He wanted me to be.

Today I have a reason to praise God because even in that dark part, God found me and restored my soul through an affirming fellowship in our rural home. I now lead praise and worship and my favorite song remains, “I was glad when they said to me, let us go in the house of the Lord.”

“Dear friends, don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot do any more to you after that. But I'll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill and then throw you in to hell. Yes, he's the one to fear” (Luke 12:4-5 NLT).

Heavenly Father, please help us not to fear man.

Help us to realize that even though they may kill the body, they have no authority over our soul.

Help us to follow You in righteousness. Guide our step as we sojourn in this world.

**Contributor: [Jeremy Emmert](#)**

A meditation on Revelation 3:14-22

Fixing the Ultimate Blind Spot

It has been said, “We don’t know what we don’t know.”

Worse yet, if we don’t know that we don’t know something how can come to know what we are unaware of? This isn’t a tongue twister. We humans are prone to spiritual blind spots – even spiritual blind spots. But God stands ready to help us step into the fullness of our lives by revealing both the known and unknown.

Revelations 3:16-17 reads, “So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing. But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. (G)

Did you catch that? The person thought he was rich when in fact he was poor? The person thought she didn’t need a thing when in fact she was pitiful.

That sounds like the ultimate spiritual blind spot.

The accusation was of being lukewarm. I doubt anyone aspires to be “lukewarm.” Even the synonyms don’t sound appealing – “tepid” “warmish.”

The fact is sometimes we just don’t know what we don’t know.

The good news is that we need not know everything. We can be confident God wants to reveal everything we need for a life well lived. This is the essence of life in the spirit. Not living in the past. Not worried about the future. But secure in the present whatever may come our way.

God wants to walk with through the known and the unknown. God wants to reveal the blind spots we have in our being so we can live more fully.

Verse 20 reads, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

Prayer: God I bring you all of me. The known parts and the unknown parts. Show me gold.

Help guide through the blind spots of life and the blind spots within my soul. Refine every part of my being.

**Contributor: [Daniel Kihara](#)**

Thank you, Lord.

“I will extol thee, O Lord; for thou has lifted me up, and has not made my foes to rejoice over me. O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit.” (Psalms 30:1-3 KJV).

I reflect on the goodness of the Lord and my heart is full of praise. He has saved me from shame.

There was a time I could not even face people.

All I saw was darkness surrounding me. All I could think was Hell fire that I was made to believe was my destiny because of my sexuality.

I praise God today because I am living true to myself and my God and I am able to serve Him in truth and Spirit.

“In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord” (Isaiah 6:1a GNB). As I reflect on this verse, I get the revelation that somethings or people must be removed from our lives so that we can see God.

There are many things hindering us from experiencing the power and grace of God, and unless we kill them, we will never experience the joy of salvation.

I had to cut off from my blood family because they wanted me to live a lie with my true self.

The day I was outed out as a gay man was the darkest day of my life.

I just wanted the earth to open up and swallow me alive. But God in His mighty power came through to me, I saw the Lord.

Whatever is hindering you from seeing God should die, let all doubts and fear die in you and for sure you will see God.  
Amen.

**Contributor: [Malique Guinn](#)**

“When I felt secure, I said, “I will never be shaken.” (Psalm 30:6 NIV).

We should never underestimate the power of the tongue and the power of the mind.

After all, God installed these things into us for a reason. For me, I’m still learning how to bask in the security of my mind.

Let me explain.

There have often been times where I would be in a state of bliss for a great amount of time. Then, a thought would slither into my mind, “Things are going so great right now that something bad is bound to happen. It’s balance. This is too good to be true.”

Some movies have scenes where they will show a character tanning under the sun, glasses on, living their best life with a cocktail in hand and everything. All of a sudden, there will be a shadow that covers their body and blocks the sun. We as an audience don’t even know what it is yet, but whatever it is, it disturbs the peace and prompts the character to remove their sunglasses and be like, “What’s going on?”

That’s how I would feel.

I’m still unlearning that. More recently, I have had to remind myself that God wants the best for me.

Also, I have to remind myself that it’s okay to be not okay. I just have to acknowledge the feelings and give them to God.

I used to have trouble sharing my true feelings with friends and family.

I would just suppress the sadness and negative thoughts and disallow my peers and God to help me with solutions.

However, when I do remind myself of the greatness of God and how much he loves me, I can’t help but feel secure and confident. I feel on top of the world. I call on the Lord’s name and he answers every time.

So now, no matter what is going on, I won’t forget that I am in His hands, and I am always safe there.

To you, who is reading this, I pray for you. I wish you peace of mind more than anything. It all starts in the mind. May God bless you and keep you.

I love you. God loves you.

**Contributor:** [Rev. Dr. Stephen Sprinkle](#)

Acts 9:1-6 (7-20) NRSV

Encounters make the difference: brave, loving encounters. Saul became Paul because someone overcame hostility and fear to lead him to newness of life. The characters are familiar, but not the outcome. The outcome of the encounter was extraordinary!

Saul of Tarsus was an anti-Jesus partisan. He led an armed deputation to Damascus to crush the Syrian Jesus movement in its cradle. But after a blinding vision on the outskirts of town, Saul was left as physically sightless as he was spiritually benighted. His fantasies of violence and murder led him to a bitter dead end. His unreasoning bias against a peace-loving people backfired against him, feeling godforsaken and alone.

The leader of of the Jesus movement in Damascus, Ananias, had every reason to leave the enemy of his people in the dark place where he had fallen. Ananias knew that were Saul healthy and fully sighted would have offered him no mercy. But the mystery of Love overcame his aversion and fear. Moved by a vision, Ananias offered wretched Saul something he didn't deserve—the amazing grace of a God-filled healing, and even more than that, a loving relationship. What an encounter! When Ananias, the persecuted Jesus loyalist, laid his hands on the blank stare of Saul of Tarsus, the avowed enemy of the Beloved Community, more than the restoration of physical sight came to Saul. Transformation came to him, and God “flipped the script,” transforming Saul into Paul.

The open heart of Ananias cracked open the biased heart of a bigot, and nothing could ever be the same for Paul again.

President Barack Obama stepped into the ruined and lost lives of the assassinated members of Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston, South Carolina in July 2015, and found God's amazing grace as mysterious and active as the writer of Acts had found it in the encounter between Paul né Saul and openhearted Ananias. At the funeral of Mother Emanuel's slain pastor, Rev. Clementa Pinkney, President Obama said that the virtually unbelievable openheartedness of the families of the fallen toward the shooter who had stolen away the lives of their loved ones was an encounter with undeserved, healing love. The President remarked,

That's what I've felt this week -- an open heart. That, more than any particular policy or analysis, is what's called upon right now, I think -- what a friend of mine, the writer Marilyn Robinson, calls “that reservoir of goodness, beyond, and of another kind, that we are able to do each other in the ordinary cause of things.”

That reservoir of goodness. If we can find that grace anything is possible. If we can tap that grace, everything can change...

Amazing grace -- how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me; I once was lost, but now I'm found; was blind but now I see.

The shooter, Dylann Roof, was blinded by white supremacy and hatred. But the Jesus loyalists of Charleston showed us all what an encounter with amazing grace can do.

Hatred cannot do that. Only love can. Now, Beloved, it's our turn to reach out to the haters with amazing grace, and transform us and them. O God, open our hearts like Ananias. Bless our encounters with hatred until haters become changed by love.

Amen.

**Monday, May 2, 2022:**

**Psalm 121; Ezekiel 1:1-25; Acts 9:19b-31**

**Contributor:** [Uli](#)

Getaway from Damascus (Acts 9:23-25) may be my favorite story from Saul's early doings as a Christian.

He's recently converted and is eager to preach to whomever may listen. He's hot-headed and doesn't really care about his own safety. He's met Jesus and now the whole world needs to hear it!

When Saul converted, Christians didn't really believe him. After all, he was the one who persecuted and killed them.

It is an interesting story of slowly building trust written in Acts 9. From being the one who oversees the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58;8:1) to one that is sent as a help (Acts 11:30). The change in relationship between Saul and the other apostles is tremendous. But that's not the story for today.

Today I'd like to tell you about a reckless guy and his friends doing illegal things at night for the sake of said reckless guy. Saul started his (Christian) preacher career by convincing Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, which some Jews didn't really like: after all it was Jews who wanted Jesus dead (and succeeded).

No surprise that after some time those Jews also wanted Saul dead.

They had this whole bulletproof plan of trapping Saul in the city by holding guard at all gates at all times. Somehow Saul learned their plan (friendly tip: if you have that plan do something someone may not like, don't brag about, like, anywhere). And what did Saul do? We don't know, but his friends/followers (sometimes it's good to have admirers) literally put him in a basket and moved him outside the city walls.

I like to imagine it as a one-night spontaneous crazy heist rather than an execution of a carefully prepared plan. It makes those early-Christians (Saul included) way more human. And that's it. Saul goes to Jerusalem and goes on with his preaching and studies and whatnot.

But this little episode tells us so much about those Christian communities. They were organized enough to somehow execute a witty getaway, and they cared enough to do so.

I want to write that today's message is "be gay, do crimes," but it may be more among the lines "be Christian in a Christian community, do necessary (reckless) things for other Christians."

With that, lets pray: Holy Ghost, the untamed spirit of creativity and recklessness and being together: be with us when we do stupid things out of love, and make us brave enough to step out when our brothers are in danger.

**Tuesday, May 3, 2022:**

**Psalm 121; Ezekiel 1:26-2:1; Acts 26:1-18**

**Contributor:** [Rev. Yadi Martinez-Reyna](#)

Paul replied, “Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am—except for these chains.” Acts 26

Can a person change?

I have often heard people debate the question of character and the difficulty to believe that a person can change for the better. More often there is proof to back up that a person’s flawless character means there is a slim possibility they can change for the better. The reading found in Acts 26:1-28 is one of those stories of a changed man giving testimony before King Agrippa and the highest court.

See as a young man Paul grew into a powerful force commission to persecute with no mercy those who stood against his beliefs as a devote Pharisee. Ironically this same Paul who chased people like a bounty hunter, badgered a person relentlessly to blaspheme before the Holy-One, and even caused people’s death, was now the one being chased and imprisoned. Who better to speak of the ability to change than the one who had walked the path of hate and violence?

I imagine myself on that day among the spectators hearing this man speak, wondering if he had lost his mind. Or if I was among the new believers of this Jesus, hiding in the shadows, finally persuaded that He was one of us. Can a person really change?

The Apostle Paul became a living testimony of the power of forgiveness given to us in spite and despite our actions. As a pastor working with young people, I see the conversion of Paul come alive time and time again. I have seen this when standing next to a fourteen-year-old who had found himself/herself or themselves in the wrong place and side of the law. Or when standing next to a remorseful teen having to pay for the consequences of making poor choices.

Perhaps like Paul they have chased and wandered through the path of violence, and circumstances that stains their credibility and their heart.

But unlike Paul it is not the blinding light, or the dramatic conviction that nudges them to look up at grace. It is often something as simple as our presence standing next to them assuring them that all will be well for; they are not alone. It is also the way we live authentically, and unapologetically, a walking proof of what happens when grace and love collide with our unsavory past.

See, it has nothing to do that we now wear these Christian vestments that authorizes us to call out humanity’s transgressions. For even today we have witnessed the sometimes-undeserved kindness of a stranger.

We continue to make promises to change when we mess up, just to find out that the Holy-One has not been keeping score. For even at our worst, we will hope that whether quickly or not that those who hear us might become free of the chains that once bonded us. For we continue to experience every day the liberative power of redemption, acceptance, forgiveness, and love. In this season of your life may you remember the Jesus of Nazareth who redirected your path, your heart, and your mind with such a transforming power that you just can’t help but to share that with others.

**Prayer:** Today I pray that you live authentically, try, and try again relentlessly and stand in the conviction of knowing the Holy-One’s got your back every time. I pray in the Holy-One’s boundless love and grace. Peace be with you. Amen



**Wednesday, May 4, 2022:**

**Psalm 121; Isaiah 6:1-8; Luke 5:1-11**

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**Contributor:** [Elizabeth Moraa](#)

“I look to the mountains; where will my help come from?”  
(Psalms 121:1 GNB).

As I reflect on this psalm, I can relate with my own life.

I was so desperate to live, but my main aim as a Christian is to have eternal life. I searched for this loving and caring God. I fasted and waited for God to cleanse the lesbianism in me but the more I prayed and fasted, the more I was spiritually uplifted and the more my attraction to women grew.

I was desperate, and I really wanted God to intervene in my life.

I approached my local pastors and all they told me was that I was not saved enough and I should repent and turn to God.

I turned to our school chaplain, and I was given the same message. I was so desperate, and I knew I was a sinner destined to hell. I hated my existence, and all I wanted was to die and be forgotten that I ever existed in this world.

I searched for hope and peace, I went to the valleys for fasting, I went to the caves but all this left me desperate.

But the moment I was so tired of searching, my God appeared and gave me hope.

He gave me a new beginning; He gave me a future and a hope. He connected me with the right people, who embraced me for who I am, who loves and cares for me.

I am a living testimony that our help and our hope in this senseless world is in the hands of God. I know I have a long journey to go, but my God is bigger than all the mountains.

Dear God, I pray that you may let all that hinders me from seeing you, experiencing you, you die for me to dine with you and all the angels in heaven. In Jesus name I pray trust and believe. Amen.

**Thursday, March 5, 2022:**

**Psalm 23; Ezekiel 11:1-25; Revelation 5:1-10**

**Contributor:** [Denise Hamblen](#)

Oh my, I feel as if I won the scripture lottery with this reading. “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” (Psalm 23:1 KJV). My soul is filled with such peace when I read this verse.

I grew up in a church that taught homosexuality was a sin, right up there with murder.

Thankfully, they have softened the words spoken by church leaders over the pulpit, but they still hold fast to the teaching that homosexuality has no place in heaven.

I was approaching the 4th decade of life when I realized I could no longer walk that line between an inherit part of me and a church that set me aside as separate.

I thought, given the religious teachings I had lived with for 40 years, that there was no place at God’s table for me as I am. I spent several years thinking that God and I would have to sort it out later and active practice of my Christian faith would be a solitary experience.

Thankfully, that idea left my heart when I had the opportunity to listen to Bishop Gene Robinson. Although the gathering was a fundraising event for an LGBTQ+ political organization in Utah, God’s spirit was burning strong that evening.

He shared the story of the lame man who was taken to the gate of the temple. Every day, he would sit at the entrance and beg for gifts to provide for his needs. His physical impairment gave him the label “unclean” and prohibited him from entering and worshiping in that holy place. The temple gate was as far as he was allowed to go.

One morning, as Peter and John were approaching the temple, the lame man asked them for a gift. Peter and John stopped, gave this man their attention and then Peter said; “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” (Acts 3:6 KJV)

Immediately, the healing grace of God filled him, strength came to his feet and ankles and he stood. He could have gone anywhere – ran back to family and friends, to the marketplace – but he chose to enter the temple with Peter and John. At his core, in his soul, he knew was a child of God and worthy of worshiping in the temple. He knew the Lord was with him; the Lord’s rod and staff was there to comfort him. He knew the Lord’s mercy followed him and that he would dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

This Easter season, when so much pain fills this world, I am comforted in knowing that the Lord is with us and ready to give us comfort. He is our source of peace.

**Friday, May 6, 2022:**

**Psalm 23; Ezekiel 20:39-44; Revelation 6:1-7:4**

**Contributor:** [Marie Nganga](#)

This is a psalm that I had memorized so well when I was young. I used to sing it in the Sunday school and even during public participation in our primary school. But I didn't understand the deeper meaning of it until I started facing challenges in this life. Since it is the psalm, I loved and still love most, I just find myself reciting it in form of prayers.

Psalms 23:1 "The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need." This brings me comfort in my greatest time of need and reminds me of the care and protection of my good shepherd. The Lord cares for and watches over me and provides all that I need.

The Lord brings me to rest, peace and refreshment. He gives me new strength for my weary heart and enables me to walk forward on my journey. The Lord guides me into righteousness so that my life will glorify Him.

Psalms 23:4 "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

I have been walking through hard times in my life, God has been with me even there. And when I reflect on this verse, I desire to spend more time in His presence and allow Him to take care of me and love on me.

During my walk with Christ, I have realized that, as long as I am walking in the right path, His protection abides with me. I have witnessed evil being planned on me because of my association with the LGBT community.

But all along God has proven to be the good shepherd. Trials must be there, but if I feast on His word, and learn to be still in His presence, goodness and love will be with me all my life.

Prayer:

Dear loving God, our Father and Mother who is at Heaven. Thank you for being our good shepherd, thank you for caring for us even at times when we don't deserve your love.

Many times, we go short of your glory and just like the children of Israel we forget how far you have walked with us. But you are a God who is full of mercy and grace. You always forgive us when we turn to you and repent our sins. We give our hearts as a living sacrifice to you.

Guide us in the paths of righteousness. We pray that we get to live with you Holy God, forever and ever. Amen and Amen.

**Saturday, May 7, 2022:**

**Psalm 23; Ezekiel 28:25-26; Luke 12:29-32**

**Contributor:** [Giacomo Liggera](#)

Ezekiel 25 “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. 26 They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards; they will live in safety when I inflict punishment on all their neighbors who maligned them. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God.”

This passage is so interesting given the current political atmosphere. And, since the present lurks so heavily, I find what it actually discusses to be even more interesting.

As seen above, this passage is from the 28th chapter of the Book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel was a prophet, a priest, born in Jerusalem in a time of political strife. He along with countless other Jewish people were taken into captivity by Babylonians, never to return home to his native Israel.

His Book is centered on his prophecies, or at least in some cases other’s interpretations of them. This book in particular discusses the judgment of the nations of Tyre and Sidon, Israel’s neighbors- pledging that their aggressions will cease and Israel will prosper.

Ezekiel touches on the importance of “home,” and how crushing is the feeling of displacement.

So many people who have been forced to flee their homes have this wish and we share it with them: that we will all find a holy space for ourselves. A place that feels wholesome and safe; a place where they can provide for themselves and be protected.

It is so important to have heart for the many people who are being forced to leave their homes and seek shelter in new countries. We must share our godly love with them and help them create a new feeling of home.

Ezekiel 32 “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

As we are joined by new neighbors who have lost so much, we must be thankful for the blessings we have. When we release good into the world, the Goddess looks down on us favorably and that good shall return to us. While this idea of goodness being reciprocated should not be our motivation, we should remember that having the potential to do good is a blessing in its own right.

**Contributor:** [Rev. Kim Purl](#)

“Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, ‘Tabitha, get up.’ Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up” (Acts 9:40 NRSV).

Peter’s story of the resurrection of a woman, Tabitha, who was a disciple of Jesus, stirs us. She was devoted to loving her community well and made beautiful clothing for widows. The news that Peter was in a nearby town reached them as a paralyzed man, bedridden for 8 years had been healed. Two disciples asked Peter to come to the town where Tabitha had died. Peter kneels by her bed and says, “Tabitha, get up” and she arises.

This story has similarities to the account of Jesus resurrecting Jairus’ little girl in Mark 5. On Jesus’ way to heal Jairus’ daughter, Jesus is interrupted to heal a woman who has bled for 12 years. During this delay the sick little girl dies, yet Jesus goes into her bedside and says, “talitha, cumi,” which means “little girl, rise,” and she arises.

Both accounts give account of a healing in one space, then a journey to the bedside of a deceased female who was resurrected using similar wording of “talitha” and “Tabitha.” Although there are similarities, there is uniqueness in each story, showing us that God does not minister in cookie-cutter fashion. We can expect something similar that shows us the work of the Lord, and yet something unique that meets our specific situations.

As a minister, I witnessed healing in the anointing of oil and prayer, but I can’t recall I have witnessed a bodily resurrection.

I have done many funerals with the hope of the body rising in glory in the time to come. Some friends in paramedic work have given witness to dead bodies being resuscitated or resurrected when a return to life was hopeless. I have prayed over bodies in dead end situations and Jesus intervene to bring life again.

These instances have similarities as hopeless situations filled with life again, and each met with unique responses of the holy. As disciples of the resurrected Christ, we embody the resurrection and life in our broken bodies to a world that longs to live again.

Respond: How has your body been broken and resurrected? As a disciple of the risen Christ where do you see dead end situations that plead for life to return? How do you respond to what you see?

Prayer: Lord, thank you for raising us from the dead within us and around us.

*Writings for May 8 continue on the next page.*

**Contributor:** [David Mwaura](#)

Psalms 23 remind us that God is good and worth of our trust. God is my shepherd, and I am the sheep. A shepherd protects his/her sheep's by protecting them from enemies and also providing for them. When we are under God's protection, we just feel safe and encouraged knowing that we are safe. It doesn't matter the storms we go through on our journey in this world. Let's continue to do good because our God doesn't forget our good deeds. God remembered the good deeds of Tabitha as we read from Acts 9:36 and she was given a second chance to live so that she could continue with her good deeds of helping the poor. Never get tired of doing good, never get tired of assisting the less fortunate because one day God will remember you and help you when you need Him most.

There are times that I feel discouraged by the world, I hate the discrimination of LGBT in school and also from home. Our refuge can only be found in God. Jesus said in the book of John 10 that He knows his followers. If I continue to do the will of God, He will always take care of me even when I do not have the strength to move on.

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never die. No one can snatch them away from me” (John10:27-28 GNB).

Dear God, it is by your grace that I am born again. Help me to follow Your guidelines. Guide my steps so that I do no evil and live an upright life. Give me a big heart like the one you had given Tabitha your servant. Help me to serve You and my fellow human beings. Thank You because You are my God and savior. In Jesus name I pray trust and believe. Amen.

**Monday, May 9, 2022:**

**[Psalm 100; Ezekiel 37:15-28; Revelation 15:1-4](#)**

**Contributor: [Uli](#)**

As an anarchist I'm not a big fan of "nations."

I just don't understand why we should divide ourselves in such groups, often formed in quite bizarre ways, often for the mere purpose of hating that-other-nation.

And I am not a fan of kings and kingdoms, feudal systems and rulers-over-people; even if we're considering LORD-the-Shepherd and Their sheep. It doesn't suit my mentality, it goes against anything I think I know about God and Their doings in our reality. I know They want the best for us, They are protecting us etc. - still, I'd much rather be free than protected, call me stupid or a blasphemer, I won't mind.

What I mind are people around me and my community, be it Christians or anarchists, or anybody else. Yes, I consider any person my sibling, and I long for the day God will bring us all together into one "nation" (like in Ezekiel's vision, see: Ezekiel 37:15-28)

I consider prophecies about old-testament Jews to be transponded on all people / Christians via Jesus fulfilling the law and the Messiah prophecies) - but in the meantime it's really, really hard to practice love towards every human being. Especially in times of wars, genocides, conflicts and disasters.

See, we're all divided, even inside the nation! I don't know where you're from, but from what I heard about the USA it's bad over there.

Not much better in Europe, though. And for me the answer to that is not to try to connect people at all cost (is that a heresy here, at Holy Dialogues?) There's so much urgent stuff to do. Little things, for the siblings at arm's length.

Get that queer kid a safe place to stay, take them out of the street. Prevent your friend from doing what can't be undone. Buy a binder for some kid from Instagram. Send this one Ukrainian family to a better place abroad. Organize abortion pills for a person in need of them, because abortion is banned here. Talk about Tigray or Rojava or Ujgurs or Rohinjas at a family gathering.

Go dumpster-diving or cook for food not bombs, give some warm meal to the homeless. Help your friend move and carry all their heavy stuff, just to hear, "Thanks for helping me become un-homeless for the third time in my life," said by a person under 30. Rip off your throat in front of a court or a jail where your comrades are trailed or held.

Babysit for a single mother or learn how to care for a severely disabled person, so that their mother (or other carer) can take a break. Cook a meal for that friend who works 24/7 just to afford rent. Organize an anarchist Bible study group that will eventually free some consciences.

Tip your server, because you know how shitty they are paid and treated. Visit a lonely elder. Throw a rotten tomato at your church bishop/elder who constantly says homo- and transphobic and racist stuff. Give a cigarette to anybody who asks. Love thy neighbors.

That is my Christianity. Dirty poor, here-and-now, extremely queer, no-questions-asked except, "What do you need?"

There will be time to care about nations and uniting them, end of times will come. Christ will rule eventually. But. Now is time to act.

Tuesday, May 10, 2022:

Psalm 100; Ezekiel 45:1-9; Acts 9:32-35

Contributor: [Jeremy Emmert](#)

### The Unconditional Miracle

Miracles are a tricky subject. By definition, miracles are hard to come by. [dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com) defines a miracle as, “an effect or extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known human or natural powers and is ascribed to a supernatural cause.”

Acts 9:32-34 reads, “As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord’s people who lived in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. “Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat.” Immediately Aeneas got up.

I found something peculiar missing from the text. The text doesn’t say Aeneas asked for a miracle. The text insinuates the miracle found Aeneas.

Perhaps the authors just forgot this minor detail or perhaps the omission implies a powerful point.

By the very nature of miracles being so unlikely to occur it becomes commonplace not to spend time thinking about miracles until we are in such a pinch, and we start thinking we need one.

I wonder how different my life might be if every day I asked for a miracle but didn’t put any conditions on the rest?

What if I just started living life expecting that God would show up in miraculous ways?

The passage said Aeneas had been bedridden for eight years... I suppose after that amount of time Aeneas may have started to believe hope was lost. Maybe the encounter with Peter was something Aeneas hoped for regularly. We won’t ever know Aeneas’ state of mind, but we can change our state of mind on miracles.

Prayer: Today God I ask for a miracle.

I could suggest a few areas where a miracle might be warranted but instead of trying to know what is best, I put my full trust in your will.

Your will is to bring miracles to a hurting world. I stand ready and open to be the vessel of delivery. Forgive me for my unbelief and thank you that you can use a wretch like me.



**Contributor: [Denise Hamblen](#)**

As I write this, we are approaching the beginning of the Holy Week. This timing – the day on the calendar and the words of John – are not lost on me. How often did Jesus find Himself in harm’s way before paying the ultimate cost of this rejection by Jewish authorities? I marvel at his ability to love us to the very death. Is there anything greater that testifies of His divinity than this – to love us enough to carry Himself through the events leading up to His crucifixion and resurrection? I believe it is only because of His love for us that He received the power to achieve His calling to redeem this world. His perfect example of humility and trust in God gives me the strength to face my challenges in this mortal life.

The emperor moth is one of the most beautiful (and rare) insects. The wings of the emperor moth are simply stunning.

One day a biologist happened upon the cocoon of the emperor moth. He carefully removed the bottle-shaped cocoon and took it to his lab so he could observe the moth emerging from the cocoon. The day came when the biologist saw movement in the cocoon. For hours, he watched as the moth struggled to free itself. This went on and on to the point that the biologist determined that removing the cocoon from nature must have dried and hardened the cocoon and the moth’s body was simply too large to push itself through the narrow opening.

To help the moth, he took a pair of scissors and cut the fibrous strands at the top of the cocoon. He sat back, waiting to see the moth emerge and spread its beautiful wings. Instead, the moth dropped from the cocoon, its engorged body and shriveled wings struggling to move, until the moth died.

The biologist could not understand what had happened, so he began to read about the emperor moth. He learned that the shape of the bottle, and the very difficult task of freeing itself through its narrow opening actually streamlined the body and forced fluids into the wings, making the body small and the wings massively stunning.

With every experience, from challenging “the Jews who took up stones again to stone him” (John 10:31 KJV) to fulfilling all required of him as the one sanctified and sent into the world, Jesus was refined and prepared to do the works of His Father.

And I am once again humbled that He has provided for me the perfect example. As I face the challenges of this world, I can look to Christ for peace through these experiences.

I pray the words of the Apostle James are written on my heart – “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22 KJV ).

What a beautiful day it will be when we kneel before Him and receive His perfect love and grace.

**Contributor: [Rev. Roberto Ochoa](#)**

Ezekiel 3:10-11 New Revised Standard Version

“G-d said to me: Mortal, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart and hear with your ears; then go to the exiles, to your people, and speak to them. Say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God;’ whether they hear or refuse to hear.”

The prophet Ezekiel, in a vision, is given a scroll to read both sides, then eat it, and directed by God to speak to the “hardheaded and stubborn heart” (3:1-7) people of Israel, warning Ezekiel, they may not listen to him, but preach the truth, nevertheless. God instructs Ezekiel, that he had the capacity to be just as fierce to speak from the heart in plain and simple words. “Thus says the Lord God,’ whether they hear or refuse to hear.”

This year, 2022 has not been good for the LGBTQ+ communities as both Texas and Florida recently passed bills that not only question the personhood of our Queer selves, but criminalizes anyone who supports the well being of our families and communities as lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, queer people.

In Texas, parents are being threatened to be reported as child abusers to the state’s Child Social Services if they assist their trans children towards wholeness. In Florida, the so called “Don’t Say Gay” bill, harasses school districts and teachers with civil action if curriculum includes any discussion of LGBTQ+ sexuality or family dynamics.

It’s understandable that after a century in the modern era of struggling for LGBTQAI+ human rights and recognition, we can become fatigued and exhausted in our battles for inclusive rights in humanity. It is especially disheartening when it comes from certain sectors of the Church that teaches a Just God who loves conditionally to those in hetero familial relationships and condemns same gender loving relationships and families.

Like Ezekiel, God provides us with a spirit of determination and resilience through the Word we receive from the Divine One. We KNOW that we are created in the Image of the Holy One, the Divine Spirit, the God we hold on to. We KNOW that our LGBTQ+ families are just as worthy and loved by God. We are not to give up, we have made strides in being seen and visible as Queer People of God. Let us not lose hope, let us be as fierce as Ezekiel in speaking truth that we are all created in the image of God and worthy of God’s Love just the way we are.

Dear Holy One, provide us with the strength to celebrate that we are created in the Image of You. “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Amen!  
(Romans 8:38-39 - NRSV)

**Contributor: [Steven Maina](#)**

This book of psalms answers the question of me existing in this world, “Why am I living?”

And the good reason is to glorify my creator, of which I will do no matter what comes my way.

Good or bad I will glorify His name.

Daniel 7:13-14

It is clear from what Daniel saw at night that God lives outside our time and He knows our future and He also reveals certain details of the future.

Revelation 11:15

Revelation is teaching us about the events that will happen when we are still living, it states that Christ will return while those who crucified Him are still living. So, let's keep ourselves ready for the right will triumph over evil.

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, the whole creation praises your name. as humans created in your image, we praise you and make melody in our hearts.

Everlasting God you are powerful, the moon, in all its elegant wonder of light at night, thus reminds us of your great light that shines in the midst of our darkness. Let all humankind, Angels, the stars, the ocean, the trees and all the creation that you created dear Lord, praise your glorious name.

Dear God, you are in control of all things, you do good to those who are called according to your will. All humankind share in your glory.

We always begin with praising your name and end praising your Holy name. your name is exalted above all. You are the beginning and the end, walk with us as we traverse in this world. Give us grace to be faithful till the end. In Jesus name we pray trust and believe.

Saturday, May 14, 2022

[Psalm 148; Daniel 7:27; Revelation 11:16-19](#)

Contributor: [Aaron Jackson](#)

“Praise the Lord!”

*And for all this, nature is never spent;*

*There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;*

*And though the last lights off the black West went*

*Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —*

*Because the Holy Ghost over the bent*

*World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.*

*Excerpt from “God’s Grandeur” by Gerard Manley Hopkins*

In the Summer of 2021, I stood on the top of the world.

Several month’s earlier, my dear friend shared that God had instructed him to take me camping. I asked if it was perhaps indigestion he was hearing, but he was insistent, and asked me where I’d like to go. Incredulous, I said, “Yellowstone.”

So there I was, in July, crossing into the country’s largest park over Bear Tooth Pass, one of the highest elevation points on earth at 10,000 feet. Seeing the world from such a high view made me feel at once both big and small. I got to see the epic sweep of slope and sky stretch below me like a grand tapestry as it stretched to the horizon.

I got to see the intricacies of God’s creation flow from this point to an endless wash of colors and textures, a wild canvas that went on forever.

As if I needed another reason to praise the Lord.

The Psalmist entreats us to “Praise the Lord from the heavens, Praise Him from the Heights (Psalm 148:1 NKJ), to “praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all the depths” (Psalm 148:7 NKJ).

In all things, fire and hail, snow and clouds, stormy wind, mountains, hills, fruitful trees, beasts and cattle, the Psalmist sees the glorious handy work of the Creator, and the creation as evidence of God’s greatness. All things, and people, from the children to kings, point conclusively to the mandate to praise the Lord.

In the age of the digital swirl, when it is easy to keep our focus downward on screens, God is calling us to turn our gaze to the wonderful gift of the reality in which God has placed us. Once we do, the only response can be praise for the one who is and was and is to come (Revelation 11:17)

Daniel says that His is “an everlasting Kingdom, and all his dominion shall serve and obey Him” (Daniel 7:27 NKJ).

Lord, teach us to see, and in great joy and gratitude, respond like the elders who fell on their faces before you.

Praise the Lord, indeed!

Contributor: [Rev. Dr. Stephen Sprinkle](#)

Acts 11:1-18

“What God has made clean, you must not call profane” (v. 9).

Binary thinking (and binary living) do us no favors, do they? Clean vs. unclean. Decent vs. Indecent. Them vs. Us. How quickly it becomes “Us or Them!”

Peter, the Big Fisherman wanted to please the Home Team back in Jerusalem. He longed to follow Jesus crucified and risen, but he wanted to keep conservatives happy back home. Imagine his disorientation when he tried to straddle Jesus’ imperative to love the Gentiles as his neighbor, and the purity party who wanted nothing to do with uncircumcised Gentiles. He got criticized! And it hurt!

Intolerance of the tolerant is one of the least attractive aspects of binary thinking and living. It is empirically verifiable that in-group shunning and exclusion of marginalized people is terribly hurtful. So many have been turned off of religion by being turned out into the cold. Binary exclusion harms. Period.

LGBTQIA+ people are way too familiar with the pain of exclusion by people convinced of their right to keep their faith communities “pure.” So, what are queer people of faith to do? How do you straddle the divide between the keepers of purity and the all-too-often-harmed queer community? Peter’s situation in Acts 11 becomes uncomfortably relevant to this scenario the more we become familiar with it. Chuck all of religion, horn hide and tail, or give it all a second look? The Big Fisherman took a second look.

That religious zealots wound vulnerable people is true. Also true is that faith community is vitally important to many LGBTQIA+ people. Contemporary communities of queer folk certainly include people of both inclinations. Is binary exclusion destined to divide?

Like Peter, we must listen to another voice!

There is a grim little joke among queer people of faith. It goes like this: “If you’re not catching hell from both directions at once, you’re not doing religion right!” Like Peter, pleasing one group seems destined to displease everybody. But God has not finished with any of us yet, for as our friends in the United Church of Christ say, “God is still speaking.”

Peter’s piety strictly forbade him to eat any food that was ritually unclean. The vision of the four-cornered sheet filled with “unclean” animals and birds bred for food by Gentiles repelled him. Twice Peter heard God speak. The second time, God made it abundantly clear: “What God has made clean, you must not call profane” (v. 9). Peter took the message and its meaning to heart, and lived out of the truth of it. As with foodstuffs, also with people. God’s love makes all things—and all people—holy and good. And so, the binary in Peter’s life was exploded. He still got criticized, and it still hurt. But he knew what he had to do and how he had to live. No more in-group and outcasts. No more us versus them. The mystery of God’s self-giving love overcomes old wounds and heals old scars. Oh, there will still be pain from time-to-time. But if the queer community has learned anything at all from facing hostility and indifference, it is that LOVE WINS.

Give us second sight, O God. Give us a second chance for love. Amen.

*Writings for May 15 continue on the next page.*

**Contributor:** [Marie Nganga](#)

Love one another.

In the book of Acts 11, Peter was supposed to explain why he had fellowshiped with the Gentiles, and just like a good pastor he explained what happened step by step. Peter tells us a story of God's grace towards these people who were referred to as sinners.

Acts 11:17 "It is clear that God gave those gentiles the same gift that He gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; who was I, then, to try to stop God!"

This shows how our God works. Our world view may be narrowed because of ethnicity, race, gender or sexual identity.

God here reveals that He is not a respecter of persons. As long as you believe, He will be your God and you have a place in His kingdom.

Revelation 21:3 "I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: "Now God's home is with human beings! He will live with them and they shall be His people. God himself will be with them, and He will be their God."

This scripture is giving us hope. We live in a deadly, torn, sick, hurtful and a very painful world. We are called to be on the side of God and be part of his new creation.

Our God is the beginning and the end. He is inviting all of us to come and drink from the spring of the water of life without paying for it. This encourages me to be persistent in living for Christ. I know it is not in vain to serve God.

Prayer:

Dear God, you love us with endless mercy. You call us all to be your children. Lord grant us a big heart. A heart always willing to love. Help us to love with no condition just like you commanded us. God, open our ears and eyes to the newness of your creation and make us active partners so that your will be done here on earth. Thank you for being our God and savior. In Jesus name we pray, trust and believe. Amen and Amen.

**Contributor:** [Giacomo Liggera](#)

Samuel 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the Lord call David’s enemies to account.” 17 And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

18 Then Jonathan said to David, “Tomorrow is the New Moon feast. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty. 19 The day after tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where you hid when this trouble began, and wait by the stone Ezel. 20 I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I were shooting at a target. 21 Then I will send a boy and say, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to him, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them here,’ then come, because, as surely as the Lord lives, you are safe; there is no danger. 22 But if I say to the boy, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you,’ then you must go, because the Lord has sent you away. 23 And about the matter you and I discussed—remember, the Lord is witness between you and me forever.”

41b David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most.

This reminds me of the importance of found family.

Jonathan and David were forced apart by Jonathon’s own father. Initially, as is pretty typical of a loyal family, Jonathan underestimated his father’s viciousness. He wanted only to believe the best of him, blindly believing that his father would even admit to him if he intended to kill his best friend. A child’s blind faith and love for a parent.

David’s sharp instincts saved him from an untimely fate but so did Jonathon’s love for him. Jonathan knew that no matter how close he was to his father, he could not abide by him doing harm to another, especially someone close to him. And so it is our duty to.

No matter the love we have for our family, we must also remember our love for our neighbors. Our family members have faults. Some actions are excusable, others are not. It is our duty then to acknowledge when a family is acting inexcusably and do our best to protect our neighbors, especially from hatred and violence.

There is often a belief that our elders expressing racism and homophobia is unchangeable and a relic of the era they were born in. Even if not physical, such words and hatred are violence, and, as family, it is our duty to do our best to protect our neighbors from such violence.

Let us do our best to acknowledge and not excuse the faults of our family members.

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

Psalm 133; 2 Samuel 1:4-27; Acts 11:27-30

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Contributor: [Zaweria Hunyu](#)

Peace.

As I reflect on Psalms 133, our God is a peace-loving God. He blesses us when we are living in peace with each other.

Right now, there are rumors of war in the world, the attack of Ukraine by Russia has all of us worried of what tomorrow will be. We have already felt the impact of this war, especially here in Kenya, the cost of living has shot up and most families cannot afford two meals in a day.

But I thank God because he has a solution to all our problems. "The disciples decided that they would each send as much as they could to help their fellow-believers who lived in Judea" (Acts 11:29 GN Bible).

We should be our brothers and sisters keeper; we should learn to share whatever little we have to spread the love of Christ in this world.

I thank God for connecting me with the Parity fraternity, they have shown us immense love here in Kenya by supporting us with grants for LGBTQ+ rural church.

Many lives have been changed through Parity's ministry. Through their act of giving and supporting our local church, many souls have turned to Christ and reaching out to many others and the church is growing every day.

May peace prevail in our world, may we live in peace as God's plan is for us to live in perfect peace.

Dear God, we need you. You are the Prince of Peace, help us to love one another, help us to live in peace with each other. In Jesus name we pray trust and believe. Amen.



**Contributor:** [Ash Mason](#)

"But for real girl, come as you are."

Psalm 133 (NLT)

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem. A psalm of David.

1 How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony!

2 For harmony is as precious as the anointing oil that was poured over Aaron's head, that ran down his beard and onto the border of his robe.

3 Harmony is as refreshing as the dew from Mount Hermon that falls on the mountains of Zion. And there the Lord has pronounced his blessing, even life everlasting.

As an Lgbtqia+ minister with tattoos, the mouth of a sailor, a multitude of degrees, and a less than conservative view on life, I've experienced the distinct honor of finding out that "come as you are" has some serious prerequisites. From being asked to wear long sleeves, being told to stay quiet in meetings, and straight up being kicked out of my denomination, I had learned the hard way that "as I am" is not honored or held sacred. In fact, "as I am" is offensive, off-putting, and upsets the status quo.

We live in a world, society, and time whenever harmony is found around the people like us. We experience harmony around the people that look like us, believe like us, and think like us. What if, however, harmony wasn't each person having their own camps of vaxxers vs anti-vaxxers vs the medically vulnerable. What if instead of the camps that provide safety in separation, we experience the vulnerable nature of stepping out of our camps to come together to recognize the preciousness of life together?

I'm a country kid, born and raised. We had more brick roads and gravel roads than we did blacktop roads. The first rule country kids learned when learning to drive on roads was, "avoid the ditches and the holes." Because, y'all, the holes in the roads were in abundance. I hit one of these famous holes one time, and my tire blew on the spot. As people are driving along, since it was a small town with very little money, holes that started years before would still be there, and you just knew where the holes were. I compare this to this idea of harmony. We know where the "less than desirable" people are located. We know the safe ways to drive on this metaphorical road. I would dare to say though, in a world so divided, people don't need us to play it safe. In fact, I think people are begging us to be so bold as to step out of our camps, and to go to the holes in the road and the ditches. Because you see, in the ditches is where harmony is located.

Among the least desired from humanity, we find Jesus anointing the head of a sheep. I love the scripture for today. I love the image of healing and blessing running down our faces, overcoming our tears, and surrounding that which makes us sacred. I love the oil that covers the hem of our garment. This is the oil that says "come as you are." And not in the shallow way that people use to weaponize scripture. This is Jesus saying, "but for real, come as you are." In all of our glory, in all of the glory of those in the ditches, we find Jesus in all of their glory.

Call to action: think of those that might be in opposite camps as you. As you do, write down the beautiful aspects of them that you admire. Begin the work of recognizing the beautiful.

**Contributor:** [Aaron Jackson](#)

## Praise in the Process

Around my Church, our pastor has a saying: “Work like it depends on you, pray like it depends on God.” The first time I heard this saying, I involuntarily rolled my eyes.

How many sayings and quips have I absorbed from pastors over the years! Oh certainly, it was correct, and I had no theological objections, but it communicated it\’s point in a trivial, almost banal way.

You might say it was trite and true.

But as I have started in earnest down the road of faith, this saying keeps coming back to me. I cannot do anything without faith, and my impulse to pray over a task that seems too difficult is as real as the saying is mundane. This makes me human, I think.

There is another, older saying: “There are no atheists in foxholes.” Everything we do requires some help from the Creator. From waking up to arriving at work safely, to caring for a loved one, God is infused in all we do.

Therefore, as the Psalmist cries, “Let the people praise You, Oh God. Let all the people praise You...For you shall judge the people wisely and govern the nations on earth” (Psalm 67:3-4 NKJ). It is God who grants us the power to work, build and rest, and God to whom praise should be directed. “Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us” (Psalm 67:6 NKJ).

This understanding of God’s hand in all we do is an expression of wisdom. And wisdom itself is precious. It is why the wise man entreats his son to “seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures” (Proverbs 2:4 NKJ) so he can “understand the fear of the Lord” (Proverbs 2:5 NKJ).

These passages taken together start to reveal part of the mystery: that praising the Lord is both a response to the reality of the majesty of our Creator and its own reward. It yields wisdom, which is a better understanding of God and His creation.

One final thought: it is good to be in relationship with others who are committed to prayer and praise in the daily work that yields wisdom. In Acts 15, “Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing’” (Acts 15:36 NKJ).

Praise can take many forms, and one of them can be the work that we do with the people we care about.

Lord, increase our wisdom, so that we may become better praisers. Amen.

**Contributor:** [David Mwaura](#)

I relate my life to that of the servant of God Paul. This guy was crazy and he hated the gospel of Christ. But one special day, he met with the Lord. “He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, why do you persecute me?” “Who are you, Lord?” he asked. “I am Jesus, whom you persecute, but get up and go into the city, where you will be told what you must do” (Acts 9:4-6 GNB).

Even though Paul was a sinner, when he heard the voice of the Lord, he recognized that there is a greater power. He was obedient to the voice of Christ and he became the greatest minister who has written many books in the New Testament.

There is a time that I never believed in God, I hated all Christians because they hated me and my sexuality. I was made to believe that this God hates all LGBTQ+ community.

I could not attend church because the preacher might preach about Sodom and Gomorrah.

But one day I was invited to attend a birthday party by one of my gay friends. I thought, “Well, free food and drinks I cannot afford to miss.” The party was good and it was full of the queer community, but there was one outstanding thing, there was a gay pastor who preached the word of God. For the first time in my life, I sat down to listen and by the time he was finishing, I had made up my mind to follow Jesus.

It is the best decision I ever made. I thank God every day for deliverance. Every day we witness the mighty power of our Lord, just as the disciples did when they were fishing a whole night without any success. But when the Lord appeared to them, they obeyed when they were told where to cast the net. Let’s just trust in the Lord and obey.

Dear God, sometimes I am desperate to find You and Your saving grace. Help me to trust in You.

Guide my steps and help me to know You more. Thank You for Your salvation and the gift of eternal life. In Jesus mighty name I pray trust and believe.

**Contributor:** [Daniel Kihara](#)

“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations. May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth. May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, Our God, will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him”(Psalms 67 KJV).

God wants us to be witness of His great love and salvation.

Through us, the nations will know the mighty God we serve. Our Holy God who rules justly will bless us.

That is the God I want to serve all the days of my life. I pray today that God will use me as a witness and a testimony to everyone I come across, and when they see me, they see God’s face shining upon me.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector, a sinner and a very short man.

He just wanted to see Jesus like any other person in that meeting. God had good plans for Zacheus because Jesus saw him, not like any human being who had seen him climbing on top of a tree. Jesus saw someone who needed salvation, they dinned together and the whole household of Zacchaeus was saved.

There were many people in that meeting but Jesus chose Zacchaeus, the same way God has chosen me and you to be His witness in this world.

Sometimes people question my faith because I am a gay man who is born again.

I choose not to listen to them and focus on Christ. He came to seek and save the lost. I am found in the kingdom of God. I am valid in His presence. I was lost and He has seen me and now I am saved.

I have hope for a future and above all eternal life.

**Contributor:** [Dorcas Kiki](#)

“That night Paul had a vision in which he saw a Macedonian standing and begging him, “come over to Macedonia and help us!” (Acts 16:9 GNB).

Paul receives his vision in the night.

One might think that getting a vision from God would make everything clear, but even a vision requires interpretation; more to the point, it requires the community of faith.

The mission doesn't belong to Paul alone, even though at this point in Acts the other apostles are almost completely left behind. The mission, of course, doesn't even belong to the church; it is God's mission. Yet the church is called into the discernment of God's mission at every turn.

Where is the Spirit calling us, and doing so through those whom we might otherwise think are outside our circle of responsibility? What visions call us beyond the boundaries into ministry where we had not considered it before?

I was brought up as a Catholic, and I knew I wanted to serve God. I went into seminary to study theology. I wanted to be this great sister ready to serve humanity. But God had other plans for me, after one year in seminary, I was expelled because I was speaking in tongues.

I asked God for directions and I had a dream of serving the lgbt community.

I was shocked and confused wondering where to start. I am still trusting God for more openings since I have met a community where I fellowship. The mission belongs to God and only Him I will serve.

John 14:27 “Peace is what I leave with you, it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid.”

Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace, when you are born again you experience this peace from deep within you.

Jesus knew this world would not give us peace, and He knew peace is very important in our day-to-day activities.

We should learn how to be peaceful humans so that we can accommodate each other no matter our differences.

**Monday, May 23, 2022:**

**[Psalm 93; 1 Chronicles 12:16-22; Revelation 21:5-14](#)**

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**Contributor: [Nancy Wanja Mwangi](#)**

“The Lord is king. He is clothed with majesty and strength. The earth is set firmly in strength and cannot be moved” (Psalms 93: 1 GNB).

As I reflect about my God, my heart humbles and I trust Him more and more each day.

In my daily walk with Him, I have renewed strength. He is the author of my life. The beginning and the end. “And now I make all things new!” (Revelation 21:5).

We are all invited to drink from the spring of life without paying anything.

As a lesbian Christian woman, I rejoice to know I have a place in the kingdom of God. I spent many years thinking that I was an outcast, the church made me hate myself. But this God has made me new. I trust Him with my life.

All I need is to obey Him as the mighty King, Creator of heaven and earth.

Prayer:

Dear God, I am humbled in your presence as I worship you. I glorify your Holy name; you are exalted above all.

Thank you for the gift of life, thank you for salvation. Thank you for renewing my strength.

Dear God, I remember all the Lgbtq+ Christians around the world.

As we face many challenges every day, we pray that you strengthen us in faith. Help us to trust you more. Bind us together in love. Let your light shine in us, that when the world sees us, they see your glory. In Jesus mighty name I pray, trust and believe.

Amen and Amen.

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

[Psalm 93; 2 Chronicles 15:1-15; Revelation 21:15-22](#)

Contributor: [Jimmy](#)

One of my favorite passages in Psalms is, “The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.” (Psalm 16:6, NIV)

Today’s readings brought this: Psalm top of mind.

For someone (me) that has so struggled with establishing and maintaining and understanding boundaries, there is something incredibly refreshing about boundaries falling in pleasant places – it sounds so simple. It is from within these boundaries that I receive that referenced ‘delightful inheritance.’

What are those pleasant boundaries? Well, earlier in the Psalm, David writes that it is in the Lord that he takes refuge, so it leads me to believe that the boundary lines fall where God Himself ends [selah]. So, I ponder that question, what does it mean to be within God? Isn’t He limitless? I don’t think He ‘ends.’

Revelation 21 likens God to a city, not just any city, but a particularly beautiful and magnificent city.

The description refers to foundations, walls, specific measurements, gates, transparency, adorned with jewels. What is best about this city? No Temple is needed because God Himself is the dwelling place. This affirms that picture from Psalm 16, the refuge within God, with a delightful inheritance.

Even more so, it is not some ethereal unknown, unreachable thing, but is a planned, intentional, solid, secure, good, and beautiful place. It is one in which we can live and breathe, stretched out in the endless goodness of God.

I often had a false notion growing up that one misstep and I was out: out of the church, out of my family, out of God’s grace, out of His mercy, out of His reach.

Thankfully, I have since grown in my knowledge of God’s love and compassion toward me but sometimes that fear lingers on my outskirts.

Imagining the city of God in Revelation 21 stirs hope and freedom in my heart. It reminds me that God is a firm, secure foundation. I am not able to see the ‘ends’ of His mercy and His grace nor do I have to worry about those ends. I can trust that they’ve simply fallen in pleasant places and choose to make Him my refuge.

Psalm 11 ends with this culmination, “You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” (Psalm 16:11)

I encourage you to breathe today, stretch out within that firm foundation of God’s mercy and His grace.

**Wednesday, May 25, 2022**

**[Psalm 93; 2 Chronicles 34:20-33; Luke 2:25-38](#)**

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**Contributor: [Steven Maina](#)**

Luke 2 teaches us to obey God and wait upon Him.

Good things come to those who wait and some things are worth waiting for. God is teaching us to be patient in this life.

His promises are true.

Mary and Joseph believed and obeyed the word of God and they were blessed. If we keep waiting and hoping, at the right time God will reveal Himself to us.

God is from eternity and His throne is established from of old. He has stood forever. He is the creator and sustainer of His creation.

Dear God,  
As we wait upon you help us to be patient, help us to be strong in Faith and let your will be done in our lives. Amen



**Contributor:** [Pelayo Alvarez](#)

A meditation on John 17:20-26

I mistakenly believed for most of my life that a prayer's importance was defined by the words that composed them. This belief created much frustration.

“Mum, why do I have to repeat these words every night?!! I just want to go to sleep!”

This “compound of words=prayer” belief prevented me from understanding the tool of prayer.

The prayers I recited in church or with my family did not resonate with me, I could not connect with this message of God being an entity in the sky, and priests serving as messengers with “word packages for God.”

When I first started acting, I thought performing in theatre was also about the words on the dialogue that your character shares on a stage.

I just had to learn those words carefully, to later repeat them on stage, incorporating a predetermined feeling or idea depending on the particular word that my character used.

For example:

I would say, “I love you,” happily and excited.

I would recite, “I hate you,” with rage and pain.

I would ask, “Would you like some more potato salad?” in a superfluous way as part of everyday life.

It was only through diving into acting and prayer that I understood words have no meaning without Message.

For every word shared on stage or on a prayer, there is an action behind it, an intention, a desire to change a situation. If not, the scene is dead, the prayer is meaningless, and there is no transformation.

No scene should finish the way it starts. No prayer should leave you unchanged.

When I read John 17:20-26, I read about the importance of the Message that words carry.

All of us speak different languages, but we can all understand the same message.

The intention. The action behind the words.

The desire to ensure the world is a little bit different when we leave.

We can playfully say, “I hate you,” when our loved one points out how much they love our silly dimples.

There are too many, “I love you's,” shared in a superfluous and meaningless way.

And sometimes we can even ask, “Would you like some more potato salad?” when we are really saying, “I love you, can we stop arguing and start all over again?”

Friday, May 27, 2022

[Psalm 97; Exodus 33:12-17; Revelation 22:6-9](#)

Contributor: [Zaweria Hunyu](#)

The Lord God our King.

A King is a very powerful person especially here in Africa.

People fight to remain in power, and all they do is to make lives of those they lead very miserable. But this psalm reminds us that there is a very just God, who rules in righteousness. His judgment is just. He hates evil and once you acknowledge Him as the King of your life, He shines His light upon you. (Psalms 97:11 GNB).

Revelation 22:7 “Listen!” says Jesus. I am coming soon! Happy are those who obey the prophetic words in this book!

I remember there was a time here in Kenya where a “pastor” had told his congregants to sell all their properties and hide in caves because there will be a “rapture” on a particular day, he cited that God had revealed the date and time to him. To the surprise of many people, all the congregants believed him.

Days passed, weeks, months until their kids started dying of hunger and thirst.

One by one they decided to go back to the real world but they were the laughing stock. The book of Revelation doesn't set precise dates, and God doesn't allow a man to be so specific in our knowledge of end times. Everyday we wait for the return of Jesus. We just need to live righteously and serve the Lord diligently.

Dear God, the king and ruler of my life, I pray that you may guide my steps, help me to walk in righteousness.

You hate sins, and I am a weak person, I am just human, many times I try to do the right thing but I fail.

Just like the Israelites forgot about your deliverance, I try to keep the discipline that is required by you.

You are my redeemer and you have been my deliverer. Forgive me dear God. Help me to wait upon You only. Help me to trust you. Help me to live according to your will. Let the world know that there is a God in heaven who judges in righteousness.

In Jesus mighty name I pray trust and believe. Amen.

**Saturday, May 28, 2022**

**[Psalm 97; Exodus 33:18-23; John 1:14-18](#)**

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**Contributor: [Josphine Wambui](#)**

I praise God today because He reigns, He lights the world.

Psalms 97:4-5 “His lightning lights up the world; the earth sees it and trembles. The hills melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth.”

In the presence of the Lord everything is reduced to nothing. The Lord preserves the souls of His saints. Sometimes we are so focused on this present world which will pass away.

I am happy because people of this world will not judge me but God in His righteousness will be the final judge.

It is amazing how the word of God is, the book of John is teaching us how the Lord became human and lived among us.

The summary of this book is teaching us to believe in it because when we do so we will live forever and have eternal life and will finally enjoy and see our maker.

But again the same book is telling those who chose not to believe in it that they will be separated with their maker forever in glory.

So it is better to choose wisely as Lgbtq+ community., let other people not discourage us telling us that we are not worth. I believe I am and many others who are like me the only judge we should know is our God who created us. Let's do as his word teaches us.

Prayer:

Father in Heaven, I worship and praise your Holy name for your wonderful plan of salvation.

Thank you for sending Jesus, the Lord. He came to this earth willingly so that a sinner like me can be saved.

I praise you Lord in the mighty name of Jesus I pray. Amen.

Contributor: [Rev. Roberto Ochoa](#)

Acts 1:8 NRSV

“...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

How do we describe the indescribable? How do we explain the unexplainable?

In the first chapter of Acts, the author tells the story of Jesus, post crucified, being present among his disciples, continuing his teachings and preparing them to be witness of the risen Christ. They were instructed to return to Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit to equip them with strength and guidance to be “witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

How do they explain this phenomenon? They don't try. They just do. As an evangelical Christian for over 35 years, I have had many mystical encounters with the Spirit of Christ in my life and ministry.

Often these encounters occur when I am in my most vulnerable, when I question my self-worth as a Child of God and second guess my vocation in serving the Church and God.

When I find myself in these situations, I just turn to prayer and self-reflection, and sit still to listen to the “whisper of God” like the prophet Elisha (1 Kings 19:12-13).

In this meditated state, I find the source of strength and courage to continue my ministry of spreading the Good News of God's Love in Jesus Christ, especially as a Queer Ethnic Identified individual into spaces within the Church which may teach that someone like me is “not worthy” of God's unconditional love.

I no longer try to explain my sexual orientation, I just am and do witness. My presence in these spaces offer those that are struggling with their own sexuality or gender identity, hope and assurance that there is a God who loves us as we are, created in God's divine image.

The Ascension story, for me is the mystery of Christ's presence in our lives in a faith which “is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Heb 11:1 NRSV)

Indescribable faith is a call to action to witness and work for a Kin-dom of God on earth without the need to explain, the unexplainable.

Dear God, grant us your breath, your whisper of the Holy Spirit to bring the Kin-dom of your love and peace to a hurting world needing hope, in Christ's Name.

Amen!

*Writings for May 29 continue on the next page.*

**Contributor:** [Monica Wambui](#)

But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”  
(Acts 1:8 GNB).

We can do a better job of building a Christ centered, mission focused community with other believers.

I thank God that I have found a community that loves me for who I am. I will not let my gender identity hinder me from experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit.

Just like the disciples, I received more power to witness when I received the power of the Holy Spirit. I pray to be obedient to the Holy Spirit and to remain faithful till the end.

Prayer

Dear God, my heart is full of joy and gladness.

You are the great king over all the earth. You chose me through Christ Jesus. I have an assurance of an inheritance that can never perish.

I believe in your promises and that is the reason I sing all your praises. My God, I know all the rulers of the earth belong to you. Help me to remain humble in you. Holy and Almighty God, I praise you for the victory that you have given me through Your Son's, death, and resurrection.

You are worthy of all glory, honor, praise, and adoration. You have sacrificed so much to bring me into your presence as a cleansed and holy child of the Eternal King.

My heart overflows with joy knowing that I am Your child and that my home is with You.

Bless me now as I finish this year and commit to be your person, to be filled with joy and praise, and to help spread the message of forgiveness.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Monday, May 30, 2022

[Psalm 29; Exodus 40:16-38; Acts 16:35-40](#)

Contributor: [Ash Mason](#)

“Building....what?”

The meticulous nature of this passage in its preparation, attention to detail, and the eventual recognition that Moses was called to a standard of living and trust within himself that what he was working so hard to build had a purpose, absolutely fascinates me.

I work extensively in the field of mental health. I work in a psychiatric hospital where we tend to acute diagnoses such as Schizophrenia, Psychosis, and all kinds of personality disorders. Each day at work brings so many challenges, some danger, and so much education regarding human nature. One of my other pieces of life is that I'm pursuing a Masters in Counseling.

I'm studying to become a therapist. One of the things I've found from my patients in active psychosis is that religious preoccupation is a significant focus. My patients in active psychosis become hyper focused on details such as why was God fascinated with fire? Am I supposed to become a donkey that starts talking? Am I supposed to sacrifice myself like Jesus? Will my lamp become a burning bush? And so on.

While this list of questions and thoughts could go on for days, and it sounds absolutely bizarre, those who claim religion are not so different. We become so caught up on details regarding doctrine, polity, theology, and so on. We hyperfocus on details. In this hyperfixation, we are unintentionally building a system of belief that is founded upon being defensive and building a structure that, in order to be sustained, we have to continue in our defenses and keep the doors locked.

HOWEVER, in this scripture, Moses hyperfocuses on the details in order to build a structure of worship, where our defenses are not keeping people out, but the Spirit flows out in abundance.

What if we begin the process of slowly but surely beginning to define that which creates a way of building health, wholeness, and love? What if we began to prepare for openness?

This preparation begins in ourselves. A common phrase we use in psychiatric care is "prevention instead of reaction." Meaning, our acts of self care and mental and emotional wellness are a means of preparing to receive another with open arms, vulnerability, and love. Preparation is a labor of love. Preparation for us as individuals means becoming acutely attuned to our own mental, physical, and emotional health. If any of these are off balance, we must then respond. In this laborious preparation, we begin to discover expectations for ourselves that we will be people that build and prepare for abundance rather than building and preparing for defenses. In this defenses, our walls become so high and so strong that we lose sight of the Promised Land.

Call to action: create a list of things in your life that you spend the most time on. With each thing, write next to it what you're building with it, as well as what you're not building because of it. For example, "I work often at my job," you're building a financially stable future, but perhaps you're not building (as much, at least) relationships with your kids as you are getting home later each evening. Moses had to spend some serious time on this structure and so much had to be sacrificed in his life, and so he had to determine what was worth the sacrifice.

**Tuesday, May 31, 2022**

**Psalm 29; 2 Chronicles 5:2-14; Acts 26:19-29**

**Contributor: [Rufus Mugu](#)**

“Praise the Lord’s glorious name; bow down before the Holy one when he appears” (Psalms 29:2 GNB).

Our God is Holy, creator of all and the covenant God of Israel. It doesn’t matter where you are in this world.

God knows us and if He chooses to glorify Himself through you nothing will stop Him.

Apostle Paul met with God when he was on a mission to persecute Christians but God had other plans, he bowed down when He heard His voice. God used Paul in a mighty way that when he was presented before king Agrippa, he was still witnessing the mighty name of our Lord God. Paul spoke with boldness because he knew who had called him.

If we know our God, we shall live boldly.

There is a time I used to live in fear because I was brought up to believe that I cannot be gay and Christian.

I was living a lie so that I could please people. I was in an abusive marriage because my wife knew I was gay and I wanted her to cover that lie forever.

I thank God today because I am free, I am at peace with God, and just like Paul, I can testify of the goodness of our God.

My prayer today is that we be filled with the Holy Spirit to be strong witnesses of our God. Let’s have the courage as the LGBTQ+ community of faith. We live together as one family, caring for each other and reach out to all who are still oppressed by religion.

May our good God be with us, today and forever more. Amen

Contributor: [Angela Athey](#)

I have never been a Psalms 23 kind of girl.

Maybe because my sojourn through life has been less of green pastures and still waters than the tsunami after the wildfire.

We are frequently invited to listen for the still voice of God in quiet places to find comfort and strength. Practicing mindfulness and meditation has often realigned my perspective and focus back to our source of hope. But sometimes when life is too much, I just need a demonstration of the power and majesty of our God that is Cinemax worthy!

David invites us to ascribe glory and strength to the Lord in Psalm 29. Not for his faithfulness, goodness, or beauty of creation. But for his sheer power and might!

From Psalm 29 (NOAB):

The God of glory thunders  
The voice of the Lord is powerful  
The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon  
The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire  
The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness  
The voice of the Lord causes oaks to whirl and strips the forest bare

For many of us, life comes with storms that God never ordained. We feel lost, small, hopeless in the path of chaos and pain. Biblical passages conferring that “it” was meant for evil, but God used it for good or that “all” things work for good, fail short of comfort to me.

David calls us to celebrate the might of our God and to find strength and peace in the havoc He inhabits.

Psalm 29:11 (NOAB):

May the Lord give strength to his people!  
May the Lord bless his people with peace!  
May you find peace in the power of the Creator of the universe, the Lord who both commands and rebukes the storm, and the resurrected Christ who conquered death!



Contributor: [Lucy Wanijuru](#)

Praise the Lord!

The name of the Lord is to be praised all the time, no matter what we are going through, no matter the season we are in our lives. He gives strength to his people and blesses them with peace (Psalms 29:11 GNB).

The only thing God requires of us is to praise and worship Him alone and live in righteousness. David knew the secret behind praising God.

King David had many faults and most of the time he fell short of the glory of God but he was a man after God's heart. He knew God loved to be praised because He is holy and just.

As I reflect on these scriptures, I just see the grace of God upon my life. When I gave birth to my physically challenged boy, I thought God was punishing me for being a lesbian.

I hated myself, and I could not accept the fact that I will raise this child. I lived in denial for almost 3 yrs.

But I met pastor Megan who encouraged and taught me how to be grateful in every situation.

Since that day I have become a worshipper and to my surprise, though my boy cannot speak, he can sing. And I have seen the power of praising God.

Luke 9:20 "What about you?" he asked them. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are God's Messiah."

I desire to know God more intimately. Yes, I believe through the blood of Jesus on the cross I am born again.

I believe in the resurrection power, but still I want to know God more and make him my personal friend. This can only happen when we praise and worship God in holiness and truth.

Dear God! Help us to take the cross daily, help us to give up ourselves so that we can find the real us in you. Help us to submit to Christ only. Amen

Friday, June 3, 2022

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; Isaiah 44:1-4; Galatians 6:7-10

Contributor: [Josphine Wambui](#)

The Lord is the only God.

Isaiah 44:3 “I will give water to the thirsty land and makes streams flow on the dry ground. I will pour out my spirit on your children and my blessings on your descendants.”

When we are humble before God, He is willing to bless us and pour His Spirit on us. Without the Spirit of God, we are nothing and we can accomplish nothing.

Galatians 6:7 “Do not deceive yourselves, no one makes a fool of God. People will reap whatever they sow.”

Being born in a rural setup where the main activity is farming, this is certainly so true. If you plant an acre of maize, you will not reap an acre of beans.

What a person sows he reaps. Even in the spiritual world, what we sow is what we reap.

I desire to sow love, kindness, and peace in me. These are the things I desire to reap. Sometimes we become angry with God because things are not going the way we want. If we plant hate, we shall reap hate.

But if all of us can plant the seed of peace and love, we can live in a very beautiful planet that is full of God’s blessings.

Prayer.

Dear God, I thank You because of giving me a chance to be called Your child.

There are many things that I desire, but right now I just want a fresh baptism through the Holy Ghost.

Heavenly Father, how I rejoice that You are my God my savior and redeemer.

May I sing forth Your praises not only in my lips but in my life, by giving up myself into Your holy service and for Your greater glory and honor.

You are the Lord over heaven and earth. Praise the Lord O my soul and all that is within me praise Your holy name.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Amen.

**Saturday, June 4, 2022**

**Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; 2 Kings 2:1-15a; Luke 1:5-17**

**Contributor:** [Elizabeth Moraa](#)

A “Sing to the Lord, all the world! Worship the Lord with joy; come before him with happy songs!” (Psalms 100:1-2. GNB). Any time I go before the presence of God, the first thing I do is to praise and worship this mighty God, I lay everything aside that hinders me from His presence. I am a struggling Christian, but I have learnt that our God needs true worshippers, who will worship in true and spirit. God is concerned with the attitude of our hearts when we come to Him. He wants us to serve Him with gladness, He wants us to serve and love Him voluntary, he wants us to choose Him and Him alone.

Let’s assemble boldly at His throne of grace so that we may obtain mercy and find His saving Grace. We have been redeemed and for that reason we can be grateful and bless His holy name. I will enter His gates with thanksgiving and praise for the gift of salvation which is an assurance of eternal life.

My life has been full of many hurdles since I was outed as a lesbian, at some point I thought my life was over. I didn’t know where to start or explain my innocence. My mother as the good Christian woman she is, I knew she will choose the church and the community at large over me.

My hope was gone, but I was holding my faith in Christ. I thank God for today because my hope was restored through a local LGBT Christian group. I believe that all that I lost when I was chased away from school will be restored. I now have a new school and a new family. May our God continue blessing Pastor Megan through the entire Parity international ministry. You are the reason I am praising God today, and I feel at peace with the world.

Dear God, you love us with endless mercy, you call us to be your sons and daughters, give us a clean heart, where everyone will feel loved and appreciated. Fill us with your grace to live in joy.

In Jesus’ mighty name we pray trust and believe. Amen.

**Contributor:** [Donna Techau](#)

A Reflection on Acts 2:1-21 and Romans 8:14-17

In the summers in college I worked in a remote location—340 acres—just me in a small one-room cabin in the woods for weeks on end, doing forestry and maintenance work. Being Central Illinois, there were storms that whipped up all summer long, multiple times a week. I wasn't living where sirens would alert me to tornados—it was too remote. I did have a small weatherband radio that let me know when to 'batten down the hatches.' But even that wasn't reliable—I could get signals only part of the time. I'd heard that when a tornado was coming it sounded like a train, and I listened intently for the sound of a train whistle.

That I never heard.

One night I laid in my little bunk in the cabin and began to stress: the air felt different; the sky was orange-green; the cabin creaked and groaned; the trees around me made noise I wasn't accustomed to. Then I heard it: the whoosh-whoosh-whoosh or chunk-chunk-chunk of boxcars passing by. It dawned on me: THAT was what they meant when they said a tornado sounded like a train! I pulled the mattress off the bunk and laid flat on the floor with the mattress over me. I've never experienced that type of fear. When it was over, the roof of the little cabin was partially lifted. I was worn out and soaked. Everything I owned was a mess. Trees were broken everywhere, and my route to town had to be cleared by chainsaw in order to pass.

by the events surrounding Jesus' death and reported resurrection. They prayed, seeking a revelation, but clearly not knowing what to really expect. And a tornadic wind was

likely low on the list of expectations. But through that fear and terror, the Spirit made Her presence known and empowered them.

Cognitive dissonance occurs when straight Christians encounter queer Christians (similarly Acts 2:12 talks about being 'amazed and perplexed'). Everything that was secure feels threatened and turned on its head. The boundaries that once clearly delineated right from wrong, in from out, sin from holiness, etc. have shattered. The complaint is levied "Queers can't by definition be Christian!"

But something strange happens when the Spirit bears witness (as in Romans 8:14-17) in queer lives. Perhaps we've been listening for the wrong sound the whole time—only hearing our own voices in our own dialect! It is time to stop assuming that God only speaks through and works in a single language, worldview, or orientation. Scripture claims that God will pour out the Spirit on all flesh (Acts 2:17). And the witness of the Spirit in the lives of queer Christians is evident.

The challenge for the church might simply be this: don't imagine the Spirit to be fragile or a monoglot. She swirls about where She may, speaking in Her own voice. Embrace a robust Pneumatology. You might just learn a new language—a new way of being—in the process. Let the Spirit judge and bear witness. And to queer Christians, the challenge is the same: trust the Spirit to bear witness through your life.

*Writings for June 5 continue on the next page.*

**Monday, June 6, 2022**

**[Psalm 48; Joel 2:18-29; 1 Corinthians 2:1-11](#)**

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**Contributor: [Dorcas Kiki](#)**

“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.” (Acts 2:4 GNB)

I love my God because He is not a respecter of persons.

He is omnipresent. We know that He knows what we are feeling, thinking, and facing in our lives. We know that He is present. But we don't feel THAT He is present.

I imagine sometimes how I would have responded if I had been in the disciples' place.

They had followed Jesus, given up their lives for Jesus, and then He was gone. He was dead. For three days they were without the presence of the one to whom they had committed three years of their lives.

After the resurrection, when Jesus is again present with them, it must have been amazing as He taught them about the kingdom of God.

Yet Jesus also tells them that He must leave them. He reminds them of His words in John 14:15-31 that He will send the Helper, the Holy Spirit to them. In the time between the Ascension and the coming of the Spirit, how hard it must be to wait. We must learn to be patient in this life.

The promises of God are true and Amen.

Prayer:

Oh God, teach me to wait upon You. Fill me again with Your Holy Spirit.

Guide me in righteousness so that I may reflect Your Glory. Thank You for choosing me and anointing me to serve You.

I will live to honor your Holy Name; in Jesus Name I pray trust and believe.

**Tuesday, June 7, 2022**

**[Psalm 48; Joel 2:18-29; 1 Corinthians 2:1-11](#)**

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**Contributor: [Ali Lopez-Valcarcel LMSW, M.Div.](#)**

Elements of God's vision

We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that comes from God, in order to understand what God has given us. When we talk about it, we don't use the words that human wisdom teaches us, but the words that the Spirit teaches us.

-1 Corinthians 2:12-13

I remember for many years after recognizing my identity as an LGBTQ+ individual, I avoided the church and everything to do with it. I largely evaded religion, but at the same time, recognizing myself brought a freedom and connection with God that I never experienced during my many years serving in the church. I avoided church until a casual conversation with a pastor who invited me to help him in his ministry.

Although this pastor was not ready to receive me as God created me. God reminded me in that moment that His Spirit and Purpose remain in me regardless of the criticisms or expectations of others.

God's creation has been called to envision and recreate God on earth through the gifts deposited in each of us. It doesn't matter what phase of our life we are in. This Lent is an invitation to silence criticism and give voice to the love, peace, liberation and healing we have received from God.

We have received the Spirit of God and are part of His Divine creation. Let us prepare our hearts to be who God called us to be through Christ, without worrying about the perception of the world. Then we do not speak with words not taught by human wisdom.

What religious ideas or expectations limit you to being as God created you?

Contributor: [Rufus Wugu](#)

“I am the Lord’s servant,” said Mary; “may it happen to me as you have said,” and the angel left her. (Luke 1:38 GNB)

Before we were born, we are called by God to know, love and serve him. We have been the constant recipient of His blessings.

Do we notice this in our daily lives?

Do we take time to listen the still voice of God?

Mary was listening, she heard the message of the Angel and responded.

We can also be filled with grace if, like her, we listen and respond with a resounding and unconditional yes to all that God wants from us. All that God requires of us is to believe and have hope and faith in Him.

“Zion, the mountain of God, is high and beautiful; the city of the great king brings joy to all the world”. (Psalms 48:2)

As I behold this great mountain that rises so high above the land, I am reminded that it took God just a whisper to create it, yet the Lord can bring it crashing down in a moment.

The works of the Lord fills me with great awe, joy and wonder. And to know I am the most beloved of his creation humbles me.

When I feel down and weak the greatness of the Lord feels me with strength and courage to proclaim His greatness to the world.

Like apostle Paul, I face the world without fear knowing he will deliver me from my tribulations.

I proclaim the word that it may touch the hearts of even the greatest adversaries I face in this life gifted to me.

That I may be a vessel to deliver the word of the good Lord to the whole world.

**Contributor:** [Angela Athey](#)

A meditation on Ephesians 1:17-19

Have you ever gazed at the heavens on a starry night, and felt so small and insignificant? Or in my case, a wave of anxiety pondering the mysteries of the unknown.

The author of Ephesians must have understood. Chapter 1 recounts heavenly places, destinies, mystery, and the fullness of time.

After 14 verses attempting to unravel these truths, the writer then offers a prayer for the audience. I like the translation from The Message which petitions God “to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do” (Eph 15-19 MSG).

The NOAB and NIV interprets the passage as a request for a spirit of wisdom and revelation. In the Old Testament the fear of God is the precursor of wisdom. This reference to fear is sometimes erroneously understood as threat or dread. However, the Hebrew definition more accurately translates as fear of greatness, feeling of human insignificance in relation to God’s glory.

How really, can we “know” God? Jesus challenges in John 14:7 “If you really knew me, you would know my Father” (NIV) So what do we know about Jesus?

Jesus says of himself in Luke 4:18-19 (MEV)  
18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
because He has anointed Me  
to preach the gospel to the poor;

He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted,  
to preach deliverance to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed;  
19 to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Jesus then shows us who he is. We see him as the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine, the father who waits for his prodigal son, the non-accuser of the adulteress, the true love of the Samaritan, our Lord who kneels to wash the feet of his servants. This is someone I want to know!

Knowing Christ personally, means knowing love. An experiential life changing love that transcends the natural and overflows through his spirit to those around us. We see "the greatness of his power," (Eph 1:19 NOAB) demonstrated in the statement of the cross.

To see “exactly what it is he is calling you to do.” Jesus said if you love me, you will keep my command. He summarizes his commands in one word, LOVE. Consequently, he is the LIVING word.

Our inheritance

25 I have told you these things while I am still with you. 26 But the Holy Spirit will come and help[d] you, because the Father will send the Spirit to take my place. The Spirit will teach you everything and will remind you of what I said while I was with you. (John 14:25 CEV).  
So, the next time I look at the heavens, I hope I am overwhelmed... at the measure of God's love!



**Friday, June 10, 2022**

**Psalm 8; Proverbs 3:19-26; Ephesians 4:1-6**

**Contributor:** [Ali Lopez-Valcarcel LMSW, M.Div.](#)

Proverbs 3:19-26

Free Yourself from Fear

19 The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens 20 by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew. 21 My child, do not let these escape from your sight: keep sound wisdom and prudence 22 and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. 23 Then you will walk on your way securely and your foot will not stumble. 24 If you sit down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. 25 Do not be afraid of sudden panic, or of the storm that strikes the wicked; 26 for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.

Proverbs 3:19-26

Sage Abba Bessarion shares the story of his experience walking by the sea with his teacher in which Abba Bessarion tells him he was thirsty. He says that Abba Doulas turned to the water, prayed, and told him to drink some of the sea water. Abba Bessarion confesses that the sea water was fresh and filled a bottle to which his teacher asked him why he was taking water, to which Bessarion replied: "Forgive me, it is for fear of being thirsty later. To which the teacher replied, "God is here, God is everywhere."

There are many times when we find ourselves in the situation of the Sage Abba Bessarion, afraid, worried about tomorrow and we do not stop to enjoy the moment.

In our lives we have opportunities to see God's presence in the simplest things of our lives, but if we are caught up in fear like Abba Bessarion, we will not grow in the realization that God is here. God is our provision and has created us to enjoy our fruits, to be our unique selves and not to be imprisoned by fear.

This season is an invitation to live without the consternation of what the world expects us to be. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the demands to produce at their expectations against the risk of being cut for missing the mark. After all, God has created us to enjoy the earth, the work of our hands, our unique hands.

But if we operate out of fear. If we live in dismay and worry for what others may think, we lose focus on our purpose of living a life of joy, love, and grace within ourselves, with our creator and with one another.

Let's use this season to refocus on God's grace starting within us. Let that drives us and guarantees that, although we sometimes miss the mark his grace is enough for today because God is here, God is everywhere.

*Devotional writings for June 10 continue on the next page.*

Contributor: [Ali Lopez-Valcarcel LMSW, M.Div.](#)

Ephesians 4:1-4

A call to Unity in a divided world

4 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:1-4

The author of Ephesians is calling our attention to live a life of intentionality. They are encouraging us to love and care for one another. They are challenging us to become one.

Although, I cannot imagine that the writer lived in a perfect world in which everyone got along with each other. At times, it certainly feels like today we are further than ever from being of one body and one spirit.

The disconnections can be felt from Main Street to Wall Street, where the rich are becoming richer while the poor is dug into a deeper hole. The split feels even greater in the pews, while some call for extravagant love and welcome; others, ask to condemn those who are different, the immigrant and the marginalized. Inadvertently the tension has made it difficult to see each other as Ephesians intended, one Lord, one faith.

Regardless of our current circumstances the call to love and unity remains as true to us as it was to the original recipients of this letter. In a divided world such as our it may be difficult to look at the big picture and see us as one. Therefore, in this globalized world it's important that we take a moment to concentrate on the smaller picture.

The call to the unity of one body and one spirit can start small. Then love will find a way to move from the micro towards the rest of world. In this season, I am inviting myself to love from the small picture in finding ways to know and love my neighbor. I am finding ways to get closer to my coworkers and I am praying for ways to find common grounds and respect towards those who believe different to me.

After all, I believe that its everyones hope to become one. What is hope but a constant reinvention of the impossible. It is in that reinvention where we can find possibilities to move closer to the call of bearing with one another in love.

**Saturday, June 11, 2022**

**Psalm 8; Proverbs 4:1-9; Luke 2:41-52**

**Contributor: [Pelayo Alvarez](#)**

When I was a young boy, I used to go every Sunday to Catholic Mass with my parents and brother. It was also a Sunday tradition, right after mass, to get a piece of candy. Our Sunday treat. In a very sensorial way, the title, “The Boy Jesus at the Temple” ( Luke 2:41-52) transported me to this period of my childhood. This flashback came not only because I remember the reading very well (it was one of the most remarked scriptures from my childhood priest), but also because my parents lost me and my brother one day after church.

One Sunday after church, my brother and I went into the candy store next to the temple.

We were immersed in the variety of candy and got lost inside our minds during the tough decision-making process of choosing the right candy for our Sunday treat.

After we came out of the candy store, we realized none of our parents were anywhere visible.

My father thought my mother had stayed with us in the candy store and went back home.

My mother thought my father had stayed with us in the candy store and went to buy some pastries.

And what did my brother and I think?

That we were going to be left on our own for the rest of our lives, forgotten by our parents, and perhaps had to recur to the kindness of a wild wolf who could take care of us in a not very far forest.

At least, looking back at how much we were crying, and how desperate we looked, I can only imagine that was what we were thinking.

At this point, everything seemed overdramatic. Yes, we were kids, but kids who were old enough to be able to walk back home following the path we took to church every single Sunday. It was less than a quarter mile away in a very walkable and safe neighborhood of my origin country Spain. However, for some reason, fear was the only thing we could feel, and the possibility of walking back home was not a considered option by neither of us.

Some ladies who were friends with my parents, saw our melodrama, and guided us home while wiping our tears. I cannot remember much more from this day, but I do remember the feeling once we were home and the fear dissipated.

I was ashamed. Not ashamed because I had caused a huge dramatic moment in front of a lot of strangers. (Well, maybe not only because of that). I was ashamed because once I got home, the path seemed so short and seamless. I did know the path home! I had been too focused on the fear and that 7-minute walk back home, that I had done so many times with my parents, seemed impossible without their presence.

On that moment, I promised my young self that this would not happen again. Ever. And I swore next time I got lost, before freaking out, and starting to desperately cry, I would stop and reflect, and remember that even if the circumstances change, inside of me, I would not let fear make me feel I had forgotten the path to return back home.

“Love wins.” Such a complex concept to understand. Especially when you are surrounded by hate, by wars, sickness, and destruction.

It is indeed difficult to see love in any of this. But what would be of us if we could not have hopes for healing, for peace and for recovery. Love is passion

**Contributor:** [Donna Techau](#)

A reflection on Romans 5:1-5

I've always found the line "since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God" troubling—not because I disagree with the role of faith and the joy of peace, but rather because there seems to be some linear, transactional implication that doesn't sit well with me: if we can meet this standard (justification) we will find peace.

I wish it were written "Peace with God justifies our faith" because I believe the onus is not on me: God gives peace and through that peace, we come to believe. In its context, the scripture reminds us that faith is sufficient and our actions alone do not put us in right relationship with God.

But I believe the GLBTQI+ person's experience has a unique dimension: so bruised and worn out from a lifetime of the rhetoric of condemnation, many GLBTQI+ folks simply give up on faith (and in the sense of resignation, 'make their peace'). And it is precisely in that moment or space of letting faith go and finding peace, they experience the Divine.

Is it possible that the moral/ethical gymnastics required by some churches for GLBTQI+ individuals to be allowed within the fold—to be considered 'justified' (that is, the love the sinner, hate the sin rhetorical demand placed upon those whose very being constitutes sin; the grace-denying demand for celibacy for those who've experienced no such calling; the life sentence of loneliness, etc.)--creates the very embattled state in which the GLBTQI+ individual can not experience peace and therefore cannot experience God?

Is it possible that the church's ethical demands of GLBTQI+ persons reinforce the very opposite of the intent of this text: you will never be at peace with God until you are justified—and your actions (works) have to meet a certain criteria that justification? It is possible that the church itself is negating the role of faith in favor of works righteousness in its ethical demands.

What if the challenge to the church in this text was this: allow the peace of God to be the impetus of faith. Trust in the Spirit to work and instead of becoming embattled over sexual identities/orientations, simply extend the peace of Christ. And trust what happens next.

And to my GLBTQI+ friends, the challenge is this: stop struggling and find peace. And trust that in that peace, you will meet God.

Because as verse 5 promises: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Spirit which has been given."

*Writings for June 12 continues on the next page*

**Contributor:** [Monica Wambui](#)

“Listen! Wisdom is calling out. Reason is making herself heard” (Proverbs 8:1 GNB)

In this text, Wisdom is personified as female, and in her humanity finds all knowledge, insight, and truth. Wisdom is also portrayed as delighting God and in human beings.

How we are to interpret this portrayal, often referred to as “Lady Wisdom” or “Woman Wisdom.” This woman wisdom, is calling out to all people from the places of human interaction and discourse.

That Wisdom is God’s very delight. It is by the power of delight that God brought forth the world, and Proverbs 8 tells us that God delights in particular in humanity. God’s delight is the power that drives God to create, forming all that is through the ordering power of divine joy.

Human life, guided by God’s Wisdom in the ways of righteousness, is God’s special delight; Wisdom draws human beings into delighted relationship with the divine.

“O Lord, our Lord, your greatness is seen in all the world! Your praise reaches up to heaven” (Psalms 8:1 GNB).

What a glorious song of praise to God. Take sometime and pray this psalm to God. We cannot look on any of the natural wonders of this world without proclaiming praise and glory to its creator God.

Dear God,  
 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,  
 The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,  
 What is man that You are mindful of him,  
 And the son of man that You visit him?  
 For You have made him a little lower than the angels,  
 And You have crowned him with glory and honor.



Rev. Kim Purl is an online minister at [missouripastor.org](http://missouripastor.org) who lives in rural Missouri and is ordained in the Church of the Nazarene.

Kim is one of the hosts at [holydialogues.org](http://holydialogues.org), enjoying rich dialogue at the intersection of LGBTQI+ and faith.

As a mother of two teenagers and two young adults, she finds herself in natural conversation on social topics and faith over yummy Thai food.

Kim is married to her minister-husband, Joe, who helps her keep one foot on the ground.



My name is Marie Nganga, and I am a Kenyan of African origin. I am 38 years old. I am a Christian lesbian woman. I love God with all my heart and I love serving God through humanity.

I have a passion for writing and studying the Bible.

I am a woman of faith and I look forward to the day when all of the LGBTQ+ community will feel safe at the Lord's table.

**Author:**  
**Liggera Edmonds-Allen**



Liggera Edmonds-Allen (they/them) is a Dramaturgy student at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Their work revolves around transgender activism and queer joy. They love poetry, theatre, and going to the aviary!



**Author:**  
**Zaweria Hunyu**



Zaweria Hunyu

Kenyan. African, Kenyan/kikuyu

Non-binary

Lesbian

Born again Christian

Business woman

Teacher



Jimmy has lived and loved in the Washington, DC, area for 17 years but his hometown is Tucson, Arizona.

His day job is a pretty basic federal employee that aspires to be like Leslie Knope.

Otherwise, his days are spent enjoying people, food, tv/movies, music, languages, and teaching spin classes (come visit me at VIDA Fitness).



My names are Daniel Kihara. 45 years old. Non- binary.

Born again Christian who is saved only by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am a small-scale farmer, and I live alone with my fur babies.

I believe in serving God through humanity.



“I grew up on a farm in rural Indiana. I went to Purdue University and then on to Regent University in Virginia Beach for law school. I started practicing law first for a small firm in Indianapolis and then eventually served 10 years in the Air Force.

The Air Force gave me the chance to live in several parts of the country, however, it was during that time that the conflict between my sexual orientation and faith became too much, so I thought I had to choose one or the other.

I walked away from a relationship with Jesus.

I made that decision in isolation without the benefit of the counsel of others.

In a way that only God could, that false dichotomy came to a resolution in October, 2013 when I firmly reconnected with God.



My names are Nancy Wanja Mwangi.

I am from Kenya, and I love nature.

A single mother of two boys and a born-again Christian lesbian woman.

I am a human rights activist and I advocate for LGBTQ+



Aaron Jackson is thrilled to be here.

A native of Southern California, he has nonetheless lived in the nation's capital long enough to call himself a Washingtonian.

He is active in his Church's production team and his LGBT Bible study group.

An avid journaler, he is learning to embrace a Loving God for the mysterious, universal force that God is. Through his journaling, he is seeing that he is limited and seeks through practice to align it with the awesome, good and powerful reality that this mysterious God of Love has given to us.

**Author: Rev. Yadi Martínez-Reyna**



New Church, Chiesa Nuova, UCC, Dallas, Texas and First UCC in Second Life

Rev. Yadi Martínez Reyna is a bilingual Latinx gender non-conforming artist, UCC Licensed Minister, Pastor, and borderlander, born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas.

Yadi serves as the LGBTQIA Unconscious Bias Awareness Facilitator with ten+ years of experience working with young people in the Dallas/Ft. Worth metropolitan area. Their work includes using arts and networking skills to create community events, retreats, leadership conferences, and safe spaces. Yadi is a certified facilitator in the Our Whole Lives (OWL) curriculum, which provides comprehensive sexuality education for young people. Yadi serves as a Youth Pastor at New Church, Chiesa Nuova, UCC, Dallas, Texas, and at First UCC in Second Life, where they are a part of a virtual reality congregation.

Yadi has contributed to the Progressive Youth Ministry Blog that can be found on [Patheos.com](https://patheos.com) and at UCC Encuentros y Bienvenida LGBTQ+ Inclusive toolkits.



Adrian Slonaker resides in downtown Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada in an apartment shared with a multicolored plush unicorn called Blaze.

Having completed university studies in linguistics and literature, Adrian works as a language consultant.

In precious moments of free time, Adrian enjoys swimming, rock 'n roll records, naps during thunderstorms, horror films and extremely spicy vegetarian dishes.

Adrian's theological background and beliefs are somewhat eclectic and syncretic, with elements of Anabaptism (Mennonite), Anglicanism, Reform Judaism and Unitarian-Universalism in the mix.

Adrian also writes poetry, stories and essays and has been published extensively in journals and anthologies.

In addition, Adrian is a fan of iced non-alcoholic beverages, especially if they are bright blue.





Hi, my name is Malique Guinn and I was born and raised in Lancaster, CA, where I am a member of Agape Community Church.

I am blessed to be a student in the Dramatic Writing Program at Carnegie Mellon University. In addition, I am a fiancée, a son, a brother, an uncle, and whoever else God says I am.

I gave my life to Christ towards the end of 2020 and I was baptized on July 11, 2021. Every day, I don't aspire for perfection, but to understand God's will for my life and serve others with love.



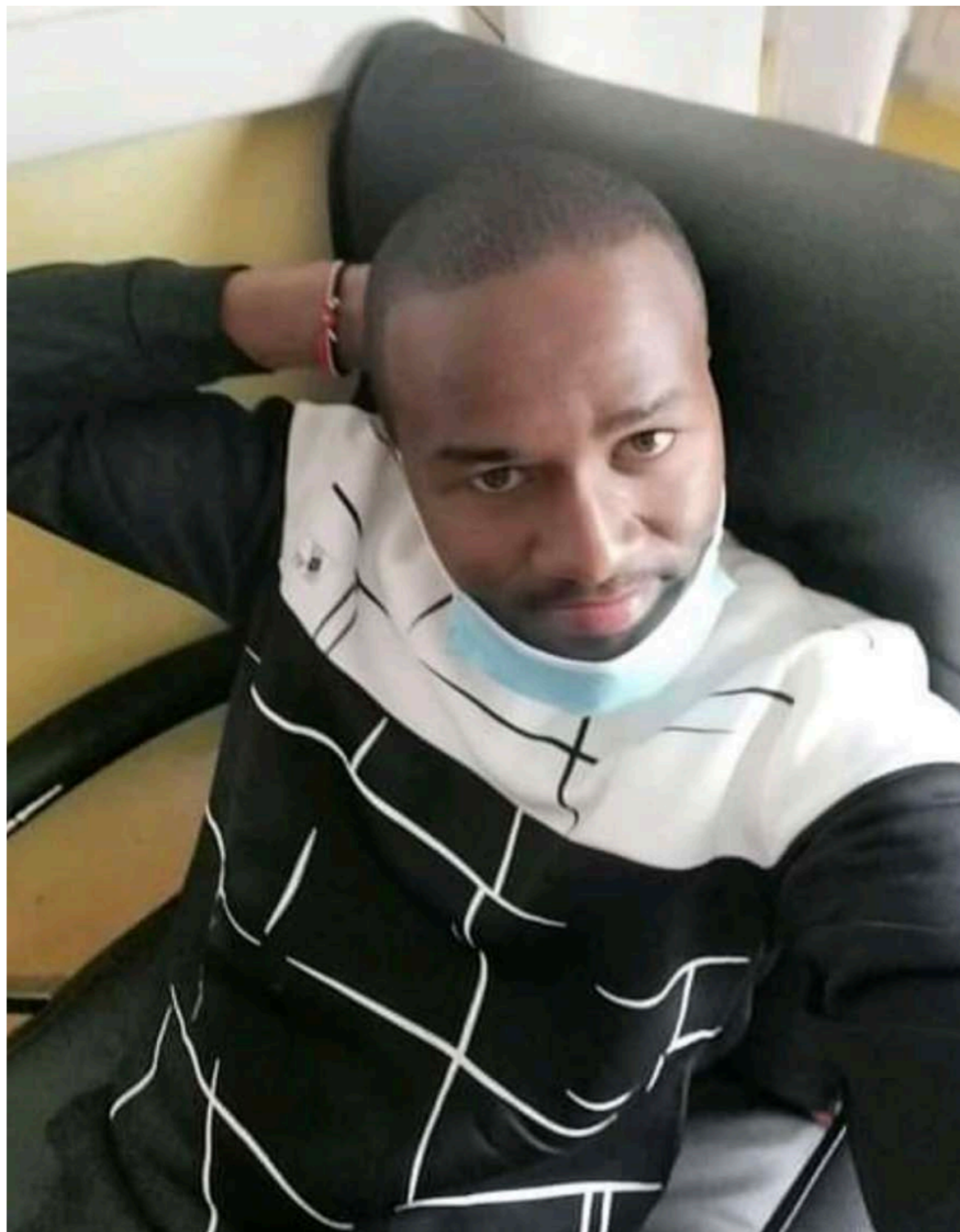
I'm an ecclesial misfit: a daughter of Nazarene missionaries (Papua New Guinea), educated by United Methodists and Catholics, welcomed by American Baptists, and served as a Presbyterian pastor. I've studied and taught theology at the graduate level, ran an ethics center, worked in educational technology, and was an RN in ICUs in Illinois and Missouri.

My closest informants are Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Christian feminists.

My current iteration is as a library director in a rural public library and as a hobby farmer.

I understand my library district as my parish--only without all the religious trappings.

**Author: Stephen Maina**



My Names are Stephen Maina.

I am Kenyan aged 26 years.

I am a born again gay Christian.



I'm am a solitary Wiccan practitioner who believes in nature and humanity's interconnectedness.

I grew up in New York but currently live in Utah with my miniature Aussie named Bubba.

I am a graduate of Smith College and am a proud gender queer person and LGBTQ activist.

**Author: Boniface Waweru**



I am a gay christian and I love God.

I have 30 yrs and I fellowship with pastor Megan in Kenya.



My journey began in Ogden, Utah and I love hailing from the "rough" part of Utah.

I grew up a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of latter-day Saints (often referred to as the Mormons). At the age of 21, I left home to serve a proselyting mission for the church to southern Germany.

My faith foundation was shattered when, at age 40, I could no longer deny my orientation and gender identity. When I walked out of the closet, I also thought I was walking away from God.

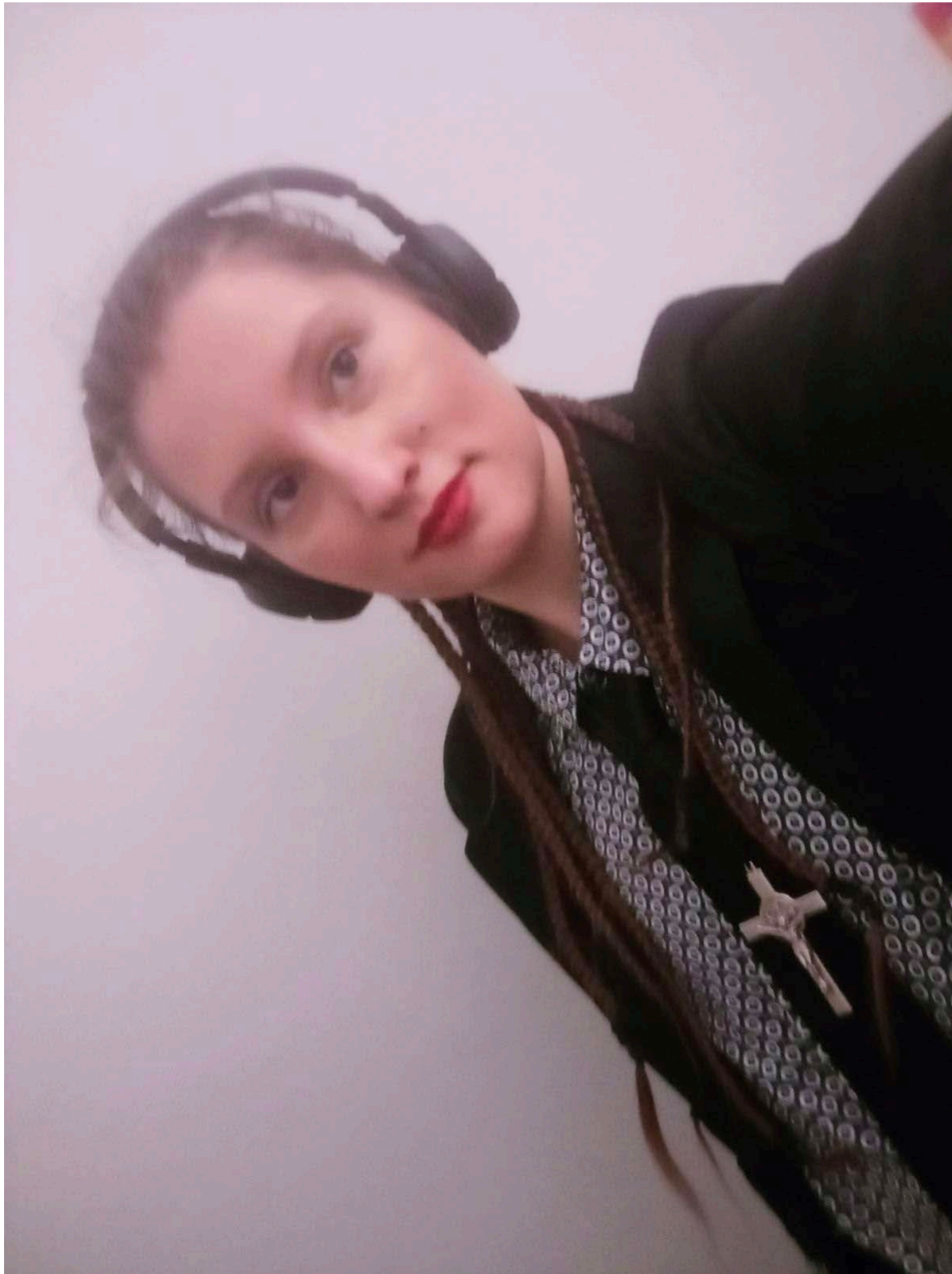
I struggled reconciling my relationship with God and I am grateful He never gave up on me. I will always be grateful for the wonderful people at the United Church of Christ congregation I found during this time.

It was in that chapel I was reintroduced to God, who loved and accepted me, just as I was. My faith journey continues and I am so grateful for experiences, such as this, that allow me to rejoice in the word of God and worship Him.

**Author: Jacklin Wambui**

My names are Jacklin Wambui from Mukurweini and I fellowship with Pastor Megan whom I was introduced to by Nancy our youth group patron.

I was so lonely and am happy with my new family now.

**Author: Uli**

Uli (they/them):

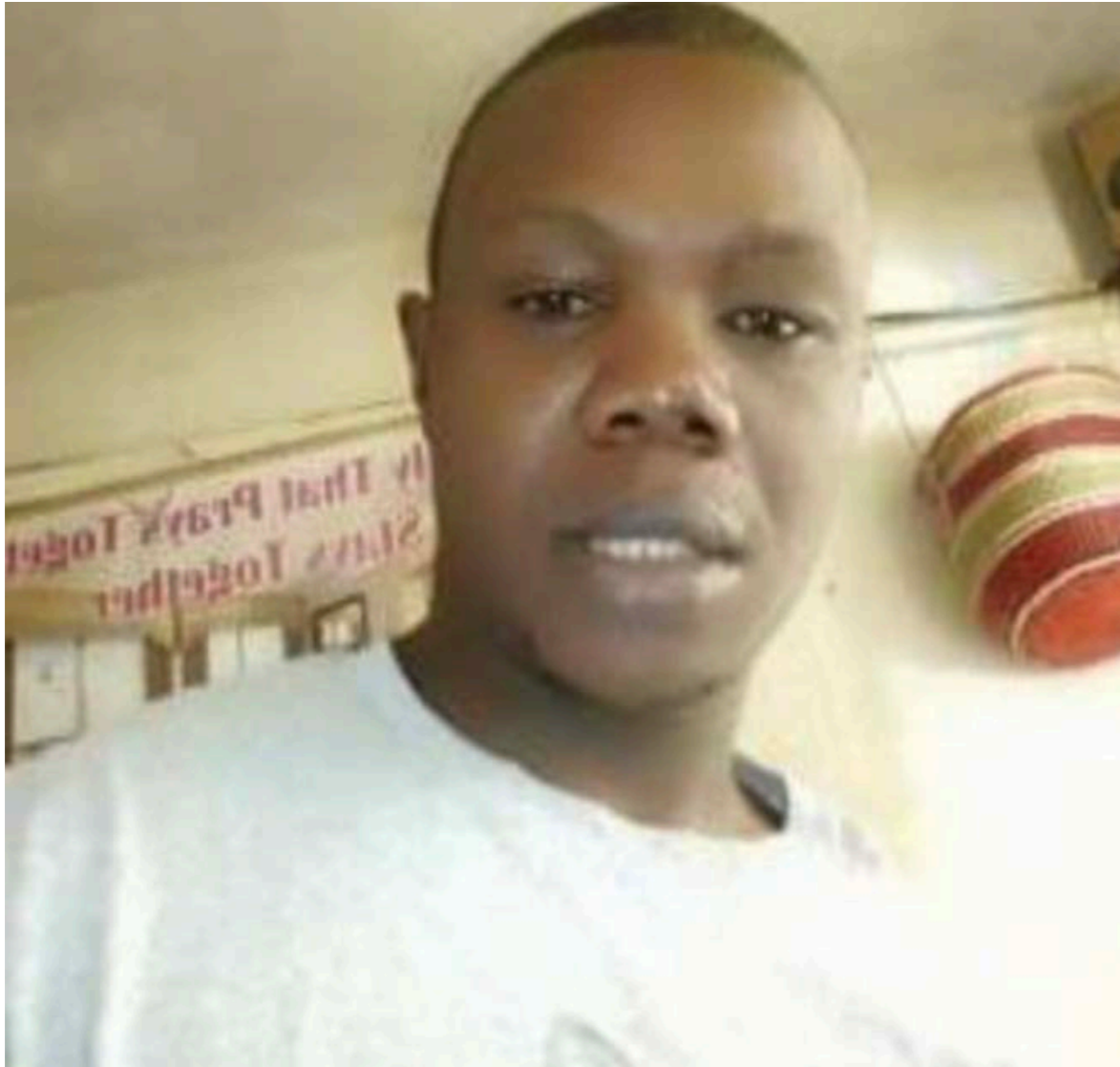
I'm a twenty something queer christian anarchist from Poland. (Roman) Catholic background, now more connected with Reformed Evangelical church, but at heart an anarchist.

My life is all about creating and taking care of communities based on care - living our lives together, caring for each other, tending to each needs and desires.

I'm a part of a christian-anarchist project: we read Bible from anarchist perspective (no hierarchy, reducing structures of power, individual freedom, communal care) and look at anarchist practice through Christian lenses (theology of care).

Also, turbo-queer.



**Author: David Mwaura**

My names are David Mwaura. I am 30 years old.

A Kenyan of African origin. I am a born again gay Christian man. I love God and I love serving Him.

**Author: Ali Lopez-Valcarcel LMSW, M.Div.**



**Pastor Ali Lopez-Valcarcel**

Pastor Ali is a graduate of the UTRGV School of Social Work, where she earned a Master of Social Work. Also, a recent recipient of an MDiv. at Brite Divinity School, and candidate for ordination at the United Church of Christ North Texas.

Ali served as a Chaplain Assistant in the US Army and as a lead pastor in the RGV. Ali also served as an Associate Pastor at FUMC in Grapevine TX. Currently, Ali serves as Minister of Community Outreach and Sabbatical Pastor at Embrace UCC.

Ali's biggest passion is to share the expansive love and grace of God to all of God's creation.

**Author: Elizabeth Moraa**



My names are Elizabeth Moraa. An African of Kenyan origin, I am 20 years.

Pursuing studies in theological studies because I want to know God More.

I am a Christian. And I love God with all heart.

I have struggled with my sexuality for so long but Now at I am at peace because I have reconciled with myself as a transgender woman.

**Author: Rev. Roberto Ochoa**



Rev. Roberto Ochoa (el, he, him) is originally from East Los Angeles, CA and currently is the Program Associate for Congregations of Color and Ethnic Identified Congregations for the National Setting of the United Church of Christ.

Roberto earned his Master of Divinity from Andover Newton Theological School with Certificates in Ethics and Social Justice; and in Spiritual and Pastoral Care.

He is currently working on his D.Min. in Prophetic Leadership at Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO. Roberto has been with his spouse Jim for 25 years and married for nine and make their home in Worcester, MA.

**Author: Ash Mason**

Hey hey! I'm ash, my pronouns are she/her, and I find the greatest joy in getting to know the most intricate nature of humanity.

I have a couple too many theology degrees and am pursuing education to become a therapist. I work in an acute psychiatric hospital with individuals in active psychosis, schizophrenia, and so much more.

I have found that God dwells in the ashes of humanity, in the people that have been burnt by life... in mental wellness, I have found particularly that God is with the individuals in acute mental illness that try to kill me just as much as a packed church on a Sunday. This, my friends, is where I find great delight..the God of the ordinary, unusual, and all around beautiful.

**Author: Dorcas Kiki**

I am Dorcas Kiki, a Kenyan transgender woman who loves God with all my heart.

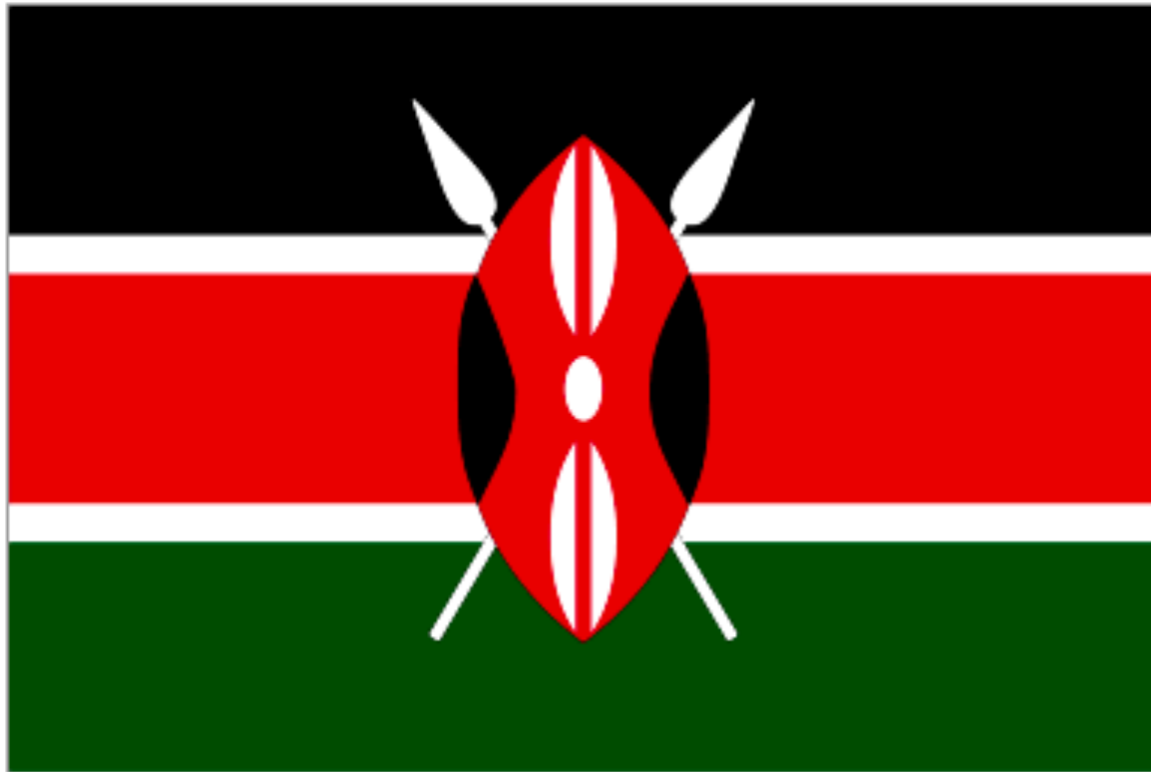
**Author: Angela Athey**



Angela Athey lives in Ohio.

She is a student of Open and Relational Theology  
on a journey to rediscover God's love.

**Author: Josphine Wambui**



I am Josphine Wambui aged 38 years from Kenya.

I am part of the fellowship which is led by our Pastor Megan.

I must confess the hope and love we get in that fellowship is just wonderful and may God keep us together as each others keeper.

I am a lesbian christ is my personal saviour and i believe in God's protection and powers.



**Author: Monica Wambui**



I am Monica Wambui, Kenyan citizen, aged 26years, a Christian lesbian.

I love worshipping God, and I am born again.

**Author: Rev. Dr. Stephen Sprinkle**

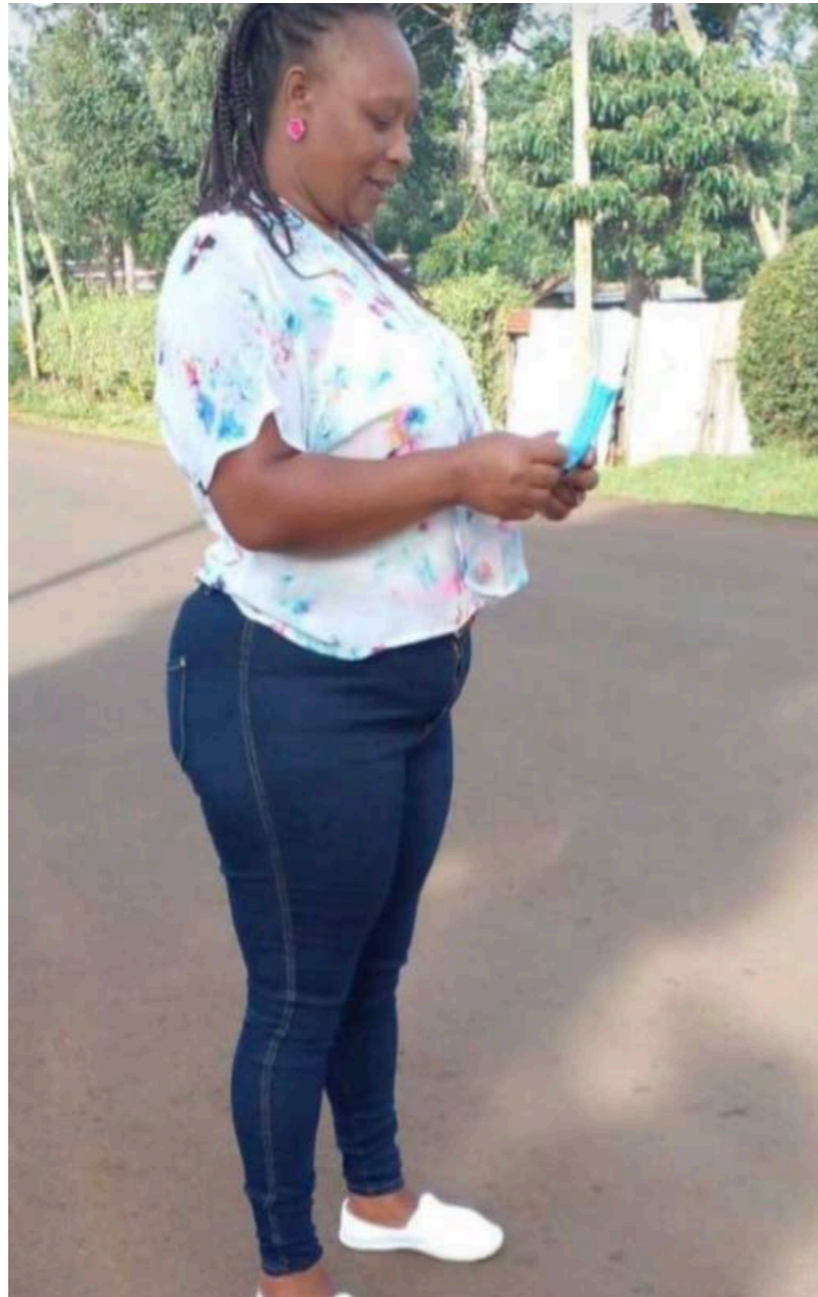


Stephen V. Sprinkle and his partner Rob Rodriguez live in South Dallas with their English Bulldog Henry.

Sprinkle is Professor of Practical Theology at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas, and Theologian-in-Residence at The Episcopal Church of St. Thomas the Apostle in Dallas, Texas.

He is the first openly LGBTQIA+ faculty member in Brite's history.

**Author: Lucy Wanjiru**



I am Lucy Wanjiru, A Kenyan of African origin.  
born again Christian lesbian woman.

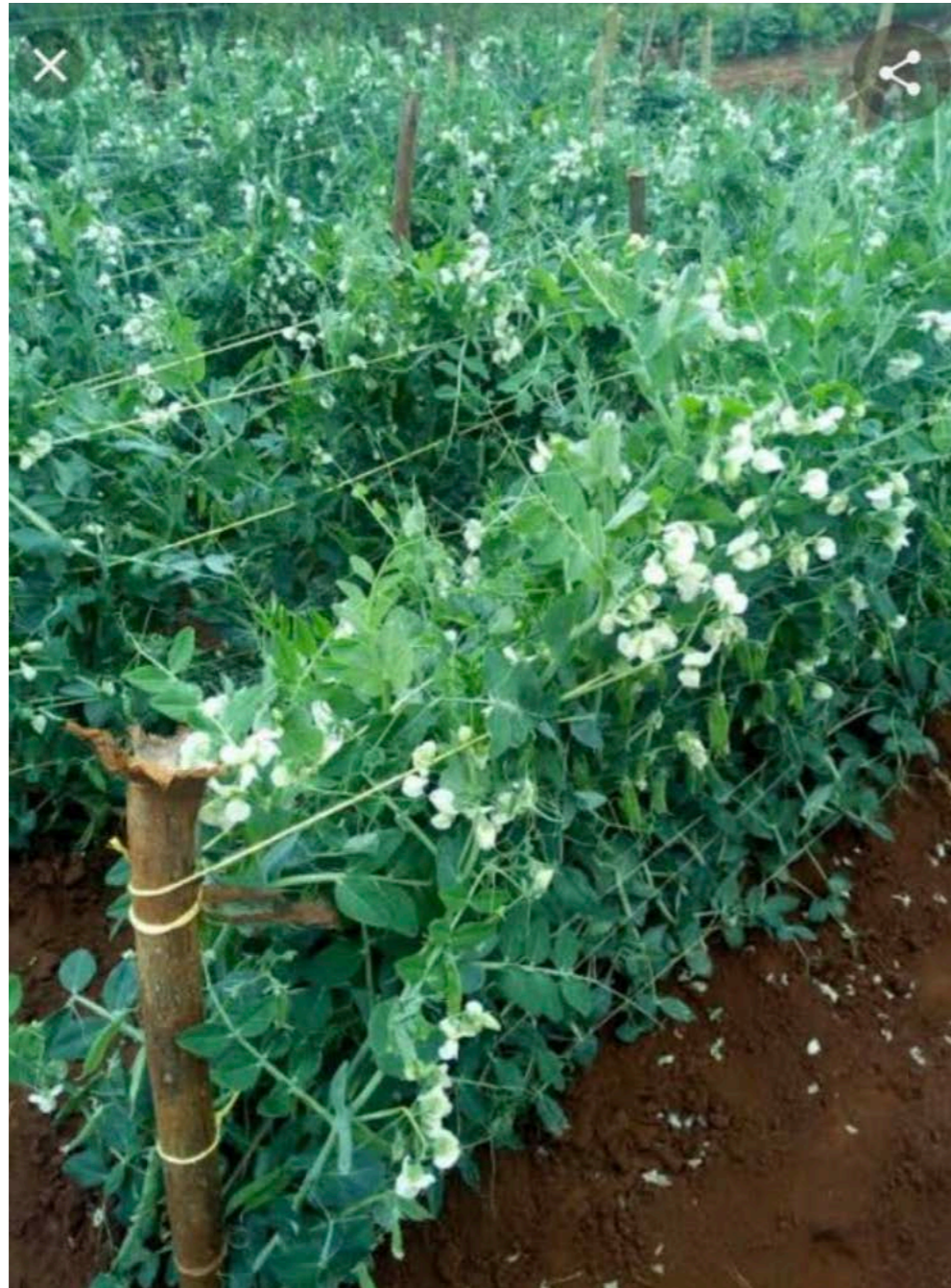
I love God and I trust Him with my life.

**Author: Pelayo Alvarez**

Hola a todxs. I am originally from Spain and I was raised catholic. During these past 5 years I have been working training least developing countries in the field of international relations and global affairs at the United Nations.

I am passionate to discover how different folks around the world live their spirituality and appreciate what makes each story powerful. I like to ask for practical advice and takeaways from different life perspectives in our episodes so you can use them for your own personal development and growth. I also have a Youtube Channel where I curate life changing ideas with a fun twist.

As a host for the Forbidden Apple Podcast I want to prove that although people celebrate religion and spirituality in so many ways, at the same time, they share so much in common.

**Author: Rufus Mugo**

I am a 40 year old farmer from Kenya.

I am a born again Christian and I am transgender and I believe God loves me the way I am since He is my creator.



Rev. Marian Edmonds-Allen is the executive director of Parity, an NYC-based national nonprofit that works at the intersection of faith and LGBT concerns, director of Blessed by Difference, and author at Family Christian.

Marian attended Western Theological Seminary and Eden Theological Seminary and has served in many pastoral capacities, including church planting, parish ministry, and chaplaincy. She is a Doctor of Ministry candidate at Eden Theological Seminary (2023) with the topic Covenantal Pluralism and Mission: Evidence for Healing the LGBT and Faith Divide. Marian is married, has four children, and is a passionate skier and outdoor enthusiast.

Thank you for joining us during this Easter Season!

If you have questions, comments need help - or would like to write - please be in touch. We always want to hear from you That is the spirit of Holy Dialogues. Be in touch by emailing [marian@parity.nyc](mailto:marian@parity.nyc)

And please visit us at [HolyDialogues.org](http://HolyDialogues.org) for videos, devotionals in this series, and resources for individuals, families, faith leaders and churches. Plus, we have wonderful Converge Groups for you to be part of.

Check it out - and remember, God loves you!