Contents

Introduction .......................................................................................................................................................5
Breathe Peace ...................................................................................................................................................7
Live Witness .....................................................................................................................................................10
Embody Wholeness .......................................................................................................................................14
Embrace Formation .......................................................................................................................................17
Experience Restoration ...............................................................................................................................20
Hymn: Meditation on Breathing ...............................................................................................................24
Introduction

Dear worship leader,

Thank you in advance for the important ministry you are offering! We realize each reunion uses these resources in the way that makes sense for them, and our hope is that this worship guide will be meaningful and flexible for the needs of your community. Feel free to adapt as necessary for your context. These suggestions will enrich worship experiences where you live and serve. *Instructions for leaders are in italic.*

**PREPARING A SPACE**

Consider creating a simple worship center for each service that includes a candle or other symbols to draw the congregation’s attention to the theme of the day. As the worship leader, it is important to prepare a space within yourself as well to be the grounding, nonanxious presence for the community as you enter this sacred time together.

**CREATING INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY**

We are wonderfully blessed to have the opportunity to share in intergenerational community and we know that also brings its challenges! These services were designed in that sacred tension — of providing depth and substance to mature disciples while creating room for new disciples who are beginning to learn and grow!

We invite you into that sacred tension with us as a worship leader. Be mindful of every opportunity to encourage children and youth to participate, letting them know that their voices matter to the community. Most of the practices and elements were designed to engage different ages at different levels, but the openness of the community and the willingness of adults to intentionally invite the voices of children will be most effective in creating genuine intergenerational community.

We often think that to engage in spiritual practice we need to have complete silence. With many ages present this is an unrealistic expectation. We are invited to seek an “interior silence” where our minds and hearts are open and receptive to the Spirit even if our external circumstances contain a few giggles or shrieks. This is a practice in discovering God in all things and seeking the Spirit in the midst of the holiest of distractions. Whenever there is an opportunity, gently remind the community of this invitation.

**ENGAGING IN SPIRITUAL PRACTICE**

Even mature disciples may struggle with spiritual practice from time to time. Moments of silence or invitations for vulnerability may be uncomfortable or unfamiliar. As a spiritual leader, it is important to hold open, safe, and loving community for all spiritual types. Invitations to practice should be gentle and respectful of persons all along the journey of faith.

Using invitational rather than instructional language can create this space of freedom and may reduce natural
resistances that could arise. For example, “I invite you to find a comfortable position for prayer” allows more flexibility than “Now, everyone close your eyes.”

May we be open to all the ways the Spirit may seek relationship with this community!

A FEW NOTES

- You will notice that every sharing service begins with a breath prayer as a way of dwelling in our theme, Breathe New Life. This can be a centering, whole-body practice for all ages. There is an option at the end of each prayer time to invite the community to share their “sacred words” with one another. This can be a good way to glimpse what the practice means to others in community and especially to hear from children and youth.

- Following the breath prayer practice each day, there is a suggested song, “Breathe In, Breathe Out,” that can be sung in a three-part round. It may be helpful to enter the song slowly throughout the week, either teaching one part each day, or singing each part separately and then eventually inviting the congregation into a round when it is more familiar.

- Throughout the worship outlines, there are scripted notes for the worship leader. Please feel free to adapt these notes to your own most natural speaking style while maintaining the essence needed to invite people into the practices and sharing.

- There may be more elements than time available. Additionally, sharing times can be dependent on what is stirring in the community! Please be sensitive to timing and aware of natural beginnings and endings for the benefit of the gathered community.

- Sometimes when people are sharing, spaces of silence emerge. We are tempted to fill the silence quickly, but we invite you to consider holding open space in case other voices need to emerge. It may take a few moments for a person to gather their courage to share what is on their heart. It is appropriate to ask after a few moments, “Is there anyone else who would like to share?”

- Some of the practices and invitations for sharing include gathering in small groups. Invite the congregation to gather into diverse groups, being especially mindful of those who may be on the margins, and inclusive of all ages.

- Trust that the Spirit is present, working in each person, and may show up in surprising ways!

"Be vulnerable to divine grace.”

—Doctrine and Covenants Section 163:10b
Let’s spend a few moments in silence breathing together, using the words to guide us. With every breath in, repeat in your heart the word that represents what you want to receive. With every breath out, repeat in your heart the word that represents what you want to give.

Optional Sharing: Turn to a neighbor to share the words you chose this day or invite the community to share “popcorn” style in the larger group the word or phrase they chose for breathing in and then for breathing out.

Sharing their words of the day can be a great way to get the children excited about this practice!

SING TOGETHER

“Meditation on Breathing,” (p. 24) a round in three parts
Unitarian Universalist Association supplemental hymnal, Singing the Journey, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kijYkP1vR6g

OPENING PRACTICE: BREATH PRAYER

Invite the community to take a deep breath and let out a sigh. Especially encourage children to participate.

Notice how your breath feels in your body. Pay attention to the rise and fall of your own chest. Let’s take three deep breaths together.

Choose a word that represents what you want to breathe in, to receive for yourself this day. (Love, peace, hope, joy, renewal, courage.)

Then choose a word that represents what you want to breathe out to offer to the community and the world this day. (Love, peace, hope, joy, renewal, courage.)

Statement for the first day: We will start with this practice each day, so notice how your words change throughout the week. You can choose a different word every time we gather for this practice.
READING
“When We Breathe Together”
Jan Richardson

This is the blessing we cannot speak by ourselves.
This is the blessing we cannot summon by our own devices, cannot shape to our purpose, cannot bend to our will.
This is the blessing that comes when we leave behind our aloneness when we gather together when we turn toward one another.
This is the blessing that blazes among us when we speak the words strange to our ears when we finally listen into the chaos when we breathe together at last.

[paintedprayerbook.com/2013/05/14/pentecost-when-we-breathe-together](paintedprayerbook.com/2013/05/14/pentecost-when-we-breathe-together)

SING TOGETHER
“Make Me a Channel of Your Peace” CCS 605
Or “Let There Be Peace on Earth” CCS 307

SCRIPTURE READING
Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

—John 20:21-22, NRSV

MOMENT OF SILENCE
SINGING BOWL OR BELL

REFLECTING TOGETHER ON BREATHING PEACE

Practice: Take a few moments to consider moments in your life when you reacted to a situation in a way that you aren’t proud of now. Pay attention to how you felt inwardly, how you acted outwardly.

For children: Has there ever been a time you were really angry with someone? What did you do? Invite the congregation into a few moments of silent reflection.

Share brief responses in small groups of 4-5 people, including a variety of ages.

Now take a few moments to consider a time in your life when you responded to a situation in a more grounded way. For the children, when did you share love with someone even when it was hard?

Share brief responses in small groups of 4-5 people, including a variety of ages.

What did you notice about the difference between those two situations? What was happening in you?

Share brief responses in small groups of 4-5, including a variety of ages.

SING TOGETHER
“Soften My Heart” CCS 187 (sing multiple times)
Or “Humble Yourself” CCS 211

SCRIPTURE READING
Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

—John 20:21-22, NRSV

MOMENT OF SILENCE
SINGING BOWL OR BELL

LARGE GROUP REFLECTING AND SHARING

Peace begins with taking a breath. Author Gerald May put it this way, “The discernment question now is, What really happens in the consecrated space between feeling and response?” (Gerald May, The Awakened Heart)
We breathe every day to survive, but we can also choose to take a deep breath in moments of fear, anger, division, or judgment. We pause before reacting to pay attention to how we are feeling and why we may be feeling that way. We take a breath to remember that the person before us is also a child of God. We allow this brief space between feeling and responding to be a time to seek the Spirit’s guidance in our response.

Now, consider a time when someone responded to you from a place of love. Maybe you were angry, needed to share something important, or were reacting in fear. What was it about the other person’s response that made you feel valued?

Invite the congregation to share brief responses. Especially encourage children and youth to participate.

SCRIPTURE READING

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

—John 20:21–22, NRSV

MOMENT OF SILENCE

SINGING BOWL OR BELL

How can taking a breath heal our relationships and change our world? What does it look like to breathe peace in our current context?

SING TOGETHER

“Make Me a Servant”

Or “Prayer of Peace”

CLOSING PRACTICE

Invite the children to come forward as the scripture is read again. Invite them to hold open their hands and breathe on their own hands like they are receiving the spirit of peace being breathed on them. Invite the congregation to join and to hear the words of the scripture as a closing blessing and invitation.

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

—John 20:21–22, NRSV

CLOSING PRAYER

POSTLUDE

ADDITIONAL WORSHIP ELEMENT SUGGESTION

Consider offering a handout with the scripture text for people to reference throughout worship.

**PRELUDE MUSIC**

**GATHERING SONGS**

“Fanana” _Community of Christ Sings_ 596

“Peace Salaam Shalom” _CCS_ 310

“Seek Ye First” _CCS_ 599

**OPENING PRACTICE: BREATH PRAYER**

*Invited the community to take a deep breath and let out a sigh. Especially encourage children to participate.*

Notice how your breath feels in your body. Pay attention to the rise and fall of your own chest. Let’s take three deep breaths together.

Choose a word that represents what you want to breathe in, to receive for yourself this day. (Love, peace, hope, joy, renewal, courage.)

Then choose a word that represents what you want to breathe out to offer to the community and the world this day. (Love, peace, hope, joy, renewal, courage.)

Let’s spend a few moments in silence breathing together, using the words to guide us. With every breath in, repeat in your heart the word that represents what you want to receive. With every breath out, repeat in your heart the word that represents what you want to give.

**Optional:** Turn to a neighbor to share the words you chose this day or invite the community to share “popcorn” style in the larger group the word or phrase they chose for breathing in and then for breathing out.

**SING TOGETHER**

“Meditation on Breathing,” a round in three parts

Unitarian Universalist Association supplemental hymnal, _Singing the Journey_, a round in three parts, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kijYkPlvR6g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kijYkPlvR6g)

**OPENING PRAYER**

**SCRIPTURE REFLECTION**

Acts 9:1–19

**INVITATION TO PRACTICE**

As a community, we will spend time dwelling in a story about two disciples who were invited to live their witness in different ways, Saul (who became Paul) and Ananias. We glimpse Saul at the beginning of his journey of discipleship and Ananias who dared to make a courageous response as an already committed follower of Christ. In both of their stories, we can discover God’s invitation for our lives today.
**FIRST READING**

*Invite members of the congregation to act out this scripture as it is being read.*

Characters: Saul, High Priest, Ananias, Voice of Jesus

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” He asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” He answered, “Here I am, Lord.” The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

**For Reflection:** What captured your attention in this story as you heard (and saw) it read? What is God’s invitation to you in this text?

*Share in small groups or with a partner.*

**SECOND READING**

*Invite the congregation to visualize the story as the text is being read a second time. Provide paper and crayons for children, youth, and adults who would like to draw their responses.*

Imagine the sounds of walking on a dirt road, the hot sun overhead, the way the light must have felt and looked as it was cast on Saul, what Saul may have been feeling throughout the story, what Ananias may have been feeling as he dared to respond knowing the danger...

**For Reflection:** As you visualize the text, what image or moment in the story feels most significant to you in your own spiritual journey?

*Share in small groups or with a partner.*

**SING TOGETHER**

“Christ’s Word to Us”  
Or “Into My Heart”  

**LARGE GROUP SHARING**

Both Saul and Ananias are faced with an uncomfortable invitation that leads to deeper life in Christ. When have you experienced a sacred disruption along your path that led to transformation?

**For children:** When did you do the right thing even though it was hard?

*Invite people to reflect on the question during the ministry of music. Consider projecting the question on a screen or providing it in a handout with the text of the scripture.*

**MINISTRY OF MUSIC**

“How Many Times We Start Again”  
Or “I Have Called You by Your Name”  

*Invite responses from the large group.*
LARGE GROUP SHARING

Living our witness begins with our own encounters with God along the paths of everyday life. Genuine spiritual experience always leads to transformed living in the world. Saul encountered God, spent time reflecting on the experience, received spiritual companionship from Ananias, and then changed his priorities and behavior to align with this experience, even changed his name! Ananias was also given the opportunity to live his witness as he courageously responded to God’s invitation to be a spiritual companion to Saul in the midst of his faith transformation.

Many of us don’t have encounters with God that are this drastic, but we can point to spiritual experiences along our own road of life that have continued to change and shape us as disciples. How have your own encounters with God affected the way you live your witness in everyday life?

For children: When you feel love, how do you want to act in response?

Invite people to reflect on the question during the song. Consider projecting the question on a screen or providing it in a handout with the text of the scripture.

SING TOGETHER

“Come and Bring Light” CCS 287

Or “Touch Me Lord with Thy Spirit Eternal” CCS 574

Invite responses from the large group.

DRAMATIC READING

Intersecting Journeys of Transformation

Reader 1: I am Saul. I was so convinced that my anger and hatred toward others was justified, that I didn’t even question my inherited assumptions and judgments until one day on the road...

Reader 2: I am Ananias. I have always tried to live a good life and be a faithful disciple. Sometimes I know I have failed to respond, but I try to live my faith as authentically as I can. I thought I was growing more comfortable in my discipleship until one day something happened on the road...

Readers 1 and 2: ...And the Spirit of God disrupted my status quo.

Reader 1: I saw a light so bright it blinded me, but also strangely, helped me to see. When what I had previously relied on vanished in the blaze, I felt a deeper invitation of love calling to me.

Reader 2: When I first felt the prompting of the Spirit to go to Saul, I thought “No way, God! Do you know what he has done to other disciples? Do you know what he could do to me?”

Reader 1: I was in total darkness caused by a great light. Isn’t that how it is sometimes? We think God is absent, but we are immersed in a light brighter than what we are used to and it obscures God’s presence. We think we are blind, but it just takes time for our eyes to adjust so we can really see.

Reader 2: Despite the fear and hesitancy, I felt a swell of courage and compassion. I knew I had to respond, and so I went to be with Saul whose whole life had just been turned upside down. I offered him my presence and had to trust that God was working where I might least expect.

Reader 1: As my whole life came into question, I was greeted in love by a faithful companion who met me in my darkest hour. As he spoke to me and dared to be present to me, the scales fell from my eyes.

Readers 1 and 2: And I could see again.
Reader 2: I could see God in a person, in a place that was beyond my expectation of where God could be.

Reader 1: I could see a new purpose emerging in my life that began to change everything about how I wanted to live each day.

Reader 2: It took courage to live my witness as I walked in transforming love with another.

Reader 1: It took courage to release my old habits and assumptions to live my witness of the God whose in-breaking love can always redeem and transform.

Readers 1 and 2: How will you live your witness today?

CLOSING SONG

―Siyahamb’ Ekukhanyen Kwenkos (We are Marching in the Light of God)‖

CLOSING PRAYER

POSTLUDE
EMBODY WHOLENESS

PRELUDE MUSIC

GATHERING SONGS

“Jesu Tawa Pano”  
Community of Christ Sings 71

“Amen Siakudumisa”  
CCS 109

“I Will Sing, I Will Sing”  
CCS 112

OPENING PRACTICE: BREATHE PRAYER

Invite the community to take a deep breath and let out a sigh. Especially encourage children to participate.

Notice how your breath feels in your body. Pay attention to the rise and fall of your own chest. Let’s take three deep breaths together.

Choose a word that represents what you want to breathe in, to receive for yourself this day. (Love, peace, hope, joy, renewal, courage.)

Then choose a word that represents what you want to breathe out to offer to the community and the world this day. (Love, peace, hope, joy, renewal, courage.)

Let’s spend a few moments in silence breathing together, using the words to guide us. With every breath in, repeat in your heart the word that represents what you want to receive. With every breath out, repeat in your heart the word that represents what you want to give.

Optional Sharing: Turn to a neighbor to share the words you chose this day or invite the community to share “popcorn” style in the larger group the word or phrase they chose for breathing in and then for breathing out.

SING TOGETHER

“Meditation on Breathing,” a round in three parts

Unitarian Universalist Association supplemental hymnal, Singing the Journey, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kijYkPlvR6g

READING

“We Awaken in Christ’s Body”  
Symeon the New Theologian

We awaken in Christ’s body as Christ awakens our bodies, and my poor hand is Christ, He enters my foot, and is infinitely me.

I move my hand, and wonderfully my hand becomes Christ, becomes all of Him (for God is indivisibly whole, seamless in His Godhood).

I move my foot, and at once He appears like a flash of lightning. Do my words seem blasphemous? — Then open your heart to Him.

and let yourself receive the one who is opening to you so deeply. For if we genuinely love Him, we wake up inside Christ’s body.
where all our body, all over,
eyour most hidden part of it,
is realized in joy as Him,
and He makes us, utterly, real,

and everything that is hurt, everything
that seemed to us dark, harsh, shameful,
maimed, ugly, irreparably
damaged, is in Him transformed
and recognized as whole, as lovely,
and radiant in His light
he awakens as the Beloved
in every last part of our body.

SONG
“Somos el cuerpo de Cristo (We are the Body of Christ)” CCS 337

BECOMING WHOLE: A REFLECTION THROUGH IMAGES
Invite the congregation to gather in small groups (4-5 people) that include a variety of ages. Give the group two minutes between each image to share together how all the parts make up the whole. You can project corresponding images or just share each one verbally. How do all the parts work together for the whole to thrive?

Ocean
Forest
Human Body
Garden
The World

SING TOGETHER
“Blessed Is the Body and the Soul” CCS 238
Or “In My Life, Lord” CCS 602

COMMUNAL PRACTICE: WHOLENESS OF BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT
Invite each person to consider themselves as a whole person.

How do the body, mind, heart, and spirit work together in each of us? How do all the parts of you work together for you to thrive? Each group will receive masking tape or sidewalk chalk to put on the floor in the shape of a plus sign, and a handout (at the back of this resource).

Encourage the group to write or draw on the handout how they are feeling today in each of the quadrants (mind, body, spirit, heart). Let the group know that sometimes it’s difficult to talk about our whole selves, and we honor that for some this will be a challenge. Let them know that it’s OK to share at your own comfort level.

After a time of reflection with the handout (consider using meditative music here), invite the group to take turns standing in each quadrant (if they are able) to share about how they are feeling in that part of their being. Share with the group that this is a way to embody reflecting on our whole selves.

After the small groups have shared, invite the community back to their seats to share in the larger group on these questions.

What was it like to pay attention to your whole self?
Do you sense God’s invitation in your body, mind, heart, or spirit this day?

SING TOGETHER
“Christ Be In Your Senses” CCS 579
Or “Come Now, You Hungry” CCS 227

WHOLENESS FOR THE WORLD: WE ARE ONE
Let’s spend a few moments examining the ways in which we are all connected.

Take a deep breath in and give thanks for trees and plants converting carbon dioxide into oxygen.

Pause for reflection.

Remember everything that you have eaten and drunk so far today. Think of every individual ingredient and where it came from; the water that sustains all life and covers the globe, perhaps the coffee beans harvested from Columbia or Guatemala, the fruit picked in the fields of California or Mexico, vegetables from nearby gardens or farms.

Every bite, every breath, everything that sustains your existence today comes from the planet. Give thanks for the Earth which is our home and very life.

Pause for reflection.
Take a moment to look at the clothes and shoes you are wearing right now. If you can, check the label or have a friendly neighbor check it for you. In what nation was your clothing produced? Consider the workers in the factory. Consider the journey it made across continents or oceans or states to be on your body this day.

_Pause for reflection._

Take a look around this room and notice the people here. Consider how this experience would be different if just one person were missing from this room. Think of those you have talked with today, who has made you smile, who has affected your life in some way.

_Pause for reflection._

Take another deep breath and notice how we are breathing in and out the breaths that have entered and exited one another’s bodies in this room. Notice how we belong to one another here and now. Notice how we are one. Notice how we are whole.

_Pause for reflection._

Now hold in your heart the whole world. In this moment, people are laughing and working, crying and singing, eating and starving, working for peace and living through war. In this moment, pollutants are entering rivers and people are picking up trash. In this moment, we are divided over politics and we are united in a deeper love. In this moment, hearts are beating, longings are emerging, someone is hoping for a better tomorrow. Everything that is happening is impacting everything else.

The scriptural proclamation, “when one suffers, we all suffer; when one rejoices, we all rejoice” is as biological as it is spiritual. Where are we suffering and rejoicing as members of one another in this sacred creation?

_Pause for reflection._

We pray for wholeness of body, mind, and spirit for God’s sacred world of which we are one part. We are one.

**CLOSING SONG**

“We are One in the Spirit”

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**POSTLUDE**
Optional Sharing: Turn to a neighbor to share the words you chose this day or invite the community to share “popcorn style” in the larger group the word or phrase they chose for breathing in and then for breathing out.

SING TOGETHER

“Meditation on Breathing,” a round in three parts

Unitarian Universalist Association supplemental hymnal, Singing the Journey, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kijYkPlvR6g

OPENING PRAYER

Reading

Every breath can be a doorway to awareness and awakening. This is why attending to one’s breath is such a foundational practice in all spiritual traditions. Its important place in Christian spirituality has often been overlooked; yet the foundation of breath prayer as a Christian practice is grounded in the creation story, which speaks of God forming humans from the dust of the earth but animating them with God’s own breath. Each breath we receive is a gift of God, drawing God into our very being. Attending to our breathing, is therefore, a prayerful way of opening ourselves to God—an opening that can be an awakening.

—David Benner, Spirituality and the Awakening Self
INVITATION TO PRACTICE: EMBRACE FORMATION

Supplies: clay, wipes or paper towels

Consider using this instrumental video Potter and the Clay, with images of the potter and clay during this practice: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdXMsAWZ1B4

Pass out a piece of clay to each person.

Spend a few moments holding the clay in your hands. Consider how this clay represents the substance of you that has taken on new form over time.

For the next few minutes, shape the clay in your hands. We invite you to do this as reflectively and silently as possible. What image or symbol emerged for you as you worked your clay? Allow the clay to take a shape that represents where you are currently in your journey of spiritual formation. How are you being formed in your relationship with God?

Play 5-10 minutes of instrumental music as people shape their clay.

SING TOGETHER

“God the Sculptor of the Mountains” CCS 21
Or “Yo quiero ser (I want to Be)” CCS 498

INVITATION TO SHARE

How are you being formed in your relationship with God? What image or symbol emerged for you as you worked your clay?

SING TOGETHER

“Spirit of the Living God” CCS 567

EMBRACE FORMATION TOGETHER

Depending on how much time passes, it may be helpful to have water available for each group to soften the clay again.

Break into small groups with a variety of ages. Each of us has been formed in unique ways on our spiritual journeys. In your small group, we invite you to do something that might be challenging. Take your piece of clay and join it with the clay of the other members of your group. We bring the substance of ourselves into community and offer it as we are being formed as members of the whole.

In her book, Christianity For the Rest of Us, Diana Butler Bass describes congregations who are open to the Spirit by saying that they didn’t treat “tradition as a museum piece to be guarded; rather, they understood it as the clay of Christian experience—materials that successive generations of believers must craft with faithful care.”

Similarly, we are reminded in Doctrine and Covenants 162, “Be respectful of tradition and sensitive to one another, but do not be unduly bound by interpretations and procedures that no longer fit the needs of a worldwide church. ...The spirit of the Restoration is not locked in one moment of time, but is instead the call to every generation to witness to essential truths in its own language and form. Let the Spirit breathe.”

As a group, use your clay to allow a symbol to emerge of who God is forming us to be as we move into God’s future. How are we to craft the substance of what has been with careful care for this time? How is God forming this church, this community?

Play instrumental music in the background as the groups work together. After about 10 minutes, invite the small groups to return their focus to the larger group.

LARGE GROUP SHARING

There may not be time for every group to share, so invite individuals to share as they feel led.

1. How did it feel to contribute your personal symbol to the larger community? Was it challenging? Liberating? Empowering?
2. What symbol emerged as you worked the clay with the group?
3. How is God forming us now and for the future?

SING TOGETHER

“Spirit of the Living God” CCS 567

READING

“In Your Hands”

Katie Harmon-McLaughlin

What I notice in the forming
Is your touch, O God.
In your hands is the substance of us.
We are made and remade
Forms changing over time
You are the One who is molding.
We consent or resist.
There is never a moment
That we are out of your hands.

It isn't the shape we take
That catches my breath in wonder.
It's the relationship that makes the shape.

Like a potter with clay,
Mystery and intimacy
Question and closeness.

Who are you forming us to be?
We ask in yearning
Sometimes forgetting
That deeper than the seeing
Is the holding
Is the forming
Is the hand of the One
Who is our life
Always shaping and molding
Making all things new
Never letting go.

BLESSING THE CLAY

Ask one person from each group to bring their symbol forward and place it on the worship center. Encourage worship participants to examine the forms after the service has ended. Consider asking evangelists or other spiritual leaders in the community to offer:

- **Prayer of blessing for our personal spiritual formation**
- **Prayer of blessing for our communal spiritual formation**

CLOSING SONG

“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”  CCS 53

PRESIDER

Go in peace!

POSTLUDE
PRELUDE MUSIC

GATHERING SONGS
“T Will Sing, I Will Sing” Community of Christ Sings 112
“Halle, Halle, Hallelujah” CCS 86
“Jubilate Deo” CCS 123

OPENING PRACTICE: BREATHE PRAYER

Invite the community to take a deep breath and let out a sigh. Especially encourage children to participate.

Notice how your breath feels in your body. Pay attention to the rise and fall of your own chest. Let’s take three deep breaths together.

Choose a word that represents what you want to breathe in, to receive for yourself this day. (Love, peace, hope, joy, renewal, courage)

Then choose a word that represents what you want to breathe out to offer to the community and the world this day. (Love, peace, hope, joy, renewal, courage)

Let’s spend a few moments in silence breathing together, using the words to guide us. With every breath in, repeat in your heart the word that represents what you want to receive. With every breath out, repeat in your heart the word that represents what you want to give.

Optional Sharing: Turn to a neighbor to share the words you chose this day or invite the community to share “popcorn” style in the larger group the word or phrase they chose for breathing in and then for breathing out.

SING TOGETHER

“Meditation on Breathing,” a round in three parts

Unitarian Universalist Association supplemental hymnal, Singing the Journey, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kijYkPfvR6g

OPENING PRAYER

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 58:9-12, The Message

Use the PowerPoint “Praying with Scripture: Isaiah 58” at http://www.cofchrist.org/reunion-resources-2018

If you do not have projection capabilities, read the text slowly two times and invite people to imagine each image in the text, paying attention to the image that most captures their attention.
If you get rid of unfair practices, quit blaming victims, quit gossiping about other people’s sins, if you are generous with the hungry and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out, your lives will begin to glow in the darkness, your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight. I will always show you where to go. I’ll give you a full life in the emptiest of places—firm muscles, strong bones. You’ll be like a well-watered garden, a gurgling spring that never runs dry. You’ll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew, rebuild the foundations from out of your past. You’ll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again. —Isaiah 58: 9-12, The Message

INVITATION TO SHARE
Especially encourage children and youth to participate.

• What image in the scripture spoke to the children and youth?
• What words, phrases, or images captured your attention?
• Where is God’s invitation for restoration in your life, church, community, or our world?

SING TOGETHER
“God, Renew Us by Your Spirit” CCS 237
Or “Breathe on Me, Breath of God” CCS 190

SCRIPTURE READING
The restoring of persons to healthy or righteous relationships with God, others, themselves, and the earth is at the heart of the purpose of your journey as a people of faith.
—Doctrine and Covenants Section 163:2b

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE
Circles of Blessing (adapted from missionalleaders.org)
It will be helpful for those following this practice for the first time to have the statements for each “circle of blessing” projected.

Invite the congregation to consider the scripture that was just read. We are invited to experience restoration in every part of our lives, in all the circles of relationship we share. Invite older children and youth to think especially of friends and family members as they engage this practice.

STEPS
The leader of the practice will read each step and provide a couple minutes of silent space between each statement for the congregation to engage in prayer. It may be helpful to have soft, meditative music playing in the background; soft enough that the voice of the leader can still be easily heard. Remind the congregation that we are invited into silence, which is a quality of the heart. If there are little noises around us, that is OK. We relax into the Spirit’s invitation to this time of prayer amid the realities of where we are.

1. Close your eyes and become aware of your breathing. Take a few moments to breathe in and out without striving to control it. Gradually allow yourself to feel settled and to feel a calm descend over you.

2. Begin with the first circle of blessing for yourself. Silently repeat the prayer until you feel your heart become soft and receptive.
May I be blessed with loving kindness.
May I be blessed with health.
May I be blessed with true happiness.
May I be blessed with peace.

3. When ready, pray the second circle of blessing for someone very close to you—a life partner, close friend, family member. It may help to visualize this person as you repeat this blessing. Again, pray until your heart feels full of loving compassion for this person.
May they be blessed with loving kindness.
May they be blessed with health.
May they be blessed with true happiness.
May they be blessed with peace.

4. When ready, begin to pray the third circle of blessing for someone you know only casually or distantly. Perhaps someone you work with, go to school with, or know of—someone outside your circle of close friends. It may help to visualize this person as you pray this blessing for them.

May they be blessed with loving kindness.
May they be blessed with health.
May they be blessed with true happiness.
May they be blessed with peace.

5. Now think of someone who has hurt you or with whom you have conflict. This is the fourth circle of blessing. Spend as much time here as you are able. Be aware of the feeling of openness and release what accompanies this prayer of blessing on those whom you feel wounded by. Visualize the blessing covering them or filling them.

May they be blessed with loving kindness.
May they be blessed with health.

6. Return to the prayer of blessing for yourself. Returning to yourself may be helpful if you’ve been praying for an especially difficult person.

May I be blessed with loving kindness.
May I be blessed with health.
May I be blessed with true happiness.
May I be blessed with peace.

INVITATION TO SHARE

- What was your experience of this practice?
- How is the Spirit inviting you to experience restoration in all the circles of relationship in your life?

SING TOGETHER

“Blest Be the Tie that Binds” CCS 325
Or “Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love” CCS 367

CLOSING PRAYER

POSTLUDE
WHOLENESS OF BODY, MIND, SPIRIT

Pay attention to how you are feeling today in each of the four quadrants. Take time to be present to your whole self.

Do you sense God’s invitation in one or all of these quadrants?

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Meditation on Breathing

When I breathe in, I'll breathe in peace. When I breathe in, I'll breathe in peace.

Breathe in, Breathe out,

out, I'll breathe out love. When I breathe out, I'll breathe out love.

Breathe in, Breathe out

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