



**First Presbyterian Church**  
OF OKLAHOMA CITY

---

**Service of Preparation**  
**December 14, 2025 | 2:00 p.m.**

---

We are grateful for your presence with us and hope you find this time of worship to be meaningful.  
When you see an asterisk \*, please rise in body or spirit, however you are comfortable.



*Dance of the Soul*

# PREPARE FOR WORSHIP

## Visio Divina, Divine Seeing

This afternoon, you are invited to a time of **Visio Divina**, *Divine Seeing*.

There are four basic steps to help start the practice of Visio Divina:

- **Read.** Read the scripture verse, then be still. Settle into a posture to listen to God's voice.
- **Meditate.** Ponder the words, then gaze at, look at, and observe the picture. Ask questions and ask God to help you see what God wants you to see or what God wants you to notice. What stirs within you?
- **Pray.** Pray through the text or what you notice in the image.
- **Contemplate.** We live the text. A contemplative spiritual exercise is meant to lead us to gospel action in the world and a deeper connection with God.

*Thus says the Lord... "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do new things; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"*



*Where the Fruit Lies*

# MOVEMENT ONE

## Letting Go of Anxiety & Busyness to Cultivate Calm

PRELUDE

WELCOME | ROOM

CHIME

OPENING QUOTE | ISAIAH 43:16A, 18-19

One: Thus says the Lord... “Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do new things; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Gather us in-

**All: The lost and the lonely.**

One: Gather us in-

**All: The seeking and doubting.**

One: Gather us in-

**All: For healing, for hope, for new life we pray-  
Gather us in.**

SING | HYMN 793

*O Christ, the Healer*

ERHALT UNS, HERR

PRAY | UNISON TRUTH TELLING

**God of the here and now, we know that you are here, but too often we fail to see you.**

**Too often in times of pain, we choose to numb, distract, or ignore our hurt rather than bring it to you. Forgive us for the times we choose busyness over Sabbath and suppression over healing. Still our minds and strengthen our hearts, so that we might be able to see and know you better. Gratefully we pray, amen.** (silent confession)

LISTEN | MATTHEW 11:28-30

We are surrounded by millions of words every day—to-do lists and advertisements, lyrics and news updates, push notifications and conversations around dinner or conference room tables. The sounds of our anxiety and busyness can so easily drown out the voice of God. So as we gather today, we start with letting go of anxiety and busyness to cultivate calm.

Friends, I invite you to take a deep breath in and a deep breath out.

As you continue to breathe deeply, still your mind. Allow any thoughts or worries to float by like a river. Focus only on your breath.

(pause)

And now, from this centering space, I invite you to hear these words from Matthew with fresh ears.



## CULTIVATE | HOLY SPACE

Family of God, it is rare that we slow down to dwell in God's presence. So, for the next few minutes, we will cultivate a holy space by letting go of our to-do lists and busy lives to truly dwell in God's presence.

I invite you to spend the next few minutes reflecting on the questions below. I invite you to answer them. Write the actual words that express how you will feel in the coming moments in your bulletin.

What you write is only for you to see. I encourage you to hold onto these prayers and return to them later.

May this be a centering time. May this be a holy time. May this be an authentic and calm time between you and your Creator.

Let us go to God with our written and silent prayers.

## INSTRUMENTAL INTERLUDE

- What burdens are you carrying?

- What truth(s) would you like to share with God?

- What is your prayer for this evening, or this season of your life?

## MOVEMENT TWO

### Letting Go of Fear to Cultivate Confidence in God

#### CONSIDER | CONFIDENCE

Professor and historian at Duke Divinity school, Kate Bowler, was diagnosed with stage four colon cancer at the age of 35. Her new memoir, *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved*, explores her personal, intellectual, and spiritual struggle to accept her illness. Recently, while speaking at Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church in Dallas, Texas, she said:

"What I wanted so much when I was sick was for people to pray with deep anticipation for something that was better than we could hope for. What was so frustrating about my Mainline Christian friends was that they could never pray for what was unimaginable. I wanted them to pray for the unimaginable—that somehow there would be more than enough. I wanted them to pray for my healing, or to fill up the end with beauty. There was a kind of politeness to their prayers that I kind of resented, so secretly I would pray with the Pentecostals, 'cause they were in it to win it."

#### PRAY

*When God Restored Our Common Life*

RESIGNATION

Puffer Jones, baritone

*When God restored our common life, our hope, our liberty, at first it seemed a passing dream, a waking fantasy; a shock of joy swept over us, for we had wept so long; the seeds we watered once with tears sprang up into a song. We went forth weeping, sowing seeds in hard, unyielding soil; with laughing hearts we carry home the fruit of all our toil. We praise the One who gave the growth, with voices full and strong. The seeds we watered once with tears sprang up into a song. Great liberating God, we pray for all who are oppressed. May those who long for what is right with justice now be blest. We pray for those who mourn this day, and all who suffer wrong; may seeds they water now with tears spring up into a song.*

#### LISTEN | EXCERPTS FROM ISAIAH 43:1-5, 15-19

#### CULTIVATE | LIGHT

Family of God, our world is full of big problems—big diagnoses, big illnesses, big loss, major fights, catastrophic grief. The list goes on. Fortunately for us, we worship an even bigger God. At this moment in our service, we are going to focus on letting go of our fears—letting go of that which prevents us from laying our burdens fully before God—and cultivating the confidence that God is present no matter what.

Scripture reminds us that God is the light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. We all know what darkness feels like, so for the next several minutes, we are going to cultivate light.

Throughout this time of individual reflection, we will lift up prayers to the God of Creation, who knows us, calls us by name, and walks with us through fire.

We have candle stations up front for lighting. Each lit candle is a prayer—a prayer for you or a light to honor someone you love. You are welcome to come light a candle for yourself or someone else.

## **INSTRUMENTAL INTERLUDE**

### **MOVEMENT THREE**

#### **Letting Go of Doubt to Cultivate Hope**

For our final lesson, we will let go of doubt to cultivate hope, turning to a parable about a fig tree that has yet to produce any fruit. Let us open our eyes, ears, and hearts to the wisdom this story may bring to us in our journey toward healing and wholeness.

## **LECTIO DIVINA | LUKE 13:6-9**

### **THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE**

<sup>6</sup> Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup> So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ <sup>8</sup> He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. <sup>9</sup> If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

## **WATCH | “THE WISDOM OF THE FIG TREE” BY LISLE GWYNN GARRITY**

### **REFLECT**

I invite you to gaze upon the finalized image titled “Where the Fruit Lies” printed on the front of your bulletin. Let your eyes rest here for a few moments in silence. Take a deep breath in and let it out. Continue breathing deeply as you gaze upon the image.

(pause)

In silence, I invite you to ponder the following questions, continuing to gaze upon the image as you reflect.

Which character in this parable do you resonate with the most? The landowner? The gardener? The fig tree?

(pause)

Where is doubt emerging in your life? What does doubt feel like and how can you work to let it go?

(pause)

Where is hope emerging in your life? What spaces in your life need nurture, patience, and care in order to bear fruit?

(pause)

No matter what you have pondered in this time of silence, we offer it all to God as an earnest, unspoken prayer. Amen.

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Friends, hear, receive, and believe these words from the prophet Isaiah:

“Thus says the Lord . . .

Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”

God is doing a new thing in you, even if you can’t yet perceive it. So in faith:

The cross...

we shall take it.

**The bread...**

**we shall break it.**

The pain...

we shall bear it.

**The joy...**

**we shall share it.**

The gospel...

we shall live it.

**The love...**

**we shall give it.**

The light...

we shall cherish it.

**The darkness...**

**God shall perish it.**

**Hallelujah, Amen!**

SING | HYMN 89

*For You, O Lord, My Soul in Stillness Waits*

MY SOUL IN STILLNESS WAITS

(Congregation sings the refrains)

SENDING | *LOVE COMES RUNNING*

POSTLUDE

Worship Leaders

John L. Edwards

Warren Puffer Jones

Rev. John McKinnon

Aidan Mckinnon

Liturgy by Sarah (Are) Speed | Film & Art by Lisle Gwynn Garrity