



## Prayer Practices to Nourish Primordial Hope

1. *Listening to your Body.* Close your eyes. Center your awareness on your breath. Can you feel God's presence in every breath? Be aware. Breathe slowly, in, and then out. Listen to your body, your feet on the ground of Mother Earth, your legs, core, arms, up to your face and out the top of your head where your energy merges with the energy of the air, the Cosmos, the same energy Source that goes back to the Dawn of Time. We are part of the God of Ages, before the Big Bang, and we are blessed to ground our connection to the God of the Universe in the person of Jesus Christ. Can you feel HOPE in your own body? A hope that grounds you in strength and courage, regardless of the circumstances.
2. *Listening for the Divine in Nature and the Outer World.* Walk through our Greenbelt, with a buddy. Walk in the mountains, your own backyard, your own street, or in your own room. Close your eyes. What sounds do you notice? If you are on the beach, can you hear the pause between the outgoing and incoming tide, a split second to hear the silence at the heart of the Universe?
3. *Centering Prayer.* 20 minutes, ideally twice a day. Sit. Close your eyes. Let go of all racing thoughts, return again and again to your secret word, one syllable, "tree," "God," "peace," whatever you choose. This practice trains your "monkey mind," to calm down and opens a subtle, direct channel to God.
4. *Welcoming Prayer.* When stress or conflict arises, "Oh, no, another fire!" welcome the fear. Welcome the anxiety. Welcome the sense of helplessness. Sit with it. And then, Let it Go. You can say, "I'm giving this one to God. You will be amazed how daily *Centering Prayer* meditation can train your brain, and help you Let Go in everyday life.
5. *Saint Ignatius Contemplation* taps into your imagination, one of God's greatest blessings to humankind. I will read a passage from the Bible, then I will invite you to imagine that you are *there*, interacting with the people, and the environment. Matthew 13:31-32, Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches." ---I invite you to close your eyes and imagine that you are sitting beneath the tree that has grown from the mustard seed. Birds perch in its branches. Jesus and the disciples and Mary Magdalene are there with you. What do you feel, sitting there among them?.....Can you feel the breath of the wind? The scent of the Sea of Galilee? ....What does it feel like to be in Jesus's presence?.....How do you imagine Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and the other disciples experienced the primordial force of HOPE? Choose your own favorite Bible scene and enter into it.
6. *Sing a Phrase.* One line from a hymn that brings you joy. You can sing it in the shower, walking in nature, in the vegetable market, any time you feel the weight of the world and want to feel closer to God. I'll sing, you join in. "Shepherd me, my God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life." What is a favorite phrase you love from a hymn?
7. *COMMUNITY.* Join with others, as we love Mother Earth and each other.



## Additional Resources to Consider

- From the most recent [Creation Care Newsletter](#):  
*Amidst the dire data, it could be easy to feel discouraged. Rather than feeling gloomy, I am filled with hope. Our church community provides support amidst both the challenges we face and the joys we experience. People who show up for a service or an activity are quickly welcomed in. Especially as summer activities wind down and the pace of goings-on at the church ramps up, we can continue to experience the joy of our community and welcome more people in through openness, simple acts of kindness, breaking out of our shells to talk with more people, and spending time to have meaningful conversations.* — Richard Hartung, parishioner and member of the Creation Care Ministry at Saint Mark's.
- From climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe:  
*Hope is the best weapon against climate change:*  
<https://www.katharinehayhoe.com/2023/08/23/whats-the-best-weapon-against-climate-change-hope/>
- Reading suggestions from Saint Mark's Canon for Intergenerational Ministries, Wendy Claire Barrie:  
*Not Too Late: Changing the Climate Story from Despair to Possibility*  
by Rebecca Solnit, editor (Haymarket Books, 2023)  
Eco-anxiety resources from Yale School of the Environment:  
<https://fore.yale.edu/Resources/Eco-anxiety-Resources>  
Mental Health and Climate Change 101 from Action for the Climate Emergency:  
<https://acespace.org/2022/03/31/mental-health-101/>  
Top recommendations for teens and tweens from School Library Journal:  
<https://www.slj.com/story/nineteen-top-books-for-tween-and-teen-climate-activists>  
*A Kid's Guide to Saving the Planet: It's Not Hopeless and We're Not Helpless* (ages 9-13),  
by Paul Douglas (Beaming Books, 2022) with a downloadable activity guide:  
<https://www.beamingbooks.com/store/product/9781506466392/A-Kids-Guide-to-Saving-the-Planet>  
*Finding Calm in Nature: A Guide for Mindful Kids* (ages 9-13) By Jennifer Grant (Beaming Books, 2023):  
<https://www.beamingbooks.com/store/product/9781506485133/Finding-Calm-in-Nature>  
*Old Enough to Save the Planet* (ages 8-12) by Loll Kirby (Abrams books, 2021):  
[https://www.abramsbooks.com/product/old-enough-to-save-the-planet\\_9781419749148/](https://www.abramsbooks.com/product/old-enough-to-save-the-planet_9781419749148/)  
*Here: The Dot We Call Home* (ages 5-10) by Laura Alary (Paraclete Press, 2022) with a downloadable activity guide: <https://paracletepress.com/products/here-the-dot-we-call-home>  
*We Are Water Protectors* (ages 3-8) by Carole Lindstrom and Michaela Goode:  
<https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250203557/we-are-water-protectors>
- Saint Mark's Creation Care Ministry: <https://saintmarks.org/justice/creation-care/>