

Creation Station

We are constantly reminded of God's presence in our life as we are surrounded by the wonder of creation. Creation confirms that God provides all that we need. Creation invites us to use all of our senses to engage with God and express our gratitude, commitment, and service in caring for all that has been provided.

SELECT A STONE from the fountain area and hold it in your hand. Take a few minutes to sit quietly and LISTEN to the sounds of water flowing, SEE the images of creation in all its glory, TOUCH the coolness of the water and feel the smoothness of the stone in your hand.

REMEMBER your baptism as drops of water touch your skin.

READ the posted Scripture passages that remind us of all that God has created and shared with us.

REFLECT on the following questions in your journal:

- What part of God's creation most grabs your attention and why?
- How often do you really take time away from technology and busy schedules to simply enjoy God's creation? Why is that?
- Is it harder or easier to appreciate creation as you get older? Why?
- How might paying better attention to creation help us pay better attention to God?

After you have finished reflecting, WRITE A WORD on your stone that expresses your gratitude for something specific in creation that God has provided for you.

Write this word in your prayer journal and a sentence or two about why you chose this word.

As you prepare to leave this center, PLACE YOUR STONE with others along the path as a reminder that God provides all we need as we "GO" out into the world to serve.

ABC's of Prayer Instructions:

The poster on the wall in this center has a different prayer word for each letter of the alphabet and a related Scripture passage. The words represent gifts we may have been given or skills we may need for our journey as God calls us to "GO" into the world and share the message of the transforming power of a relationship with Christ.

LOOK at the list and pick one or more words that you think may be lacking in your own life. Look up the related Scripture passage in one of the provided Bibles and spend a few minutes JOURNALING about what God needs you to hear from that text.

WRITE the key word in capital letters in your journal and make a point to KEEP PRAYING for God to help you develop that attribute.

ABC's of Prayer

Attitude ... Psalm 19:14

Boldness ... Psalm 27:1

Courage ... John 1:9

Discernment ... Philippians 1:9-10

Enthusiasm ... Colossians 3:23

Friendliness ... Proverbs 18:24

Generosity ... 2 Corinthians 9:7

Humility ... Philippians 2:3-5

Initiative ... 1 John 3:18

Joyfulness ... Philippians 4:4

Knowledge ... Proverbs 18:15

Listening ... Proverbs 12:15

Maturity ... 1 Corinthians 14:20

Neighbors ... Mark 12:31

Overflow ... Romans 15:13

Perseverance ... Galatians 6:9
Quiet ... Proverbs 29:11
Respect ... Romans 12:10
Self-Control ... 2 Peter 1:5-7
Thankfulness ... 1 Chronicles 16:34
Understanding ... Psalm 114:130
Victory ... Psalm 18:29
Wisdom ... James 3:17
eXcellence ... Proverbs 3:9
Youthfulness ... 1 Timothy 4:12
Zeal ... Romans 12:11

“Why Me?” Instructions:

We often become our own biggest obstacles when it comes to following God's intention for our lives. We bombard ourselves with negative self-criticisms and excuses and then we believe what we tell ourselves. It often takes the voices of those in the community around us to help us see our best selves. God frequently speaks through others to break through our own negativity and defenses. While we often struggle to see the God-given gifts we do have, it is usually much easier for us to see the possibilities in others – even strangers. It often is much easier to see how God could love someone else than to understand how God could possibly love us.

READ the following passage of Scripture from the Message paraphrase of Isaiah 43:1 and COPY any parts of it that really "shout" at you into your journal as a reminder of how intensely God loves you.

"But now, God's Message, the God who made you in the first place, Jacob, the One who got you started, Israel: "Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you. I've called your name. You're mine. When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you. When you're in

rough waters, you will not go down. When you're between a rock and a hard place, it won't be a dead end - Because I am God, your personal God, The Holy of Israel, your Savior." -Isaiah 43:1

TAKE A SELFIE with your cell phone.

SEND THE PHOTO to _____ and we will print it out for you.

HANG IT on the wall using a loop of blue tape and then WRITE on a post-it strip one or two self-critical observations about what you see in your own photograph.

Take the time to LOOK at other photographs in the center and leave one or two POSITIVE messages around the edges of other photos.

In your prayer journal, WRITE down the self-critical message you put on your own photo in small letters and spend a few minutes in PRAYER asking God to help you become more aware of your gifts and strengths and to focus less on those things that you are self-critical of. Now WRITE down one or two of your strengths in BIG letters beside your self-critical message and UNDERLINE, CIRCLE, AND PUT EXCLAMATION MARKS beside those words.

ASK GOD to help you find more opportunities to develop and use those things that are your strengths.

“Here I Am” Center Instructions:

God calls us to GO out into the world and speak on God's behalf. God equips us with the gifts and resources we need to do that. But God leaves the CHOICE up to us about how we respond. Will we allow excuses and fears and doubts to paralyze us into staying in our comfort zone, or will we choose to be risk-takers, trust God, and leap into the life God envisions for us?

In this center, you are invited to spend some time MEDITATING about the choices you are facing -in your life right now and in the future.

CHOOSE one of the outlines of a hand and an extra fine-point black marker. Use the marker to divide the handprint up into smaller sections and then "doodle" a different design or pattern in each small section (this is known as Zentangling). Once you have the designs drawn, use colored pencils to color in the various designs.

As you draw and color, PRAY about the things in your life that you use as excuses or allow to get in the way of God's plan for your life. The following questions might help guide your prayer time:

- How could I be speaking out on God's behalf in my life right now? Why don't I?
- With whom could I be sharing my own faith story and the importance of God in my life? What gets in the way of my doing that?
- How could my education, both now and in the future, be better used to serve God's purposes?
- What things am I wasting by the choices I make?
- How could my community (church, friends, family) make a bigger difference in preparing me to "GO" if I allowed it to happen?

Isaiah 6:8 says: Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!" What would it take for you to be able to make that response to God? You might want to WRITE this Scripture and your response in your prayer journal.

Once you have colored your handprint, cut it out with a pair of scissors and use a glue stick to ADD IT to the ever-growing circle of hands on the floor as you pray for God to give you the strength to say "Here I am, Lord!" The expanding circle of hands

committed to responding to God's invitation/command to "Go" is symbolic of the growing power of many voices telling God's story out in a world that needs to hear it.

"Fears Take Flight" Center instructions:

"Butterflies often symbolize how something can be transformed from one kind of life into a whole new way of being. In our Christian tradition, butterflies are used as symbols of resurrection. Around the world, butterflies represent endurance, change, hope, and life."

READ the two different versions of the 2 Corinthians 5:17 - 20 passage that are posted in the center.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - 20. The Message

"Because of this decision we don't evaluate people by what they have or how they look. We looked at the Messiah that way once and got it all wrong, as you know. We certainly don't look at him that way anymore. Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life burgeons! Look at it! All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other. God put the world square with himself through the Messiah, giving the world a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins. God has given us the task of telling everyone what he is doing. We're Christ's representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God's work of making things right between them. We're speaking for Christ himself now: Become friends with God; he's already a friend with you.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - 20 (New Revised Standard Version)

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; That is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

CHOOSE one of the squares cut from an old hymnal. READ through the words that appear and see if any one word or phrase jumps out at you as a word you needed to hear from God today that hints at a transformation of something from your old life

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that needs to be made into something new; something that, if changed, would allow you to put excuses and fears out of the way and allow you to become the person God is calling you to become.

Use a highlighter to MARK THE WORD or phrase and then follow the instructions to FOLD YOUR SQUARE into an origami butterfly.

TUCK the butterfly into your prayer journal or post it on the wall with others to symbolize transformation that is possible with God."

NOTE the word or phrase you highlighted in your prayer journal and spend some time in PRAYER asking God to transform you into a new person ready to respond to God's invitation.

"Who Is My Neighbor?" Stranger Prayer Instructions

In more than one place in the Gospels, Jesus tries to help his followers gain a new understanding of what it means to be a "neighbor." As we are called to GO out into the world to speak on behalf of God, we are not called to go alone. We are gifted with a faith community of believers who have the same challenge that we do. Sometimes that community is made up of folks in our church, our school, our neighborhood, or our town - and these people are our neighbors. Part of God's call to us is to go extend that "community" into all parts of the world. We don't just get to talk about God in places that feel comfortable and familiar. We are to go meet new people. We are to cross into new cultures. We are to step outside our comfort zone. We are to make NEIGHBORS out of STRANGERS in unlikely places.

One way to begin to see strangers as our neighbors is to pray for them. We don't even have to know their names, for God surely does.

As you look around at the photographs of faces in this center, CHOOSE one that you find interesting. Focus on that person's face and consider the following questions:

- How old do you think this person is?
- Where do you think this person lives?

- What kind of family do you imagine they are part of?
- How do you imagine this person spends their day?
- What do you imagine would make this person smile?
- What struggles do you think this person could be facing?
- What might be one or more things this person and I have in common?
- What would you ask God to do in this person's life?

Once you have finished praying for this new "neighbor", LIGHT A CANDLE and place it near their photograph as a symbol of your commitment to seek out new neighbors in unlikely places.

TAKE A PHOTO of your new neighbor with your phone and MAKE A NOTE in your prayer journal to continue to pray for this stranger in the weeks ahead.

Labyrinth Instructions:

Walking can be a spiritual experience. Movement can be a type of prayer. In fact for some of us, like St. Augustine, walking is the way we do contemplation, discernment, and encounter God. The labyrinth is a spiritual tool that helps us seek God by simply walking this path.

So you are invited to WALK THE LABYRINTH. If you aren't familiar with it, here are some tips that may help you experience it for the first time. If you are familiar with it, have at it and enjoy. Seek and you will find. Start walking and enjoy praying on your feet!

The labyrinth is ancient. In many of the great Christian cathedrals labyrinths were built right into the pattern of the floor tiles. Even sacred circles of ancient civilizations resemble features of the labyrinth.

The labyrinth is a tool. It holds no special powers and isn't sacred alone. It is a tool for a sacred experience, just like music and artwork. Alone, it is only an object. But put to use, like a hammer to a nail, it can achieve the purpose for which it was designed.

The labyrinth isn't a maze or puzzle. There is only one path to follow. It intended to confuse, but to clarify. The journey toward the center is clearly marked so you can move confidently into and through the labyrinth.

The labyrinth is within our tradition. It is appropriate for Presbyterians, Christians of all traditions and people of all faiths. It doesn't have doctrine.

The labyrinth is shared. While it may be a solitary experience, you may also encounter others on this path. That's just like life. Remember to be mindful and respectful.

The labyrinth is an opportunity. It provides the chance to be attentive to God's presence in new and fresh ways. For many, the labyrinth is a new tool, but even for those who have experienced it before, each entry into the labyrinth can be an opportunity to encounter God in a new way. Allow the rhythms, movement and silence of walking the labyrinth to help your contemplation and nourish your imagination to life.

The labyrinth is a spiritual practice. This can be a one-time event, but it can also become a part of a regular spiritual practice. While attending the event, you are encouraged to revisit the labyrinth several times to become more familiar with it as a spiritual practice. It may be that you will find a labyrinth in your community. Indoor and outdoor labyrinths are now available in many places throughout the country and world.

The labyrinth has many purposes. It is a journey that can help us get to many destinations. Christians can use the labyrinth for many purposes, including:

Prayer - Instead of sitting with bowed head, simply walk and allow the prayer to happen.

Presence - Allow yourself to experience the presence of the triune God.

Discernment - Consider a particular concern, decision, or request. The labyrinth can be the place where you seek divine wisdom and guidance.

Metaphor - Reflect on your walking experience as a metaphor for something in your life.

The labyrinth is without judgment. There really isn't a "right" way to do it. While these suggestions can help guide you, they do not insure a particular experience or outcome. Like reading scripture, each time you enter the labyrinth is a new opportunity. Let

the Spirit move according to its will rather than your own. Let go of your "planned" outcome. Sometimes it will seem that nothing has happened or the experience has "gone wrong." If that is the case, accept the outcome and explore its meaning for you. Trust that the Spirit of God has spoken even in the unexpected or confusing outcomes.

When your walking is completed, spend some time reflecting in your journal about what the journey was like for you.

Inspiration Station Instructions:

God sometimes speaks to us through the words of others.

READ the words on the various prayer posters in this center and decide which one most speaks to you.

COPY it into your prayer journal along with your own thoughts about why it seems most important.

"Mirror, Mirror on the Wall" Instructions:

STAND so that you are able to look directly into one of the mirrors and see your own face. What do you see?

What failures and negative thoughts come to mind as you look at your image? Use a dry erase marker and WRITE one or more of the negative words/failures on the mirror.

What are three positive things God would see and say to you about who you are? What is an example of a failure in your life that has ended up teaching you something important about yourself. WRITE the positive "God messages" in your prayer journal."

ERASE the negative messages off of the mirror with a paper towel and spend some time PRAYING that God helps you not use superficial criteria, such as what you can see in a mirror, as your measure of worth.

Java With Jesus Instructions:

If you were able to sit down with Jesus over a cup of coffee, what question would you most like to ask? What is going on in your life that you'd like to seek advice about?

CHOOSE one of the blank comic strip grids and spend a few minutes imagining that conversation. FILL IN the empty conversation balloons with your question and imagine what Jesus' answer to you might be. Feel free to hang your completed conversation on the wall or tuck it in your journal.

Exodus Station Instructions:

The word Exodus literally means 'to go out'. God appeared to Moses and gave him instructions to go. Moses made excuses. He claimed he didn't have the right qualifications. He asked, "Why me?" And God insisted Moses go anyway and assured him that He would be with him through all of it.

TRACE YOUR FOOTPRINT onto a sheet of colored paper and cut it out. WRITE on the footprint some things you think God might be calling you to GO OUT and do, both now and in the future.

ADD YOUR FOOTPRINT to the line of others that God is calling to GO. Spend a little time WRITING IN YOUR PRAYER JOURNAL about your own personal Exodus.

Prayer Wall Instructions:

An Advocate is a person who speaks or writes in support or defense of a person, cause, OR ... a person who pleads for or in behalf of another; OR an intercessor. ... a person who pleads the cause of another in a court of law.

Prayers are powerful ways we can be advocates for others.

LOOK at the current news magazines and newspaper headlines to see what is happening in our world.

CHOOSE a strip of fabric and use a marker to WRITE the name of a person, country, group of people, or situation that you want to lift up in prayer. After a time of prayer, TIE YOUR STRIP of fabric onto the prayer wall.

MAKE A NOTE in your journal about the situation you are going to be an advocate for through your prayers.

Scripture Doodling Instruction:

Sometimes it is easier to listen for God's voice if our hands are creating. As you spend the next few minutes in creative activity, turn off all the other things buzzing around in your head and try to simply be quiet and present to God.

TAPE your 6 X 6 piece of Bristol board down to a sheet of white copy paper.

Use strips of masking tape to CREATE A SIMPLE DESIGN on your small board. Use oil pastels to COLOR in between the strips. You may layer more than one color. Once you have colored in all the sections, put a few drops of baby oil on a cotton ball and use it to BLEND the oil pastels together. Gently REMOVE the strips of masking tape.

SELECT a portion of Psalm 32 posted here in the space that particularly seems to "speak" to you and use a black marker to WRITE it into the white spaces left by the masking tape. Feel free to POST your artwork or take it with you by turning it facedown on your white paper to protect the design and make it packable.

Jesus Prayer Instructions:

Sign language is a way of speaking with your hands. While it is often used by those unable to speak verbally, it may also be used by each of us as a way to speak differently. It can become a way to pray with your whole body and to allow your hands to help in "dancing" your prayer.

The Jesus Prayer is a type of contemplative prayer. It is a short prayer that is repeated over and over as a way of centering and focusing on God.

PRACTICE THE SIGNS for the JESUS PRAYER using the teaching poster mounted in the space.

WRITE the words for the Jesus prayer in your prayer journal so that you may continue to pray it at other times.

SIT QUIETLY for a few minutes repeating the prayer to yourself and signing the words as you do so.

Mandala Quilt Instructions:

Mandala, originally from the Indian language of Sanskrit, loosely translates to mean "circle". It is now used in multiple faith traditions as a tool for meditation. For Christians, the mandala may represent wholeness and completeness, and it reminds us that God is at our center and we GO out toward the world knowing God is at the core of who we are.

CHOOSE one of the four mandala designs and spend a few minutes coloring in the design. As you color, **REFLECT** on how you can make sure your life stays centered on God. How would others recognize that is true for you? How will you carry God out into the world with you?

Once you have finished your coloring and praying, **CUT** out your mandala and **GLUE** it to a black square of paper and add your square to the paper quilt on the wall. You may want to **TAKE A PHOTO** of the Mandala quilt with your phone to remind you that you are part of a larger community, all of which is committed to keeping God at its center and carrying God out to a world yearning to know Him.

Prayer Posture Instructions:

Scripture is full of passages that describe people praying and worshiping with all of their senses and using their entire bodies. This center has a variety of Scripture passages posted with the prayer posture or movement underlined.

CHOOSE A POSTER and read the text.

Use one of the small rugs in the center as a place from which to pray. Allow your body to ASSUME THE DESCRIBED POSTURE. Close your eyes and take a few moments to REFLECT on the message of that text, paying attention to how your body feels expressing that prayer.

Feel free to respond to as many of the different passages as you desire. Once you have finished, take a few moments to WRITE in your journal about the experience of praying with movement.

Bread for the Journey Instructions:

READ the posted Scripture passages which refer to the five senses.

REFLECT on the following questions in your prayer journal or use a piece of paper from the table in the station:

- What food, literal and spiritual, does God provide for you?
- Where do you experience spiritual nourishment in your life?
- What smells do you associate with positive memories in your life?
- What smells do you associate with church?
- When have you experienced "hospitality" in the form of food or drink?
- What is the sense that you think you use the most? The least? Why?
- How can we make sure we use ALL of our senses to pay attention to all that is around us and to serve God with all of who we are?

Once you have finished with the questions, have a TASTE of the homemade bread and a cup of cold water as a symbol of hospitality.

Scripture Passages to be posted (print on separate posters):

Psalm 34:8

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

Proverbs 20:12

The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both.

Matthew 5:13

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"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

Psalm 115:3-8

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. ...

Genesis 8:21

And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done.

Matthew 26:26-29

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Prayer Flag Instructions:

Prayer flags are a spiritual tradition borrowed from Tibetan Buddhists but which can have rich prayer meaning for Christians. Symbols or words of prayer significance may be drawn or written on the flags. The prayer flags are normally hung outside to flutter in the breeze. The idea is that the "wind" of God will blow over and through the flags as we turn over those prayers to God.

Use one of the fabric squares to WRITE down a one sentence prayer of confession - something that you know is currently part of your life and that gets in the way of God's will for you. This could be a fear, a bad habit, self-doubt, a negative person or group of acquaintances, or something else.

Once you have written your prayer request, take two paper clips and ATTACH your prayer flag to one of the fishing lines strung outside the building.

Word Play Instructions:

Words have great power. Words can be used to glorify God. They can be used to ask questions of God. They can be used to confess or to request things of God. Words can also help us sort out our thoughts and our feelings and discern God's intention for us.

This station has a table full of images and words. PICK out three or four words that grab your attention and several of the pictures that call out to you.

Take them to the writing table, spread them out in front of you, and take a few minutes to allow your mind to CENTER on one word and one image out of the selection you chose. Don't spend too much time trying to figure out "why" you are drawn to that word and image, but instead begin PLAYING WITH IDEAS on a piece of paper that are inspired by the word and image you have chosen. Initially you might be jotting down other words or short phrases that come to mind as you focus on your choices.

Begin to try to WEAVE YOUR WORDS and thoughts into a short poem, song lyrics, a hymn, or a prayer. It can be one line, a full verse, or multiple verses. It can rhyme or be free form. It can be illustrated or unadorned. THERE ARE NO RULES except to pay attention to your heart as you take a time out and play with words.

Once you have come up with something that feels complete, feel free to COPY IT into your prayer journal, or fold and tuck your original work into your journal, or post a copy of your Word Play on the wall in this center.

Return the laminated words and images to the main table.

Prayer Journal Instructions:

A prayer journal is a helpful way to capture your thoughts and ideas on paper so that you can continue to reflect on them over time. Many of the stations here in the Spirituality Center will have suggestions for things to do in your journal, so keep it with you and bring it each time you visit the Center.

SELECT one of the small composition books and WRITE your full name just inside the front cover (in case it gets lost, it can find its way back to you).

The tables at this station have lots of art materials that you may use to personalize your journal and make it your own. Use scrapbooking paper, odds and ends of ribbon, beads, charms, etc. to ALTER the cover. You may also use tiny scraps of paper inside your journal to create tabs, pockets, envelopes, etc.

KEEP your journal tucked inside your pocket or name tag and use it for prayers, jotting down "ah-ha moments" during worship, small group, and keynotes, and to note any other ways that God may be grabbing your attention this week. You may also find yourself doodling or drawing rather than writing and that is perfectly fine too. God knows your heart's intentions even when you don't or can't use words.

Scrabble Tile Prayer Instructions:

The theme this week invites us to confront the fears, excuses, and doubts that become obstacles to God's intentions for our lives. Confession and seeking forgiveness become necessary to clear those obstacles out of God's way.

Use the tiles on the table to CREATE one or more words to express your prayer regarding those things. When possible, INTERSECT your word with other words already on the table.

WRITE your prayer word or words in your journal as a reminder to keep on praying that word.