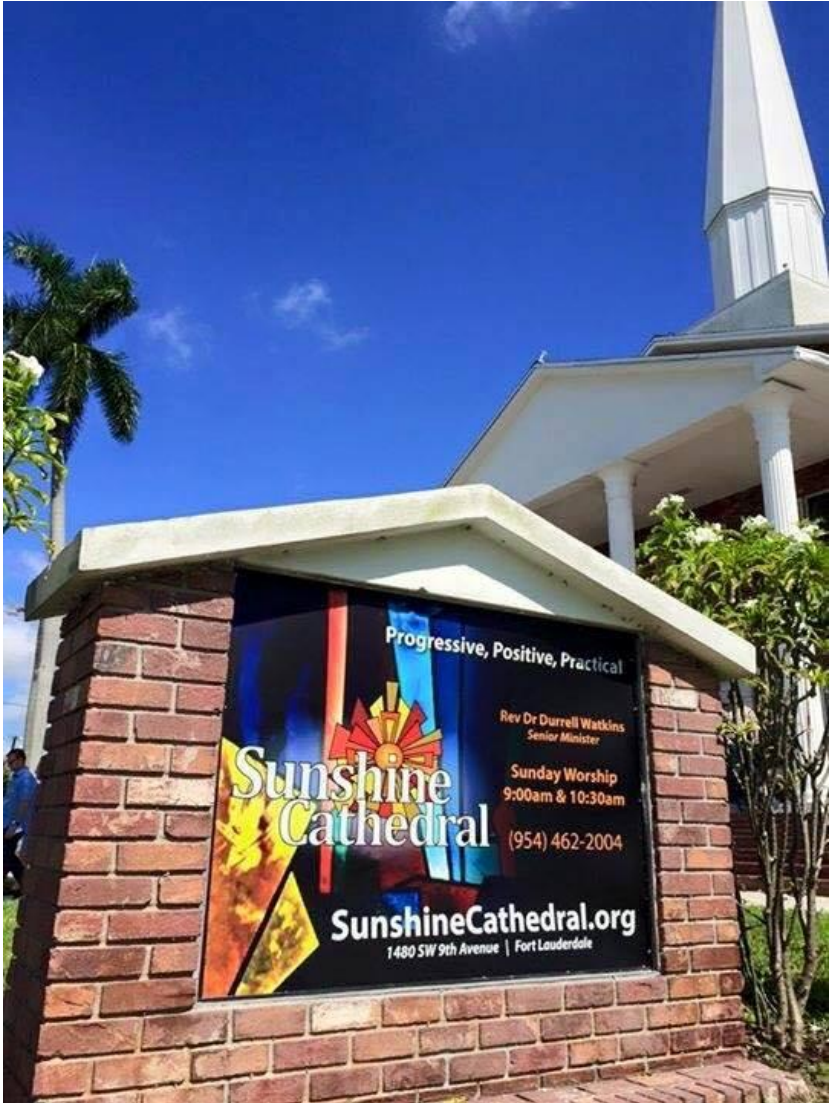


# Spirit & Truth

A Samaritan Press Publication

September - October 2016

[www.sunshinecathedral.org](http://www.sunshinecathedral.org)





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**Spirit & Truth is a Samaritan Press publication, a teaching tool of The Samaritan Institute. TSI is the educational arm of the Sunshine Cathedral.**  
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### Praying Scripture in 2016

*Spirit & Truth* has been “reimagined” for 2016. Readers of *Spirit & Truth* will spend 2016 going through the bible. Of course, simple reflections and prayers won’t cover every word in or every story of the bible, but what this year’s reflections will do is take some passages from every book of the bible and use those passages for contemplation and prayer. Hopefully, readers will be inspired to read more of the bible on their own, but even if they do not, they will still have been exposed to some thoughts from every single book of the bible, and they will have used ideas inspired by biblical passages as part of their affirmative prayers.

The scriptural quotes for the daily reflections are paraphrased by Rev Dr Durrell Watkins. The daily prayers were written by Durrell Watkins.

"I know the Limitlessness of my Power.  
I know the Fullness of my Supply.  
I know the Perfection of my Source.  
I will be still and know the God in whom I believe."  
*Alice R. Ritchie*

## Spiritual Heroes: September & October

**September 1: Socrates** (469 – 399 BCE) - believed in the mind/body connection. He said, “One ought not to attempt to cure the body without the soul.” He also believed in the continuity of life beyond the death of the body. Rather than focusing on the Greek gods of his time, Socrates believed in tending to an “Inner Voice.” He was executed (by poison), but said, “You can kill my body, but you cannot kill *me*.” The story of a noble teacher who is executed but who cannot stay dead is also found, of course, in the Christian gospels!

**Plato** (427 – 347 BCE) - taught that there was a definite energy that emerged out of the cosmic nothingness of “mind.” He suggested that this energy was the product of thought and it resulted in ideas which precede manifest form. In fact, Plato believed ideas were the source of life, purpose, and meaning. He believed souls (self-aware consciousness) pre-existed before their human incarnation and that they came to this life with prior knowledge. He believed that everything existed in relation to its resemblance to a Universal Form.

**Aristotle** (384 – 322 BCE) - believed the universe is governed by [spiritual] law. He defined God as “the first cause and the final cause of all being.” Believing in the perfection of God, Aristotle also believed that everything in the world aspires to share in that divine perfection.

**Philo** (circa 20 BCE – 50 CE) taught that it is our duty to offer love and kindness towards others. He seemed to be able to harmonize Plato’s philosophy with teachings of the Hebrew scriptures. He believed that God directs all activity through the Logos (the power of Ideas, Reason, Wisdom).

**September 3: Samuel Checote (d. 1884)**—Creek Chief and preacher. Checote was born in present-day Alabama and attended mission schools as a child. After the Creek nation was forced to move west of the Mississippi tensions led to the banning of Christian preaching. Checote refused to abandon his faith and interceded with the chief to lift the ban. A Creek Methodist district was established. Checote became a lay preacher, and worked to have the bible and many hymns translated into Creek. He was elected chief three times, and worked tirelessly to overcome racial and cultural differences.



**September 10: Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)**—Founder of the Missionaries of Charity. As a simple nun from Albania, Teresa felt a special calling to care for the poorest of the poor. She left her convent and took on a simple white sari with blue borders and went to Calcutta, looking for Jesus among the sick and homeless. She founded the Missionaries of Charity, who care especially for the destitute and dying. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.



**September 15: *Martyrs of Birmingham (d. 1963)***—Four young girls. A few weeks after Martin Luther King has given his famous speech, “I Have a Dream,” and in the midst of an intense summer of civil disobedience and

demonstrations, the situation in Birmingham, Alabama had come to a head. The nation watched as fire hoses and attack dogs had dramatized the evil of racism. On a peaceful Sunday morning someone threw dynamite through the basement window of the 16th Street Baptist Church, where four young girls, who had just finished their Sunday School class, were changing into choir robes. In their eulogy Dr. King called them “martyred heroines of a holy crusade for freedom and human dignity.”

**September 17: *St. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)***—Abbess and visionary. Hildegard started as a simple Benedictine nun, but excelled as an author, prophet, preacher, theologian, musician, composer, poet, doctor, and pharmacist. Her intense visions and ecological and holistic spirituality speak strongly to our own time.

**September 18: *Dag Hammarskjöld (1905-1961)***  
Secretary General of the UN. A skilled Swedish diplomat, Hammarskjöld served for eight years as the head of the United Nations. He was a rare person in that public service was not a means to gain power, but a religious vocation, a way of living out his faith. He was deeply committed to the cause of world peace. His personal journal, *Markings*, published after his death, revealed his own inner struggles with finding meaning in life. What is still unknown to most people is that he was also a gay man.



**September 20: *Henri Nouwen (1932-1996)***—Priest and spiritual guide. After ordination in his native Holland, Nouwen taught in the US at Notre Dame, Yale and Harvard. He was drawn toward monastic life, and became one of the most popular and influential spiritual writers of our time.

**September 21: *St. Matthew***—Apostle and Evangelist. Matthew was a tax collector, and as such was part of a group that was hated for being collaborators with Rome. Tradition says Matthew traveled to the East, but we really know nothing of his life and death. Matthew’s Gospel was probably written by an anonymous second generation Jewish Christian in a Greek community. ‘Matthew’ wrote the story of Jesus in a way that addressed the needs of the early church, a central concern to his gospel.

**September 27: St. Vincent de Paul (1580-1660)**—Apostle to the poor. Vincent began his life as a priest simply as a means of escaping his family's grinding poverty. At mid-life he experienced a great transformation as he understood the seriousness of his vocation and dedicated his life to serving the poor. He founded hospitals, orphanages, and homes for the mentally ill.



**Aimee Semple McPherson (1890 – 1944)** – a Canadian born evangelist and radio personality in the 1920s and 1930s who was also the founder of the Foursquare Church, a Pentecostal denomination. She was a pioneer in the use of entertainment media to create a form of religious instruction and worship that appealed to a broad audience.

**September 29: St. Michael and All Angels**—While angels (from the Greek word *angelos*, or messengers) are mentioned often in the bible, only a few are named. The Archangel Michael is described as the captain of the heavenly host who helps humanity in fighting the powers of destruction and injustice. Michael has been recognized as a protector, intercessor, healer, and guardian.

**October 4: St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)**—Friar and founder of the Franciscan order. Born into a wealthy family, he sought glory as a young knight, but instead ended up seriously ill and in prison. Encounters with beggars and lepers touched him so deeply he embraced a life of poverty. Because of his deep love for them, his feast day is often celebrated by blessing animals. He reminds us of the radical simplicity of the gospel and the sacredness of creation.

**October 7: Ss. Sergius and Bacchus (d. 290)**—Martyrs in death and lovers in life. These two saints were

tortured for refusing to compromise their faith by making a sacrifice to Jupiter. They were officers in the Roman army and they were also a couple.

After their arrest they were paraded through the streets in women's clothing, which was meant to humiliate them. Bacchus died first and came to Sergius in a vision, telling him not to lose heart because they would soon be together for eternity. They later became patron saints of the Byzantine army, and are still honored among certain Arab nomads. Some gay people consider them to be patron saints of same-gender love.



**October 12: Matthew Shepherd (1976-1998)**—Victim of hate crime. A 21 year old student at the University of Wyoming, Matthew was abducted, tied to a fence, and beaten into a coma by two young men. His murder gave a face to the tragedy of gay bashing. He is remembered not for any particular achievements in

his brief life, but as a symbol of the violence that is bred by homophobia and the rhetoric of hate.

**October 15: St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)**—Mystic. Raised in a wealthy Spanish family, Teresa became a Carmelite nun. In an age in which women's voices went unheard, she became a towering figure —author of four books, religious reformer, founder of 17 convents. As a woman who based her authority on mystical visions, she fell under the suspicion of the Inquisition. Her best known work, *The Interior Castle*, describes the soul as a castle, and the journey of prayer that leads from meditation to mystical union with Christ.

**October 16: Archbishop Thomas Cranmer (d. 1556)**—Creator of the *Book of Common Prayer*. During a time of political and religious turmoil, as Archbishop of Canterbury Cranmer was instrumental in the English Reformation and the institution of the Church of England. Under Queen Mary, a devout Catholic, he was declared a heretic and burned at the stake. His legacy is carried in the *Book of Common Prayer*, the beauty of its liturgical language and its influence on Christian prayer and worship even to our own time.

**October 18: St. Luke the Evangelist**—Luke was the only writer to attempt to tell the story of not only the life of Jesus (the Gospel of Luke), but the founding of the early Church ( the book of Acts). He was a Gentile who never met Jesus, but tradition says he was a physician and a later companion of Paul. St. Luke is patron of physicians and artists.



**October 22: Maura O'Halloran 1955-1982**—Christian Zen monk. Born in Boston and raised in Ireland, Maura felt from an early age a deep compassion for human suffering. Her concern for social justice and attraction to meditation led her to explore Eastern spirituality. She applied for admission to a Buddhist monastery in Tokyo where many Catholic priests had studied Zen meditation. There she underwent intense training as a monk and was recognized for reflecting a remarkable state of enlightenment. On her return trip to Ireland she was

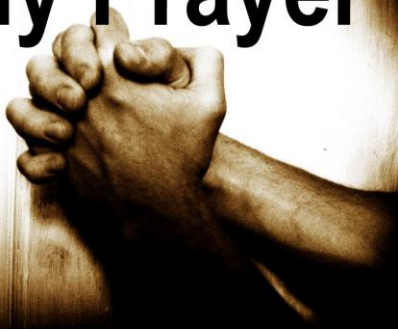
killed in a bus accident in Thailand at the age of 27.

**October 23: St. James of Jerusalem (c. 62)**—Brother of Jesus and martyr. James is traditionally believed to have been the first Bishop of the church in Jerusalem. He was leader of a more conservative Jewish wing of the early Jesus movement that was uncomfortable with Paul's preaching to the Gentiles, but Peter helped forge a compromise between them. He is traditionally associated with the Epistle of James, a short letter that tells us much about the early church. Some of its primary concerns include the intrusion of class divisions among the believers, showing mercy toward the poor, and letting our faith be reflected in our actions.



**October 30: Albert Grier (1864 – 1941)** – a Universalist minister for 20 years before becoming Founder of the Church of Truth in 1912. He also was the pastor of a Divine Science congregation.

# Daily Prayer



Sunshine  
Cathedral  
Daily Office

## Lauds (morning prayer)

### A Psalm

"God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So, we will not fear..." (Psalm 46.1-2, NLT, Hebrew bible)

### Confession

"For all the times we fail to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person, when we do not affirm and promote the goal of a world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all, when we live as though interdependence were a personal choice and not a fact of our existence, we ask forgiveness of one another and we vow to begin again, in this and every moment." (Mary Edes)

### Doxology

To God, immortal, invisible, and all wise, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1.17, New Testament)

### A Reading

#### Statement of Faith

(by Durrell Watkins, based on the Apostles' Creed)

"I believe in God, the Good,  
and in the message and mission of God's anointed prophet, Jesus the Wayshower who was born of Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was executed for empowering the powerless and restoring the dignity of the marginalized, and yet he lives in our hearts and ministry.  
I believe in the omnipresent power of divine Love, in the Blessed Community, in the sacred value of all people, and in life without end. Amen."

#### Model Prayer (aka "The Lord's Prayer", using non-patriarchal language)

*Creator which art in heaven, hallowed be thy names; thy kin-dom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and*

*forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.*

### **Suffrages (Traditional)**

Show us your mercy, O Lord; and grant us your salvation.

Clothe your ministers with righteousness. Let your people sing with joy.

Give peace, O Lord, in all the world; for only in you can we live in safety.

Lord, keep this nation under your care; and guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Let your way be known upon earth, Your saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us clean hearts, O God; and sustain us with your holy Spirit.

### **Intercessions**

I pray for my loved ones today.

I pray for travelers.

I pray for those who need healing in mind, body, or affairs.

I pray for those who grieve.

And I pray for the departed; may they rest in peace.

Amen.

### **For Social Justice**

"Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace...Amen." (Book of Common Prayer)

### **Thanksgiving**

I give thanks for the blessings in my life, especially for those I now name...

Amen.

### **Benediction**

"The light of God surrounds me; the love of God enfolds me. The power of God protects me; the presence of God watches over me. Wherever I am, God is." (James Dillet Freeman)

## **Midday Prayer**

### **Invocation (Traditional)**

"Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name(s)...Amen."

### **A Psalm**

"Give praise...praise the names of our God.

From the rising of the sun to its going down let God be praised.

Divine glory is omnipresent." (A pericope from Psalm 113, paraphrased)



## **Doxology**

To God, immortal, invisible, and all wise, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1.17)

## **Scriptural Prayer**

"O God, you will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are fixed on you; for in returning and rest we shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be our strength. (Isaiah 26.3, 30.15, Hebrew bible)

## **Prayer for Loved Ones**

"Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that you are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for...Amen." (Book of Common Prayer)

## **Serenity Prayer**

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen."  
(R. Niebuhr)

## **Prayer for Peace**

"May peace prevail on earth." (Masahisa Goi)

## **Affirmation**

"All shall be well, all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."  
(Julian of Norwich)

## **Concluding Blessing**

"May God bless us and keep us. May God's face shine upon us and be gracious to us. May God look upon us kindly and grant us peace." (Numbers 6.24-26, Hebrew bible)

## **Vespers (evening prayer)**

### **Versicle (Psalm 40.13) & Response (1 Timothy 1.17)**

"O God make speed to save us. O Lord make haste to help us."

"To God, immortal, invisible and all wise, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen."

### **A Reading**

### **A Moment of Silence**

### **Supplications**

I pray for my needs to be perfectly met.

I pray for my loved ones to be safe and well.

I pray for peace in the world.

I pray for blessings to flow into my life.

I pray for goodwill to radiate from me into the world.

I pray for miracles to occur where they are needed most.

I pray for the concerns, conditions, and people that I now name...

These prayers I offer in the spirit of Jesus who taught us to pray saying...

"Our [God] which art in heaven, hallowed by thy Names. Thy kin-dom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen." (Roman Catholic version, adapted)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary...pray for us now and at the hour of our death. Amen." (Traditional, adapted)

"We reverently pray for eternal harmony in the universe.  
May the weather be seasonable; may the harvest be fruitful.  
May countries exist in harmony, and may all people enjoy happiness."  
(Buddhist prayer)

"May children, the aged, the unprotected - be guarded by beneficent celestials, and may they swiftly attain [enlightenment]." (Buddhist prayer)

### **Benediction**

"May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace...Amen." (The Apostle Paul)

## **Compline** (end of day prayer)

### **The Collect**

"O Lord...let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always...Amen." (BCP)

### **Statement of Faith** (by Durrell Watkins, based on the Apostles' Creed)

"I believe in God, the Good,  
and in the message and mission of God's anointed prophet, Jesus the Wayshower who was born of Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was executed for empowering the powerless and restoring the dignity of the marginalized, and yet he lives in our hearts and ministry.  
I believe in the omnipresent power of divine Love, in the Blessed Community, in the sacred value of all people, and in life without end. Amen."

### **Prayer for the Oppressed**

"Look with pity, O [God]...upon [those]...who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Have mercy upon us. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to these our neighbors. Strengthen those who spend their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. And grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the riches of this [world]...Amen. (BCP, adapted)

## **Intercessions**

"We pray for the human family, that we all may be one.

We pray for our parish home - our spiritual community, and for our leaders (lay and ordained), that they may be faithful ministers of word and ritual.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world, that there may be justice and peace on the earth.

God give us grace to do what is good that our works may be divinely blessed.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble, that they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed eternal rest; let light perpetual shine upon them.

Amen." (Prayers of the People, Form III, adapted, BCP)

## **A Moment of Silence**

### **Model Prayer (aka "The Lord's Prayer, contemporary/ecumenical/non-patriarchal)**

"Our [God] in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kin-dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

For the kin-dom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Amen."

## **Affirmations**

"The angel of supply is ever at hand." (Malinda Cramer)

"There is good for me and I ought to have it." (Emma Curtis Hopkins)

"The spirit of the Lord goes before me to make easy and successful my way." (An affirmative prayer of The Unity Church)

"Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better." (Emile Coue)

"There is but one Mind, one Law, one Principle, one Substance in the universe and I am one with all there is." (William Woodfin)

## **Benediction**

"O Lord, grant that this night we may sleep in peace. And that in the morning our awakening may also be in peace. May our daytime be cloaked in your peace.

Protect us and inspire us to think and act only out of love.

Keep far from us all evil; may our paths be free from all obstacles from when we go out until we return home." (Babylonian Talmud)



## *Readings to Use for Morning & Evening Prayer*

### ***The wisdom of Alexander Pope:***

"The way of the Creative works through change and transformation, so that each thing receives its true nature and destiny and comes into permanent accord with the Great Harmony: this is what furthers and what perseveres."

### ***The wisdom of Meister Eckhart***

"You may call God love, you may call God goodness. But the best name for God is compassion."

### ***The wisdom of Stormie Omartian***

"It's not about finding ways to avoid God's judgment and feeling like a failure if you don't do everything perfectly. It's about fully experiencing God's love and letting it perfect you. It's not about being somebody you are not. It's about becoming who you really are."

### ***The Wisdom of Helen Zagat***

"I have faith in God. My trust flows as a quiet stream. It moves with me wherever I go. I am sustained by its serene current. The deep place of peace within is the starting point for outward harmony, joy, and blessings in my life. I have faith in God."

### ***The Wisdom of Neville Goddard***

"It is not what you want that you attract... You attract what you believe to be true."

### ***The Wisdom of Melody Beattie***

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns...chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend."

### ***The Wisdom of Napoleon Hill***

"Patience, persistence and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success."

### ***The Wisdom of A. Powell Davies***

"What can we do to stretch our hearts enough to lose their littleness? Here we are – all of us – all upon this planet, bound together in a common destiny, living our lives between the briefness of the daylight and the dark. Kindred in this, each lighted by the same precarious, flickering flame of life, how does it happen that we are not kindred in all things else? How strange and foolish are these walls of separation that divide us!

### ***The Wisdom of Archbishop Desmond Tutu***

"Your ordinary acts of love and hope point to the extraordinary promise that every human life is of inestimable value."

### ***The Wisdom of A Course in Miracles***

"Love will immediately enter into any mind that truly wants it."

### ***The Wisdom of Marian G. Moon***

"There is something within every person that is absolutely unlimited – a part of us that is never bound. That is the Real Self, our divinity, our spiritual wholeness."

# Daily Reflections

September

## 1 Thessalonians – 2 Corinthians

{While there are 13 books of the New Testament attributed to the Apostle Paul, he almost certainly wrote no more than 7 of them. The authentic Pauline texts are: 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Philemon, Philippians, & Romans.}

***God bless the people who are always in my heart. Bless the people I encounter today. Bless those who seek courage, who need hope, who long for love, who wish for healing, who dream of success, who are trying to forgive themselves or others for past mistakes. And God bless me that my very life might encourage others. Amen.***

{The books of the bible do not appear in the order of their composition. The New Testament in particular takes on new meaning and clarity when read in chronological order. All 27 books of the New Testament will be used in the remaining reflections and prayers, but rather than the order in which they appear in our bibles, we will use them in the order they were written, making 1 Thessalonians the first, or oldest, book of the New Testament and 2 Peter the last.}

### 1 – Kindness Leads to Joy

“Even though we had suffered...we found the courage to share with you good news...” 1 Thessalonians 2.2

***Even when things are difficult, I can still encourage others. As I do what I can, I find myself encouraged as well. When I sow kindness, I reap joy. And so it is.***

### 2 – Glad When Others Do Well

“Timothy has given us good news about you.” 1 Thessalonians 3.6

***I rejoice when I hear that others are doing well. Thank you, God, for all the blessings that are available today. May many people embrace these good gifts. Amen.***

### 3 – I Am a Conduit of Divine Goodness

“God wants you to love one another, and you are very loving. Still, we can always learn to love even more.” 1 Thessalonians 4.9-10

***Whenever I share compassion, kindness, or love, I am allowing the power of God to flow through me to touch others. Thank you, God, for allowing me to be a conduit of your goodness. Amen.***

#### 4 – The Gift of Encouragement

“Encourage one another.”

1 Thessalonians 4.18

***A word of encouragement can be a great gift indeed. May I offer the gift of encouragement to others, and may I gladly receive encouragement when it is offered to me. Amen.***

#### 5 – Investigative Spirituality

“Test everything. Hold on to what is good.”

1 Thessalonians 5.21

***Practical spirituality is investigative, curious, open. As I explore, ask questions, and try new practices and understandings, I will continue to grow in faith. I can discover what is enriching for me, and I can embrace and be thankful for what blesses my life.***

#### 6 – Praying for Others

“May God give you grace and peace.”

Galatians 1.3

***In this holy instant, I think of loved ones. I call to mind people who are facing challenges. I remember someone who needs comfort, hope, or courage. I pray now for each of these dear ones: May God give them grace and peace. Amen.***

#### 7 – God Knows My Heart

“God does not judge by outward appearances.”

Galatians 2.6

***Dear God, you know my heart. Mend what may be broken, heal what still holds onto pain, and diminish all fears so that I may see the good, embrace the good, share the good, and become my best possible self. Fill my heart with your light and love and all will be well. Thank you, God. Amen.***

#### 8 – Trust, Not Tradition

“Faith isn’t about keeping traditions and religious rules.”

Galatians 3.12

***Faith is trust. I trust that I am forever in and part of God. I trust that God’s Love can never let me go. I trust that I am a person of sacred value. I am a person of faith. And so it is.***

#### 9 – I Am Entitled to the Best

“You are God’s child, and all that God has is your inheritance.”

Galatians 4.7

***I release all worries today. I have nothing to fear. I am a child of God and as such, I am entitled to the very best in life. Thanks be to God! Amen.***

### 10 – Healing Kindness

“When I preached to you the first time I was ill. But even though I was physically weak, you welcomed me and treated me as nicely as you would have treated an angel! You welcomed me as you might have welcomed Jesus himself!” Galatians 4.13-14

**When St. Paul was ill, he still shared a message of hope; and he was grateful when people were kind to him. No matter what challenges we face, we always have something to share; and kindness, whether we give or receive it, has healing power. What a great lesson!**

***I always have something to share, and kindness given and received can contribute to miracles. Thanks be to God! Amen.***

### 11 – Freedom

“We are free. We are meant to be free!” Galatians 5.1

***I am destined to be free from fear. I am meant to be free from anxiety, from self-doubt, from loneliness, from despair, and from needless shame. Freedom is the divine will for all people. May God’s will be done. Amen.***

### 12 – Spiritual Qualities

“Spirit offers love, joy, peace, patience, compassion, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is nothing wrong with any of these qualities.” Galatians 5.22-23

***For everything good in my life, I am truly thankful! When I am loving, happy, kind, trusting, and intentional about the thoughts I choose to think, I am doing what is right, good, and blessed. And so it is.***

### 13 – Helping One Another

“Bear one another’s burdens.” Galatians 6.2

***I give thanks for those who help me when I am sad, confused, or overwhelmed. And I am thankful for the times that I can help someone else. Divine Light, shining through each of us, is a healing power. Amen.***

### 14 – God is Faithful

“God is faithful...” 1 Corinthians 1.9

***God is faithful, and so it is that I can always trust that God dwells within me, that God is always with me, that God’s love is always enfolding me; God will never let me go. As I consider God’s faithfulness, my own faith is enriched. Thank you, God! Amen.***

15 – *We Are All God's Chosen*

"God chose the down and out..."

1 Corinthians 1.28

***God hasn't abandoned the sick, the poor, the vilified, the war ravaged, the victims of hatred and prejudice. On the contrary, God's love flows in abundance to the so-called "down and out"! God has never, will never, can never reject any of us. God's love is all-inclusive, unconditional, and everlasting. Thanks be to God!***

16 – *Afraid but Able*

"I showed up weak and afraid but somehow I still demonstrated spiritual power."

1 Corinthians 2.3-4

***Thank you God for a power that flows through me that doesn't depend on my conditions or circumstances. Even when I feel afraid or weak, that power is still mighty; it is the power of your loving presence filling me and expressing through and as me. Even when my knees are knocking, I can still face every challenge knowing that you are with me and you are giving me the help and guidance I need. Alleluia!***

17 – *Knowing Who I Am*

"The ego-identity [the small self, the 'I' that feels disconnected from its Source, the belief that we are separate and frail] does not accept spiritual greatness."

1 Corinthians 2.14

***May I remember today that "I" can never be separate from the great I AM! I am a child of God, filled with God's spirit of love and life. And so it is.***

18 – *Our Right Mind*

"We have the Christ Mind."

1 Corinthians 2.16

***Divine Mind, the anointed consciousness, the understanding that we are part of God, is our Right Mind! This is the Mind that gives us inspired ideas. This is the Mind that knows all that can be known. This is the Mind with which all things are possible.***

19 – *Doing Our Part*

"I planted, [someone else watered], but it is God that makes things grow."

1 Corinthians 3.6

***When we do our part, God does God's part. I take comfort in this and I rejoice. Amen.***



20 – Be Smart

“Not everything is beneficial.”

1 Corinthians 6.12

***I am so glad that I no longer embrace legalistic religion with its many prohibitions and threats. I do not think of myself as a “sinner.” I do not fear that God could ever desert me. Wisdom is one of God’s gifts to me, and I can discern that some things will not serve me well. I have the power to choose what is good for me and to reject what is not. I can do this without fear, without shame, and without condemning others. I simply use good judgment to keep my life happy.***

21 – Unity with All That Is

“The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the life of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the community of Christ? The loaf is one, and we who share it, though many, are one.”

1 Corinthians 10.16-18

**Communion, comm-union, is so much more than a ritual meal. Communion is “union with” all life and with the Source of all life. Prayer, study, even rituals can remind me of the constant state of communion in which I dwell, and yet, the communion, the unity with All That Is, remains a constant reality, when I am aware of it and when I am not.**

***Today, may I be aware of my oneness with God and with all the children of God. Amen.***

22 – God Gives Gifts to Everyone

“There are different kinds of gifts...but the same God who gives gifts to everyone.”

1 Corinthians 12.4, 6

***I am gifted. Thank you, God, for the gifts, skills, and talents that are mine to develop and share. I am enriched as I offer my gifts to the world. And so it is.***

23 – Looking at Love

“Love is patient and kind...it does not seek its own interests, it isn't hot-headed, it does not pout over offenses...it endures, it believes the best about the one loved, it always hopes for the best, it never gives up. Love never fails.”

1 Corinthians 13.4-8

**We are told that God is Love. The Apostle Paul tells us what love is: Love is patient and kind and enduring and optimistic. He also says that Love can't fail! That is so encouraging. If divine Love could ever reject us or lose us, that would be a failure, but Love cannot fail.**

Old concepts of God pictured God as demanding, needing to be praised, having a large (however divine) ego to be stroked, and often holding grudges (necessitating our begging for forgiveness)...but that isn't the picture of love at all! Love is patient and kind, doesn't nurse grudges, won't give up on the one who is loved, and it cannot fail. Divine Love, Infinite Love, must be infinitely kind, infinitely compassionate.

*Sweet, holy Presence, in this moment I pause to consider how good you really are. I rejoice to think of being forever part of you, forever blessed by you. Thank you so very much. Amen.*

24– Use Critical Thinking With Bible Reading

“Welcome him as you would welcome me.”

The Apostle Paul's Letter to Philemon

Onesimus escaped slavery, but the Apostle Paul sent him back to his former captor, Philemon. Now, Paul says that he could demand that Philemon welcome him without punishing him for leaving, but instead Paul tries to persuade Philemon to be kind. He asks Philemon to receive Onesimus “as a brother” and to treat him well. He never condemns the institution of slavery, nor does he specifically ask Philemon to grant Onesimus legal freedom.

*Disturbing.*

The letter shows Paul trying to advocate for Onesimus, but not doing quite as much as he could. Paul tries to intervene on Onesimus' behalf, but does send him back to someone who could ignore Paul's pleas. Without challenging an unjust system, or helping someone escape the system, Paul tries to ease someone's suffering within the system. From our vantage point in time, Paul's efforts seem too little.

We may never know why Paul made his decision to send Onesimus back. Maybe he thought he was saving the runaway slave's life by trying to remove the possibility of Onesimus being prosecuted for escaping. Maybe Paul didn't question slavery (as it was ubiquitous in his world) and thought the best he could do was make things a bit easier for the enslaved. It's a hard passage for our 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective.

What this difficult and disturbing letter shows us, however, is that something being enshrined in scripture doesn't settle a matter. By pretending that scripture is universally and everlastingly relevant and infallible, people have used such passages to justify unspeakable acts of human cruelty in our history. The bible has been used to subjugate women, to marginalize same-gender loving

people, to abuse children, to justify xenophobia, and yes, to enslave people. That is a misuse of the sacred text.

Let us not be afraid to bring our own reasoning, our own questions, our own lived experience, our own education, our own humanness to the reading of scripture. A thing is not right, or settled, simply because it is recorded in an ancient and translated text. We do well to engage the scripture, but let us never use it as a weapon, nor as an excuse to worship our own prejudices.

25 – *I Can Choose to Look for What is Good*

“I will continue to rejoice.”

Philippians 1.18

**Even in prison, Paul declared that he would continue to rejoice. I let that remind me that my circumstances do not determine my state of mind, but my state of mind can help determine how I experience and navigate my circumstances.**

***No matter what, I can choose to look for what is good and to celebrate the good that I find. I will continue to rejoice! And so it is.***

26 – *Work It Out*

“Work out your own sense of liberation and wholeness, even if to do so isn’t easy or comfortable.”

Philippians 2.12

***I am free when I believe I am. I am whole when I trust that I am. It may take some work, some affirmations, some creative denials, some optimism, some learning, thinking in new ways, facing old fears, choosing to believe that I am forever part of God and can never be separated from divine Love...but it is worth the work. I will do it, and I will thrive. Alleluia!***

27 – *Where is My Focus?*

“Focus on what is good and positive.”

Philippians 4.8

***What I think about habitually, I bring about eventually. I choose to think about what is good, and all the good that is possible. I am deciding to be a positive thinker. And so it is.***

28 - *Multiplying the Good*

“The one who supplies seed to the gardener and food for the table will supply and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your right thinking and right action.”

2 Corinthians 9.10

***May the good that I do be blessed and may it be a blessing for many. May my positive thoughts bring positive results in my life, and may my blessed life bless others. Amen.***

### 29 – Difficulties Come & Go

“Repeatedly I was beaten, shipwrecked, and jailed. I was even stoned once! I’ve also been stranded at sea.” 2 Corinthians 11.25

**Even spiritual giants, heroes of faith, have known hard times. Prayer and a positive attitude can help situations improve, but what is even more amazing is that prayer and a positive attitude can sustain us and fill us with peace and hope and joy until the situations improve.**

***Difficulties come and go, but I am forever embraced by the Love that God is. Alleluia!***

### 30 – Good Self-Esteem and Still Humble

“I could boast; I really am quite something! But I won’t. I am in no way inferior to others, yet I am nothing.” 2 Corinthians 12.6, 11

**A wise teacher once said that we should keep a note to ourselves in both our left pocket and our right. In one pocket, the note should read, “I am the universe!” In the other pocket, the note should read, “I am a speck of dust.” Of course, both are true. Which note should we take out and read? The one we need to remember most.**

**When we are too full of ourselves, thinking we are better than others, we should remember that we are dust (of course, dust is part of the perfect, divine creation, but at first glance, dust doesn’t seem terribly impressive). And, when we are feeling frail, incapable, afraid, or overwhelmed, we should remember that we are the universe (manifestations of the same energy that composes the universe).**

**We are perfect, and sometimes we fall short of our perfection. We are powerful, and sometimes we forget or misuse our power. We are divine, and in this experience of life, we are all too human.**

**When we are tempted to look down on others, we need to remember that we are no better than they are; and when we are tempted to believe that we aren’t as good as others, we need to remember that the same divine Life is manifesting as us that manifested as the greatest humans to ever live.**

***I am dust. And I am the universe. What a beautiful, magical, and balanced way to live my life!***

October  
2 Corinthians - Mark

***Infinite Spirit,***

***In this sacred moment I relax and allow myself to be aware of your light and love surrounding and flowing through me. Because I am ever one with you, I know that there is nothing that can separate me from your goodness, or from my Good. And so I am at peace. I am filled with joyful expectation. I deserve success in my life. I view every circumstance in my life with hope and with calm assurance that ultimately, all is well. My life is good! I give thanks for infinite possibilities, for wonderful opportunities, and for grace equal to every need. Blessings abound. Amen.***

***1 – Thankful for Grace***

“Divine grace is all you need. Even when you feel weak, divine power can show up for you.” 2 Corinthians 12.9

***Thank you, God, for unlimited grace. By your grace, miracles are possible. By your grace, wisdom, hope, and peace are always available to me. By your grace, even when I feel weak, there is abundant Strength available to help me. And so it is.***

***2 – Live in Peace***

“...Live in peace.” 2 Corinthians 13.11

***Peace is always possible. The grace of God offers me peace that no circumstance or situation can take away. Joy and peace can be my constant companions. Let it be so. Amen.***

***3 – Jesus***

“Jesus was established as God’s chosen one in power according to the spirit of wholeness through rising to life beyond death: Jesus, the Anointed, our inspiration.” Romans 1.4

***Jesus was anointed with divine Power. He was conscious of being immersed in the infinite River of divine Life. He shows us that we are all children of God, part of God’s universal wholeness. Jesus’ life was an expression of divine Life, and so is ours, and divine Life has no end and no limits. And so we can embrace indomitable hope!***

***4 – Seeing the Invisible***

“God’s invisible qualities can be clearly seen all around us. This has always been the case.” Romans 1.20

***I look around and I see kindness being expressed. I look around and I see hope being embraced. I look around and I see life emerging from despair and devastation. I look around and I see beauty, love, and courage. Everywhere I look, I see evidence of holiness, divinity, abundant life. My heart is filled with wonder and gratitude. Amen.***

***5 – Moving Beyond Idolatry***

“Some exchanged the glory of the divine Power and Presence for mere images which can be seen. They abandoned the truth of God’s omnipresence for the lie that the Infinite could be contained in an image.”  
Romans 1.23, 25

***There have been times that I wanted God to be contained in a sacrament, a sacred text, or a tradition. I am thankful that I did not stay in such limited thinking. Whenever we want God to be located in our community, our country, our religion, our gender, our prejudices...we are basically trying to worship our own preferences and privileges rather than experiencing more of the universal and eternal Life that God is. Idolatry, trying to contain God in an image (or even a few), is just too limiting. I will continue to abandon all idols. God is always more than any name, dogma, or image.***

***6 – God’s Not a Maniac***

“Because of their idolatry, God gave them over to their lusts.”  
Romans 1.26

**Romans 1 has been used to justify homophobic prejudices, but Paul’s letter to a community in Rome neither mandates nor excuses demonizing and dehumanizing same-gender loving people.**

**The Apostle Paul suggests (strangely) that same-gender attraction, at least at one time in one culture, was divine punishment for worshiping incorrectly! What a strange notion. Scholars suggest that the passage may be condemning prostitution or physical abuse, but in any case, sexual desire is not punishment for how one worships! Paul simply got that one wrong, and even at that, he said nothing of mutually caring same-gender relationships or even same-gender attraction.**

**Sexuality is a gift, and any relationship built on love is blessed. God doesn’t punish people for how they worship, and God certainly doesn’t make people feel a certain way as a form of retribution, but this odd verse has been used in unkind and unfair ways to cause pain to LGBT people and those who care about them.**

**May we use scripture to heal and never to harm. May we be healed of the wounds inflicted on us in the name of religion. May we know that God is Love and Love will never condemn love. And may we be grateful for who we are and for the love in our lives. Amen.**

**7 – Not My Job**

“It’s not your job to condemn others. When you belittle others, you also belittle yourself. The truth is, much of what you wag your finger at you actually do yourself.”

Romans 2.1

**I don’t need to look down on someone to feel good about myself. I know that I have done or entertained the idea of doing things that I frown upon when others do them. Rather than judging them, or even myself, I can remember that most of us are doing our best most of the time. My job isn’t to point fingers, but to evolve, to love, and to see and seize possibilities in life.**

**8 – Devoted to Goodness**

“You used to be obsessed by things that did you no good; now devote yourself wholly to what is good and life-giving.”

Romans 6.19

**I am devoting myself to spirituality, to generosity, to learning, to kindness. As I focus on these qualities, I express them more abundantly. And so it is.**

**9 – The Christ in Me**

“If God’s spirit is within you, then you are part of the spiritual realm. You are not limited to material conditions. To not have the Christ spirit would mean you weren’t part of Christ. But if Christ is in you, the Spirit of Life is constantly renewing you.”

Romans 12.9-10

**“Christ” is the divinely anointed one, which is each of us in our Truest expression. The Christ Principle or Buddha Nature or True Self is the perfect pattern of our lives. Wayshowers and Master Teachers like Jesus show us what it is to embrace and demonstrate this divine anointing, this consecration of consciousness, this awareness of one’s unity with divine Life, but the potential, the seed, the spark, the power is within each of us. Spirit always enfolds, indwells, and seeks to express through us. And so it is that we are being renewed, empowered, divinely guided, and abundantly blessed.**

**I give thanks for the Christ in me!**

10 – Love; Just Love

“What you owe the world is love. Whoever loves is fulfilling the wishes of God. The commandments, ‘Keep your promises,’ ‘Don’t commit murder,’ ‘Don’t be jealous of your neighbor’s good fortune,’ and all the other commandments are summed up in this simple statement, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love doesn’t seek to hurt others; therefore, love is the fulfillment of God’s law.” Romans 13.8-10

***Divine Love, in me, flowing through me, expressing as me, is all Good and moves me to treat others well. I let God, through me, bless others. And so it is.***

11 – God Embraces Us All

“Don’t be so judgmental; God embraces people that you don’t...Who are you to judge someone else’s apprentice? To their supervisor, the apprentice will stand or fall, and when it comes to the faith community, seekers and disciples will stand because Christ is able to help them stand.” Romans 14.3-4

***We are all the children of God. We are following the way and example of our elder brother, Jesus. Our brother, Jesus, shows us that God’s anointing is on us as it was on him, and that anointing empowers and uplifts us. God’s judgment is a favorable judgment; God is saying of each of us, “This is my child in whom I am well pleased.” And so I need not accept the unkind judgment of others, nor is there any reason for me to judge others harshly. God embraces us all and the Christ within us will help us grow into our divine potential. And so it is.***

12 – Full of Goodness

“I really believe, dear ones, that you are full of goodness...” Romans 15.14

***We are each made in the divine image. We are all part of the creation that God calls very good. I am filled with goodness! May the goodness within me be expressed daily. Amen.***

13 – Thankful for Prayers

“Please, please, please pray for me.” Romans 15.30

***I give thanks for those who pray for me, who affirm possibilities for me, who wish me well. The positive energy of love and goodwill flows into my life as dear ones hold me in their kind thoughts. I am blessed by those who pray for me, and I joyfully bless others with my prayers as well. And so it is.***



14 – *Divine Peace is With Us*

“The God of peace is with you. And so it is!”

Romans 15.33

***When I am troubled, anxious, or uncertain, I find comfort in the affirmation that God is Perfect Peace, and that Perfect Peace is with me. When others are troubled, I can silently affirm for them, “The God of peace is with you. And so it is!”***

15 – *Women in Ministry is Nothing New*

“Welcome our sister, the Deacon Phoebe. Help her...Welcome Mary who has ministered to you...Welcome Tryphena and Tryphosa and Persis, hard working women in ministry...Welcome Rufus’ mother who has been like a mother to me. Welcome Julia and also Nereus’ sister...”

Romans 16.1-15

**Within 30 years or so of Jesus’ execution, the Apostle Paul was writing about women ministers, including an ordained deacon. Women have always been leaders among the followers of Jesus. Whether one is male or female, cisgender or transgender, gay or straight, one may be called to offer something meaningful to the Christ Community. We are all made in God’s image, and we each have gifts with which we may bless the world.**

16 – *Baptism of Repentance*

“John the baptizer showed up in the outback offering a psychic cleansing ritual.”

Mark 1.4

**Cleansing rituals weren’t uncommon in antiquity, but John somehow became known for his. His was called a “baptism of repentance” – a procedure that symbolized being immersed in a consciousness of God’s goodness and grace which helped people have a change in their habitual thoughts and attitudes.**

***Today, I am immersing myself in God Consciousness; I am turning from fears and regrets and embracing hope and peace instead. Amen.***

17 – *Immersed in a Divine Awareness*

“John said, ‘I immerse you in a river, but there is someone else who will immerse you in the whole spirit of God.’”

Mark 1.8

**Rituals are fine. They help us move past our discursive thinking to have a deeper experience, but we need to remember that the experience is the important thing. John was happy to offer a doorway to a transformative experience, but he knew that Jesus had such an evolved consciousness, that he was so aware of the omnipresence of God, that just being near him could help one have**

a deeper experience of the holy. Our rituals can be useful, but they are trying to help us move past imagined obstacles so that we may have a more profound experience of unlimited Good.

***May I be immersed in an awareness of God's omnipresence and infinite goodness. Amen.***

*18 – Hooray for Angels!*

“After his baptism, Jesus endured a time of trial, troubled by negative and untrue thoughts. Angels came, however, and encouraged him.”

Mark 1.13

**When negative messages torment us, positive messages (angels) can drive away those negative thoughts. We can choose words, thoughts, ideas, memories, quotes, and perspectives that will encourage us and give us hope. We all face difficulties now and then, but angels are available to help us through the tough times.**

***I give thanks for the ministry of angels!***

*19 – I Am Encouraged*

“Jesus told a man with a disfigured hand, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ The man did as Jesus said, and he was healed.”

Mark 3.5

**Jesus was an encourager. He encouraged a man to do what he could, “Stretch out your hand.” And when the man did what he could, things got better. We can focus on our limitation, or we can rejoice in what we can do, and do whatever we can to the best of our ability. When we do what we can as well as we can, things often to seem to get better.**

***I am encouraged today!***

*20 – Embracing Peace: Sharing Peace*

“Jesus and his disciples were in a boat on the lake when a very strong wind came up on the lake. The waves began coming over the sides of the boat. Jesus was at the back of the boat, sleeping. His followers went to him and woke him. They said, ‘Teacher, don’t you care that we are about to drown?!’ Jesus stood up and commanded the wind and the waves to stop (and they did). Jesus said to his followers, ‘Why are you afraid? Where is your faith?’”

Mark 4.37-40

**Jesus spent time in prayer cultivating peace so when the storms of life came, he could rest. He could “go to peace instead of pieces.” And having peace, he could share peace with the world around him.**

***May I embrace the power of peace and have peace in abundance to share. Amen.***

### 21 – Give Thanks & Share

“Jesus took five loaves and two fish. He gave thanks to God and divided the bread and fish and gave the pieces to his followers for them to give to the huge amount of people who were gathered. All the people ate and were satisfied.” Mark 6.41-42

**Jesus didn't seem to have enough to feed all the people who needed food, but that didn't stop him from trying. He gave thanks for what he had and shared what he could, and when he did that, what didn't seem to be enough made a big difference after all.**

**When we are thankful for what we have and share what we can, miracles of provision and abundance still take place. Gratitude and a willingness to share can make a big difference.**

***Thank you, Jesus, for this simple but powerful lesson. Amen.***

### 22 – The Waters of Turmoil Will Not Drag Me Down

“Jesus saw his friends rowing a boat against the wind in the very early hours of the morning. Jesus approached them, walking on the water..” Mark 6.48

**We can struggle against obstacles and challenges, or we can rise above them and walk over them. As we grow spirituality, we learn that there is something amazing within us that can never be harmed or hampered by outer circumstances.**

***The waters of turmoil will not drag me down; I walk over them knowing that blessings are at hand. And so it is.***

### 23 – Be Open

“Jesus met with a man who was deaf. He put his fingers in the man's ears, and he took a deep, centering breath, and then said to the man, ‘be opened!’ After that, the man could hear.” Mark 7.33-35

**We are not always ready to hear a word of challenge, a new perspective, or an idea that could promote positive change in our lives; but when we are open to truth, wherever it may come from, our lives are enriched.**

***I will try to be more open to perspectives that can help and enrich my life.***

### 24 – Ready & Willing to See

“Jesus put his hands over the eyes of a man who could not see. Afterward, the man was able to see clearly.” Mark 8.25

***Today, I am ready and willing to see my sacred value, the amazing potential in my life, and the goodness all around me. I look around, and I see miracles everywhere!***

*25 – Balm of Grace*

“Jesus asked his friend Peter, ‘Who do you think I am?’ Peter answered, ‘You are God’s anointed.’”  
Mark 8.29

**It is spiritual vision that sees “that of God” in every person.**

***Every person in my life and in my world is a child of God, loved by God, filled with the light of God, anointed with the balm of everlasting grace. And so it is.***

*26 – What the Transfiguration Story Can Mean for Us*

“On a mountain, Peter, James & John shared a vision of Jesus being clothed in dazzling garments and being visited by Moses and Elijah.”

Mark 9.3-4

**In ancient literature mountain tops represent the presence of the gods. Peter, James, and John, according to some, represent Faith, Wisdom, and Love. Jesus represents conscious unity with the Divine. Moses and Elijah represent religious Law and Prophecy (which along with some history make up the Hebrew scriptures).**

**The story of the Transfiguration of Jesus seems to suggest that as we pause to experience the divine Presence, we grow in faith, wisdom, and love, and we see religious tradition serving (rather than ruling) us, helping us to become more fully aware of our oneness with God.**

***Dear God, in Jesus and in scripture, I find a path to fuller awareness of your omnipresence which includes me and all life. And so it is that I rejoice. Amen.***

*27 – I Believe; Help Me Trust*

“A man brought his son who had many problems to the disciples to see if they could help him, but they couldn’t. He then went to Jesus and said, ‘Please help my son, if you can.’ Jesus said, ‘Sir, anything is possible.’ And the man cried, ‘I believe that; help me believe it even more.’ Jesus prayed for the boy and his condition immediately improved.”

Mark 9.17-27

**We who are religious, spiritual, or seeking clearly believe that our path could make a positive difference in our lives and in the world, but we keep studying, praying, meditating, worshiping, and seeking so that we might believe it even more, or rather, go from merely believing it to absolutely trusting it.**

***Dear God, I believe in your omnipresence, and that every blessing exists in the field of possibilities; I believe that the blessings I desire strongly can be made manifest in my life. Help me believe it so much that I experience it more; help me trust that All Good is available to me. Amen.***

***28 – The Life that Never Ends***

“A rich young man came to Jesus and asked, ‘What must I do to have the life that never ends?’ Jesus looked at the man with love and answered, ‘...Give all you can to the poor. You will find a great reward from doing that. Then, you can follow me.’ The young man was rich but was sad at Jesus’ answer. He left.” Mark 10.21-22

**A life that feels endlessly significant is a life of generosity. If we have a scarcity mentality, we will be afraid to share what we have, even if in reality we have quite a lot. A life of love is a life of service, and a life of service is a life of sharing. The good news is that the more we share in love, the more we seem to have to share.**

***The circulation of divine supply is endless, “the life that never ends.” And so it is.***

***29 – We Can Experience Peace***

“Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the Temple. Since it was late, he proceeded on to Bethany with his disciples.” Mark 11.11

**Jerusalem symbolizes peace, while Bethany symbolizes affliction. Jesus journeyed to “peace” but having peace didn’t mean there wouldn’t be times of trouble; having peace meant that times of trouble couldn’t define him nor permanently deter his quest. Jesus and his disciples would know affliction, but even so they would overcome it. Peace is always possible.**

***30 – Holy Communion***

“While Jesus and his friends were sharing a Passover meal, Jesus took some bread, thanked God for it and broke it. Then he gave it to the others and said, ‘Take this. Think of it as my body.’ Then Jesus took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to the others. They all drank from it. Then they sang a hymn and left.” Mark 14.22-23, 26

**Offering a piece of bread, sharing a cup of wine, saying prayers and singing hymns together: Simple acts of worship help us feel connected to all life and to the Source of life. Holy Communion (union with the whole of life) takes place whenever we pause to remember the Love that enfolds us all.**

### 31 – *I May Need Some Support & That's Okay*

“Jesus and his disciples came to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray.’ He took three of his best friends with him a little ways out. He was feeling anxious. He said to the three, ‘I’m absolutely heartbroken. Stay here with me and keep an eye on me.’”

Mark 14.32-34

**It is okay to ask for help, for support, for a shoulder to lean on. A friend, a prayer partner, a colleague can offer us the ministry of presence, the ministry of caring. They can't fix our problems for us, and their efforts may fall short of what we think we need, but still their mere presence (in person or by phone, email, or social media) will communicate to our souls that we are not alone.**

***In moments of need, I will summon the courage to ask someone to hold me in prayer, or hold my hand, or just sit and watch out for me for a bit. If no one is around, I will hold a pet in my lap or hug a pillow. There are many ways that the comforting love of God can show up for me to remind me that in truth, I am never alone. Thanks be to God.***



# About Sunshine Cathedral

[www.sunshinecathedral.org](http://www.sunshinecathedral.org)

Sunshine Cathedral is an affiliate of Divine Science Federation International, the Global Justice Institute, the International Council of Community Churches, and Metropolitan Community Churches. Also, Sunshine Cathedral participates in the American Baptist pension plan. Sunshine Cathedral is *transdenominational*, and increasingly, *postdenominational*. We are Sunshine Cathedral, a *different kind of church!*

## **Who We Are at Sunshine Cathedral**

**Our Spiritual Practice is:** *Progressive, Positive, & Practical*

**Our Community Prayer is:** *May Peace Prevail on Earth!*

**Our Affirmation is:** *Sunshine Cathedral is a different kind of church where the past is past and the future has infinite possibilities.*

**Our Desire is:** To rescue religion from irrelevance, practice positive thinking, be justice workers, build community, value diversity, and help people experience peace, hope, and joy in their lives.

**Our Core Values are:** Inclusion. Compassion. Spiritual Transformation. Social Action.

## **Our Spiritual Principles are:**

1. God is omnipresent (“There’s not a spot where God is not”).
2. All people have sacred value.
3. Love makes a family and Mutuality makes a relationship holy.
4. Our habitual thoughts matter (“Change your thinking & change your world”).
5. Beliefs are well-rehearsed opinions and can be changed.

## **Our Message is:**

- ✓ All people have sacred value.
- ✓ Divine Life “in which we live and move and have our being” is an all inclusive, all good, universal Presence.
- ✓ Rooted in the Christian tradition and the Gay Rights Movement, we are an inclusive church for ALL kinds of people.

## **Our Commitment is:**

- ✓ To welcome into membership anyone who makes a commitment to support the work of Sunshine Cathedral with time, talent, and

treasure; that is, with frequent worship, volunteer service, and consistent financial generosity.

- ✓ While acknowledging that we are culturally and historically Christian, to honor truth wherever it may be found and the wisdom of every faithful spiritual tradition.
- ✓ To offer the sacrament of Holy Communion (a symbolic meal representing our unity with all life and with the Source of life) to all worshippers regardless of church membership or personal beliefs.

### **Our Pastoral Vision is:**

- ✓ To promote Progressive, Positive, Practical spirituality within the Sunshine Cathedral Community and beyond.
- ✓ To build a church culture of gratitude and generosity where every active member gives generously of time, talent, and treasure.
- ✓ To continuously grow in multiple ways.
- ✓ To reach out to South Florida and beyond through worship, small groups (on and beyond our campus), classes, written materials, community partnerships, the Internet and other media.
- ✓ To improve the quality and accessibility of Religious Education through the Samaritan Institute so that our church can increasingly experience biblical literacy, theological sophistication, and spiritual maturity.

### **Sunshine Cathedral is the parent organization of:**

Sunshine Cathedral Foundation  
Sunshine Social Services (SunServe)  
The Samaritan Institute

### **Our Affiliations are:**

Divine Science Federation International  
Global Justice Institute  
International Council of Community Churches  
Metropolitan Community Churches

### **About Our Partner Organizations**

*Sunshine Cathedral Foundation:* SCF supports the “bricks and mortar” needs of Sunshine Cathedral. By chairing capital campaigns, handling bequests, seeking endowment opportunities, managing the sale of columbarium niches and our Stained Glass window project, the Foundation helps us with big ticket items so that they need not burden the operational budget of the Sunshine Cathedral. Additionally, the Foundation is the legal owner of Sunshine Cathedral’s beautiful 3 acre property. SCF has its own 501c3 status, its own bylaws (ratified by



Sunshine Cathedral's Board of Directors), and its own Board of Governors (also ratified by the Cathedral's BOD).

*SunServe:* SunServe handles the social services needs of our community. SunServe provides therapeutic counseling in two locations, sponsors a youth group, provides gender identity programming, and manages Sunshine Cathedral's McArtor Senior Center. SunServe has its own board (ratified by Sunshine Cathedral's Board of Directors), its own funding (from community donations and grants), and its own staff. While it was born from and works closely with Sunshine Cathedral, SunServe is autonomous in its staffing, funding, and operations.

*The Samaritan Institute:* TSI is the educational arm of the Sunshine Cathedral. TSI offers very low cost religious education classes and is the training institute for those who wish to become Sunshine Cathedral deacons. TSI is also approved by the Divine Science Federation International to train Divine Science Practitioners and Ministers. Finally, TSI is approved by the State of Florida to confer religious degrees.

*Divine Science Federation International:* DSFI is an organization that promotes the spiritual principles of Divine Science. Divine Science is the oldest of the New Thought schools of thought. New Thought emphasizes the power of positive thinking, the unity of all life, and the omnipresence of God.

*The Global Justice Institute:* GJI sends out press releases and calls to prayerful action in response to a number of justice issues throughout the world, and often sends representatives to justice-seeking and consciousness raising events, such as peace conferences, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Selma to Montgomery March, a gay pride parade in Jamaica, a visit to an AIDS orphanage in Africa, etc. GJI also does important on the ground work in places where it is very dangerous to be lesbian, gay, or transgender; such work has included encouraging people in Malaysia and training women in Pakistan to have a trade so they can be independent and safe. GJI has also helped LGBT people who are in danger seek asylum in friendlier environments.

GJI wishes to "to be an agent of change by building bridges that liberate and unite voices of sacred defiance...in acts of justice." GJI is an independent 501c3 that is housed in the offices of Metropolitan Community Church in New York City. The Reverend Elder Pat Bumgardner is the Executive Director of the Institute. The Institute is incorporated in New York State and its bylaws comply with requirements therein.

*International Council of Community Churches:* In 1950 the Peoples Church of Christ and Community Centers merged with the National Council of Community Churches to become the ICCC (at the time, the largest interracial merger of religious bodies in the US). ICCC is a **post-denominational movement** dedicated to international, intercultural, and inclusive fellowship focusing on the unity of all who claim the label “Christian” rather than on doctrines, traditions, or worship styles that have so often divided churches. ICCC seeks “to witness to the inclusive love of God that overcomes all divisions, to love and serve God, God’s people and God’s creation, to affirm freedom of conscience, to build toward a world of peace, to affirm communities of justice, mercy and love, and to be an integral partner in the worldwide ecumenical movement.” ICCC (sometimes called “ITripleC”) is a member of the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches in the US. *ITripleC* has over 100,000 members worldwide.

*Metropolitan Community Churches:* MCC was founded on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1968 by a defrocked, gay, Pentecostal minister, the Reverend Troy D. Perry. His church was MCC of Los Angeles and soon after he founded MCC, other independent congregations asked to join with his, and the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches was born. MCC was founded by and for the LBGT community and their allies. MCC has just over 150 churches in the world (half what it once claimed) and 40 some “emerging ministries.”

*Missionaries & Ministers Benefit Board:* MMBB is the American Baptist Churches USA’s pension plan. Sunshine Cathedral staff members are eligible to participate in the pension plan to help secure their future in retirement.

### **Some Important Projects at Sunshine Cathedral**

***Burn the Mortgage Campaign:*** Thanks to a matching gift, Sunshine Cathedral will be mortgage free in 2016! We need everyone who has made a pledge to the Burn the Mortgage Capital Campaign to honor those pledges, and it isn’t too late to become part of this exciting moment and make a pledge here in the final months of the campaign. Your support has been so important and greatly appreciated.

***Sunshine Cathedral Columbarium & Memorial Chapel:*** We are very pleased that we have a beautiful Columbarium/Memorial Chapel where people can permanently rest. Some people are buying niches in clusters (forming post-mortem “neighborhoods” in the columbarium) while others are buying niches based on a preferred placement or based on budgetary needs. Whichever niche one chooses, for whatever reason, it

will be attractive, well cared for, and part of a spiritual home that has meant so much to us in life and now, beyond. If you would like to secure a permanent resting place at the Sunshine Cathedral, contact the Foundation office (954.462.2730).

**Stained Glass Window Campaign:** Each of our lovely stained glass windows were gifted to us by generous donors. We have more windows to install as donors make that possible. Two new windows have recently been secured. The Spirit Window in the Columbarium and the Christmas Window over the organ in the Lawrence/Lewis Center will be installed before the end of this year. Renderings of windows that we will be installing in the future can be seen in the narthex. For information about the Window Campaign, contact the Sunshine Cathedral Foundation office (954.462.2730).

**Pillars Program:** Pillars are those who remember the Sunshine Cathedral with their legacy gifts and estate planning. Everyone can be a Pillar. Whether one leaves a designated amount of money, or an insurance policy (or a percentage of a policy), no gift is too large or small. To become a Pillar, contact the Sunshine Cathedral Foundation office to let them know of your plans, and then simply arrange with your bank, financial adviser, or insurance carrier to remember Sunshine Cathedral with a bequest. Bequests should be left to the Sunshine Cathedral Foundation; a portion of those gifts will be shared with the Sunshine Cathedral ministries and the bulk of the gifts will go into Foundation accounts that are used to help the Cathedral buy, maintain, repair, or improve property.

*Sunshine Cathedral is a different kind of church,  
where the past is past and the future has infinite possibilities!*

[www.SunshineCathedral.org](http://www.SunshineCathedral.org)

Sunshine Cathedral is a progressive, transdenominational and postdenominational church.

