

40 Days of Grace: A Time for Reflection and Renewal



As we come up to Grace United Church's Annual Meeting 2025 on Sunday, March 23rd, the Board is working through an intentional process of discerning how God might be leading our community of faith to live out its guiding principle of "Belonging, Learning, Connecting in Grace".

Rev. Helen Prior helped Grace United Church to name its core values and its guiding principle. That work has helped us to become who we are today, almost six years later: an Affirming community of faith of The United Church of Canada, strong in the service of those who are connected with Grace and working to serve the needs of some of the most disadvantaged folks in the wider community.

Our Lead Minister, Richard, has offered the Board "A Call to Grace". Some have called it a manifesto, others a love letter to the church! It invites the Board to consider who God wants Grace to be in **2035**, and offers a starting vision of what that might be. As the Board discerns what it understands God is asking the church to do and prepares to bring it to the congregation for its consideration, one of the most important things we can do is pray for them in that work. **And so, everyone who is part of the Grace United Church is asked to participate in 40 days of Prayer, beginning on January 22nd, and finishing just before Ash Wednesday.**

Richard has prepared this booklet to help us in our times of prayer. Each week focuses on a different theme in "A Call to Grace".

- Week 1: The Heart of Grace - Loving Deeply and Wholly - (Focus: Foundational Principles)
- Week 2: The Call to Be Beloved Community - Radical Welcome and Inclusion - (Focus: Building an Inclusive Community)
- Week 3: The Journey of Learning - Growing in Christ Together - (Focus: Discipleship and Spiritual Formation)
- Week 4: The Power of Connecting - Serving God's World with Compassion - (Focus: Outreach and Social Justice)
- Week 5: The Spirit of Abundance - Sharing Our Gifts with Joy - (Focus: Stewardship and Generosity)
- Week 6: The Path Forward - Discerning Our Way Together - (Focus: Seeking God's Guidance and Embracing the Future)

While this booklet contains prompts for individual prayer, we would also like to offer a few communal opportunities as well. On **Monday evenings at 7:30pm, both online and in the Small Classroom**, space will be set for those who wish to pray in the style of our Quaker siblings. We will come into the space, share in a scripture, and then settle into our chairs. If someone feels the nudging of the Holy Spirit, they are welcome to share what they are called to say with the rest of those gathered listening, and then we settle into the silence again. If another person present is nudged, they speak, and we continue to sit and listen for God's direction. At the end of an hour, we'll close with a word of thanks and head home. Before **Sunday worship, at 9.40am, anyone who wishes is welcome to gather in the Fellowship Room**, where we will pray together for the Board's leadership, and for Richard as he prepares to lead the service.

As well, you can find an online space here: <https://bit.ly/4gEhblR> . You are welcome to post prayers, prayer requests, and things you feel you've heard God saying in response to your prayers (maybe as things people have said to you, or things you've read, that you've understood in a 'God talking' kind of way.

We understand that individual prayer isn't something that we've particularly taught in The United Church of Canada during the lifetime of many of the folks in the congregation. The thing is, it is an important practice for folks who are trying to follow Jesus' Way, and is especially important when we're needing to make big decisions about what's next in our life as a Christian community of faith. It's really important that we talk with God about what we're thinking and feeling and then listen with our hearts

and minds for what God might be asking us to hear and share with the rest of the congregation.

To help with all of this, we've provided this resource. It includes a daily scripture, a question for you to reflect on, and then an option for spoken prayer, an option for Journaling/Artwork, and an option for action. **It shouldn't take more than 5 to 10 minutes in your day.** Please choose any one of the options that most resonates with you! **(You really *don't* have to try and do everything!)** Finally, you'll find the name of one member of the Board or Trustees that you are asked to hold in your heart, asking God's Wisdom to be with them. For each day, space is left, in case you would like to write down any thoughts that come to mind, or experiences that you have during the day that you sense have something to do with God's response to your prayers.

If you would like to have a conversation about the prayer part of things, please feel free to talk with Richard, Janet Smith, Sherrill McNally, or Janet Saunders. If you would like to talk about "A Call to Grace", please feel free to chat with Richard, Stacy Goodale, or any other Board member.

Thank you for being part of this community of prayer at this important time in Grace's life.

The Heart of Grace - Loving Deeply and Wholly

Day 1: Reflecting on Love's Fullness

Scripture: Matthew 22:36-38 (The Greatest Commandment) - "A teacher of the law once asked Jesus, 'Which is the most important commandment?' Jesus replied, 'Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.'"

Reflection Prompt: "How can we cultivate a deeper sense of love and connection in our lives - to the Divine, to something greater than ourselves, to our values, to the world around us?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): Thank you, God, for the gift of Jesus' teaching, and for the gift of your love. Help me to open my heart, my soul, and my mind to your love. Bring me to the people and the places where you need me to share that love, in real, tangible ways. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Stacy Goodale, our Board Chairperson.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): What does it mean for us to love God fully? How might God be inviting us to express this love in our actions today?

Option 3 (Action): Commit to an act of kindness today that reflects God's expansive love.

Day 2: Loving Our Neighbors

Scripture: Matthew 22:39 (The Second Greatest Commandment) - "And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Reflection Prompt: "Who are our neighbours? How can we expand our circle of care and concern to include those who are different from us or those who are often overlooked?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): As you continued to teach the lawyer, you continue to teach me, Jesus. Help me, my God, to not only love my neighbour as if my neighbour were me, but to recognize that "who my neighbour is" might be wider than I think. Help me to open my heart to the inherent worth and dignity of every person in the world. Help me to live my life in ways that reflect that worth and dignity, I pray. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Heather McGavin, our past Board Co-Chairperson, and convenor of the Nominations committee.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): How can we challenge our own biases and prejudices? How can we be better neighbours today?

Option 3 (Action): Reach out to someone who is isolated or marginalized and offer kindness or support.

Day 3: Extending Compassion

Scripture: Luke 10:25-37 (Parable of the Good Samaritan) - "Jesus said, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' The man asked, 'And who is my neighbor?' Jesus told a story of a man attacked by robbers, and how a Samaritan, who were typically enemies of the Jews, helped him where others would not."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we be 'Good Samaritans' in our community? Where do we see suffering, and how can we respond with compassion, even at personal cost?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): God, there is a lot of pain in our community and in your world. As I realize this, help me to understand, first, where I may be causing pain; and then, where I might be able to be a healer. Help me to understand where Grace might be able to serve for the healing in your world. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Jennifer Brezina, our Board Secretary.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): When have I witnessed someone being a 'Good Samaritan'? How did it make me feel? How can I emulate that behavior?

Option 3 (Action): Volunteer time or donate resources to a local organization that serves those in need.

Day 4: Practicing Forgiveness

Scripture: Matthew 6:14-15 (Forgiveness) - "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Reflection Prompt: "Is there anyone we need to forgive? How can we release resentment and move towards healing and reconciliation?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): Holy, loving, God... we all hold resentment against someone at some time, don't we? Help me to understand what I am holding is doing to the other person. Help me to understand what it is doing to me. And help me, I ask you, to let go of what can be let go of right now. Fill the space that is left with your healing love. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Rev. Richard Bott, our Lead Minister.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): Write a letter of forgiveness (you don't have to send it) to someone who has hurt you. What would it take to forgive, for your sake?

Option 3 (Action): If appropriate and safe, take a step towards reconciliation with someone from whom you are estranged.

Day 5: Seeking Justice and Peace

Scripture: Matthew 6:33 (Seek First the Kingdom) - "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we align our actions with the values of justice, peace, and equity? What does it mean to seek 'the kingdom' in our daily life?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): God... the world is full of brokenness. Wars and conflicts on international and national levels. Fighting and infighting in communities and families. Inequities that are greater and greater and lead to more and more suffering. Help us, we pray, to respond in ways that make a difference for the better. Change your world, we pray, so that it might be healed and whole. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Sandy McKeown, our congregation's Treasurer.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): What are the injustices that we see in the world? How can we contribute to creating a more just and equitable society?

Option 3 (Action): Learn more about an issue of social justice and consider how you can get involved in advocating for change.

Day 6: Expressing Gratitude

Scripture: Luke 17:11-19 (The Ten Lepers) - "Jesus healed ten lepers, but only one returned to express gratitude."

Reflection Prompt: "For what am we grateful today? How can we express our appreciation for the blessings in our life?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): I am sure that every one of the people Jesus cured were full of thanks, God. Celebrating that they were healed, that they could be with their family and community once again, their hearts and lives must have been filled with shock and with joy. Help me to be like the one person who, in the midst of all those feelings, remembered to say their thanksgivings out loud. Help me to share my thanks, with you, and with those who have helped me, today. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for John Allchin, our previous Donation Steward, and for Doug Smith, our new Donation Steward.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): Make a list of things you are grateful for, big and small.

Option 3 (Action): Express your gratitude to someone who has made a difference in your life.

Day 7: Finding Rest and Renewal

Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30 (Come to Me, All Who Are Weary) - "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Reflection Prompt: "Where do I find rest and renewal? How can we create space for stillness and self-care in our life?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (**Words**): Sometimes, Jesus, there is just so much to *do* in life and in the work of the ministry of being someone who follows you. There aren't always enough hours in the day. Sometimes, things fall off the to-do list, because they've been crowded out by other thing! Help me, please - not to try to find spaces to do more - but to make spaces to *be* more. More time with myself, more time with those I love, more time with you. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Dave Shilton and Mike Lawton, the co-chairs of the Grace: St. Stephen and the Grace: Nelson Endowment Funds.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): "What activities bring me joy and replenish my energy? How can I prioritize these activities?"

Option 3 (**Action**): "Take a break from technology and spend time in nature, reading, or engaging in a relaxing hobby."

The Call to Belong - Radical Welcome and Inclusion

Day 8: Welcoming the Outsider

Scripture: Matthew 25:35 (I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me) - "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we be more welcoming to those who are new, different, or marginalized? How can our community extend a more radical welcome?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): Sometimes, God, I'm not sure how to interact with the person who I meet - the family who moved in beside me, the person in line at the store. So many situations feel different, so many people who grew up with different cultures and traditions than the ones I did. Help me, please - to listen and be curious, to be supportive and loving, to be someone ready to help and share, even if I don't quite understand. And, God? Could you help Grace to be a community that does that, too? As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Donna Lelievre and Keith Rutherford, the co-chairs of the Faith Formation committee.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): "When have I felt like an outsider? How did it feel? How can I help others feel like they belong?"

Option 3 (Action): "Make an effort to connect with someone new at church or in your community."

Day 9: Unity in Diversity

Scripture: John 17:20-23 (That They May Be One) - "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we celebrate our differences while also embracing our unity as a community of faith? How do we live into being 'one'?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): We aren't all the same, are we, God? Different gifts, different experiences, different hopes, different dreams - but all of them lived in this life that we share! Help us to be curious about one another. Help us to experience the similarities AND the differences in ways that bring us together in community, and in love. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Susan Ward-England and Larry Hatt, the co-chairs of our Communications committee.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): "What are the gifts that diversity brings to our community? How can we foster greater understanding and appreciation for different perspectives?"

Option 3 (Action): "Attend an event or learn about a culture or faith tradition that is different from your own."

Day 10: Seeking the Lost

Scripture: Luke 15:3-7 (Parable of the Lost Sheep) - "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Don't they leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until they find it?"

Reflection Prompt: "Who are the 'lost sheep' in our society? How can we reach out to those who are hurting, isolated, or marginalized?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (**Words**): God, you know that there are many people who are struggling in our community, and in your world - people who have been pushed to the sides by policies and institutions, by prejudice, by practices and traditions. Help me to open the understanding of my heart, help us to be a community that opens our hands and your church, to love all who are marginalized into the abundance of your love, and the Grace of Grace! As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Janice Martin, the chair of Grace's Outreach committee.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): "Have I ever felt lost? What helped me find my way back? How can we offer that same support to others?"

Option 3 (**Action**): "Find a way to volunteer with a ministry or an organization that serves vulnerable populations."

Day 11: Valuing Every Individual

Scripture: Luke 15:8-10 (Parable of the Lost Coin) - "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?"

Reflection Prompt: "How can we ensure that every person feels valued and seen within our community? How do we show that each person is precious?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): Holy One, you know what is in the hearts and minds of all those you love. You know when people are isolated, or have come to believe that they have little value... that no one really cares. Help Grace to be a community of care, one that does everything it can to help each and every person in our community of faith and in the wider community to know that they are valued and loved. Help us to be the community that seeks out the undervalued, and recognizes how precious they are. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Sue Stephen, the Coordinator of our Ministry of Care, Barb McKeown, the chair of the Care Network @ Grace, and Susan Ward-England, the chair of the Welcoming & Membership committee.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): "What are the unique gifts and talents of the people in our congregation? How can we celebrate and utilize these gifts?"

Option 3 (**Action**): "Take the time to truly listen to someone's story and acknowledge their experiences."

Day 12: Radical Grace

Scripture: Luke 15:11-32 (Parable of the Prodigal Son) - "A man had two sons. The younger one took his inheritance and left, living wildly until he had nothing left. He returned home, and his father ran to welcome him."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we extend radical grace and forgiveness to those who have made mistakes or strayed from the path? How do we practice being a forgiving community?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (**Words**): When Jesus told that story, he wanted us to understand how counter-cultural your overwhelming grace as forgiveness really are, didn't he? God, where are the hurts that have happened at Grace - the relationships that were broken, and feel like they can never be healed? Help us to be a community that forgives, one that works to rebuild trust, one that embraces the fullness of your love. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Judith Allan Sargent, the chair of the Stewardship Committee.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): "What does it mean to be a 'prodigal'? Have I ever felt like one? How can we offer the same grace to others that I have received?"

Option 3 (**Action**): "Reach out to someone who has been absent from the community and let them know they are missed and welcome."

Day 13: Room at the Table

Scripture: Luke 14:12-14 (Invite the Poor) - "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we create a community where everyone feels welcome at the table, regardless of their social status, background, or beliefs?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (**Words**): Christ Jesus, you always celebrated an open table, didn't you? Children and elders, poor and rich, women and men, people in power and people without. You saw people for who they were, God's beloved, and invited them into your household again and again. Help us, please, to be a community that Affirms ALL your children, helping them to come into the fullness of who you call them to be! As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Carol Boyle and Janice Hatt, the co-chairs of Grace's Worship Committee.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): "What are the unspoken rules or assumptions that might make some people feel excluded? How can we create a more truly inclusive environment?"

Option 3 (**Action**): "Advocate for policies that promote equity and inclusion within the church and the wider community."

Day 14: Celebrating Diversity

Scripture: John 13:34-35 (Love One Another) - "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we celebrate the diversity of gifts, perspectives, and experiences within our community? How does this make us stronger?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): You have created us in your image, loving God - and what an image that is! Diverse is height and shape; in colour of skin, and eyes, and hair; in a diversity of genders; in the ways we talk and listen and understand; in whom and how we love! And yet, we are all yours, loved by your love. Help us to explore and to celebrate our diversities, as well as our similarities. Help us to find the strength and the joy that being all these differences can mean. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Bob England and Kathryn Munn, the co-chairs of our Property committee.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): "What are some of the different perspectives and experiences represented in our congregation? How can we learn from one another?"

Option 3 (Action): "Intentionally seek out opportunities to connect with and learn from people who are different from you."

The Journey of Learning - Growing in Wisdom Together

Day 15: Embracing Curiosity

Scripture: Matthew 11:29 (Learn from Me) - "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we cultivate a spirit of curiosity and a desire to learn and grow throughout my life?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): You have created a universe of possibilities, God of all! Sometimes, with everything that could be, we aren't sure we want to glance around the corner, to get a sense of what might be next. Help us, we pray, to open ourselves to curiosity about ourselves, about our neighbours, about you. In that curiosity, help us to wonder, to learn, and to love! As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the GPS team, as they reflect on our building and its ministry.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): "What am we curious about? What questions do we have about faith, life, or the world around us?"

Option 3 (Action): "Read a book, watch a documentary, or have a conversation that expands your understanding of a topic you're curious about."

Day 16: Discerning Truth

Scripture: Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23 (Parable of the Sower) - "A farmer went out to sow his seed...Other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we discern truth from falsehood in a world of competing voices? How do we ensure the 'soil' of our heart is receptive to good things?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): Not every path is the best path to travel, but sometimes there are two, or three, or more ways that are great... and we can only choose one, right now. Help us in our discernment. Help us with our wisdom. Help us with our understanding. Help us with our choices. Help us, God, to know which way to go! As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the Education & Advocacy Team, as they offer guidance on how we might support the wider community.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): "What are some sources of information that we trust? How do we evaluate the credibility of information we encounter?"

Option 3 (Action): "Engage in a respectful conversation with someone who holds a different viewpoint than your own."

Day 17: Seeking Wisdom

Scripture: Luke 2:52 (Jesus Grew in Wisdom) - "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and community."

Reflection Prompt: "What does it mean to grow in wisdom? How can we seek wisdom in our daily life?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): God, help me to understand what wisdom is all about. It seems like it's about more than experience, more than clear thinking. It seems to have to do with being aligned with your will, "open to the Holy Spirit" as they say. I'm not sure if I'm wise, or if Grace has wisdom... but I trust that you will help us to discern our best way, together with you. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Sue Stephen and Mark Goodale, the co-chairs of the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): "Who are some wise people I know? What qualities do they possess? How can we cultivate those qualities in ourselves, and in Grace?"

Option 3 (Action): "Seek out the counsel of a trusted mentor or spiritual guide."

Day 18: Embracing Questions

Scripture: Luke 2:46-47 (Jesus in the Temple) - "After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we create space for honest questions and doubts in our faith journey? How can we, as a community, be a safe space for questions?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (**Words**): Jesus, you were a child when you asked these questions and shared your thoughts. Help us to be like the elders in the Temple, ready to explore, ready to help anyone - children, youth, adults - to find their questions and to be people who seek for answers together. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Sue Stephen, Shirley Bottaro, and Rev. Richard Bott, our representatives to Horseshoe Falls Regional Council.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): "What are some of the questions we have about faith or spirituality? Where can we explore these questions in a safe and supportive environment?"

Option 3 (**Action**): "What question could you share with a trusted friend, minister, or spiritual director?"

Day 19: Engaging with Scripture

Scripture: Matthew 4:4 (Man Shall Not Live on Bread Alone) - "Jesus answered, 'It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Reflection Prompt: "How can we engage with scripture in a way that is meaningful and relevant to our life today?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): God, would you help us to be open to the challenges (and the challengers) who push us to express our faith in ways that make sense, not just to us, but to them as well? Help us to encounter you in the stories of our spiritual ancestors, and to not be afraid to dive into them. Guide us to the people who can help us make sense of them, for this time and in this place. Most of all, help us to be open to your Presence in these old, old, stories - make them alive in us, now! As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Paul Bartu and Mike Lawton, the co-chairs of Grace's Trustees.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): "What are some of my favorite passages of scripture or other wisdom literature? What do they teach me about life and faith? How can we read these texts with fresh eyes?"

Option 3 (Action): "Choose a passage of scripture (or another meaningful text) and read it slowly and reflectively. Read it three times, each time asking yourself, "What is God drawing my attention to, today?"

Day 20: The Practice of Prayer/Contemplation

Scripture: Matthew 6:5-13 (The Lord's Prayer) - "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites...But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen...This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven...'"

Reflection Prompt: "How can we deepen our practice of prayer, meditation, or reflection? How might Grace connect with the Divine/Sacred in a way that feels authentic to me?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): Sometimes, God, there are too many words inside my heart and my head. So, today, I'm just going to sit in the quiet of this place, experiencing what is in he and around me, and being with you. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Michael Mulrone and the choir. (Give yourself at least two minutes of quiet time, then say the version of the Lord's Prayer that is the one you are most comfortable with.)

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): "What does 'prayer' mean to me? How have my ideas about it changed over time? How might a contemplative practice support my spiritual journey?"

Option 3 (Action): "Experiment with a new form of prayer or meditation that you haven't tried before."

Day 21: Living Our Faith in Action

Scripture: Matthew 5:16 (Let Your Light Shine) - "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we live out our faith in tangible ways? How can our actions be a reflection of our deepest values?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (**Words**): Sometimes, God, it's easy to go through life without realizing the impact that I have on people through my words, my choices, my actions. Help me to be more aware of what I am saying and doing. Help me to be more intentional about my choices. Help my actions to be reflections of your love. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the women of W4.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): "What are some concrete ways we can make a positive difference in the world around us? What 'good deeds' could Grace do today?"

Option 3 (**Action**): "Commit to a specific act of service or kindness that aligns with your values."

The Power of Connecting - Serving the World with Compassion

Day 22: Feeding the Hungry

Scripture: Matthew 25:35-40 (I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food) - "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me...Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we respond to the needs of those who are hungry, both physically and spiritually? How do we see the Divine in those who are suffering?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (**Words**): God, we live in a world where there is enough food, even more than enough, for all people. But we also live in a world where economic systems, driven by power and greed, create vast disparities in wealth, leaving some with abundance while others starve. Help me, God, to be a part of *your* abundant life for all. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the Men's Breakfast group.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): "What does it mean to be 'hungry'? How can we help to nourish others, both body and soul?"

Option 3 (**Action**): "Connect with an organization who is responding to food insecurity. Find out what they need to change in our government. Write an email to your City Council, MPP, or MP about it."

Day 23: Caring for the Sick

Scripture: Matthew 25:36 (I Was Sick and You Looked After Me) - (See passage above in Day 22)

Reflection Prompt: "How can we offer care and support to those who are ill or suffering, in body, mind, or spirit?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (**Words**): There are many who are not well, in their physical selves, in their emotional selves, in their spiritual selves. Sometimes I am one of those people. Help me, God, to reach out with healing and hope where I can. Help me, too, to accept others' care when I cannot. Help your church to be people of healing in your world. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the Tech team.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): "How has illness impacted my life or the lives of those we love? How can we be a source of comfort and healing for others?"

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Option 3 (**Action**): "Visit someone who is sick or send a card offering words of encouragement and support."

Day 24: Visiting the Imprisoned

Scripture: Matthew 25:36 (I Was in Prison and You Came to Visit Me) - (See passage above in Day 22)

Reflection Prompt: "How can we extend compassion to those who are incarcerated or marginalized? How can we work to address the systemic injustices that contribute to mass incarceration?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): Christ Jesus, you knew what it meant to be unjustly imprisoned. Help us to understand where our systems of justice or our programs of incarceration have failed. Help our systems to be ones that truly see people, systems that work for rehabilitation as well as safety, systems that are balanced and just to all parties, regardless of wealth or status. Help us to be people of hope and new life in you. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for Linda Draddy and the folks of the Fun, Food, and Fellowship group.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): "What does it mean to be 'imprisoned'? How can we help to create a more just and restorative society?"

Option 3 (Action): "Learn more about the Canadian prison system and consider supporting organizations that advocate for prison reform or provide services to incarcerated individuals."

Day 25: Clothing the Naked

Scripture: Matthew 25:36 (I Needed Clothes and You Clothed Me) - (See passage above in Day 22)

Reflection Prompt: "How can we respond to the needs of those who lack adequate clothing or other basic necessities? How can we do so in a way that is respectful and dignified?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (**Words**): There's that song we sang in church, "When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there... and the creed and the colour and the name won't matter, were you there?" Help me to understand when we are there, God. Help me to understand when we are not. And, please, help me to understand where we need to change, now. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the folks of Food for Life.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): "What does it mean to have 'enough'? How can we live more simply and share our abundance with others?"

Option 3 (**Action**): "Find out what donations a local charity or shelter could use. Organize with others a way to respond to those needs."

Day 26: Seeking Justice

Scripture: Matthew 23:23 (Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness) - "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we be a voice with those who have been made voiceless and work towards a more just and equitable world? How do we balance justice, mercy and faithfulness in our own life?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (**Words**): Your world has become disconnected, people from people, people from the land, people from your other creatures. We have forgotten that we are all a part of this interconnected web of living. Help us to remember. Help us to live that connection. Help us to heal the broken links, that we may all be one in your life and your love, God of all creation! As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the work of the Education & Advocacy committee.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): "What injustices do we see in our community or in the world? What steps can we take to promote justice and equity?"

Option 3 (**Action**): "Support an organization that is working to address systemic injustice, through volunteering, donating, or advocacy."

Day 27: Loving Our Enemies

Scripture: Matthew 5:43-48 (Love Your Enemies) - "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we extend love and compassion even to those with whom we disagree or who have caused harm? How can we see them as fellow human beings, deserving of respect and understanding?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): Help me, Holy Spirit, to know your presence in the people with whom I find myself in conflict. Help me to see the humanity of my neighbours when we find ourselves on a political divide. Do everything you can, to help us come to the place of being guided by your will, your desire, your love - so that all the world would be made new. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the peace builders in our community of faith.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): "What does it mean to 'love your enemies'? How can we practice this challenging teaching in our own life?"

Option 3 (Action): "Make an effort to understand the perspective of someone with whom you disagree, seeking common ground where possible."

Day 28: Peacemaking

Scripture: Matthew 5:9 (Blessed Are the Peacemakers) - "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

Reflection Prompt: "How can we be a peacemaker in our relationships, our community, and the world? How can we help to build bridges and heal divisions?"

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): In a world that seems to be driven by fear, help me to be unafraid. In a world that seems to be driven by conflict, help me to live cooperation. In a world that seems to be driven by apathy, help me to choose living action. In all these things, help me to be one who lives your love. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the decorating team.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): "What are some sources of conflict in our life or in the world? How can we contribute to creating more peaceful and harmonious relationships?"

Option 3 (Action): "Practice active listening and nonviolent communication in your interactions with others."

The Spirit of Abundance - Sharing Our Gifts with Joy

Day 29: The Widow's Offering - Radical Generosity

Scripture: Mark 12:41-44 (The Widow's Mite) "Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

Reflection Prompt: Jesus highlights the widow's generosity, not because she gave all she had to a potentially corrupt temple system, but because she gave from the depths of her being. Consider what radical generosity looks like in our own lives.

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): Dollars and cents are a way that we transfer our work and energy from one place to another. Help me, God, to understand where the best of my energy, the best of my work, can be used to live out your love, your healing, your hope for the world - and then help me to get it there! As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for everyone who takes care of the church's property and grounds.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): How do we feel about the widow's actions in this story? What does radical generosity look like in my own life? How can we contribute to dismantling systems of oppression that make it difficult for people to thrive?

Option 3 (Action): Donate to or volunteer with an organization that works to address the root causes of poverty, such as advocating for fair wages, affordable housing, or accessible healthcare.

Day 30: Cultivating Our Gifts - For the Common Good

Scripture: Matthew 25:14-18 (Parable of the Talents) "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. At once the one who had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money."

Reflection Prompt: This parable invites us to consider the gifts we've been given – not just material wealth, but also our skills, passions, and experiences. We are called to use these gifts, not for personal gain, but to build a more just and loving world, working alongside those who have been marginalized. Let us not bury our gifts out of fear or insecurity, but use them boldly for the common good, trusting that God will provide what we need.

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): You invest in us in so many ways, God! Thank you! Help us to not be the ungrateful owner, but to be one who celebrates the gifts that are in us, the gifts you share with us. Help us to find the growth in those gifts, the growth in each other, the growth in our community. Help us to celebrate the Gospel of Christ's love, that is life abundant, for all! As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the people who sit beside me at church, or the ones I see on the screen.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): What are my unique talents and gifts? How can we use them to serve others and contribute to the well-being of my community? What fears or insecurities might be holding me back from fully utilizing my gifts?

Option 3 (Action): Offer your skills or time to a local organization or cause you care about. This could be anything from mentoring a young person to helping out at a community garden to using your professional skills pro bono.

Day 31: Giving with Open Hearts

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:7 (God Loves a Cheerful Giver) "Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Reflection Prompt: True giving comes from a place of joy and gratitude, not obligation or social pressure. It is a response to the abundance we experience in our lives, both material and spiritual. Let's reflect on the spirit in which we offer our gifts. Are we giving freely, knowing that our true wealth lies in our connection with God and with each other?

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): You've taught us to share what you've given us, with open hands and open hearts. Thank you for the opportunities that Grace has, through the stewardship of our ancestors and the stewardship of our endowment folks, to use the resources you have given us - in the wider community and right here at Grace. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for our caretaker, Juan.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): What does it mean to give with a cheerful heart? How can we cultivate a spirit of generosity in our daily life? What are some ways we can express gratitude for the abundance in our life?

Option 3 (Action): Perform a random act of kindness for someone today, giving freely of your time, energy, or resources without expecting anything in return.

Day 32: Sharing Our Time - Building Beloved Community

Scripture: Matthew 20:26-28 (Whoever Wants to Become Great Must Be A Servant) "It will not be so among you, but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many."

Reflection Prompt: In a world that prizes busyness and individual achievement, choosing to spend our time intentionally is a radical act. Jesus models a life of service, reminding us that true greatness is found in lifting each other up. How might we use our time to build beloved community, to be present with those in need, and to advocate for justice? Our time is a precious gift, and how we spend it reflects our values.

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): There's just so much to do, God! Could you help me to recognize where my use of time and energy is not healthy for me, or the way you want me to live? As my life changes, help me to know what my tasks are, and what I need to let go of, for others to live into. Help us, as Grace, to be wise in the use of everyone's time and talents and energy. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the Church Administrator.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): How do I currently spend my time? Does my schedule reflect my values? What changes could I make to use my time more intentionally to serve others and build community?

Option 3 (Action): Spend intentional time with someone who needs a listening ear or a helping hand. This could be a friend, family member, neighbor, or someone you encounter in your daily life.

Day 33: Sharing Our Resources - Towards Collective Liberation

Scripture: Luke 12:13-15 (A Person's Life Does Not Consist in the Abundance of Their Possessions) "Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."

Reflection Prompt: Our society often equates worth with wealth, but Jesus challenges this notion. He reminds us that true life is found in relationships and in living justly, not in accumulating possessions. How can we use our resources, both individually and collectively, to create a more equitable world, where everyone has access to what they need to thrive? This requires both personal generosity and a commitment to systemic change.

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): Sometimes, God, it can feel like our faith is idealistic. But then, that does make sense - it's built on the ideal world that you desire to be. Help us to create that world, where all your children have what is needed, where greed and want are no more. Please, start with me, and help me to live these possibilities in the world. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the Line Dancers and Bridge Players, the folks who get the dominos out, too.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): What is my relationship with material possessions? How can I use my resources to promote justice and equity? What steps can we take to challenge consumerism and live more simply?

Option 3 (Action): Research and support businesses and organizations that are committed to ethical and sustainable practices. Consider making a conscious effort to buy less and to choose products that are made with respect for people and the environment. Advocate for policies that promote economic justice.

Day 34: Investing in the Kingdom

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-21 (Treasures in Heaven) "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Reflection Prompt: Where we invest our energy, time, and resources reveals our true priorities. Jesus invites us to invest in the "kingdom" of God – a realm of justice, peace, and love – rather than in fleeting earthly treasures. What does it mean to invest in relationships, in justice work, and in building a world that reflects God's love?

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): God, there are so many possibilities in how we could be. Help us, please, to understand the best ways, for this place and this time. Help us, please, to invest all of who we are and all of what we have, all our time and talents and resources - into becoming the community of peace, hope, justice, and love, to which you call us! As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the people living in North Burlington!

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): What does it mean to "lay up treasures in heaven"? How can I invest my time, energy, and resources in things that have eternal value? What are our priorities, and do they align with the values of God's kingdom?

Option 3 (Action): Engage in an act of service or advocacy that contributes to building a more just and loving world. This could be volunteering your time, donating to a worthy cause, or speaking out against injustice.

Day 35: Trusting in the Divine Flow

Scripture: Matthew 6:25-33 (Do Not Worry) “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’”

Reflection: In a world filled with anxieties, Jesus calls us to trust in a power greater than ourselves. This is not passive resignation, but an active trust that allows us to release our fears and participate in the divine flow of abundance. How can we cultivate this trust in our daily lives, knowing that we are held and supported by a loving God who provides for our needs?

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (**Words**): Help me, God, in all of this conversation with you, to let you know what is going on in my life - and to help me to let go of it, to the best of my abilities. Help us, as Grace, to be realistic without being pessimistic; to remember, without being nostalgic; to live without worry or fear As Grace’s Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the challenges we face.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): What are our biggest worries and anxieties? How can we practice surrendering them to God? What does it mean to trust in God's provision? How have we seen evidence of God's care in our life?

Option 3 (**Action**): Practice a time of mindful meditation or prayer, focusing on releasing your worries and anxieties to God. Visualize yourself being held and supported by God's love.

The Path Forward - Discerning Spirit's Vision Together

Day 36: Seeking Wisdom Beyond Ourselves

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6 (Trust in God)

Trust in Adonai with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge God,
and God will make straight your paths.

Reflection Prompt: Discerning the path forward, both individually and as a community, requires humility and a willingness to listen to wisdom beyond our own. It involves acknowledging our biases and seeking guidance from a source greater than ourselves – from the Divine, from each other, and from the wisdom of those who have walked before us. How can we, as a community, create space for deep listening and collective discernment?

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): Open our hearts, open our minds, open our souls, to your Holy Spirit, God of all creation. We're doing everything we can to be ready for her nudge! As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the people who knit prayer shawls, for the prayer chain, for everyone who is praying right now.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): Where do we tend to seek guidance when making decisions? How can we cultivate a deeper trust in God's wisdom? What are some practices that can help me listen more deeply to the Divine and to the wisdom of others?

Option 3 (Action): Engage in a practice of communal discernment, such as a listening circle or a consensus-based decision-making process, to seek God's guidance on a particular issue facing your community.

Day 37: Listening for the Still, Small Voice

Scripture: John 10:27 (My Sheep Hear My Voice) "My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me."

Reflection Prompt: In the midst of the noise and distractions of life, it can be challenging to hear the voice of the Divine. Jesus reminds us that we are known and loved, and that we can learn to recognize the still, small voice that guides us. How can we cultivate practices, both individually and as a community, to better hear that voice?

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): I'm not quite sure what it means to "listen" for your voice, God. I know in the Bible you spoke directly to some of our spiritual ancestors. Other times you spoke through children and prophets and storytellers. So, today, I'm asking you to help me "hear" you, in whatever way you speak to me. Open the "ears of my heart", open the understanding of my soul, I pray! As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the people who see our church sign.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): What are the "voices" that compete for our attention? How can we create space in our life for silence and stillness? What practices help me to connect with our inner wisdom and the voice of God?

Option 3 (Action): Spend time in nature, observing the beauty and stillness of the natural world. Practice a period of silent prayer or meditation each day this week.

Day 38: Praying for Unity in Diversity

Scripture: John 17:20-23 (That They May Be One) "I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

Reflection Prompt: Jesus' prayer for unity is not a call for uniformity, but for a deep connection that embraces diversity. As a Christian community, we are called to celebrate our differences while working together towards a common vision of love and justice. How can we honor the unique gifts and perspectives of each individual while remaining united in our commitment to building God's kingdom?

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): The body of Christ has so many parts, the world around - and right here in Burlington. We don't agree on everything. Sometimes it feels like we don't agree on anything! Could you help us to learn from our differences and celebrate our similarities? Would you help us to be one in Christ - in all of our diversity - working to live out his love? As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the wisdom of the Board.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): How can we contribute to building unity within our community? How can we better appreciate and celebrate the diversity of gifts and perspectives within the community? What does it mean to be "one" while also honoring our individuality?

Option 3 (Action): Intentionally connect with someone in your community who has different perspectives or experiences than your own. Listen deeply to their story and seek to understand their point of view.

Day 39: Embracing Transformative Change

Scripture: Isaiah 43:19 (See, I am doing a new thing.)

I am about to do a new thing;

now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness

and rivers in the desert.

Reflection Prompt: God is always at work, creating and renewing. Embracing change, even when it is challenging, is a vital part of our spiritual journey. It requires us to be open to new possibilities and to trust that God is leading us towards a more just and loving future. What new thing might God be doing in our midst, and how can we be open to it?

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (Words): With so much change happening around and within me, it's not always easy to recognize when you are bringing about something new, God. Please, help me to perceive and understand, and to journey your Way in a life that can sometimes feel like wilderness. As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the decisions of the congregational meeting.

Option 2 (Journaling/Artwork): How do we typically respond to change? What are some areas in my life or in our community where we sense God calling for transformation? What fears or resistances do we need to release in order to embrace change?

Option 3 (Action): Reflect on an area of your life or your community that needs to change in order to more fully reflect God's love and justice. Take a small step towards making that change a reality.

Day 40: Moving Forward in Love and Action

Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20 (The Great Commission) "And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, as you go on your way, disciple people of all nations. Baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to live everything that I have taught you. And remember, I am with you every step of the way, every moment of the day. Always."

Reflection Prompt: The Great Commission, in a progressive context, is not about imposing beliefs on others, but about sharing God's love through acts of compassion, justice, and reconciliation. It is a call to embody the teachings of Jesus in our daily lives and to work towards a world where all are treated with dignity and respect. It is about being the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

What follows are simply suggestions. Feel free to chat with God in your own words, and in your own ways.

Option 1 (**Words**): God, we seem to be moving into the future - because it's not something we can really stop doing, is it! Help me, and help Grace, to move into *your* future for us. Guide us in the ways that *you* want us to go - and help us to go, together, into your future, with hope and with joy! As Grace's Board helps the congregation in its ministry, discerning your direction for us, I pray for the work of Grace United Church.

Option 2 (**Journaling/Artwork**): How can we share God's love with others through our actions? What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus in today's world? How can my faith inspire Grace to work for justice and reconciliation?

Option 3 (**Action**): Commit to an act of service or advocacy that reflects the love and justice of Jesus.