

THE RADIX PROJECT  
*small groups / deep roots*



**GRATITUDE**  
GRATITUDE  
*gratitude*

**SPRING 2023**

**GRATITUDE**



SAINT MARK'S  
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL



# THE RADIX PROJECT

*www.saintmarks.org/radix*

Since early 2020, Radix has offered the opportunity for small groups to meet over the course of six weeks to share stories, study scripture, and pray for one another.

A small group is a cohort of people who gather to get to know one another against the backdrop of shared stories, scripture, and prayer. This is not a working group; there is no task to be accomplished. It is about knowing one another, and being known, as we are known by God. And that is the root of spiritual transformation.

The name for this communal effort, *radix*, is the Latin word for “root.” Jesus modeled small group relationships in his life and ministry, and the early Church was structured on small groups who worshipped, prayed, and cared for one another. Those are our roots, and in our time, when so many pressures of modern life leave us feeling alone and isolated, Christian community offers us a tangible way of entering into relationships rooted in trust and mutuality.

The root word, *radix*, also gives rise to the oft-touted word we hear a lot these days—radical. A radical is not one who goes their separate way, doing their own thing. A radical is one who is so well-grounded with deep roots that they are able to stretch out to the fringes of existence and offer us all a different way of being in the world. We speak of radical hospitality or radical welcome because we claim our deep roots of this life in Christ, and we are willing to claim a radical vision for our lives and for the world.

We don't always agree—politically, theologically, and we have different life experiences—but we care for one another, we pray for one another, and the blush of life is more full because of those relationships. It is our hope that as you reflect on these stories, you might discover how God's graceful activity is revealed in your own life as well, and in those of your group members. ♦

# THE RADIX PROJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE

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## OVERVIEW FOR SMALL GROUPS

Small groups are designed to gather people of faith in settings that foster trust so that our relationships with God and one another are strengthened. When we meet each other for earnest conversation, sharing, and prayer, we deepen the bonds of affection by which we learn how to love ourselves, each other, and God more fully. In this way, small groups are intentional about providing space for prayerful support and accountability, guided by the One we know as Jesus the Christ.

For our purposes in the Radix Project, we have designed a process for guiding 6–10 people in their season together, designed as six 90-minute sessions, with a plenary gathering before the first session. Each small group gathering is structured to open with prayer, to have time for check-in, scripture reading and reflection, sharing of stories, and check-out with prayer.

# SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

## OPENING PLENARY

### GRATITUDE

Sunday, April 23, 2023  
7–8 p.m., online via Zoom only

### SESSION 1:

**JOHN 20:11-18** . . . . . week of April 23, 2023\*

### SESSION 2:

**PSALM 30** . . . . . week of April 30, 2023

### SESSION 3:

**ACTS 27:20-44** . . . . . week of May 7, 2023

### SESSION 4:

**1 SAMUEL 2:1-10** . . . . . week of May 14, 2023

### SESSION 5:

**EXODUS 15:19-21** . . . . . week of May 21, 2023

### SESSION 6:

**MATTHEW 6:19-24** . . . . . week of May 28, 2023

*\*Sunday groups begin on April 30 and conclude on June 4.*

# RADIX 10: GRATITUDE

The trending effects of the word “gratitude” can be seen in a quick Google search—creating lists to be more grateful, or how gratitude buoys resilience, reduces stress, and lowers blood pressure. While some of these benefits may show up in conversation in Radix 10, we invite you to think about how a theology of gratitude orients us to a dependence and ready appreciation for God in all things.

At the core of our humanity, we acknowledge God as the giver of life – of breath, of being. How we extend this practice shapes our emotions, actions, and relationships. When we say thank you, we connect our experience to God as giver. This gratitude is at the heart of the Eucharist each week—coming from the Greek word *eucharistia*—giving thanks. When we gather for Eucharist, we say thank you and are reminded of the full presence of Christ to mark our steps out into the world. There is presence, power, and transformation in the act of thank you.

The confluence of the Easter season, longer days of sunlight, and springtime afford a special opportunity to discuss gratitude in community together. We are, after all, Easter people, responding to resurrection in and around us, having examined and prepared for the ongoing work of Lent in our lives.

The six stories in scriptures we have chosen ask us to consider gratitude despite grief, longing and waiting, uncertainty, challenge and strife. In observing these characters in their story, we hope that you may see the connections within your own—how a rhythm of gratitude prepares us to encounter the divine in creation, in others, and in ourselves.

When we share these encounters of the Holy with one another, we experience communal thanksgiving of God’s presence in our lives. Embracing and deepening a spiritual practice of gratitude imprints a way of love that becomes memory for the heart and calibration for the mind.

In showing up, in paying attention, in being present with one another, may we continually ask: “Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know him and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things” (BCP, *A General Thanksgiving*, p. 836).

## ESTABLISH GROUP NORMS

In order to grow in trust, it is important for groups to agree to norms for their time together and revisit them periodically as needed. It is important that everyone agree to abide by the same expectations for their time together. Here are some aspects of relational group culture that all groups will want to discuss as they begin their work.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- ◆ What is allowed to be shared outside the group?
- ◆ What may be shared on social media?

### **RESPECT AND MUTUALITY**

- ◆ Let others finish without being interrupted.
- ◆ Resist the temptation to problem-solve.
- ◆ Mutual respect is essential.
- ◆ Give everyone a chance to speak.

### **LOGISTICS**

- ◆ What are expectations about beginning and ending on time?
- ◆ ...about informing others of an expected absence?

### **ATTENDANCE**

- ◆ Be punctual.
- ◆ Commit to regular attendance and participation.

### **PREPARATION**

- ◆ What, if anything, are group members expected to do to prepare for their meetings?

### **COMMITMENT TO PRAYER**

- ◆ What are expectations that each group member commits to pray for the others daily during this time as a small group?

# ZOOM ETIQUETTE

Keep your microphone on mute when not speaking.

Take responsibility to practice using the technology ahead of the meeting, and ask for help as needed. Zoom resources are available at *support.zoom.us*

## FLOW OF THE SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

A key to the flourishing of small groups is some consistency week to week so folks will know what to expect. A group facilitator will encourage the group to stay on track, but everyone has a part in making that happen. Here is the suggested format for all Radix groups, which are designed to meet for 90 minutes each week:

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>GATHERING</b> . . . . .                           | 5 minutes   |
| <b>OPEN IN PRAYER</b> . . . . .                      | 5 minutes   |
| <b>CHECK-IN QUESTION</b> . . . . .                   | .10 minutes |
| <b>SCRIPTURE REFLECTION</b> . . . . .                | .20 minutes |
| <b>GROUP DISCUSSION</b> . . . . .                    | .30 minutes |
| <b>CHECK-OUT INCLUDING PRAYER REQUESTS</b> . . . . . | .10 minutes |
| <b>CLOSING PRAYER/WORSHIP</b> . . . . .              | .10 minutes |



# IDEAS FOR CHECK-IN QUESTIONS

*Pick one for each week.*

- ◆ “We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.” (BCP, *A General Thanksgiving*, p. 836) Who in your life shows you loving care?
- ◆ Think back on your day or week. What is something for which you are grateful? Or, where have you noticed a small act of kindness?
- ◆ What is a ministry at Saint Mark’s for which you are grateful? What about the ministry sparks gratitude?
- ◆ Who is a teacher, role model, or mentor whose advice you still “channel” or remember in your life?
- ◆ Share one kind thing you can do for yourself this week in thanksgiving for all that you have done in the previous week.
- ◆ Think about the ways in which you move your body each day. What is one thing that your body does for you in which you can show more appreciation and awareness?
- ◆ What parts of nature do you experience and/or attend to with gratitude?
- ◆ What is an area or item in your living space that brings you deep connection, calm or joy? If you can’t think of something, what might be an idea for creating this space?

# OPENING AND CLOSING PRAYERS/CHECK-OUT

Leading one another in prayer is a responsibility that is meant to be shared among the group—it's not just for the facilitator. Decide how your group will share taking turns with opening and closing prayers. Prayers may be extemporaneous, or sourced from the rich variety of resources, some of which are listed below:

- ◆ Thanksgivings, BCP, p. 836–841
- ◆ Daily Devotions, BCP, p. 137–140
- ◆ Compline, BCP, p. 127
- ◆ A brief hymn, chant, or Taizé prayer
- ◆ A poem that connects to a theme in the scripture selection
- ◆ Lectionary-based Prayers from Vanderbilt Divinity School  
<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/prayers.php?id=154>
- ◆ The Book of Common Prayer Online  
<https://www.bcponline.org/>
- ◆ The New Zealand Prayer Book Online  
<https://anglicanprayerbook.nz/>
- ◆ The Work of the People  
<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/visual-liturgy>  
<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/be-still>

- ◆ Closing prayer is an opportunity for each member of the group to reflect on the time together, articulating what they learned, and to ask the group to hold them in prayer with special intention. That intention may have arisen in the context of the meeting, or it could be that you are asking for prayers for some prevailing part of your life (e.g., my child has surgery next week, or I am retiring from work, etc.). The important thing is that the prayers of the group gather all those intentions up as the meeting comes to an end, AND that each person commits to holding those prayers through the week, until you meet again.

In addition to including a prayer from one of the above resources, consider the following:

- ◆ The group may choose to go around and allow each person to pray for the person sitting to their right, with the facilitator opening and closing.
- ◆ Alternatively, after the intentions are named, sit in silent prayer, centered on God's mercy and presence.



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# SCRIPTURE STUDY GUIDES

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# WEEK 1

## SCRIPTURE

*John 20: 11–18*

**B**UT Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her. ♦

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. This is the only account of the resurrection in which Mary Magdalene is the sole visitor to the tomb. How do you think that might shift the perspective of the story?
3. Just after telling Mary Magdalene not to hold onto him because he has “not yet ascended to the Father,” Jesus affirms their kinship (“my father and your father”). How do you think this exchange affects Mary?

### **GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. This scripture presents a dramatic series of revelations and events. Have you ever experienced multiple life-changing revelations or events within a similarly short time frame? How did this experience affect you? What did you learn about yourself?
2. Mary Magdalene’s joy inspires her to share the good news of Jesus’ resurrection. When have you been so overwhelmed with joy that you couldn’t wait to share it?
3. When has a time of sorrow in your life been interrupted by the divine? How did you express your gratitude?



*Appearance of Jesus Christ to Maria Magdalene*  
by Alexander Andreyevich Ivanov, 1834–1835



Ivanov was a Russian painter who adhered to the waning tradition of Neoclassicism, so was not appreciated by his contemporaries. He was born and died in St. Petersburg, Russia. He has been called the master of one work, because it took 20 years (1837–1857) to complete his magnum opus, *The Appearance of Christ Before the People*. In 1835 he finished *Appearance of Jesus Christ to Maria Magdalene*. The painting was well received both in Rome and St. Petersburg. The Russian Imperial Academy of Arts granted Ivanov an honorary academic degree in 1836.

1. What does the painting suggest to you about the relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus?
2. What does Mary Magdalene's posture and the expression on her face reveal about what she's feeling?
3. What do you see in Jesus' face?

#### NOTES

## WEEK 2

### SCRIPTURE

*Psalm 30*

**I** WILL extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up  
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

O LORD my God, I cried to you for help,  
and you have healed me.

O LORD, you brought up my soul from Sheol,  
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

Sing praises to the LORD, O you his faithful ones,  
and give thanks to his holy name.

For his anger is but for a moment;  
his favor is for a lifetime.

Weeping may linger for the night,  
but joy comes with the morning.

As for me, I said in my prosperity,  
“I shall never be moved.”

By your favor, O LORD,  
you had established me as a strong mountain;  
you hid your face;  
I was dismayed.

To you, O Lord, I cried,  
and to the Lord I made supplication:

“What profit is there in my death,  
if I go down to the Pit?

Will the dust praise you?  
Will it tell of your faithfulness?

Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me!

O Lord, be my helper!”

You have turned my mourning into dancing;  
you have taken off my sackcloth  
and clothed me with joy,

so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.

O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever. ♦

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about the Psalm?
2. What does this Psalm express about the relationship between humans and God?
3. Most of the Psalm is written in the first person, except for the fourth and fifth verses. What do you think about that shift?

### **GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. It can be difficult when wrestling with something to “turn off” at night. Yet it can also be true that we can see a problem in a new light in the morning. Share a time when this has happened for you.
2. Have you experienced praying to God and received healing? How is healing related—or not—to an answered prayer?
3. How does the act of expressing gratitude—to God, a loved one, a friend, a stranger—help us? How might gratitude help us be hopeful especially in hard times?



*Truly Grateful*, self portrait  
by Beverly McIver (2011)  
North Carolina Museum of Art

After the death of her mother, Beverly McIver fulfilled a promise to become a caregiver for her sister, who is disabled. In time, her sister was able to move into an apartment complex that provides housing for people with disabilities, allowing McIver time and space to focus on her art.

1. How does the use of color in this painting add to the overall effect?
2. What emotion do you feel when looking at this portrait?
3. The figure is slightly off center. Do you think this adds or detracts from it, and why?

**NOTES**

## WEEK 3

### SCRIPTURE

*Acts 27: 20–44*

*New Revised Standard Version*

**W**HEN neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest raged, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.

Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul then stood up among them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and thereby avoided this damage and loss. I urge you now to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For last night there stood by me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before the emperor; and indeed, God has granted safety to all those who are sailing with you.’ So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. But we will have to run aground on some island.”

When the fourteenth night had come, as we were drifting across the sea of Adria, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. So they took soundings and found twenty fathoms; a little farther on they took soundings again and found fifteen fathoms. Fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. But when the sailors tried to escape from the ship and had lowered the boat into the sea, on the pretext of putting out anchors from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.” Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat and set it adrift.

Just before daybreak, Paul urged all of them to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have been in suspense and remaining without food, having eaten nothing. Therefore I urge you to take some food, for it will help you survive; for none of you will lose a hair from your heads.” After he had said this, he took bread; and giving

thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat. Then all of them were encouraged and took food for themselves. (We were in all two hundred and seventy-six persons in the ship.) After they had satisfied their hunger, they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea.

In the morning they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned to run the ship ashore, if they could. So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea. At the same time they loosened the ropes that tied the steering-oars; then hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. But striking a reef, they ran the ship aground; the bow stuck and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the force of the waves. The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none might swim away and escape; but the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, and the rest to follow, some on planks and others on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land. ♦

### *New Living Translation*

**W**HEN neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved. After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed.

Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight.

In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.” So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away. Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. “For the last fourteen days,” he said, “you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven’t eaten anything. Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.”

After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. Altogether there were 276 of us on board.

When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea. When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.

The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. But the centurion wanted to spare Paul’s life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely. ♦



### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. In verse 27:24, Paul stands up and shares with the men around him the words he received from an angel the night before: “God has granted safety to all those who are sailing with you.” These words appear to give Paul confidence and assurance of a promise being fulfilled. What other moments in scripture come to mind of God’s unfailing word being fulfilled?
3. After the harrowing sailing and days without food, Paul urged those traveling to eat. We learn that there are 276 persons on the ship who have waited in “suspense.” Paul breaks bread and gives thanks in front of them all. What would your gratitude prayer include?

### **GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Have you ever experienced a time when you had “heard” something was going to happen from someone in authority, but it was a long and difficult time until that thing happened? What emotions did you find yourself going through? Did you make alternate plans while waiting? What did you learn from the experience?
2. How might listening and discerning God’s wisdom become a source of gratitude? How might that shape your faith?
3. It seems the centurion was the instrument that God used to fulfill his word to Paul. Why do you think the centurion was protective of Paul and the prisoners?



*Snow Storm: Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*

by J. M.W. Turner, 1812

Joseph Mallord William Turner was a prominent English artist from the early 19th century who focused on creating works that depict various degrees of changing weather. The artist was determined to gain a better perspective of what it actually looked like to be in the middle of such a dangerous weather event. Turner convinced sailors to lash him to the mast so he could observe the storm in a first-person perspective. The result of his experience was this painting, which famed critic John Ruskin described as one of the “grandest statements of sea-motion, mist and light, that has ever been put on canvas.”

1. Notice the juxtaposition of darkness and light. What would your painting look like or how would you capture the experience?
2. Have you ever been on a large transport when the weather was particularly harrowing?
3. In what ways does the artist get it “right” in the piece?

#### NOTES

## WEEK 4

### SCRIPTURE

*1 Samuel 2:1–10*

**H**ANNAH prayed and said,  
“My heart exults in the LORD;  
my strength is exalted in my God.  
My mouth derides my enemies,  
because I rejoice in my victory.  
“There is no Holy One like the LORD,  
no one besides you;  
there is no Rock like our God.  
Talk no more so very proudly,  
let not arrogance come from your mouth;  
for the LORD is a God of knowledge,  
and by him actions are weighed.  
The bows of the mighty are broken,  
but the feeble gird on strength.  
Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,  
but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.  
The barren has borne seven,  
but she who has many children is forlorn.  
The LORD kills and brings to life;  
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.  
The LORD makes poor and makes rich;  
he brings low, he also exalts.  
He raises up the poor from the dust;  
he lifts the needy from the ash heap,  
to make them sit with princes  
and inherit a seat of honor.  
For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s,  
and on them he has set the world.

“He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,  
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;  
for not by might does one prevail.  
The LORD! His adversaries shall be shattered;  
the Most High will thunder in heaven.  
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;  
he will give strength to his king,  
and exalt the power of his anointed.” ♦

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. How do you interpret the opening lines, “My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in God”?
3. Why do you think Hannah’s Song was preserved? What makes it important?

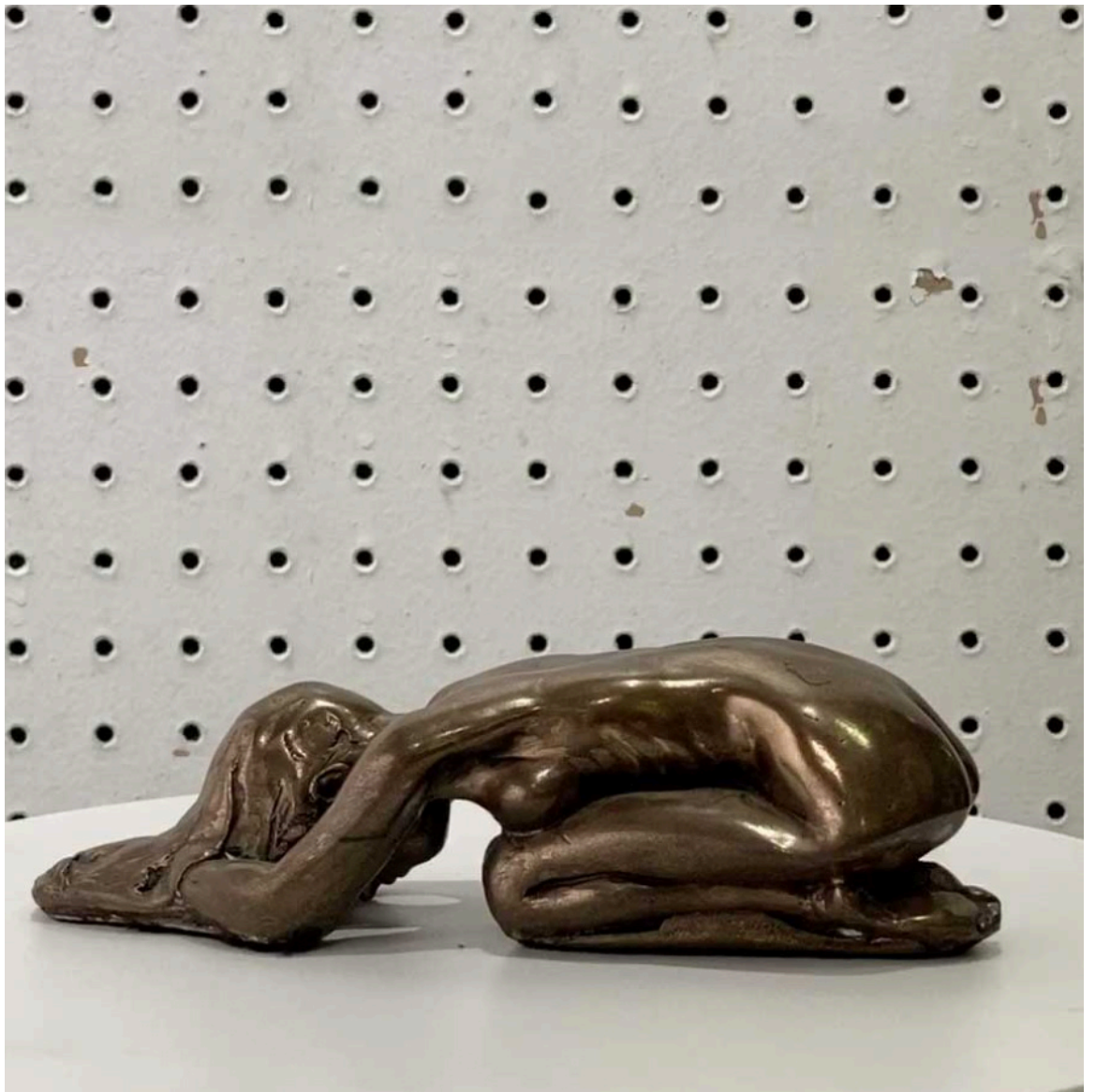
### GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How does your own life experience (and social location\*) impact your response to Hannah’s Song?
2. In what unexpected ways have you expressed your thanks and praise to God?
3. Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972) wrote that prayer “lifts people out of the triviality of existence,” giving them a sense of living “in ultimate relationships,”\*\* and this certainly applies to Hannah’s Song. How might your study of Hannah’s Song influence your own understanding of prayer?

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\* An individual’s **social location** is defined as the combination of factors including gender, race, social class, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and geographic location. This makes social location particular to each individual; that is, social location is not always exactly the same for any two individuals. (Source: the National Council on Family Relations)

\*\* Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1966), 20.



*Hannah's Prayer*

by Kwatei Nee-Owoo, 1970s

European art is highly visible in our culture and has shaped many of our interpretations of scripture. The opportunity to engage art from non-European artists provides opportunity for new perspectives. This bronze sculpture by Ghanaian artist Kwatei Nee-Owoo depicts Hannah at an earlier moment in her story as she prays to God for a child. It is a key life moment for Hannah who has struggled with her childlessness and the way this has impacted her life. She prays this prayer before learning she is pregnant, and before she lifts up her song of thanks and praise to God.

Kwatei Nee-Owoo was born into a family of artists in 1942 at Brazil House (now a museum and designated historical landmark) in Jamestown, Old Accra in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. He attended Opoku Ware Secondary School Kumasi, Ghanaata Secondary School Dodowa, and entered the College of Art, University of Science and Technology, Kumasi in 1966. After completing a year in the University, he left for the United Kingdom in 1968 to further his career as an artist. This was the decade of an explosion in music, art, and free expression. He studied at Putney College of Art in London, and later, wanting to explore the different aspects of arts, he decided on a course at the London Film School, where he graduated as a film director.

1. What feelings do you become aware of as you look at this piece?
2. How might we see (and feel) something new hearing Hannah's Song, and thinking about Hannah's honoring of her promise to give her beloved child to God, after looking at this sculpture?

#### NOTES



## WEEK 5

### **SCRIPTURE**

*Exodus 15: 19–21*

**W**HEN the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his chariot drivers went into the sea, the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them; but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground. Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea." ♦



### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. How does Miriam use the gift of song to express gratitude? How does music contribute to your experience of worship when you attend a service at Saint Mark's?
3. Miriam is named as a prophetess, one of the few specific references in scripture to this title. Why do you think this may be so?

### **GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Is there a time in which you can recall the feeling of landing on "dry ground" after not being sure of your footing in a turbulent time? What was your response when you realized you were on the other side of feeling anxious? How did you experience that in your body?
2. Miriam's taking of the tambourine serves as an invitation for the other women to join her in rejoicing. How can gratitude serve as an invitation for others to join and/or experience the love of God? How might you invite others into your practices of gratitude?
3. Miriam uses the tambourine as an instrument of gratitude. What are tangible ways that you express your gratitude to God or to people in your life?



*Miriam the Prophet* from *Women in the Bible, Exodus 14 and Exodus 15:20–21*  
by Luba Lukova  
part of the permanent collection of art at Messiah University, Pennsylvania.

Lukova was born in Plovdiv, Bulgaria and moved to the United States after traveling to participate in the Colorado International Invitational Poster Exhibition. Her work uses bold contrasts and visual metaphors to bring the viewer into a highly focused concept.

1. What do you notice about Miriam's hands in proportion to the collective image? How do you hold gratitude in your life?
2. Lukova wrote the following in an interview about the focus of her art: "*We all as people have that longing for justice. Being an artist, I try to express that through my work. In a way, I try to satisfy that need by creating my images. I think that if I'm able to speak with my art, I should use that skill to tell the truth so that many people can understand it. Because when people are able to relate to an issue, hopefully they can act and make a positive change.*" What connections could you see between cultivating gratitude and a more just world?

#### NOTES

## WEEK 6

### SCRIPTURE

*Matthew 6:1-24*

**J**ESUS said, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and wealth.” ♦

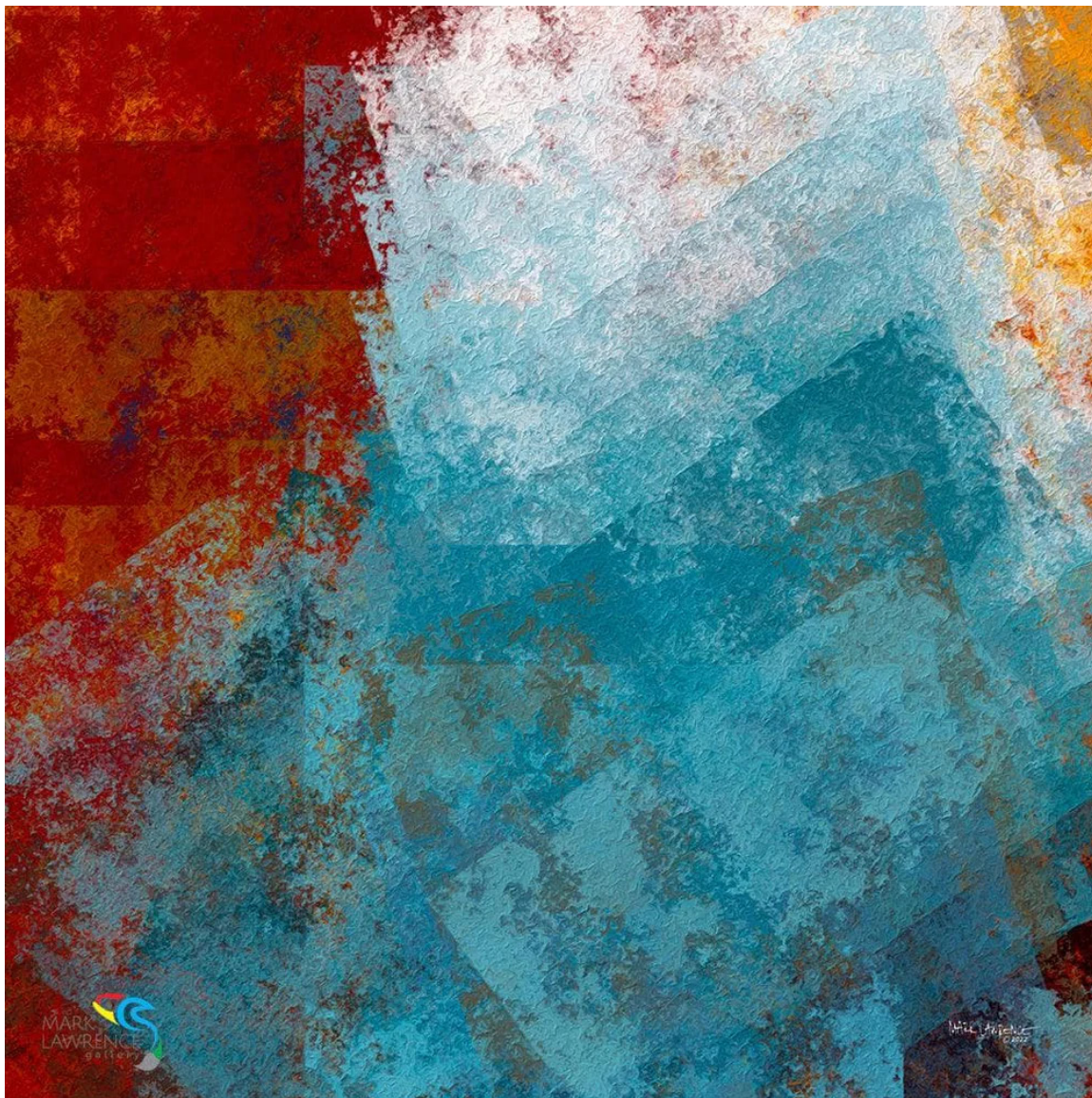
### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. Perhaps the most known line in this particular scripture selection is, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” How does his passage relate to the Radix 10 theme of gratitude, for you personally, and in the larger world?
3. The passage refers to the eyes as the “lamp of the body.... If your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness.” What do you think that means? Have you had a time in your life when it felt like the light within you was in darkness? If so, how did you find your way to the inner light?

### **GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. The word “treasure” is used throughout this scripture. What is your dearest “treasure”? What would it mean for you to have this treasure consumed by moths and rust? This might be a good place to penetrate the symbolism implied in the passage.
2. What comes to mind when you read the words “treasures in heaven?” If you store up treasures for yourself in heaven, what would that be?
3. The last paragraph of scripture expresses what some would call a “duality,” splitting the image of wealth and God into two distinct camps, and calling forth the image of a slave who cannot serve two masters. This was written in ancient times. What happens in your body when you read this passage? What about this passage resonates today, and what about it may need an update into the perspective of non-dual consciousness?





*Matthew 6:21. Where Is Your Treasure*  
by Mark Lawrence, 2022

The artist creates his paintings based on verses from the Bible. He cites Matthew 6:21 as his favorite: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

1. What do you feel in your body as you contemplate this painting?
2. How does it relate to your own deepest treasure? To gratitude?

**NOTES**



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