Blessing
Companion
Olathe Community of Christ
Congregational Blessing
40-day Walk

Welcome to your journey

This “Blessing Companion” has been design to be just that...a companion for ***you*** on this journey. It has been created with you in mind. It was prepared to assist you in making your personal 40-day walk with God an enriching, as well as discerning experience, in which the Holy Spirit shall be revealed. Dive into this book – personalize it, doodle in it, mark it up, highlight your favorite parts and make it completely yours. Think of it as a safe place for you to go each day to commune with God, learn more about yourself and grow closer in your relationship with your church family.

Just as any team would spend time preparing together, it is also important that the preparation of the individual takes place. Not only will your individual experience deepen but we as a congregation will be strengthened and lifted to new levels. It is so exciting to think of all of us on this journey together, united in these daily practices with our hearts and minds focused on a unifying purpose. As we dwell in scriptures, meditations, stories and journaling as individuals, we are also doing it as a collective whole. Imagine the transformation that can take place within each person only magnified by our entire church family embarking on this 40-day walk together.

"It is not that you have a spiritual life, you are a spiritual life." - Rob Bell

Everything is spiritual. May we align ourselves with listening ears and open hearts to receive our Creator’s will for us. May we dedicate ourselves to this process of discipleship. Even among all the unknowns ahead, we know that we don’t do any of this alone. We are held in the grace of a God that wants to bless us.

His hand is outstretched to you.

Will you join Him?

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How To Use This Blessing Companion

Your Blessing Companion has been designed to enhance your 40-day walk. Our journey will take place over the next 6 weeks beginning on Sunday, October 7th. Here are some tips for using the book:

Weekly Focus Material

Each week has a focus word assigned to it. When you begin each week, you will not only be introduced to that week's focus word, but you will also have a focus story, scripture and thought to reflect on. These will hopefully prepare you for the new theme of the week and get you excited for each day ahead.

Each Day Will Have:

- A scripture reflection to support the weekly theme
- An activity or focus moment for individuals and/or families to participate in
- A prayer thought to inspire more of your own prayer time
- A quote to inspire you
- A journal prompt and space to journal for the day

At the end of each week you will have two full blank pages to write any notes or thoughts that arise. These pages are completely unscripted and there for you to record any part of your experience that week that you want to give more attention to.

We end the 40-day walk on Thursday, November 15th. As we complete the rest of that week together leading into our congregational blessing on Sunday, November 18, each of those 3 days has a short focus moment to continue your preparation.

The most important thing is that you truly make this your companion. Make it a part of your life. You will need to set aside time each day to complete the activities, so think about where you will carve out time. Go into each day with an open mind to try new things but also feel free to customize anything to work better for you. There is no right or wrong way to do this. It's meant to enhance your experience and preparation for our blessing. Enjoy the journey.

Adventure

Week One

Opening our hearts and minds to the freedom of God's love

Adventure

opening our hearts and minds to the freedom of God's love

40-DAY WALK
WEEK ONE
OCT 7-13 2018

Weekly Focus Story

"At first I saw God as an observer, like my judge, keeping track of things I did wrong. This way, God would know whether I merited heaven or hell when I died. He was always out there. I recognized His picture when I saw it, but I didn't really know Him at all.

But later on, when I recognized my higher power better, it seemed as though life was rather like a bike ride, on a tandem bike, and I noticed God was in the back helping me pedal.

I don't know when it was that He suggested we change places, but life has not been the same since…life with my higher power; that is, making life much more exciting.

When I had control, I knew the way. It was rather boring but predictable. It was always the shortest distance between the points.

But when He took the lead, He knew delightful cuts, up mountains, and through rocky places and at breakneck speeds; it was all I could do to hang on! Even though it looked like madness, He kept saying, "Pedal, pedal!"

I worried and became anxious, asking, "Where are you taking me?" He just laughed and didn't answer, and I found myself starting to trust. I soon forgot my boring life and entered into the adventure, and when I'd say, "I'm scared," He'd lean back and touch my hand.

He took me to people with gifts that I needed; gifts of healing, acceptance, and joy. They gave me their gifts to take on my journey. OUR journey, that is, God's and mine.

And we were off again. He said "Give the gifts away; they're extra baggage, too much weight." So I did, to the people we met, and I found that in giving I received, and still our burden was light.

I did not trust Him at first, in control of my life. I thought He'd wreck it. But He knew bike secrets, knew how to make it bend to make sharp corners, jump to clear places filled with rocks, fly to shorten scary passages.

And I'm learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places, and I'm beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with my delightful constant companion, my higher power.

And when I'm sure I can't go on anymore, He just smiles and says, "Pedal…"

Author Unknown; Story from 2nd Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul)

Weekly Focus Scripture

Claim your unique and sacred place within the circle of those who call upon the name of Jesus Christ. Be faithful to the Spirit of the Restoration, mindful that it is a spirit of adventure, openness and searching. Walk proudly and with a quickened step. Be a joyful people. Laugh, and play, and sing, embodying the hope and freedom of the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 161: 1b

Weekly Thought to Ponder

God wants to take us on new paths with Him. He desires that the full purposes for which we were individually and uniquely created would come to full bloom as we seek this adventure with Him. Do not let fears, doubts, or even past disappointments keep you from fully opening yourself to God during this 40-day walk.

Remember…

God's Spirit will not lead you where His grace cannot keep you.

May we be open, in both heart and mind to the true love that God so freely gives. It is a love of freedom. It is a love of Adventure. May we join together as we learn to trust deeper in something beyond ourselves. May we say YES to all that it is ahead – all that we cannot see and all that is unknown. We need not fear, for God has already gone before us and cleared a path. He is looking back with a smile on his face and a hand outstretched warmly saying 'pedal…'

Adventure

opening our hearts and minds to the freedom of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 1
OCTOBER 7, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me." — *Isaiah 6:8*

Meditative Practice

Give yourself a couple of minutes of as much quiet as you can. Be in a space that makes you feel as peaceful as possible during that time. Close your eyes and say the following thought to yourself:

"Lord, help me learn to say more often, "Here am I, send me."

After you have focused on that thought for a moment, begin to create a rhythm with your breath and your thoughts, repeating this pattern for as long as you are able…

Inhale – "Here am I"

Exhale – "Send me"

Inhale – "Here am I"

Exhale – "Send me"

Inhale – "Here am I"

Exhale – "Send me"

Prayer Thought

O Lord, let me be open.
Let me be excited about all that you have planned for me and for our congregation.
Let the Spirit of a new adventure fill my heart.

Journal

"The big question is whether you are going to be able to say a hearty YES to your adventure."

Joseph Campbell

Use this page to write, draw or share in any way you are comfortable – your thoughts and feelings from Day One. As you were mindful of today's Scripture, Meditative Practice and Prayer Thought, hopefully the spirit of adventure filled your heart.

What Adventure is God calling you towards to enhance the Olathe Congregation?

Adventure

opening our hearts and minds to the freedom of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 2
OCTOBER 8, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the LORD your God, who goes with you; He will not fail you or forsake you. — *Deuteronomy 31:6*

Inspirational Quote and Activity

"The purpose of life is to live it,
to taste experience to the utmost,
to reach out eagerly and without fear for
newer and richer experience."

Eleanor Roosevelt

Think about the following questions as you ignite your Spirit for Adventure. Feel free to write down your answers, share more in depth on part of your journal page or spend time reflecting on your answers.

- What is one aspect of your life you'd like to grow in?
- What has been holding you back from doing so?
- What have you always wanted to do but haven't out or fear, doubt, money or time constraints?
- What would this growth look like? How might you feel different if you made these changes?

Prayer Thought

Lord, help me to be strong and bold in my life. Help me to lead with love and not from fear. Make me aware of your gentle reminders to live life to the fullest and remain open to all that is ahead.

"Life is either a great adventure or nothing."

Helen Keller

Journal

What does the above quote mean to you? How can you apply this more in your life? How does this affect the way you will think about your 40-day walk to the blessing?

What Adventure is God calling you towards to enhance the Olathe Congregation?

Adventure

opening our hearts and minds to the freedom of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 3
OCTOBER 9, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.
— *Jeremiah 33:3*

Building a Spirit of Adventure

Adventure means something different to each of us.

- What words or phrases come to mind when you think about "Adventure"? Write them all below.
- Circle or highlight the ones you'd like to experience more or prioritize during the 40-day walk.

"Adventure is a state of mind... and *spirit*."

Jacqueline Cochran

Prayer Thought

I pray to be filled with inspiration. Help me to always recognize your voice through whatever means you may speak to me. May I be willing to respond freely with love to your callings. May I be open to embrace your Spirit of Adventure.

Journal

"Release your majestic mind, embrace your untamed inner spirit. Break free from captivity, avoid society...you were born to be free." *Melanie Moushigian Koulouris*

In the space below, collect quotes or stories that inspire your Spirit for Adventure. Assemble them all here so that you can have a page to return to and reflect on throughout you 40-day journey.

What Adventure is God calling you towards to enhance the Olathe Congregation?

Adventure

opening our hearts and minds to the freedom of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 4
OCTOBER 10, 2018

Scripture Reflection

The human mind plans the way, but the LORD directs the steps.— *Proverbs 16:9*

Your Adventure Map

We are on an Adventure! Our 40-day walk has begun. Take some time to think about and envision the Adventure that is ahead of you. What are some of the stepping stones you see yourself moving through on your way to November 18th? As you identify them, write each one by one of the colored dots on the map to show you the progress you will make on your journey. Don't be afraid to get lost – you are not alone.

Prayer Thought

"This is what we all must learn to do, for this is how maps get charted – by taking wrong turns that lead to surprising passageways that open into spectacularly unexpected new worlds." *Elizabeth Gilbert*

Lord, allow me to let you direct my steps. Give me an open mind to know that even if a wrong turn is made; we are journeying together and you will never leave my side. Help me not to pre-judge the journey before having the chance to experience all the splendor and wonder of your world.

Journal

"Match curiosity with courage to take the first step. The most memorable part will always be the journey. Adventure awaits." *HOLSTEE*

What have you learned about your own personal Spirit of Adventure? How will this sustain you in your journey through your 40-day walk and beyond? How have you felt this week focusing on Adventure and opening your heart and mind to the freedom of God's love?

What Adventure is God calling you towards to enhance the Olathe Congregation?

Adventure

opening our hearts and minds to the freedom of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 5
OCTOBER 11, 2018

Scripture Reflection

You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore. — *Psalms 16:11*

Building a Spirit of Adventure

Do not let your fears rule you – never certain, but always open to the experience.

Embrace the unfamiliar – unknown places, live in the present, embrace what is different for you.

Follow your heart – adventure comes to those who seek it.

Seize opportunities – recognize opportunities and take them.

Think of something different you can do today that is outside your comfort zone. Think about ways you can serve others or get involved in affecting the lives of those around you for the better. Even if you can't do anything today, *make a plan* and get your momentum started toward stepping out in faith. Remember, adventure starts with you.

"Adventure is not outside,
it is within."

George Eliot

Prayer Thought

Do not be discouraged. You have not been promised an easy path, but you have been assured that the Spirit that calls you will also accompany you. — *Doctrine & Covenants 162:3a*

Journal

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.
Begin it now." *W.H. Murray*

What do you find yourself wanting to begin now? What is stirring inside of you at this time?

What Adventure is God calling you towards to enhance the Olathe Congregation?

Adventure

opening our hearts and minds to the freedom of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 6
OCTOBER 12, 2018

Scripture Reflection

If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. — *Galatians 5:25*

Invitation to Adventure

Imagine that you receive the following note from God:

ADVENTURE IS OUT THERE. IT'S HEADING OUR WAY.
SO GRAB YOUR SCARF AND GOGGLES. LET'S FLY!
I'VE MAPPED OUT OUR JOURNEY, WE'RE UP HERE TO STAY.
A SUNSET IS OUR HOME. A MOONBEAM WE WILL OWN.
MY SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE IS YOU.

What does it feel like to receive this note? Do you feel a new sense of energy or excitement to take this Adventure with God? What do you feel God is calling you to? Have you ever considered that YOU are God's Spirit of Adventure and that our creative and loving God wants you to live life to the fullest?

Share your thoughts as a part of today's journal.

Prayer Thought

"Be Brave. Without bravery, you will never know the world as richly as it longs to be known. Without bravery, your life will remain small – far smaller than you probably wanted your life to be." *Elizabeth Gilbert*

O God, help me to brave. Help me to live in a world as big as you have imagined for me. I pray that I will remember in my times of doubt that you join me on this Adventure and that I am never alone. May my thoughts be clear and full of faith. May I begin each step with great intention to live fully. May my journey always be led by your Holy Spirit.

Journal

"Our thoughts lead to action. Our actions create our experiences. Our experiences define our character. In each moment we define who we'll become; start this one with intention." *HOLSTEE*

How are you being guided by the Spirit? In what ways do you feel inspired to be brave?

What Adventure is God calling you towards to enhance the Olathe Congregation?

Adventure

opening our hearts and minds to the freedom of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 7
OCTOBER 13, 2018

Scripture Reflection

The challenges and opportunities are momentous. Will you remain hesitant in the shadows of your fears, insecurities, and competing loyalties? Or will you move forward in the light of your divinely instilled call and vision? The mission of Jesus Christ is what matters most for the journey ahead.
— *Doctrine & Covenants 164:9e-f*

A Saturday with Jesus

Imagine you have a completely free Saturday to yourself. It is a beautiful day outside and you have an entire 24 hours to do anything you want - but there's one thing...

You are going to be spending the day with Jesus.

Jesus is coming to be with you for this entire day and he wants to know what you would like to do. Jesus wants the two of you to have an adventure together and he wants you to plan the day.

What does your day of Adventure look like with Jesus?

What will you do? Where will you go?

What would you like to spend time talking about? What questions do you have?

What would you choose to do on this perfect Saturday if you knew that you could do anything you wanted with Jesus - no limits, no fears, no constraints - just you and Jesus on an Adventure.

Spend some time envisioning this Saturday with Jesus. Think of every detail, every minute, every last part of your time with Him. Plan it with courage and freedom.

Feel free to write this day you've planned down or just reflect over everything. How does this vision for your "Saturday Adventure with Jesus" inform you about your own journey you are currently on?

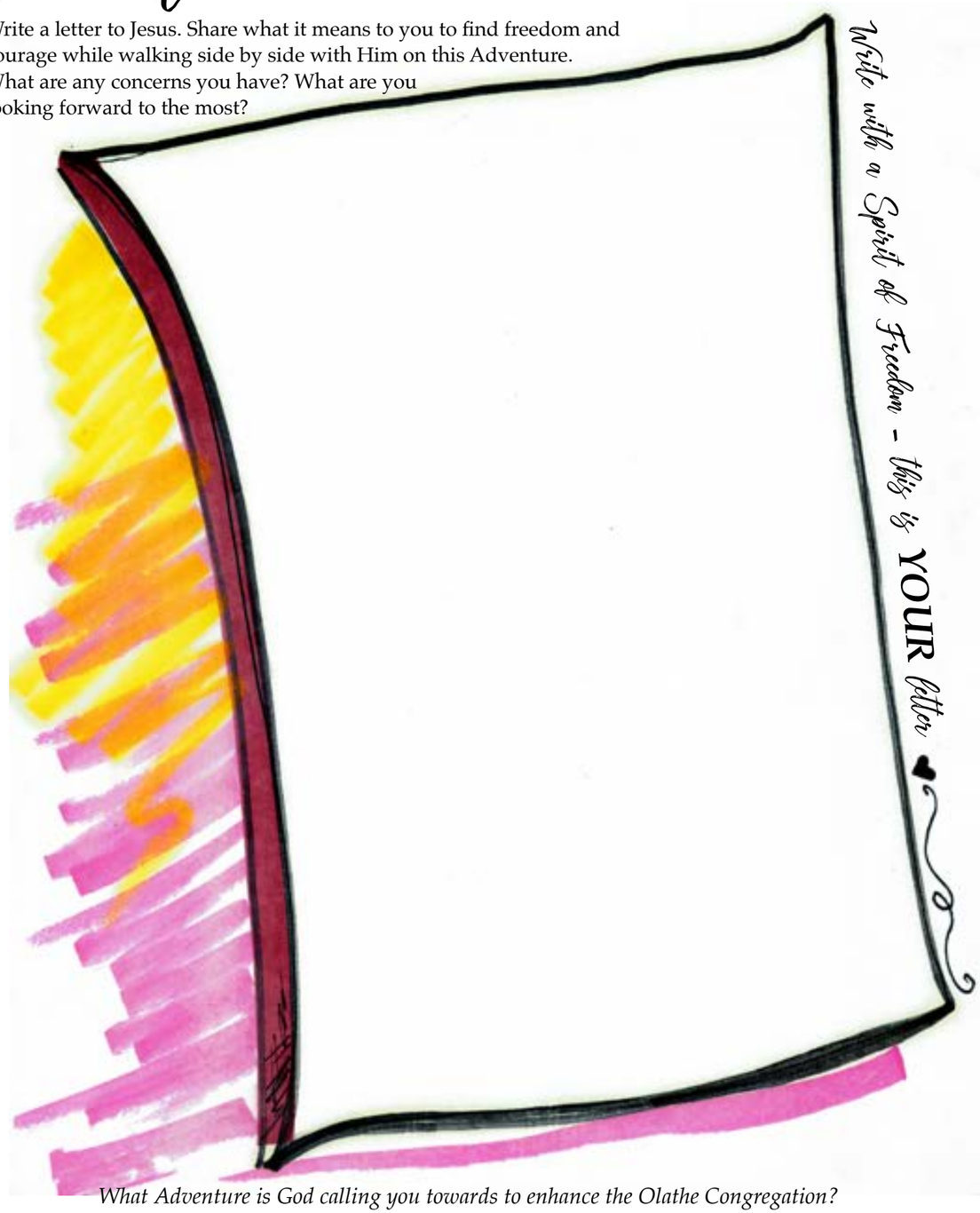
Prayer Thought

Listen carefully to your own journey as a people, for it is a sacred journey and it has taught you many things you must know for the journey yet to come. — *Doctrine & Covenants 162:2a*

"It is good to have an END to journey toward but it's the journey that matters in the end." ~ *Ernest Hemingway*

Journal

Write a letter to Jesus. Share what it means to you to find freedom and courage while walking side by side with Him on this Adventure. What are any concerns you have? What are you looking forward to the most?



What Adventure is God calling you towards to enhance the Olathe Congregation?

Thoughts & Notes on Adventure

Trust

Week Two

Responding faithfully to the
call of God 's Love

Trust

responding faithfully to the call of God's love

40-DAY WALK
WEEK TWO
OCT 14-20 2018

Weekly Focus Story

Often, when he came to visit, my grandfather would bring me a present. These were never the sorts of things that other people brought, dolls and books and stuffed animals. My dolls and stuffed animals have been gone for more than half a century, but many of my grandfather's gifts are with me still.

Once he brought me a little paper cup. I looked inside it expecting to see something special. It was full of dirt. I was not allowed to play with the dirt. Disappointed, I told him this. He smiled at me fondly. Turning, he picked up the little teapot from my dolls' tea set and took me to the kitchen where he filled it with water. Back in the nursery, he put the little cup on the windowsill and handed me the teapot. "If you promise to put some water in the cup every day, something may happen," he told me.

At the time, I was four years old and my nursery was on the sixth floor of an apartment building in Manhattan. This whole thing made no sense to me at all. I looked at him dubiously. He nodded with encouragement. "Every day, Neshume-le," he told me.

And so I promised. At first, curious to see what would happen, I did not mind doing this. But as the days went by and nothing changed, it got harder and harder to remember to put water in the cup. After a week, I asked my grandfather if it was time to stop yet. Shaking his head no, he said, "Every day, Neshume-le." The second week was even harder, and I became resentful of my promise to put water in the cup. When my grandfather came again, I tried to give it back to him but he refused to take it, saying simply, "Every day, Neshume-le." By the third week, I began to forget to put water in the cup. Often I would remember only after I had been put to bed and would have to get out of bed and water it in the dark. But I did not miss a single day. And one morning, there were two little green leaves that had not been there the night before.

I was completely astonished. Day by day they got bigger. I could not wait to tell my grandfather, certain that he would be as surprised as I was. But of course he was not. Carefully he explained to me that life is everywhere, hidden in the most ordinary and unlikely places. I was delighted. "And all it needs is water, Grandpa?" I asked him. Gently he touched me on top of my head. "No, Neshume-le," he said. "All it needs is your faithfulness and trust."

*Excerpt: **My Grandfather's Blessings**, Rachel Naomi Remen, MD*

Weekly Focus Scripture

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you, I entrust my life.

Psalms 143:8

Weekly Quote to Ponder

"Perhaps this is what this season is all about: trusting in the unknowns, finding gold in the little things, trading fear of what's uncertain for freedom to thrive within it."

Morgan Harper Nichols

Trust

responding faithfully to the call of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 8
OCTOBER 14, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths. — *Proverbs 3:5-6*

Activity

We all have areas that we do really well trusting God in. And at the same time, we have areas that are hard for us to place our trust in God. In the two columns below, make a list of the areas that you have already placed your trust in God and the areas you want to work on trusting God more. Be as truthful and as specific as you can to give yourself the most honest information.

I Trust God With:	I Need To Trust God With:

Prayer Thought

Blesser of my soul, grant me a stronger trust in you. May I come to you with all of me – the good and the bad – and trust that you will love me unconditionally. Help me to know that there is nothing that I need to hide from you and nothing that I can separate me from your love.

Journal

"Faith is like the bird...that can feel the light and sing when the dawn is still dark. Have faith and trust in yourself and trust in God." ~ *Unknown*

Think about this quote above and compare it to your feelings about the Congregational Blessing so far. Journal your thoughts as you reflect.

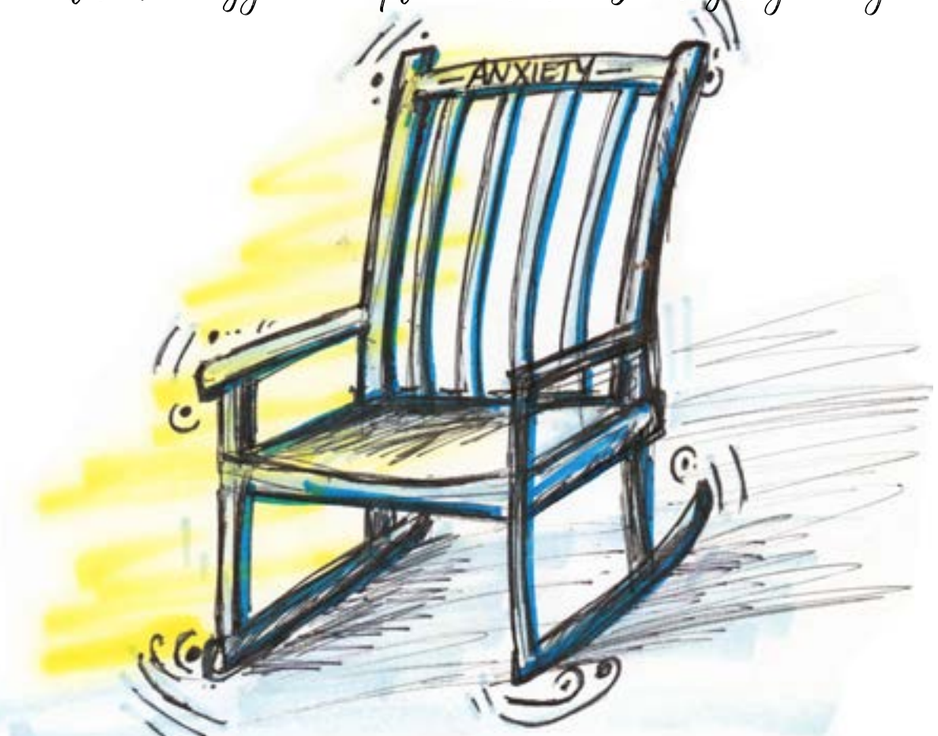
Where does the Olathe Congregation need to increase its Trust in God?

Scripture Reflection

Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. — *Psalms 25:4-5*

Rocking Chair Activity

Worry is like a Rocking Chair -
you spend a lot of energy in one place but it does not get you anywhere.



What are your worries? What are your fears? Leave all your burdens in the *Rocking Chair*, write them down and then *Stand Up and Live Your Life* trusting that God is lovingly caring for you.

Prayer Thought

God, you know what I need before I ask. You know the deepest wishes of my heart and the suffocating doubts of my fears. Help me to trust in you.

Journal

"Set your sail and risk the ocean."
David Crowder

How do you need to "set your sail and risk the ocean"? Do you feel more prepared to do so now that you have placed your worries in the rocking chair and walked away?

Where does the Olathe Congregation need to increase its Trust in God?

Trust

responding faithfully to the call of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 10
OCTOBER 16, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Know, O my people, the time for hesitation is past. The earth, my creation, groans for the liberating truths of my gospel which have been given for the salvation of the world. Test my words. Trust in my promises for they have been given for your assurance and will bear you up in times of doubt. Be not overly concerned with method as you go forth to witness in my name. There are many techniques for proclaiming my word which may be used as needs and circumstances dictate. — *Doctrine & Covenants 155:7*

Activity

Read the statement below. Let it wash over you. As you feel answers coming to you, begin writing them all down. There is no right or wrong answer – just share honestly and freely. Know that you have many gifts and talents. Know that you have a light that needs to shine. Trust that the Lord created you exactly as you are.

I *Believe* that God Created *Me*...

and I *Believe* that I was *Created* to...

Prayer Thought

God, when I feel myself retreating, help me to trust in your purpose for my life. As I journey forward, help me to trust that I do so divinely created. I may not always see the purpose for everything, but I can be confident that I have a purpose and I need to live on purpose for you.

Journal

"Today I will trust beyond the borders of what I can see, and have the courage to believe in what is greater than me." ~ *Morgan Harper Nichols*

Journal some specific ways in which the above quote can be lived out in your life as an act of trust.

Where does the Olathe Congregation need to increase its Trust in God?

Trust

responding faithfully to the call of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 11
OCTOBER 17, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Our heart is glad in Him because we trust in His holy name. — *Psalms 33:21*

Trust Walk Activity

With your Family members or Friends participate in a trust walk. You will need a blindfold of some kind. You can do the trust walk in your yard or in your home. Take turns being the person who is blindfolded and can't see, and the person who is doing the guiding. Try to direct the blindfolded person around the yard or your home – at first by only using your voice to guide and direct them. Then you could try a time of doing this in complete silence and only guiding them with your hands on the back of their shoulders. Switch people so that everyone gets to be the one blindfolded and the one guiding. Think about the following questions after you are finished:

- How did it feel to trust someone else to lead your journey?
- How did it feel guiding someone when they couldn't see?
- Which way was easier?
- How does this illustrate your trust in God?

Prayer Thought

"May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears." ~ *Nelson Mandela*

Journal

"Release. The art of letting go. The act of setting free. The process of becoming who you were meant to be." ~ *Morgan Harper Nichols*

What do you need to release to become who you were meant to be? How can you more fully live in your truth? How can you allow God to guide you on your journey more?

Where does the Olathe Congregation need to increase its Trust in God?

Trust

responding faithfully to the call of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 12
OCTOBER 18, 2018

"Let your faith be bigger than your fear."

Scripture Reflection

The LORD is good, a stronghold in a day of trouble; He protects those who take refuge in him. — *Nahum 1:7*

Reflection Thought

The more we are able to trust God, the better He is able to use us for His good. This will, at times, put us in awkward and uncomfortable places. Not all occasions will turn out exactly like we'd hope (or think God has in mind). Nevertheless, do not doubt the actions you take in response to the leanings of His Spirit. Remember, there was a crucifixion...***and*** there was a resurrection.

Prayer Thought

Lord, help me to know I can take refuge in you. I want to serve you and do works that will bring peace to your creation. I know this means I will be uncomfortable at times. Help me to trust you in my own doubts. Help me to trust the leadings of the Holy Spirit.

Journal

Reflect on a time that you truly trusted God to provide His blessing to you or a loved one. How did this experience shape your faith in God?

Where does the Olathe Congregation need to increase its Trust in God?

Trust

responding faithfully to the call of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 13
OCTOBER 19, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers, for they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security. Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in Him, and He will act. — *Psalms 37:1-5*

Inspirational Quote

A fish cannot drown in water,

A bird does not fall in air.

In the fire of creation,

God doesn't vanish:

The fire brightens.

Each creature God made

must live in its own true nature;

How could I resist my nature,

That lives for oneness with God?

Mechthild of Magdeburg

Let this quote sit with you today and reflect on what it means to you. Revisit your feelings about it in your journaling time.

Prayer Thought

Let my trust be an "active" trust, O God.

Journal

"Most of the things that we do have two possible outcomes: they might work or they might not. Being able to live with the possibility of either is essential if we're going to move forward." *Seth Godin*

Are you trusting God to live in your own true nature as your most authentic self? Are you able to live with a certain amount of uncertainty? How can trusting God help you to move forward more freely?

Where does the Olathe Congregation need to increase its Trust in God?

Trust

responding faithfully to the call of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 14
OCTOBER 20, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Although you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy. — *Peter 1:8*

Meditation on Words

Give yourself a couple of minutes of as much quiet as you can. Be in a space that makes you feel as peaceful as possible during that time. Repeat these words silently to yourself, until you feel more at peace.

Believe

Trust

Let go

Surrender

Prayer Thought

God, may I feel more peace in my life as I learn to trust you deeper than I ever have.

Journal

"Cling to joy: audacious and unbridled joy that looks for light in everything, even in the waiting."
Morgan Harper Nichols

Thinking back to our weekly focus story, what do you need to plant? What do you need to water? What do you need to trust that God will provide for you on this journey?

Where does the Olathe Congregation need to increase its Trust in God?

Thoughts & Notes on Trust

Gratitude

Week Three

Giving thanks for the generous
Spirit of God 's love

Gratitude

giving thanks for the generous Spirit of God's love

40-DAY WALK
WEEK THREE
OCT 21-27 2018

Weekly Focus Story

The note I picked up from my mailbox at school read, "Call Margaret at 555-6167." Both the name and number were unfamiliar to me, but as a high-school automotive instructor, I got calls all the time from people who were looking for someone to fix their cars. During my lunchtime at school that day, I dialed the number.

"I'm calling for Margaret," I said.

"Yes, this is Margaret," a voice answered.

"This is Ron Wenn. I have a message here that says to call you," I continued, all the while wondering what kind of car trouble this woman had.

"Oh, I'm glad you called. If you'll just give me a few minutes of your time, I have something to tell you that I think you'll be interested in hearing."

"All right," I answered looking at the clock. I only had a few minutes before I needed to be back in class.

"I'm a nurse at St. Luke's Presbyterian Hospital, and yesterday on my way home from work I was driving down 290 when my car started acting up."

"Uh huh," I said, looking at the clock again.

"It was late at night, and I was alone. I was so afraid to pull over, but finally my car just quit, so I coasted to the shoulder. I sat there for a few minutes wondering what to do."

I didn't want to sound impatient, but I really needed to get back to class. "Would you like me to take a look at your car, ma'am?" I asked.

"Just let me finish," the woman answered.

I tapped my pencil on the stack of papers in front of me as Margaret continued her story. "Suddenly, two young guys, about twenty years old, pulled up behind me and got out. I didn't know what these guys were going to do. I was so scared.

"They asked me what happened, and they sad that from the sound of things that they might be able to get the car running again, so I popped the hood.

"I sat in the car praying that these guys weren't up to no good. A few minutes later, they yelled at me to try to start the car. I couldn't believe it! It started right up! The guys slammed the hood and told me the car would be fine but that I should take it somewhere soon and get it checked out."

"And you'd like me to take a look at it and make sure everything's okay, right?" I asked.

"No, not at all, just listen," the woman went on. "I was so grateful. I thanked them over and over and offered them money, but they wouldn't take it. That's when they told me they were former students of yours."

"What?" I asked in surprise. "Students of mine? Who were they?"

"They wouldn't tell me. They just gave me your name and the school's number and made me promise to call and thank you."

I couldn't believe it. I didn't know what to say. Besides teaching my students about fixing cars, I always tried to teach them things about life — about going the extra mile, being honest and using what you know to help other people. The thing is I never really knew if the students learned any of this.

"Mr. Wenn, are you still there?" Margaret asked.

"I'm still here," I answered.

"Well, I hope you know how grateful I am," Margaret said.

"I hope you know how grateful I am to you, Margaret. Thanks for calling," I said and hung up the phone.

I walked back to class feeling inspired with the knowledge that my students had helped someone just because of what I taught them in my classroom. I had just gotten the greatest reward a teacher could ever get.

"A Note in My Mailbox" by Ron Wenn and Nancy Cavanaugh,
Chicken Soup for the Teacher's Soul

Weekly Focus Scripture

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into His presence with singing. Know that the LORD is God. It is He that made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. For the LORD is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations.

Psalms 100:1-5

Weekly Thought to Ponder

What if you discovered that living with awareness and intention, focusing on what makes you feel alive, grateful and in wonder, allows you to: live longer, inspire others, experience joy, hold pain and grief with compassion, and deepen love, generosity and respect for all life?

Grateful living is a way of life that does all of the above and, in doing so, contributes to a peaceful, thriving, and sustainable world — ***held sacred by all.***

Gratitude

giving thanks for the generous Spirit of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 15
OCTOBER 21, 2018

Scripture Reflection

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads every place the fragrance that comes from knowing Him. — *2 Corinthians 2:14*

Questions for Personal Reflection or Conversation:

- What are you grateful about in your life right now? Why?
- How can you live a grateful life in the midst or pain, suffering and hardship?
- Consider a difficult situation and the impact it had on you. Can you identify an aspect of the situation (or the impact) that you can feel grateful about?
- Who are people you know who live a grateful life? How are their lives different than yours?
- Close your eyes and imagine a world where everyone lives a more grateful life. Describe this world and how you fit in.
- What can you do when you are around others who never seem to be grateful. How can you navigate your relationship with them so that it doesn't affect your own feelings?
- Imagine today is your final day on earth – what are you grateful for in this moment? Are there things you would change in your life now so that you can be truly grateful for a life well lived?

Think about your answers, write them down or discuss them with a friend or family member. How has this activity affected the way you think about gratitude?

Prayer Thought

God – I am so grateful that you are leading my life in the good times and in the hardships. Help me to direct my thoughts towards Gratitude this week no matter what the circumstances.

Journal

"There are many things in life we can't be grateful for – sickness, violence, injustice – but in every moment we have the opportunity to be grateful.." ~ *Brother David Steindl-Rast*

Inspired by the above quote – can you take your entire day today and find at least 10 things you are grateful for? Share more if you can. How will this mindset play a part in preparing yourself for our Congregational Blessing?

What about the Olathe Community of Christ makes you feel a sense of Gratitude?

Gratitude

giving thanks for the generous Spirit of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 16
OCTOBER 22, 2018

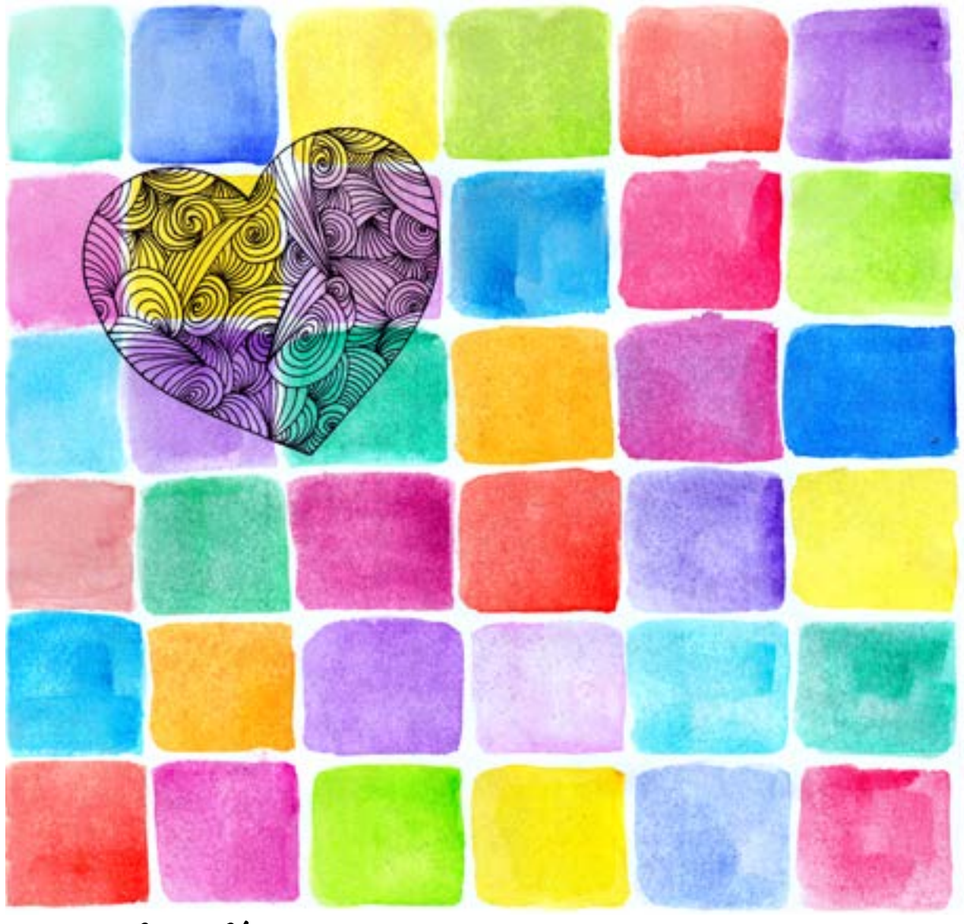
"Gratitude is the memory of the heart." *Massieu*

Scripture Reflection

Eternal joy and peace await those who grow in the grace of generosity that flows from compassionate hearts without thought of return. — *Doctrine & Covenants 163:9*

What are You Grateful For?

Fill in each box below with something or someone you love so much that you find yourself Grateful for their presence in your life on a regular basis.



Prayer Thought

Lord I have so much to be thankful for. My happiness expands when I keep my mind focused on all the vibrant, colorful goodness that surrounds me. Thank you for sharing such a beautiful world with me.

Journal

How did you feel filling in your colored squares with everything you are Grateful for? Could you add more and if so what would they be? Did it make you focus your attention in a more positive way today?

What about the Olathe Community of Christ makes you feel a sense of Gratitude?

Gratitude

giving thanks for the generous Spirit of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 17
OCTOBER 23, 2018

Scripture Reflection

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, and I will extol you. O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever. — *Psalms 118:28-29*

The Glow of Gratitude

You will need a candle and a lighter for it. Light the candle and give yourself some time to sit peacefully. Play soothing music if you would like to. As you sit looking into the glowing flame, think about:

- Your own life – all your blessings that come with being alive
- Your loved ones – all your Family and Friends
- Your Congregation – all the members of the Olathe Community of Christ

As you sit in your room, let the light of the candle symbolize the warm glow of the love and gratitude you feel. Spend time thanking God for them in the following guided meditation thought:

Inhale – "Thank you Lord for these precious lives."

Exhale – "Please surround them in the warm glow of your love."

Inhale – "Thank you Lord for these precious lives."

Exhale – "Please surround them in the warm glow of your love."

Inhale – "Thank you Lord for these precious lives."

Exhale – "Please surround them in the warm glow of your love."

Prayer Thought

Lord we love you and we need you, this day and every day. We give you praise and thanks and seek to always find joy in our journey. Help us take the time to slow down and express our gratitude for the people in our lives.

Journal

"Gratitude – it requires awareness and intention. With practice, it has the power to bring healing and joy to ourselves and others. Each breath brings with it an infinite number of things for which we can be grateful."
HOLSTEE

What joy does living a life of Gratitude bring you? What thanks do you wish to give to God as you prepare for the Congregational Blessing?

What about the Olathe Community of Christ makes you feel a sense of Gratitude?

Gratitude

giving thanks for the generous Spirit of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 18
OCTOBER 24, 2018

Scripture Reflection

When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the LORD Jesus. — *Philemon 1:4-5*

Gratitude Journal Prompts — *Answer these in your journal on the next page.*

What's something that you're looking forward to?

What's a simple pleasure that you're grateful for?

What's something that you're grateful to have today that you didn't have a year ago?

Write about a happy memory.

What is an element of worship you are thankful for?

Write about an adventure or someplace you've been that you're grateful for.

What's something about your body or health that you're grateful for?

What's something you're grateful for in nature?

What's a possession that makes your life easier?

What have you been given that you're grateful for?

What is something or someone that makes you feel safe?

What artist, author, or musician are you grateful for?

What do you like about your job?

How are you able to help others?

What is something unique about yourself that you are grateful for?

What's an accomplishment you're proud of?

What book(s) are you grateful for?

What piece of clothing or furniture are you grateful for?

Write about a friend that you're grateful for.

Write about your favorite way to be healthy and active.

Write about a teacher or mentor that you're grateful for.

Write about a family member that you're grateful for.

What did you accomplish today?

What's a tradition that you're grateful for?

What's one of your personality traits that you like?

What mistake are you grateful for?

What skill(s) do you have that you're grateful for?

What's something that you created recently that you're grateful for? (art, music, sewing, cooking, gardening etc.)

What's your favorite activity to do with friends?

Look around the room and write about everything you see that you're grateful for.

What is your favorite part about the Olathe Community of Christ?

Write about 3 things you're grateful for today.

Prayer Thought

Lord, as we wish to experience life with joy, remind us that generosity and Gratitude are linked together. Help us to share generously and to give thanks for all things through a generously lived life.

"Generosity is giving more than you can,
and pride is taking less than you need." *Khalil Gibran*

Journal

Refer back to your Gratitude Journal prompts from the previous page and journal your responses to them. Once you have completed them, reflect on how you feel. Which ones were harder to answer? Which answers surprised you? Is Gratitude Journaling something you would enjoy continuing?

What about the Olathe Community of Christ makes you feel a sense of Gratitude?

Gratitude

giving thanks for the generous Spirit of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 19
OCTOBER 25, 2018

Scripture Reflection

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I will hope in Him." — *Lamentations 3:22-24*

Gratitude Bingo

Check off each box on the BINGO card below that you experienced today. Did you get a BINGO?

Prayer Thought

God let your compassion work through me that I may shine your light of generosity and gratitude to all I encounter.

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough." *Melody Beattie*

Journal

Did Gratitude Bingo help you realize anything? What were some of the little things that made today special?

- Something or someone you saw?
- Something you heard or listened to?
- Something unexpected or different than normal?
- Something productive or exciting you did today?
- Something small that you never want to take for granted?

What about the Olathe Community of Christ makes you feel a sense of Gratitude?

Gratitude

giving thanks for the generous Spirit of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 20
OCTOBER 26, 2018

Scripture Reflection

You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us. — *2 Corinthians 9:11*

Gratitude Exchange

You can do this as a family or as an individual. As you go about your day, every time you find yourself frustrated, annoyed or wanting to complain about something - stop yourself and exchange it for something you are grateful for. Turn your focus to your blessings and the good in your life.

If you want to go to the next level - ask for an "Accountability Buddy". Tell someone about the "Gratitude Exchange" you are doing today and every time you don't catch yourself when you are expressing a frustration, they can remind you and then you can share with them something you are thankful for.

At the end of the day think back on this experience. Are you expressing negative thoughts more than you realized? How did it change the way you looked at things?

Prayer Thought

God, I come to You, confessing that I tend to have a heart that is filled with frustration and complaining instead of gratitude. Please forgive me. Help me learn to see Your hand at work in my life. I want to trust You even when I don't understand my circumstances. I want to change my mindset to focus on my blessings.

"The miracle of gratitude is that it shifts your perception to such an extent that it changes the world you see." *Dr. Robert Holden*

Journal

Perspective is a powerful thing. Sometimes we don't notice how far we've come until we can look back and reflect upon it. For this Gratitude Journal entry, reflect on what's different in your life today than it was a when you started the 40-day walk...what are you most grateful for that's changed? What are some of the new feelings you are aware of in your life now?

What about the Olathe Community of Christ makes you feel a sense of Gratitude?

Gratitude

giving thanks for the generous Spirit of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 21
OCTOBER 27, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Listen to the testimonies of those responding generously. Follow your soul's yearning to come home to God's grace and generosity. Let gratitude show you the way. — *Doctrine & Covenants 165:2b*

Gratitude Actions List

List 10 different ways you can share your Gratitude with others today. Do you best to do as many as you can.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Prayer Thought

Lord, thank you for walking with us through the seasons of our lives. For the winter, when we are held safe in your arms through the darkness. For the hope of spring, as we are filled with new promise and life. For summer time, full of warmth and color and for autumn days as leaves fall to seed new growth. Thank you for always being with us. We are grateful for your grace and generosity.

Journal

"Be content with what you have, rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you." *Lao Tzu*

Who are you the most grateful for at this time? Use your journal to write them a letter sharing as specifically as you can all the ways you are thankful for them. Share it with that person when you are finished if you want to. Write more than one letter to other people if you want to. You could even use this experience to write a letter to those who are no longer with us but have impacted you greatly and you are thankful for their role in your life.

What about the Olathe Community of Christ makes you feel a sense of Gratitude?

Thoughts & Notes on Gratitude

Thoughts & Notes on Gratitude

Grace

WEEK FOUR

UNDERSTANDING WE ARE FULLY
ACCEPTED IN GOD'S LOVE

Weekly Focus Story

At a fundraising dinner for a Brooklyn school that caters to learning-disabled children, the father of one child was expected to give a speech extolling the dedicated staff's work. Instead, his opening remarks shocked the crowd of parents and teachers.

He cried out, "My son goes to this school, which teaches that everything God does is done with perfection. But where is the perfection in my son Shaya? My child cannot understand things as other children do. So tell me where is God's perfection?"

The audience, shocked by the man's anguished question, hushed. A few people coughed nervously as the father continued: "I believe that when God brings a child like this into the world, the perfection He seeks is in the way people react."

The father then told about the afternoon he and Shaya walked past a park where some boys Shaya knew were playing baseball.

"Do you think they will let me play?" Shaya asked.

The father knew that his son was not at all athletic and that most boys would not want him on their team. Nevertheless, Shaya's father understood that, if his son where to be chosen to play, it would give him a comfortable sense of belonging. So the father approached one of the boys on the field and asked if Shaya could play. The boy looked around for guidance from his teammates. Getting none, he took matters into his own hands.

"We're losing by six runs, and the game is in the eighth inning," he told the father. "I guess he can be on our team, and we'll try to put him up to bat in the ninth inning."

Shaya's father was ecstatic as Shaya smiled broadly. A team member told Shaya to put on a glove and go out to play short center field.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shaya's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shaya's team scored again. Now, with two outs and the bases loaded, and with the potential winning run on base, Shaya was up to bat.

Would the team actually take a chance on Shaya to bat home the winning run? the father wondered. Everyone knew it was all but impossible because Shaya didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, let alone hit.

Yet, as Shaya stepped up to the plate, the pitcher moved a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shaya should at least be able to make contact. The first pitch came in, and Shaya swung clumsily and missed. One of Shaya's teammates came up behind Shaya and put his arms around him so together they could hold the bat and face the pitcher.

Again, the pitcher took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly. As the pitch came in, Shaya and his teammate swung at the ball, and together they hit a slow ground ball. The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could have easily thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shaya would have been out, and that would have ended the game. Instead, the pitcher took the ball and threw it on a high arc to right field, far beyond the reach of the first baseman.

Everyone started yelling, "Shaya, run to first!"

Never in his life had Shaya run to first. So, now he scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled. By the time he reached first base, the right fielder had the ball. He could have thrown the ball to the second baseman, who would tag out Shaya, still running. But the right fielder understood what the pitcher's intentions were; so he threw the ball high and far over the third baseman's head.

Everyone yelled, "Run to second! Run to second!"

Shaya ran toward second base as the runners ahead of him deliriously circled the bases toward home. Just as Shaya reached second base, the opposing shortstop ran to him, turned him in the direction of third base and shouted, "Run to third!"

As Shaya rounded third, the boys from both teams ran behind him screaming, "Shaya, run home!" Shaya ran home, stepped on home plate, and all eighteen boys lifted him on their shoulders. They made Shaya their hero, as he had just hit a grand slam and won the game for his team.

"That day," said the father softly, with tears now rolling down his face, "those eighteen boys reached their level of God's perfection."

"God's Perfection" by Rabbi Paysach Krohn

Weekly Focus Scripture

Indeed, God did not send the son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.

John 3:17

Weekly Quote to Ponder

Be kind to yourself today.

Even if you are not where you thought you'd be,

you are still allowed to find peace in the beautiful reality that you are still on a journey, and you cannot measure yourself up against the miles you have not traveled yet.

Be kind to yourself today,

in a grace-filled, honest way, knowing that no matter the things that have been far from perfect,

you are growing at a steady pace.

Morgan Harper Nichols

Grace

understanding we are fully accepted in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 22
OCTOBER 28, 2018

Scripture Reflection

From His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. — *John 1:16-17*

Practicing Grace for Self and Others

In thinking of ways to focus on Grace, below you will find a mnemonic technique to assist in a compassionate mindset for yourself and others.

G. R. A. C. E.

G – Gathering Attention: Focus and calm your mind. Find a sense of grounding as you center yourself to your creator. Pause, breathe, give yourself time to feel balanced. Invite yourself to be present and discerning in the moment.

R – Recall Your Intention: Remember what life is really about. Focus on helping and serving others without judgment or requirements. Do so with an open heart and mind. Cultivate Love. Give Love. Be Love.

A – Attune To Yourself: Notice what's going on in your own mind and body. Then sense who you were created to be and make space for that beautiful spirit to flourish. Inhale the acknowledgment that you're God's loving creation perfectly designed. Exhale any criticism or pain.

C – Consider What Will Serve: As you encounter other people – notice what energy they are offering. Listen carefully to them and observe their actions. In what ways can you serve them? How can you be of help? How can you share God's love with others?

E – Engage and Act: Move forward in faith to not only put into action the self-love and attention you require but also the compassionate action that comes from an openness, connectedness and acceptance towards others. With each person, co-create a dynamic, trusting, respecting and caring relationship. Allow the Holy Spirit to flow through you and everyone you encounter.

Prayer Thought

LORD, let me accept your forgiveness and be free in your grace. Help me to practice Grace not only for others but also for myself.

Journal

"There will be days where it feels like everything is changing. And there will be days where it all feels the same. But there will never be a day that light will not find you and remind you: it's okay to learn as you go. In the most beautifully honest way." ~ *Morgan Harper Nichols*

How have you seen Grace operate already in your life? How have you seen Grace in the preparation for our Congregational Blessing?

How can we extend more Grace to our Community in Olathe?

Grace

understanding we are fully accepted in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 23
OCTOBER 29, 2018

Scripture Reflection

God's grace revealed in Jesus Christ, freely moves throughout creation, often beyond human perception, to achieve divine purposes in people's lives. — *Doctrine & Covenants 164:2b*

Inspiration for Your Time in Nature

"As you learn to fly,
Your wings will be proof:
You are so much more
Than what happened to you.

Morgan Harper Nichols

Make time to be outside today – if that means you rise earlier than normal and enjoy the morning or your find time to be outside during your lunch break or school recess, or if you come home at the end of your day and enjoy the crisp, fall evening. Try to truly connect to nature and all of God's creation. Remind yourself that you are a part of all that surrounds you just as nature is a part of you. Use all your senses to be fully present – hear, smell, see, touch and taste.

Prayer Thought

God, help me to exercise more faith and trust concerning the worries and struggles that are out of my control. Assist me in adjusting my expectations to instead be sustained by your love. Help me as I practice being fully present in all the amazing glory that surrounds me.

Journal

"I do not at all understand the mystery of grace – only that it meets us where we are but it does not leave us where it found us.." *Anne Lamott*

What does Grace look like to you? Write about it or draw it or use images to collage you thoughts and feelings about Grace.

How can we extend more Grace to our Community in Olathe?

Grace

understanding we are fully accepted in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 24
OCTOBER 30, 2018

Scripture Reflection

And all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. — *Romans 3:24*

Focus Mantra

Use this as your mantra today. Reflect on this at three different times through out the day.

I Have Enough -

is a beautiful reminder that when we are grateful we realize we have everything we need.

I Do Enough -

eases the pressure we feel to do and achieve more.

I Am Enough -

is a powerful conclusion to the gratitude practice at the end of the day. We have so much to gain when we take a moment to realize we have been blessed by grace. It is a gift to be alive, to exist on this incredible planet and to receive and share kindness and love. Life can be difficult but take a moment to realize that within God's Grace we are offered peace and light.

— *HOLSTEE*

Prayer Thought

"I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." — *John 12:47*

LORD, help me to replace judgment with acceptance.

Humble me to forgive. Open me to love. Help me to know that I AM ENOUGH.

Journal

"Both worry and stress reek of arrogance. They declare our tendency to forget that we've been forgiven, that our lives here are brief, that we're headed to a place where we won't be lonely, afraid, or hurt again, and that in the context of God's strength, our problems are small indeed." ~ *Francis Chan*

Reflect on your Focus Mantra from today. When we truly believe we reside in God's Grace, we will know that WE ARE ENOUGH. What was your experience living with these words all day today?

How can we extend more Grace to our Community in Olathe?

Grace

understanding we are fully accepted in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 25
OCTOBER 31, 2018

Scripture Reflection

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; He bestows favor and honor. No good thing does the LORD withhold from those who walk uprightly. — *Psalms 84:11*

Generations of Grace

We are truly blessed to worship and live among so many different generations. What rich layers of wisdom, heritage, energy, leadership, joy, discernment, vibrancy and excitement we are wrapped in. Below is a Prayer for Peace that our Evangelists Kris Judd created for our Congregation. As you read over it, reflect on the people from multiple generations that show you God's love, hope, joy, peace... and Grace.

Prayer

God of the Journey,

As we move more deeply on the path toward our congregational blessing, we pause to remember our calling and identity as people of Christ's peace. We recognize that we are not always mindful of the potential or even experience of your peace, especially in the midst of a divisive culture and broken world. Help us to hear again your invitation to live a different way, the way of shalom.

For our children, whose innocence and trust radiate from their very beings – help us to walk the path of peace with them, showing them the steps and the landmarks that we have found that help us to know we are on the right journey. May we model in our words and actions the essence of Christ as teacher, guide and friend. And may we receive from them the gifts they are born with and long to share with us – wonder and curiosity, a sense of oneness with others, the belief that all things are possible. May their dreams of a peaceful world compel us into action.

For our elderly, those whose dreams of peace have diminished or disappeared over time and life experience – revive their memories of what can be and strengthen them to share the hope that a lifetime in your spirit brings. May we receive the gift of wisdom born of their many days on this earth, and express to them our need for their knowledge and presence.

And for all of us whose lives fall in between, help us to dream as well as remember. Enliven us with the desire for peace for all children, not just our own, and to work for the dignity of all people, not just our elders. And of course God, may we consider the very earth you created for us like a beloved mother whose existence depends upon us. May she experience restoration and peace as well. God, help us to see once again the path towards peace – peace for ourselves, for our loved ones, for those with whom we struggle, for all of your people O God. Bring to our mind those who have walked this path of peace before us – teachers, mentors, ancestors, members of this congregation, and leaders in Community of Christ. Stir our memories to remember the way they walked, with dignity and grace, fearless at times and fearful in other moments, yet called to take the next right step before them out of their call to create with you the peaceable kingdom. For this peace O Lord we pray. May your Kingdom come, your will be done. Now, and always.

Amen.

"Now I see after all these years,
grace is the reason I made it here."
Morgan Harper Nichols

Journal

Share those people you thought of in your Generations of Grace reflection and prayer time. Draw or write about them below to remind you of all those that have helped shape your faith journey thus far. From the youngest to the oldest – we can learn from everyone we meet.

How can we extend more Grace to our Community in Olathe?

Grace

understanding we are fully accepted in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 26
NOVEMBER 1, 2018

Scripture Reflection

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all. — *Titus 2:11*

Reflective Thought

You're so hard on yourself.
Take a moment.
Sit back.
Marvel at your life:
at the grief that softened you,
at the heartache that wizened you.
Despite everything,
you still grow.
Be proud of this.

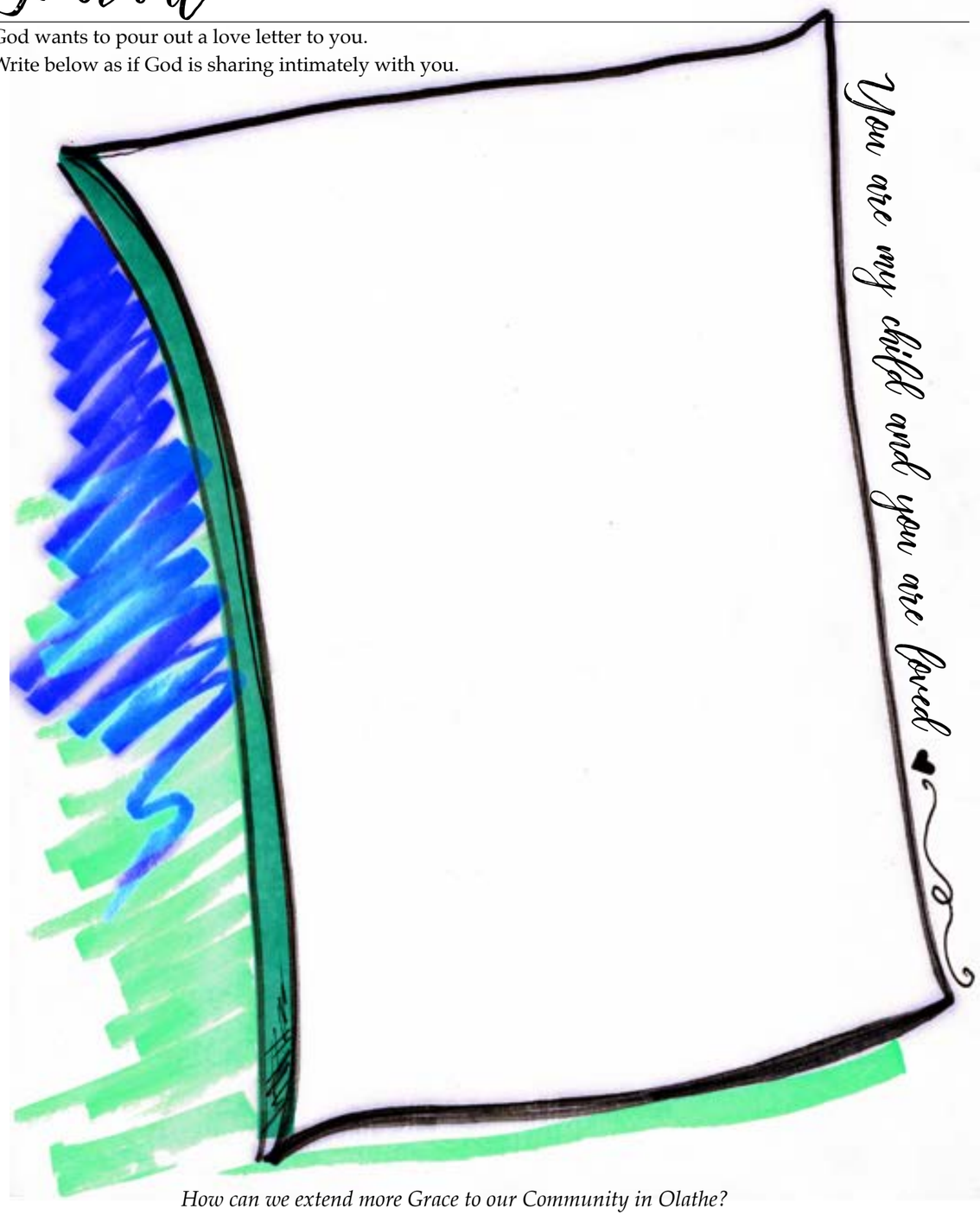
Prayer Thought

Gracious God, empty me of shame and fill me with your grace. I want to be able to receive your unconditional love. Help me to grow and heal in the light that you bestow upon me.

Journal

"Maybe it's okay if it takes time to be okay. Maybe healing is a road that is lined with endless grace." ~ *Morgan Harper Nichols*

God wants to pour out a love letter to you.
Write below as if God is sharing intimately with you.



How can we extend more Grace to our Community in Olathe?

Grace

understanding we are fully accepted in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 27
NOVEMBER 2, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. — *Hebrews 4:16*

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
tho precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me; his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

— *Hymn 19 in the Community of Christ Sings Hymnal*

After reading the lyrics to the famous song "Amazing Grace" – choose a way to listen to it. There are so many varieties and variations of artists from all different genres. Find some versions that you enjoy and let the song provide you with ministry today. If you find a new version of "Amazing Grace" that you love, share it with someone else today.

Prayer Thought

God, you never weary of speaking to my heart. You rescue me passionately even in times I don't realize or understand. Thank you for loving me so fiercely. May I strive to be exactly who you created me to be.

Journal

"When you forgive someone, when you are generous, when you withhold judgment, and you love, when you stand up for injustice – you are in that moment bringing heaven to earth." *Rob Bell.*

God already loves you exactly where you are. It's true.

Knowing that, how can you help bring the Grace of " heaven to earth" in the way that Rob Bell says above.

How can we extend more Grace to our Community in Olathe?

Grace

understanding we are fully accepted in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 28
NOVEMBER 3, 2018

Scripture Reflection

In all your efforts, therefore, continue to trust in my grace and respond in love to the leadings of my Spirit. If you will come before me in unity and love, I will bless you with a great outpouring of compassion, both for one another and for the world into which you are sent. — *Doctrine & Covenants 157:17*

Reflection Thought

"Kintsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with gold. It can also be viewed as a philosophy for life. The gold highlights the pottery's unique history, rather that hiding it. Its' the idea that our past and our pains do not need to leave us broken in pieces. Rather, we can fill in the gaps with beauty and be strengthened through them. Our scars can become a gilded reminder of our resilience." ~ *Dave Radparvar*

As you prepare for Communion tomorrow, think about yourself as this beautiful piece of pottery. What are the gold highlights that run through your life? No matter what they are, God is awaiting your arrival at the table tomorrow. God's grace has already put you back together with an unconditional love beyond our own understanding. Come, grace awaits.

— *HOLSTEE*

Prayer Thought

God send me into this world unafraid of breaking; for if I do, remind me that your grace will bond my shattered pieces together. Help me to embrace my imperfections and to also lovingly accept everyone in their own brokenness. Let us not be ashamed, but rather join us together with your gold.

Journal

"Agape doesn't love somebody because they are worthy.
Agape makes them worth by the strength and power of its love.
Agape doesn't love somebody because they are beautiful.
Agape loves in such a way that it makes them beautiful." ~ *Rob Bell*

Your cracks and breaks are a part of your story. They make you unique and strong and more beautiful. How has God's Grace filled you in with the shimmering gold of agape love? How do these thoughts affect you as you will receive communion tomorrow?

How can we extend more Grace to our Community in Olathe?

Thoughts & Notes on Grace

Community

Week Five

Creating sacred relationships
founded in God's Love

Community

creating sacred relationships founded in God's love

40-DAY WALK
WEEK FIVE
NOV 4-10 2018

Weekly Focus Story

There once was a boy little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his Twinkies and a six-pack of root beer, and he started on his journey. When he had gone about three blocks, he met an old man. He was sitting in a park, staring at some pigeons.

The boy sat down next to him and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed that the old man looked hungry, so he offered him a Twinkie. The old man gratefully accepted it and smiled at him. His smile was so pretty that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered him a root beer. Once again, the man smiled at him.

The boy was delighted. They sat there all afternoon eating, drinking root beer, and smiling, yet they never said a word. As it grew dark, the boy realized how tired he was, and he got up to leave. Before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned around, ran back to the old man, and gave him a hug. The man gave the boy his biggest smile ever.

When the boy opened the door to his own home a short time later, his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked him, "What did you do today that makes you so happy?"

He replied, "I had lunch with God."

But before his mother could respond, he added, "You know what? He's got the most beautiful smile I've ever seen!"

Meanwhile, the old man, also radiant with joy, returned to his home. His neighbor was stunned by the look of peace on his face. And she asked, "What did you do today that made you so happy?"

He replied, "I ate Twinkies in the park with God." But before his neighbor could respond, he added, "You know, he's much younger than I expected!"

"Twinkies and Root Beer" by Unknown, ***Fireside Stories: Of Faith, Family and Friendship***

Weekly Focus Scripture

God is calling for a prophetic community to emerge, drawn from the nations of the world, that is characterized by uncommon devotion to the compassion and peace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Through divine grace and wisdom, this faith community has been given abundant gifts, resources, and opportunities to equip it to become such a people. Chief among these is the power of community in Christ expressed locally in distinctive fashions while upholding a unity of vision, foundational beliefs, and mission throughout the world.

Doctrine & Covenants 163:11a

Weekly Quote to Ponder

Keep your eyes open. Keep your heart open too.
You never know who you're going to meet
and what they will mean to you.
Keep traveling to unknown places
and listen and learn as you go.
Keep leaning into moments that keep
you trusting beyond what you know.

Morgan Harper Nichols

Community

creating sacred relationships founded in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 29
NOVEMBER 4, 2018

Scripture Reflection

It is imperative to understand that when you are truly baptized into Christ you become part of a new creation. By taking on the life and mind of Christ, you increasingly view yourselves and others from a changed perspective. Former ways of defining people by economic status, social class, sex, gender, or ethnicity no longer are primary. Through the gospel of Christ a new community of tolerance, reconciliation, unity in diversity, and love is being born as a visible sign of the coming reign of God. — *Doctrine & Covenants 164:5*

Mail Activity

Think about all the people that are in your life. We have family, friends, co-workers, fellow members of our congregation and neighbors. In today's world we "know" people through social media and other internet platforms as well. We even "know" people we have never met in person.

To add a personal touch back into living in Community with one another – today's activity is going to be sending cards or letters to three different people. Try to think of one person from each of these categories:

Family Friend or Co-Worker Church Member

Personally select a card for each of them or write them a note. Be sure to get their current address and have it ready to place in the mail tomorrow. Go the extra mile to show your gratitude for the people in your life that make up your Community. Let them know they matter to you. If you find this is something you enjoy, think of making it a practice in your life. What a wonderful thing it is to receive a card for no reason in the mail. You have the power to brighten someone's day with a simple act of kindness.

Parents, help your children do this activity as well. Ask them who they would like to send cards to in their life. As a family, you could all share in a time of reflecting about the amazing people in your Community and experience the joy it will bring when you send them some unexpected mail.

Prayer Thought

Thank you Lord for all the wonderful people that make up my Community. May I be more mindful of the blessing that they are in my life and may I take every opportunity that I have to share my love with them.

"We all share an undeniable interdependence. When we try to understand and ease pain, we set in motion a wave of infinite love and possibility." ~ *HOLSTEE*

Journal

What was your experience with the Mail Activity today? What was it like to spend time reflecting on all the people that make up your Community? What did you enjoy the most about sharing your love in this way? Who were the three people you selected and why?

What kind of Community would Jesus want to be a part of in the Olathe Community of Christ?

Community

creating sacred relationships founded in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 30
NOVEMBER 5, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Collectively and individually, you are loved with an everlasting love that delights in each faithful step taken. God yearns to draw you close so that wounds may be healed, emptiness filled, and hope strengthened. — *Doctrine & Covenants 163:10a*

Healing Activity

Do you have any relationships that need healing?

On the image below, write in the names of those relationships you would like to repair, mend and forgive. Any pain or discomfort you hold inside from past wrongs or misunderstandings can be released in this activity as you symbolically take that first step in healing. It may turn out to be the first step towards true reconciliation or it may be something that stays private with you. Either way, it is a practice to help free you from the control pain can have within your Community.

Prayer Thought

God, help me to see everyone through your eyes and to respond to everyone with your love. With past hurts or wrongs, help me to forgive and let go. I pray for a strong Community of people in my life. May I always strive to offer my respect, compassion and understanding in all I say and do. Where I have hurt others, help me to be an active tool towards healing. Where I have been hurt, help me to be quick to forgive.

"Healing doesn't mean the damage never existed. It means the damage no longer controls our lives"

Journal

How did you feel today while you focused some time on past hurts? Did you feel any sense of your own personal forgiveness or renewal towards those in your Community that you wrote down? Do you see yourself taking any further steps towards healing these relationships?

What kind of Community would Jesus want to be a part of in the Olathe Community of Christ?

Community

creating sacred relationships founded in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 31
NOVEMBER 6, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Support one another in love, confident that my Spirit will be with you even as I have gone before you and shown you the way. — *Doctrine & Covenants 154:7b*

Rays of Light in your Life

Reflect on those who are rays of light in your life. Think of the people in your Community that have provided you with the warm light of Jesus, which in turn has given you the strength and foundation to go out and be the light for others in the world. Write their names on the rays coming out of the sunflower...

Prayer Thought

Lord, I am so grateful for the lives of others you have placed on my journey. So many people have laid a foundation of your Son's love in my life. Give me the courage to go out and shine the warm light of love to all I encounter.

"Endless love is fueled by endless friendship.
Experience your own light by seeing it in others."

Journal

How have your relationships with others strengthened and filled you with the love of Jesus?

What kind of Community would Jesus want to be a part of in the Olathe Community of Christ?

Community

creating sacred relationships founded in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 32
NOVEMBER 7, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Be patient with one another, for creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called. Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world. Be assured that love will overcome the voices of fear, division, and deceit. — *Doctrine & Covenants 161:3c*

Focusing on Community

Today, make some time to focus on all the people in your life that are meaningful to you. Think of today as a day long prayer dialog with God as you reflect on all the those that form our Olathe Community. As you begin to think of them, picture their faces in your mind, say their names to yourself, out loud or write them down. Send them the warm, loving energy that a hug would bring them. Think of found memories you share with them and all that you are grateful for about their presence in your life. Dedicate today to thinking of others and offering positive thoughts and prayers of thanksgiving for each one.

The sign of a beautiful person is
they always see beauty in others.

Prayer Thought

Creator God, thank you for the presence of each person in my life. Their friendship is like sunshine to me and I am forever grateful for the ways they have loved me, accepted me, challenged me and believed in me. Help me to never take any of them for granted. May I always find myself mindful of them, their needs and the journey they are on. Lord I lift them up to you in prayer today with a heart filled with love and thanksgiving. Thank you for each and every person you have placed in my life. What a blessing they are to me.

Journal

"Each friend represents a world in us, a world not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born." ~ *Anaïs Nin*

What was today's activity like for you? How did you feel as you spent a day in an ongoing, open prayer of thanksgiving to God for all the people in your life?

What kind of Community would Jesus want to be a part of in the Olathe Community of Christ?

Scripture Reflection

My Spirit is reaching out to numerous souls even now and there are many who will respond if you, my people, will bear affirmative testimony of my love and my desires for all to come unto me.

— *Doctrine & Covenants 153:9b*

Gift for a Loved One

Think about one person that you love. With that person in mind, consider what they might truly need right now. Expand beyond money, objects, monetary items – but instead explore simple, experimental gifts like friendship, comfort, listening, support, help. Consider the needs that they may be too embarrassed or ashamed to ask for or admit. Think beyond material needs to consider ways of improving their life and happiness.

Write down those gifts you think you could provide them with in the next three days. Gifts like time, your company, helpful information etc. ***Write down every idea you can think of for them below.***

Challenge

Do at least **ONE** of these today! It can be anonymous if you desire or you can do it with them knowing. If the gift requires logistics or preparation then initiate this process today. Do what you can. If you can do more, *do more*. Make this person feel like it is a National Day in their honor. Give to them from your truest sense of compassion and discernment of what they need at this time in their life and see what blessings unfold when you do so.

Prayer Thought

God help me to discern the needs of your people. Make me a vessel of your good work and help me be of benefit to others. In each and every interaction with another human, help me to see them as you created them. Help me to offer a listening ear and an open mind to all they trust to share with me.

Journal

"I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship." ~ *Brené Brown*

How are you creating ways to really connect with people in your life? What more would you like to do to strengthen the relationships you have with your church family?

What kind of Community would Jesus want to be a part of in the Olathe Community of Christ?

Community

creating sacred relationships founded in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 34
NOVEMBER 9, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Stand firm in the name of the One you proclaim and create diverse communities of disciples and seekers, rejoicing in the continuing fulfillment of the call to this people to prophetically witness in the name of Jesus Christ. — *Doctrine & Covenants 161:6a*

Who Do You Reach Out To In Your Community?

The Community of people around us fill so many parts of our life. We probably rely on them more than we realize. They inspire us, comfort us, make us laugh. We enjoy all that life has to offer with these people and they become a part of our daily fabric woven deeply into our journey. Have you ever stopped to think about who you reach out to and share with about specific, individual aspects of your life? Fill out the activity below to see as a visual expression of those you reach out to the most.

WHO DO YOU RELY ON MOST:	WHO DO YOU SHARE THE MOST LAUGHS WITH:	WHO DO YOU TRUST WITH A SECRET:	WHO GIVES YOU THE BEST MOVIE, MUSIC, BOOK RECS:	WHO DO YOU CALL OR TEXT WITH A QUESTION:
WHO CHALLENGES YOU:	WHO DO YOU HAVE THE MOST FUN BEING AROUND:	WHO INSPIRES YOU:	WHO HELPS YOU WHEN YOU NEED SOMEONE:	WHO DO YOU TAKE THE MOST PHOTOS WITH:
WHO MAKES YOU FEEL ACCEPTED FOR WHO YOU ARE:	WHO DO YOU WANT TO TAKE AN ADVENTURE WITH:	WHO MAKES YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE CAPABLE OF MORE:	WHO DO YOU ASK TO PRAY FOR YOU:	WHO GIVES THE BEST HUGS:
WHO SHARES YOUR VALUES:	WHO MAKES YOU FEEL SPECIAL ON YOUR BIRTHDAY:	WHO STRENGTHENS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD:	WHO DO YOU WANT TO SHARE YOUR WEEKENDS WITH:	WHO DO YOU WANT TO SHARE A MEAL WITH:
WHO CAN CHEER YOU UP WHEN YOU ARE SAD:	WHO'S OPINION TO YOU VALUE MOST:	WHO KNOWS YOU THE BEST:	WHO WOULD YOU WANT TO GO ON A WALK WITH:	WHO LOOKS OUT FOR YOUR WELL-BEING:

Prayer Thought

Creator God, I can't imagine my life without this vibrant Community of people you have blessed me with. Thank you for all the ways they share with me in my life. Help me to be a positive and loving presence to all I meet. Remind me to seek your Spirit in each person and the unique value they bring to this world.

Journal

"The glory of friendship is not the outstretched hand, not the kindly smile, nor the joy of companionship; it is the spiritual inspiration that comes to one when you discover that someone else believes in you and is willing to trust you with a friendship." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

We live in a time where we all have so many photos documenting our lives. Look through your photos of friends and family on your phone or in photo albums. Look at the pictures framed around your house and think about why you have chosen to give them a place of honor in your home. The people that form our Community are some of our greatest blessings. Share these photos below or share about the people who occupy space in your life and why they are blessings to you.

What kind of Community would Jesus want to be a part of in the Olathe Community of Christ?

Community

creating sacred relationships founded in God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 35
NOVEMBER 10, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Be not consumed with concern about variety in human types and characteristics as you see them. Be passionately concerned about forming inclusive communities of love, oneness, and equality that reveal divine nature. Oneness and equality in Christ do not mean uniformity. They mean Unity in Diversity and relating in Christ-like love to the circumstances of others as if they were one's own. They also mean full opportunity for people to experience human worth and related rights, including expressing God-given giftedness in the church and society. — *Doctrine & Covenants 165:3d-e*

Hymn Meditation and Reflection

"God, We Gather As Your People" has been a very special hymn for our congregation. Spend some time today reading over the words and meditating on what this song means to you as a part of the Olathe Community of Christ. How do these words apply to your life and your thoughts of Community?

God we gather as your people to raise our song above, and we dare to claim the promise of your love. Though the day may not yet be here, we trust it soon will be, when your children will be free.

Oh, we sing for all the children, that one day they be free; and we sing for generations yet to be, that they never have a reason to doubt that they are blest. May they in your love, find rest.

Oh, we pray for all the young lives cut short by fear and shame, so afraid of who they are and whom they love. May the message now be banished that your love is for the few; may their faith in you re-new.

God, we're working for the future when children far and wide can live their lives with dignity and pride. As they grow in strength and stature, may they join us hand in hand, as against all hate we stand.

Prayer Thought

"Oh, may our hearts and minds be opened, fling the church doors open wide. May there be room enough for everyone inside. For in God there is a welcome, in God we all belong. May that welcome be our song." — *Chorus, Hymn 274 "God, We Gather as Your People"*

Journal

"The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw – and knew I saw – all things in God and God in all things." ~ *Mechthild of Magdeburg*

What thoughts or feelings have developed this week as you focused on Community? In what ways do you see yourself strengthening our Olathe Community with your own special gifts and talents? There is room for everyone inside – what does this look like to you?

What kind of Community would Jesus want to be a part of in the Olathe Community of Christ?

Thoughts & Notes on Community

Blessing

Week Six

Becoming aware of the
fullness of God 's Love

Blessing

becoming aware of the fullness of God's love

40-DAY WALK
WEEK SIX
NOV 11-17 2018

Weekly Focus Story

Life as a photographer fills me with nothing but purpose. So much thought goes into a single shot -- from the type of film I choose to load into my camera, to the composition of the image, to the light and shadows, or even to how quickly I want to freeze a moment or maybe just let it slide by as a slight blur in my frame. It all has a crucial function (of course, happy accidents do happen on occasion -- and I embrace them!).

I see almost everything as a photograph. I aim to take photos of emotions and experiences more than poses, because I cannot ever quite grasp what the intention of a forced pose is. And every part of the images I make, both before and after I press the shutter, have purpose. This sort of conscious existence has no choice but to bleed into the rest of my everyday life.

The way I spend my days, my hours. What I choose to consume. The activities I take part in with my children. What types of personal projects I take on for artistic expression. The dates I go on with my husband. How we decorate our home. The friends we surround ourself with. Where we dream about traveling. All of this is the way I "compose" my life, if you will. The way I balance the dark and the light -- because life most certainly has a healthy mixture of both.

Of course some days the intention slips by the wayside, because sometimes I just want to turn my brain off for a little while and simply exist without constant thought. But when you are a recovering Type-A personality like myself, it can be both a blessing and a curse to constantly make choices filled with purpose and intent. To constantly make pro/con lists and weigh your options. To endlessly try to figure out what the "right" path is, can be exhausting on occasion.

So what is the answer to living mindfully and intentionally without wearing yourself out? A wise friend once said, "Be where you are."

Whether that means swinging on a hammock and simply enjoying the breeze. Or sitting on your porch and watching the cars pass by. Or maybe writing in your journal. Or playing with your kids. Or having dinner with your significant other. Catching up with old friends. Yoga. Making art. Wine tasting. Reading a book. Even taking a photograph.

Whatever it is you have chosen to do with any given precious moment of your day, be where you are. Choose to give your full attention to that one thing, and soak in every ounce of its beauty and the freedom you had to make that choice.

Be where you are...

and be a blessing.

"Be Where You Are: Life Through a Lens" by Lea Ciceraro, ***HOLSTEE: Intention***

Weekly Focus Scripture

Indeed, I am longing to pour out greater blessings than you have ever known if you, my people, will open yourselves through preparation, study, and prayer.

Doctrine & Covenants 158:11b

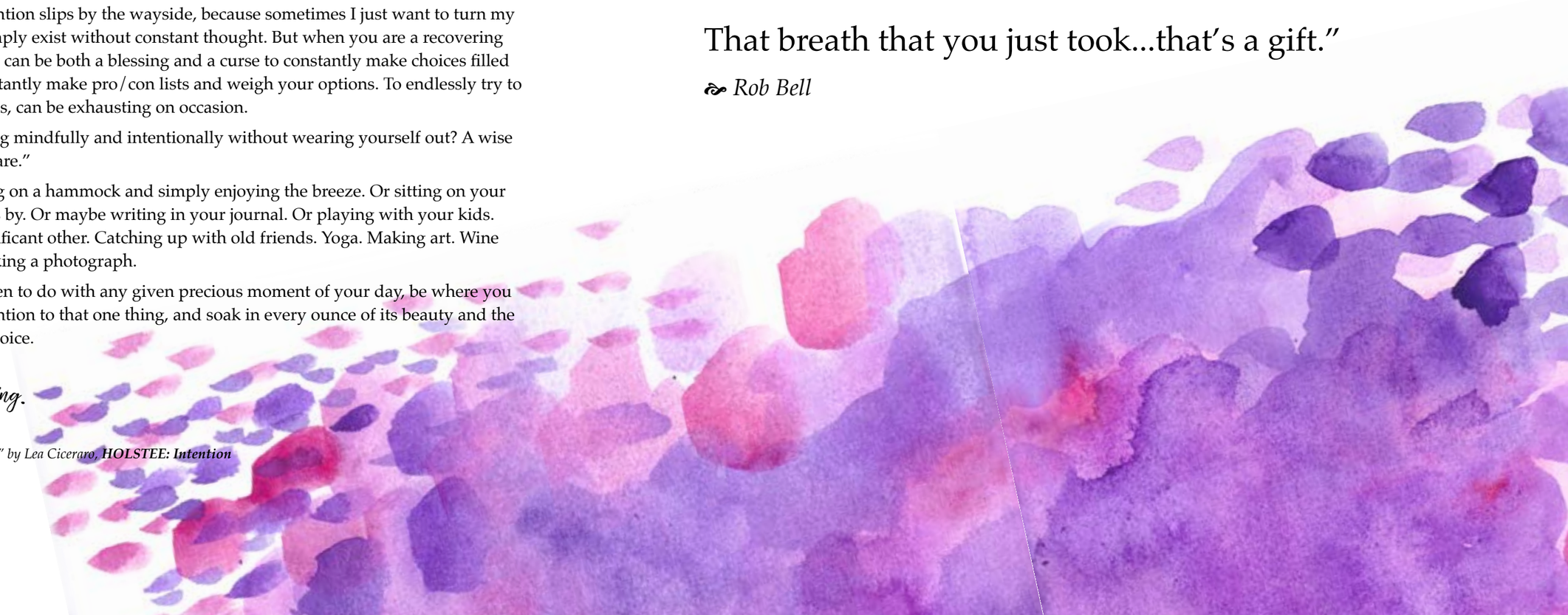
Mission Prayer

God, where will your Spirit lead today?
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.
Grant me courage to risk something new
and become a blessing of your love and peace.
Amen.

Weekly Quote to Ponder

"There's way too much wonder and mystery all around us to not stay open to more that's going on here. You can wake up, and sense and feel and taste and hear a whole world right here within this one,
right here in this breath you're about to take.
That breath that you just took...that's a gift."

Rob Bell



Blessing
becoming aware of the fullness of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 36
NOVEMBER 11, 2018

Scripture Reflection

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and His compassion is over all that He has made. — *Psalms 145:8-9*

Writing Your Own Psalm

The Psalms are songs and poetry. They can be musical in nature and are used to give expression to an amazing array of emotions; from loneliness and sorrow to exultation and joy, from fear and anger to hope and gratitude. The Psalms awaken and shape our emotions in line with the instruction they give.

Your Scripture Reflection above is from Psalms and it speaks to the unconditional love that God wants to bless each one of us with. For your activity today, use the space provided below to write your own Psalm. Think of your Psalm as it connects to our Congregational Blessing.

Prayer Thought

Lord, keep me in the discipline of your Holy Spirit so that I may continue to hear your call and be open to receiving your loving blessing in my life.

"Our prayers should be for blessings in general, for God knows best what is good for us." ~ *Socrates*

Journal

How are you feeling as we enter into our final week before our Congregational Blessing? Share some of your experiences and reflections on our 40-day walk together.

What Blessing do you believe God wants to share with the Olathe Congregation at this time?

40-DAY WALK
DAY 37
NOVEMBER 12, 2018

"When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around."

Scripture Reflection

So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up.

— *Galatians 6:9*

Photos of Your Blessings

Today you will go on a photo scavenger hunt for your Blessings. With a camera or your phone, begin your day with the intention to focus on all your Blessings. From the smallest Blessing to what you are most grateful for in your life – pay attention to everything that is a part of your day. Photograph each and every thing you consider a Blessing. For abstract things you can't photograph like emotions, you can write them down on paper and then take a photo of that word. Involve everyone in your family to take part in this. Even if little ones don't have phones to use for the camera, you can help take photos for them or they could verbally tell you their blessings at the end of the day.

Photograph with full abandon today! Don't limit yourself or judge your initial reaction to noticing your Blessings. Photograph it all – anything that you recognize as a gift in your life. At the end of the day, share your photos with your family or friends, or look through them yourself and reflect on how many wonderful Blessing surround our average day to day life.

Prayer Thought

God we are truly a blessed people – surrounded by daily blessings. Help us to keep our focus on the ways in which you want to bless our lives.

Journal

Journal about your experience photographing your Blessings today. What is something new you realized after participating in that activity? What did it teach you? Feel free to print some of the photos and put them here in your journal as a reminder of this day.

What Blessing do you believe God wants to share with the Olathe Congregation at this time?

Blessing

becoming aware of the fullness of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 38
NOVEMBER 13, 2018

Scripture Reflection

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our LORD. — *Romans 8:38-39*

Awareness of Blessing Reflection

Below you will find two statements. Around each statement write down all the things that come to mind to finish those sentences. Share as many ideas as you can for each one.

Prayer Thought

O Lord, make me aware of the abundance that is mine and help me be willing to share all you have blessed me with so that I may be a blessing to others.

Journal

"I am showered with abundant blessings and peace of mind even when things seem chaotic and unfair. To be alive and surrounded by a few who love me is all I will ever need."

What could you do to be a blessing to others? Brainstorm and journal all the ways you feel inspired to be of service. Think of people in the congregation that need you to share your blessings with them. In what ways will you respond.

What Blessing do you believe God wants to share with the Olathe Congregation at this time?

Blessing

becoming aware of the fullness of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 39
NOVEMBER 14, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. — *James 1:17*

You Have a Message From God...

We are nearing the end of our 40-day walk.

What Blessing does God have in store for your today?

Write down the message you are receiving from God at this time:

Prayer Thought

God, prepare us for the messages you want to lay upon our hearts. Open us up to receive your Blessings. Ready us. Help us to be still and listen.

Journal

"Even here your soul is steady, even here, you are seen. Through every changing thing, you are headed where you are meant to be." *Morgan Harper Nichols*

God wishes to pour blessings over you. As we have journeyed through our 40-day walk, what leadings of the Spirit have you felt? Use this journal entry to help determine how and where you are being called to serve the Olathe Congregation and offer your special gifts and talents as a blessing to your Community.

What Blessing do you believe God wants to share with the Olathe Congregation at this time?

Blessing
becoming aware of the fullness of God's love

40-DAY WALK
DAY 40
NOVEMBER 15, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Continue your journey, O people of the Restoration. You have been blessed thus far but there is so much yet to see, so much yet to do. Go forth with confidence and live prophetically as a people who have been loved, and who now courageously choose to love others in the name of the One you serve. Amen.

— *Doctrine & Covenants 162:8c*

Lecto Divina *(Divine Reading)*

Below you will find Hymn #549 "Gathered Here to Seek God's Blessing". Read it through 3 times, each time for a different purpose.

- First Time – what words and/or phrases stand out to you. Feel free to highlight or mark them?
- Second Time – What part of this Hymn is the most meaningful to you?
- Third Time – How can you use this Hymn today as you prepare for the Congregational Blessing?

Hymn Meditation and Reflection

Gathered here to seek God's blessing, praise, and prayer, and anthems sung, many hands and many faces, many hearts unite as one. Hope now births a new creation; dreams now sing a brand new song. Bless this waiting congregation, young and old, and weak and strong.

For this sacramental blessing is a cradle for God's dream, birthing ministries of caring, calling all to live love's theme. More than words of light and guidance, more than lofty words aflight, bless this waiting congregation, bringing dawn to endless night.

Let this prayer of supplication, wrapped in sacramental grace, stir aflame our sleepy passion far beyond this holy place. Fanning sparks of love's redemption in the hearts of those grown cold, bless this waiting congregation, in love's service to be bold.

May this sacrament of blessing spill beyond this time and space. May the Spirit fill your people with an alphabet of grace, spelling words with wings of action, gracing minds with truth's embrace. Bless, O God, this congregation as your instrument of peace.

— *Community of Christ Sings #549*

Prayer Thought

Lord, let my **Adventure** be with you, let my **Trust** be in you, let my **Gratitude** be towards you, let me feel your **Grace**, let me serve your **Community** and let me be open to receiving your **Blessing**. Amen.

"A Blessing is headed your way. Believe it, expect it, and receive it by faith."

Journal

It is Day 40. Take a deep breath and allow yourself to think back on this journey we have been on together. Flip back through this Blessing Companion and revisit all you shared. Today, make your journal entry about your overall experience as you prepared for our Congregational Blessing.

What Blessing do you believe God wants to share with the Olathe Congregation at this time?

Friday
November 16, 2018

Today in your continued preparation, you are invited to read one of our Congregational Blessing focus scriptures.

Beloved children of the Restoration, your continuing faith adventure with God has been divinely led, eventful, challenging, and sometimes surprising to you. By the grace of God, you are poised to fulfill God's ultimate vision for the church.

When your willingness to live in sacred community as Christ's new creation exceeds your natural fear of spiritual and relational transformation, you will become who you are called to be. The rise of Zion the beautiful, the peaceful reign of Christ, awaits your whole-hearted response to the call to make and steadfastly hold to God's covenant of peace in Jesus Christ.

This covenant entails sacramental living that respects and reveals God's presence and reconciling activity in creation. It requires whole-life stewardship dedicated to expanding the church's restoring ministries, especially those devoted to asserting the worth of persons, protecting the sacredness of creation, and relieving physical and spiritual suffering.

If you truly would be Community of Christ, then embody and live the concerns and passion of Christ.

The challenges and opportunities are momentous. Will you remain hesitant in the shadows of your fears, insecurities, and competing loyalties? Or will you move forward in the light of your divinely instilled call and vision?

The mission of Jesus Christ is what matters most for the journey ahead.

— *Doctrine & Covenants 164:9*

Saturday
November 17, 2018

This is an all-new place for you,
and it brings with it new unknowns,
but there is nothing you will go through out here
that you will have to go through alone.

Morgan Harper Nichols

May this quote bring you peace as we make our final preparations for tomorrow's service.

Sunday
November 18, 2018

A Morning Meditation for your before the service. May your feel God's peace and love surrounding you at this time.

Peace...Be Still And Know That I Am God

Peace...Be Still And Know That I Am

Peace...Be Still And Know

Peace...Be Still

Peace.

Thoughts & Notes on Blessing

Thoughts & Notes on Blessing

Epilogue

Take this time to sit quietly and reflect on this journey. Think about your 40 days and the time you spent in prayer, meditation and communion with God. What was the most fulfilling part of the journey for you? What parts enabled you to draw closer to God? What surprised you about your journey? What challenged you? What pushed you outside your comfort zone? Did you learn new things about yourself?

Examine your activity and journal notes. Do you see any pattern in what God was placing on your heart during the 40-day walk? What do you sense God is calling you to do with your life right now? What preparations or space do you need to make in your life to fulfill this new purpose? What obstacles do you see standing in your way? How can your Olathe Community of Christ family help you accomplish those desires of your heart?

What do you sense God's call is for Olathe? What challenges will we face? What are our next steps in making our realizations a new part of our reality? What role can you play in making this happen? What will your prayers be for our congregation as we continue to journey together?

Remember, this 40-day walk was just the beginning. Our congregational blessing began months ago and will continue to reveal itself through time as we discern our next steps. We are called to take an **Adventure** committing to being life-long students and curious believers. We are called to **Trust** that God walks with us as an unconditional companion. We are called to cultivate a true sense of **Gratitude** in all we see and do. We are called to accept that God's **Grace** has already washed over us. We are called to come together as a **Community** in unity through diversity. We are called to receive an inspired **Blessing** from our Creator that wants nothing more than to love us.

"Your job is the relentless pursuit of who God made you to be."
- Rob Bell

Let us relentlessly pursue who God is calling us to be. Let us move out in faith with a fresh vision and an unwavering energy. May we continue to sense God's call for us as individuals and as a people as we yearn for the truest form of love, hope, joy and peace.

Welcome to your *next* 40 days...

Thank You

We are so very grateful for the 5 incredible evangelists that have traveled with us. To Kris, Mikal, Tom, Greg and Bob — we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the gift of your presence during this journey. You have been spiritual lighthouses for our congregation. Thank you for your time, talents and treasures that you have shared with Olathe.

Thank you to the Olathe congregation for your willingness to take this journey as a church family. From the evangelists, leadership and members — it took every single one of you to participate in this sacramental experience to make it what it is. We are truly a blessed people.

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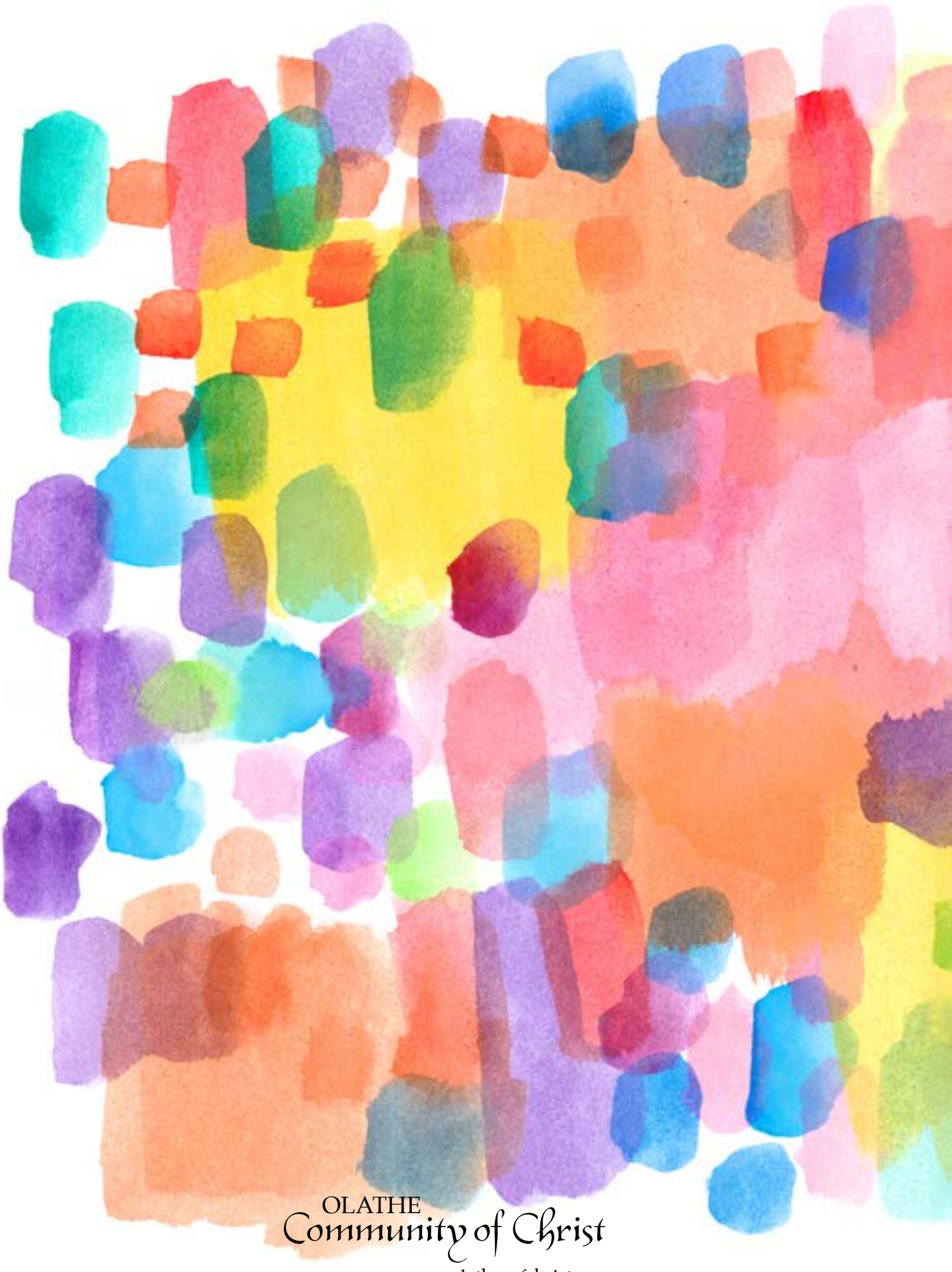

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