

The Embodiment of God, *The Embodiment of Us*

Reflections and
Body Practices
for Advent



beautifulē



To be human in an aching world
is to **know our dignity**
and become people who
safeguard the dignity of
everything around us.

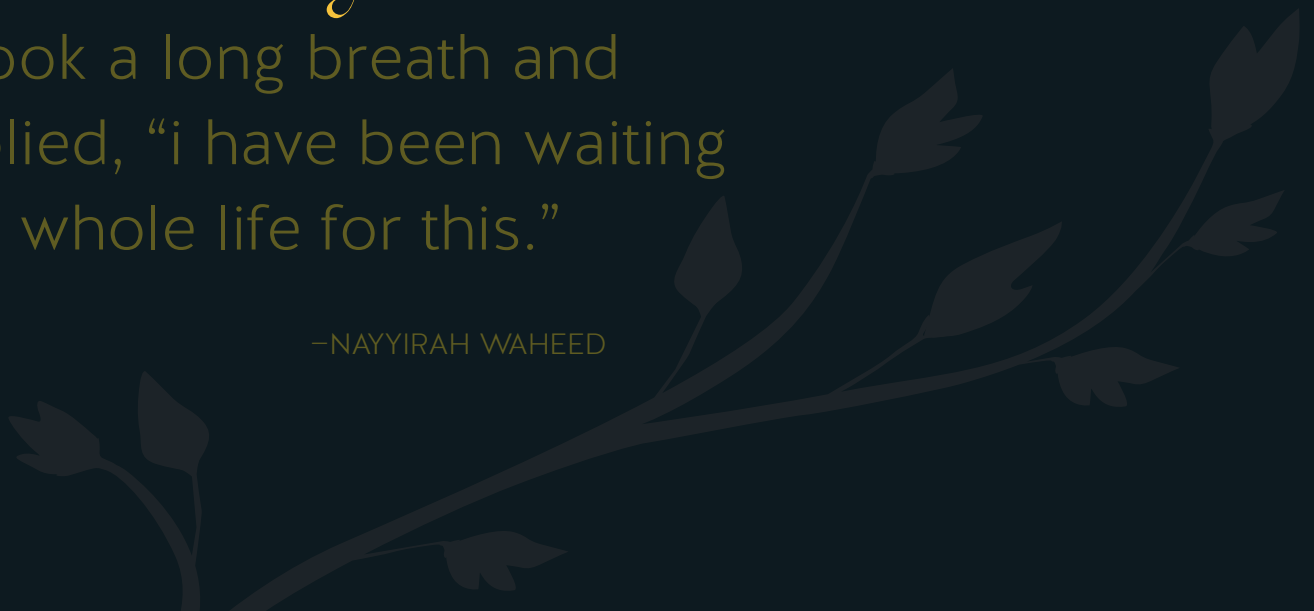
—COLE ARTHUR RILEY, *THIS HERE FLESH*

Creator's Word became a flesh-and-blood
human being and pitched his sacred tent
among us, **living as one of us.**

—JOHN 1:14, *FIRST NATIONS VERSION*

and i said to my body softly,
“i want to be your friend.”
it took a long breath and
replied, “i have been waiting
my whole life for this.”

—NAYYIRAH WAHEED





Welcome to The Embodiment

We are so glad you are here.

At Advent we take the four weeks before Christmas to anticipate and prepare for the birth of God in the person of Jesus—the arrival of Divinity in human form. At its core, Advent is a season of embodiment.

Many of us think of the incarnation as one great cosmic event, one grand moment that redeemed all time before it and shifted everything after. But this embodiment was not a one-time event. The incarnation is an ongoing and perpetual reality that we are invited into—a constant opportunity for God to become alive through us. We are invited to not simply celebrate God moving into a body, but to live it, to experience it in our flesh and bones, and to allow our hearts to be constantly renewed.

The incarnation also reminds us we belong in these bodies. Black and beautiful, vulnerable and strong. These bodies that they fear and fight, batter and bullet—are the same glorious bodies that uniquely carry the Divine. Even though we bend, we don't break. We move and flow. Our bodies feel all the rhythms of life that are pulsating within us. So when a song brings you joy, dance. When your heart is filled with sorrow, weep. When your body is tired, rest. This too is the incarnation.

As we prepare for the coming of a God-made-flesh, we invite you to slow down and sink deeper into the rhythm of your own body. Each week we share reflections and practices around themes that honor and support your body: tenderness, vulnerability, community, and stillness.

Take a deep inhale. Now slowly exhale. Breathe these words:

God moved into a body, I can move into my body too.

—Leonetta and Kimberly



How to Use This Guide



For each of the four weeks of Advent, there is a devotional reflection, a breath prayer, and two embodiment practices for the corresponding theme. You may find that one of the embodiment practices really speaks to you, and others do not. We encourage you to give them all a try but, above all else, listen to your body. Move and skip around the content of the guide as it best suits you.

On page 26, there is an Embodiment Playlist that can be played throughout all the weeks. Don't wait until the end of Advent to discover this resource! The songs were curated to support you in reflecting on the season while connecting more deeply with your body.

Finally, there are some beautiful illustrations by artist Paula Champagne included in this guide that we trust will also speak to you. We encourage you to use them as a gateway to deeper reflection using a practice of Visio Divina, or 'divine seeing.' Hold an illustration in your gaze and notice what you feel in your body in response. What stands out to you? What emotions or thoughts come to you as you look upon the image? Is there a message for you that might come through the image?

However you use the guide, let the journey be your own without judgment or expectations.



Week 1: November 28 - December 4

Tenderness

Reflection by Leonetta Elaiho

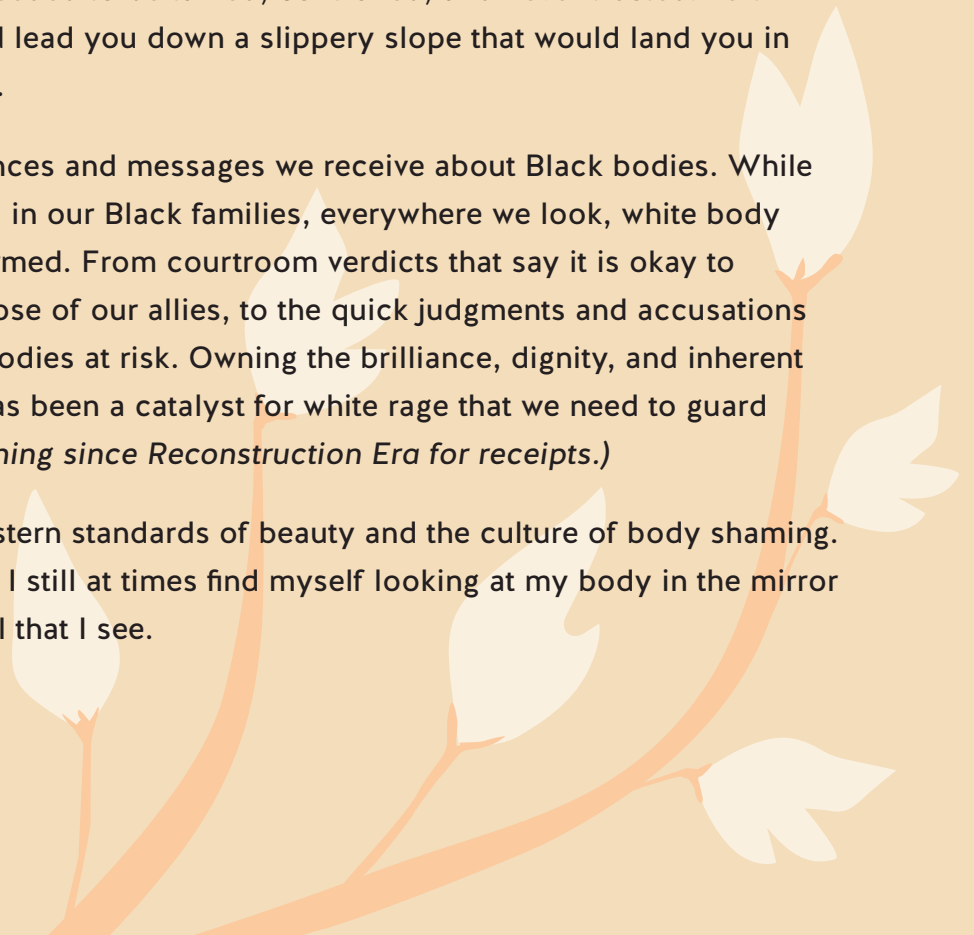


I'll admit, being at home in my body takes active work and intention.

In the Pentecostal church that I grew up in, I heard countless sermons on the 'flesh'. The summary of my takeaways would be that the flesh and its carnal nature was an enemy of progress that needed to be tamed, controlled, and never trusted. Left unchecked, its desires would lead you down a slippery slope that would land you in the hot molten center of hell.

Then add to this the experiences and messages we receive about Black bodies. While often celebrated and revered in our Black families, everywhere we look, white body supremacy is constantly affirmed. From courtroom verdicts that say it is okay to destroy Black bodies and those of our allies, to the quick judgments and accusations that consistently put Black bodies at risk. Owning the brilliance, dignity, and inherent worth of our Black bodies has been a catalyst for white rage that we need to guard ourselves from. (**See everything since Reconstruction Era for receipts.*)

Then finally there are the western standards of beauty and the culture of body shaming. While I actively reject those, I still at times find myself looking at my body in the mirror and struggling to embrace all that I see.



The messages are loud and consistent: The body does not deserve tenderness and it is not a safe home.

The word tenderness has two distinct meanings: gentleness or kindness, and also sensitivity. We can say, “that feels tender” to describe our hearts being warmed by seeing a child help a younger sibling, or to describe the pain caused when someone touches a wound or a bruised area. Tenderness invites us to be responsive to all we feel in our bodies, whether it’s the tenderness and pain of a broken heart and loss, or the tenderness of being vulnerable in love and allowing our hearts to be touched by another.

**When God chose to come and make a home in a body,
God chose tenderness.**

God chose the tender kindness of a mother’s loving embrace, and the tender heartbreak of betrayal and sorrow.

If God can find a good home in a body, perhaps we can too. Perhaps all the tender feels, the physical and emotional pains, the tender joys of delight and belonging, can all be welcomed. The sensitivity of full embodiment may not be something to shun and run from, but something to embrace.

Breath Prayer

Throughout the week, we invite you to find a few moments to center and focus on your breath.

Inhale: My tenderness is a gift.

Exhale: I am safe to feel.

Week 1 Embodiment Exercise

The Practice of Tender Touch

For many of us, our bodies suffer the abuse of our negative thoughts toward it.

If you are like me, you have been guilty of lamenting what your body used to do that it can no longer (like quickly metabolize a burger) or the changes that have set in over the years. Many of our bodies bear scars from surgeries, wounds, and traumas that are hard to look upon. Maybe you also look at your body and wish you could swap out parts to fit an ideal in your mind. This embodiment exercise is about reframing the way we see and appreciate the wonderful flesh that allows us to take up our space in this world.

What you will need:

- *Any cream or oil that feels good and nourishing on your skin (lotion, shea butter, coconut oil)*

Whatever your cleansing ritual is, think of ways to luxuriate in it a bit more this week. If you take baths, maybe you are intentional about adding epsom salt and aromatics to your bath. If your shower, maybe you lean against the shower wall and take some deep breaths as the warm water hits your body. If you bathe with a bucket, perhaps you scoop water over your skin slowly and allow yourself to feel the trickle of water over your skin. Whatever you do, do it with a little more tenderness this week.

When you have finished your cleansing ritual, take a moment to admire your body. Allow your eyes to take in all the parts you can see. If you begin to focus on something you deem an imperfection, something you wish to change, or something you don't like, gently release those thoughts and come back into admiration for all you see.

Finally, use your cream or oil to lovingly massage and tend to your skin. While moisturizing after a bath may be a normal practice you rush through, take your time to show tender love to your body through your hands. Linger longer and with more acceptance over parts of your body that you feel less desirable about. Touch your skin with the intention that you would a newborn baby. Delight in all your parts—every finger and toe, every lump and curve, every muscle and bone.

Week 1 Embodiment Exercise

The Practice of Imaginative Contemplation

Being held by God tenderly in times of contemplation has helped me connect and release things in my body. One encouragement: Contemplation can be hard for those of us who spend a lot of time in our 'heads'. But when we quiet the driving thoughts in our head, we can hear the body and the spirit more clearly.

What you'll need:

- *A quiet place to lay down and feel comfortable and safe*
- *An blanket and pillow (optional)*

Lay down where you can be uninterrupted for about 20 minutes. If it feels good to cover yourself with a blanket and to support your head, do so.

Once you are settled, close your eyes and begin to pay attention to your breath. If comfortable, your eyes can remain closed for the entire exercise.

Begin to inhale slowly (four seconds or longer), hold briefly, then exhale slowly (four seconds or longer). Do this for about two minutes or about ten breaths. If your mind starts to drift at any time throughout this exercise, just tenderly bring it back.

Once you have settled into a rhythm, begin to set an intention to your breathing. On the inhale, imagine your breath scanning your body for any tension, and on the exhale, imagine releasing or relaxing that exact tension with your breath.

As you continue scanning and releasing with your breath, feel the weight of your body on the surface you are laying on. Imagine you are being held by a source of infinite trust. Allow your mind to imagine what that source of trust is; maybe it's Christ holding you, or the hands of your ancestors, or maybe it's a field of grass or a bed of flowers holding you, or maybe you are amongst the stars. See yourself being held tenderly in whatever you see. Trust the surface is holding you and inviting you to sink deeper and release more with each breath.

Staying in this place as long as you would like, listen for any messages that might come to you from the Divine. First, in your body (what sensations are present?), then in your mind's eye (what do you feel and see in the envisioned space you are in?). Maybe there is something you want to say or express in this space. Stay here feeling, listening, and communing with the Divine as long as you would like.

When ready, allow your breathing to return to its normal pattern if you haven't already. Slowly open your eyes. If you can, journal what came up for you in this exercise.

When we drop fear, we can draw nearer to people,
we can draw nearer to the earth,
we can draw nearer to all the
heavenly creatures that surround us.

—bell hooks

You deserve to rest long enough to let whatever go.
I put my skin right next to yours to let you know that even
when you seem alone, I'm with you.

—ALEXIS PAULINE GUMBS, *UNDROWNED*



Week 2: December 5 - December 11

Vulnerability

Reflection by Kimberly Goode



Love cannot come of
emptiness. It is full of reality.

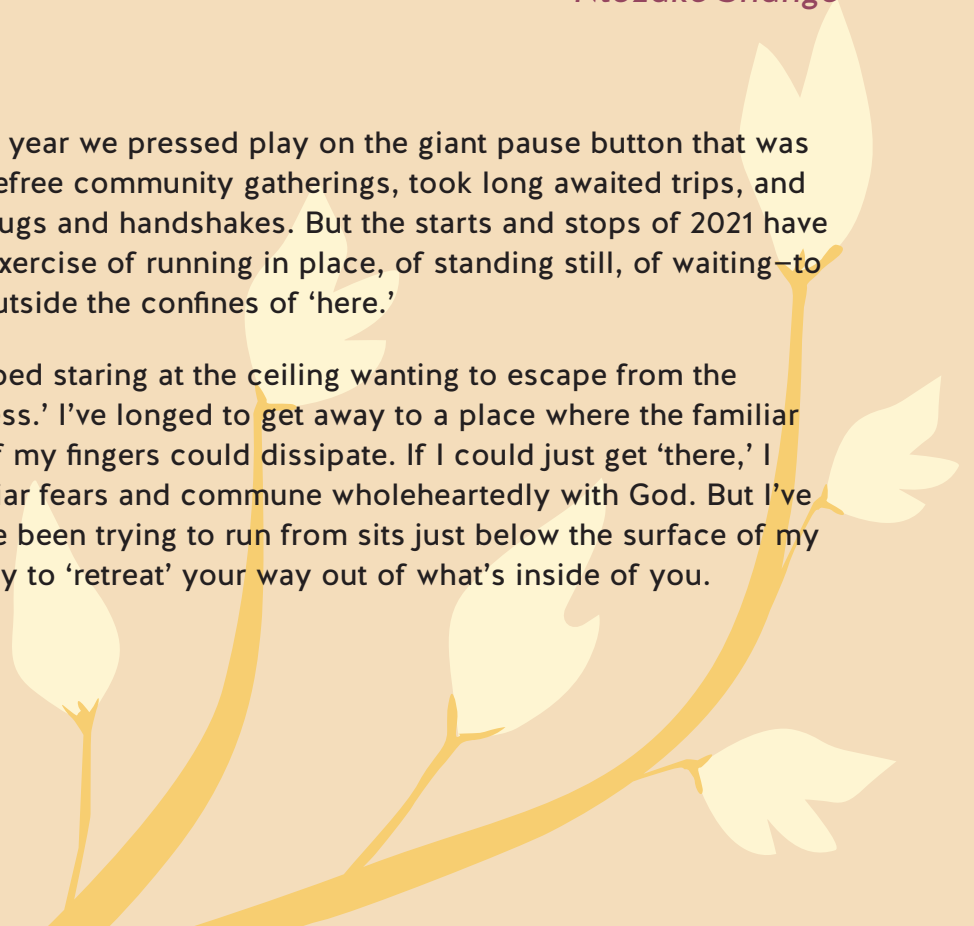
—Thomas Merton

i found god in myself and i loved her,
i loved her fiercely.

—Ntozake Shange

This was supposed to be the year we pressed play on the giant pause button that was 2020—when we resumed carefree community gatherings, took long awaited trips, and ended the awkwardness of hugs and handshakes. But the starts and stops of 2021 have made much of this year an exercise of running in place, of standing still, of waiting—to go somewhere, anywhere, outside the confines of ‘here.’

Many mornings, I’ve laid in bed staring at the ceiling wanting to escape from the emotional weight of ‘stuckness.’ I’ve longed to get away to a place where the familiar anxious tingling at the tips of my fingers could dissipate. If I could just get ‘there,’ I could leave behind my familiar fears and commune wholeheartedly with God. But I’ve come to realize that what I’ve been trying to run from sits just below the surface of my own skin. And there is no way to ‘retreat’ your way out of what’s inside of you.



It's tempting to believe that connecting to God requires rising above emotions like worry, hurt, exhaustion, and disappointment. But finding divine peace often requires sinking into our full humanity, guided by our vulnerability.

**God is a God who descends,
a God who chose to step down from the company of
heavenly hosts into the tenderness of human flesh.**

In this body, Jesus as Divine incarnation basked in every emotion. He cried out for his mother as a weaning baby, shed tears at the news of a loved one's passing (John 11:35), experienced the angers of injustice in the temple courts (Matthew 21:12), and trembled with fear when staring at death's door (Luke 22:44). It was in a body that God showed us what it means to hold the tension of divinity and humanity, healing and woundedness, grief and resurrection, birth and crucifixion—while calling it all holy, so we might become whole.

Christ incarnate is our invitation to discover God in our own bodies. To experience every emotion as Jesus did, with all the vulnerabilities of the flesh. And to know it is there, in our own body, where we truly experience the indwelling of Divine love in its perfection.

Breath Prayer

Throughout the week, we invite you to find a few moments to center and focus on your breath.

Inhale: I honor every emotion within me.

Exhale: Each one has insights to offer.



Week 2 Embodiment Exercise

The Practice of Honoring Every Emotion

“How are you?” has become such an expected conversation starter that we rarely take the time to consider the true answer. But whether we choose to acknowledge our emotions or not, they find ways to speak—to take up space in our body and mind. The simple act of naming our emotions has a way of making each one lighter, lifting the weight that ignoring and suppressing creates. This is an invitation to connect with your feelings, without judgment, and explore the beauty and sacredness of vulnerability.

What you'll need:

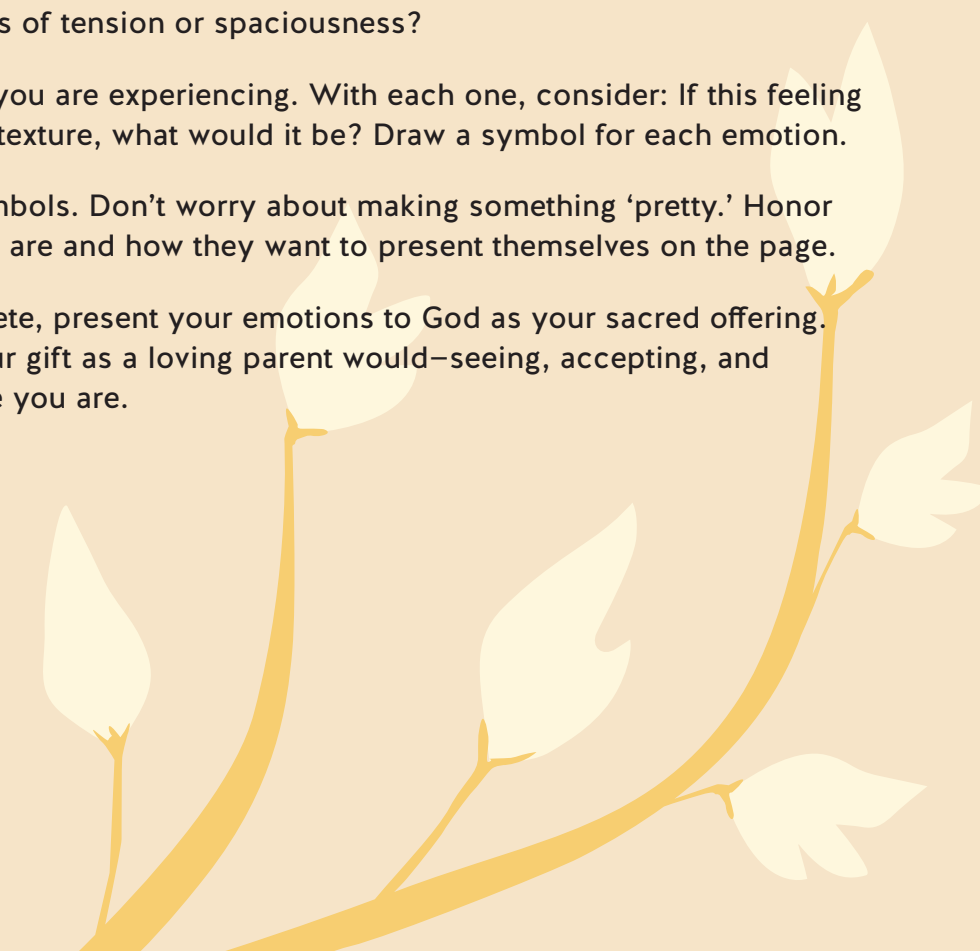
- *A piece of paper*
- *Drawing utensils, such as pencils, markers, oil pastels, or paint*

Find a space for yourself that is quiet and safe. Take a moment to connect with how you are feeling. What emotions can you identify? How does each emotion feel in your body? Are there sensations of tension or spaciousness?

Write down the emotions you are experiencing. With each one, consider: If this feeling had a shape, a color, or a texture, what would it be? Draw a symbol for each emotion.

Fill the page with your symbols. Don't worry about making something 'pretty.' Honor your emotions just as they are and how they want to present themselves on the page.

Once your piece is complete, present your emotions to God as your sacred offering. Imagine God receiving your gift as a loving parent would—seeing, accepting, and embracing you right where you are.



Week 2 Embodiment Exercise

The Practice of Imaginative Journaling

*For You have created my conscience.
You knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise You, for I am awesomely, wonderfully made!
Wonderful are Your works—
and my soul knows that very well.*

—Psalm 139:13–15, *The Tree of Life Translation*

Creator God formed each element of our being with careful consideration and intention. Our emotions, then, are a product of our divine design. What wisdom might our feelings—even the most difficult ones—have to offer us? How might we be able to see God's fingerprints through our vulnerabilities and everyday emotions?

What you'll need:

- *A quiet space for reflection*
- *A journal or something to capture your thoughts*

In the Presence of Wise Counsel

For this exercise, imagine yourself sitting in a circle of friends—each friend is one of your emotions personified. As you look around the circle, who is present? Is Hope sitting next to Anger, Grief next to Joy?

Now imagine that each emotion in this circle has something it wants you to know. Why is this emotion present in this community of friends? What does it want you to be aware of? Is Anxiety looking to protect you from something? Is Sorrow inviting you to release? Is Hope wanting to remind you of a childhood dream? Take a moment to journal what these 'friends' want to say to you.

Next, picture Jesus sitting alongside these friends. What does he add to this conversation? How does his simple presence shape the circle? Describe the intimacy in this space. What is it like to allow yourself to be completely vulnerable and fully yourself in the company of unconditional love? Take as much time as you need to journal some final thoughts.



what did I see to be except myself?
i made it up
here on this bridge between
starshine and clay

—LUCILLE CLIFTON, *WON'T YOU CELEBRATE WITH ME*

If we are to remember our cosmic origins, if we are to recognize
the star-stuff in our bodies, if we are to understand our biogenetic
connections one to another, then we need more mystery, not less.

—REV. DR. BARBARA HOLMES, *CRISIS CONTEMPLATION*

Week 3: December 12 - December 18

Community

Reflection by Leonetta Elaiho



...you in me and I in you.

—Jesus, John 14:20

Without community, there is no liberation.

—Audre Lorde

I am human. I am you. I just happen to run faster.

—Sha'Carri Richardson

I know several people who would join me in saying that 2021 has been the hardest year of their lives. And not just because the year kicked off with an insurrection led by white nationalists, a prolonged global pandemic, and continued racial traumas—but because of all the personal challenges we've had to navigate on top of that. This year I had to face some of my deepest fears. I dealt with anxiety, chronic fatigue, sadness, and heartbreak. I experienced exactly just how trauma moves you out of the body. My body became a transactional conduit—an Uber if you will—just the means to get my harried and scattered self around to all the endless tasks and commitments I had in front of me. And just like selecting the mode “passenger prefers silence,” I wasn't intentionally trying to be rude to my body-Uber, I just didn't have the energy to engage and listen. Just get me where I need to be with no hiccups and distractions, please and thank you.

But luckily the body is not easily dismissed. Even though we can try to neglect it, it's hard to hide in community. Community is the gift that our embodiment enables. In community, often our body speaks before we do. In the height of my challenges this year, community showed up for me and my family in profound ways. They changed plans, brought meals,

sacrificed sleep, listened, checked on us, hugged us, and prayed for us. The loving embrace of family and friends literally carried me through a difficult season.

I have come to know that God is a community, and community is an expression of God.

In the Trinity, God moves in perichoresis—a type of sacred dance and divine flow that moves between God’s forms—Creator, Spirit, and Son. With all our ‘starshine and clay,’ our divinity and humanity, we are invited into this dynamic community of God.

Transforming community welcomes our full humanity—our brokenness, needs, longings, traumas, our entire struggle bus. (Note: riding the struggle bus in community is always better than taking the disembodied Uber). We also bring our gifts, joys, laughter, beauty, and compassion. And community can reflect back to us what we can’t see in ourselves.

It’s possible that those descriptions may not match your experience. Many of us in Black bodies have been both hyper-visible *and* invisible in community. Or maybe you have experienced exclusion, betrayal, or isolation in community that leaves you doubtful and guarded. To this I say, choose community anyway.

God chose a community that would disappoint. From Jesus’ mama and daddy, to his handpicked closest homies, to the preachers and teachers of the time—all at some point were a colossal disappointment. But Jesus consistently chose community anyway. He still walked on water to get to community when he was lonely at night (Matthew 14:25). He still hosted a reunion BBQ for his community after being away (John 21:9). He still brought more drinks to the party despite getting into it with his mom (John 2:7). And even at the moment of his death, he was concerned about ensuring community (John 19:26). Over and over again, community.

Whether it’s your family, your friends, your work community, or any other group you belong to, bring your full embodied self. When we allow our true essence—the soul of our being where deep love resides—to show up in community, everything changes. For us, and then others.

Breath Prayer

Throughout the week, we invite you to find a few moments to center and focus on your breath.

Inhale: I stand in my sovereignty.

Exhale: I lean into community.

Week 3 Embodiment Exercise

The Practice of Eye Gazing

Eye gazing is a powerful experience of connection. If the eye is a lamp to the body (Matthew 6:22), it will illuminate the soul and what lies in our innermost intimate space. Eye gazing can provide a safe space for us to see and to be seen by another. If you have never done this before, it can be awkward and uncomfortable but try to stick with it.

What you'll need:

- *A friend, partner, or anyone you feel comfortable with who is willing to try this with you in person or virtual—both work just fine!*

When you have identified someone who is willing to engage this practice with you, set a time to be together in person or virtually. Eye gazing doesn't require any prep work or significant depth of relationship with your partner. It can happen with your best friend, life partner, or a stranger willing to engage in the exercise.

If this is your first time eye gazing, try setting a timer for 10 minutes to start. A longer experience can be more rich, so try it if you feel up to it.

Get in a comfortable sitting position close to your partner. Start the timer and begin to stare into each other's eyes. Two things to note: 1) It is impossible to stare into both eyes equally (try it if you don't believe me) so it's fine to pick one eye to focus your gaze or switch between the two. 2) You can blink! Blink as much as you need. You don't need to feign intensity for this exercise to be meaningful. Relax your gaze and settle into the experience.

What is coming up for you in your body as you gaze? If you get distracted, just bring your focus back to the gaze. Imagine yourself allowing yourself to be fully seen. Let yourself feel whatever emotions come up for you—sadness or tears, laughter or love, anger or sorrow. You may find such deep connection with your partner that you begin to mirror or connect with their emotions as well.

When the timer goes off, take a few minutes to journal and write about what the experience was like for you. What did you feel in your body? What emotions or thoughts came up for you as you processed? It's important that you hold these thoughts without judgment or self-criticism.

If it feels good to do so, exchange reflections with your partner. Notice how this experience might stir up other emotions throughout the day and week.

The Practice of Communal Cooking

In cultures across the diaspora, spices and herbs come together to create dishes that nourish the heart, spirit, and body. Whether stew or gumbos, baked confections, or barbecued meats, there is a sacredness in preparing, serving, and sharing food together in community. Sharing meals and eating together is a central part of the human experience. In many cultures, getting the whole family together working to create ethnic dishes—from the smallest to the eldest—is a ritual of community and a rite of passage.

This week, we invite you to engage in the central part of the human experience: communal preparation. Preparing and eating food together is an embodied experience that engages and delights all five senses.

What you'll need:

- *All the ingredients required for your dish or recipe*
- *A kitchen or place to cook*
- *Someone(s) to share this experience with*

Invite your community to join you in the process of preparation. This could be one person or several. Maybe this is a group of friends, children, a neighbor, or a partner.

Prepare the space for community by creating an atmosphere of delight. Maybe there is music or festive drinks that you enjoy while you prepare the dish.

Take your time with your community to enjoy the process of preparing the dish or recipe. This is less about getting through the steps and more about the process of co-creation. Here are some things to consider discussing:

- What does the dish mean to you or your family
- Are there stories about the dish from your childhood that you can share?
- Are there origin details about the dish or its ingredients that may not be known?

All these prompts center the dish or recipe, but really you can use the time with your community to talk, laugh, and connect about anything.

If possible, make it a point to 'break bread together' when finished. Share a prayer of gratitude for the gift of sustenance and the gift of community. Whether you made cookies or cakes, or sat down together for a full meal, enjoy each other and all the embodied feelings cooking and eating together can bring.

He is the visible representation of our invisible Creator.

—**COLOSSIANS 1:15, FIRST NATIONS VERSION**

Learn to be quiet enough to hear the genuine in yourself,
so that you can hear it in others.

—**MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN**

Our bodies are a site of liberation.

—**TRICIA HERSEY, THE NAP MINISTRY**



Week 4: December 19 - December 24

Stillness

Reflection by Kimberly Goode

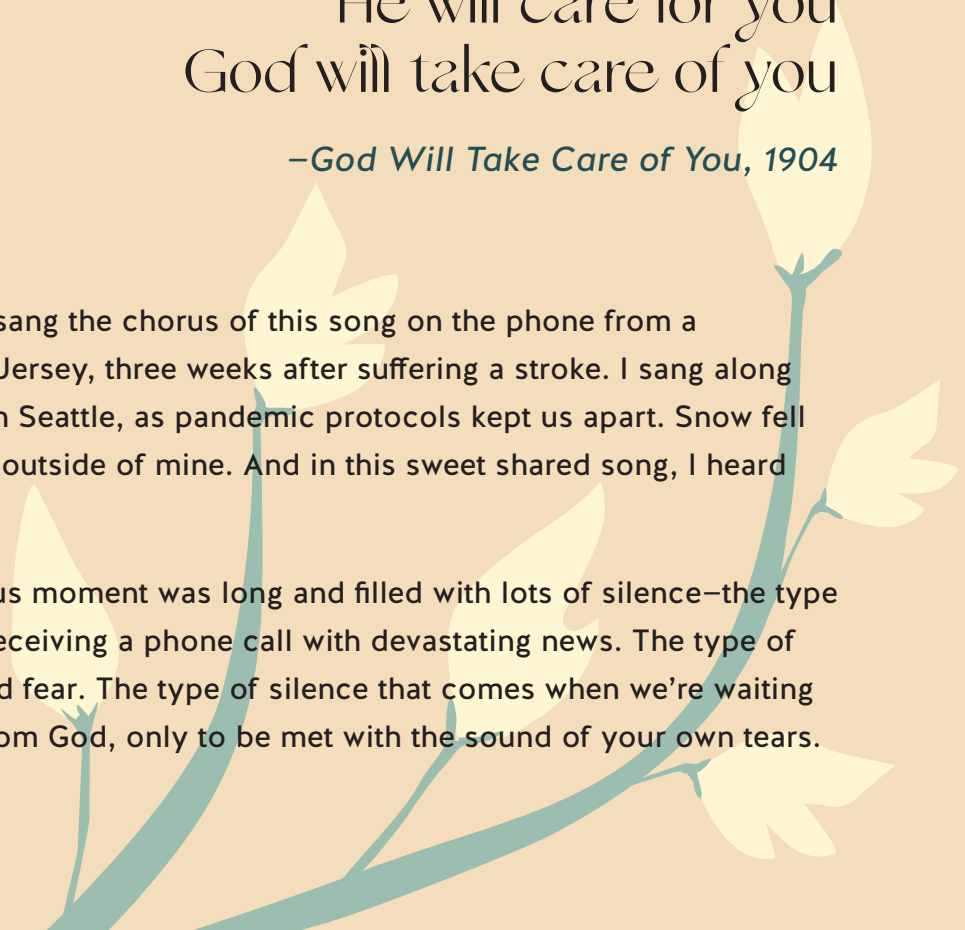


Be not dismayed whatever betide
God will take care of you
Beneath His wings of love abide
God will take care of you
God will take care of you
Through every day o'er all the way
He will care for you
God will take care of you

—*God Will Take Care of You, 1904*

This year, my mother softly sang the chorus of this song on the phone from a rehabilitation center in New Jersey, three weeks after suffering a stroke. I sang along with her from my bedroom in Seattle, as pandemic protocols kept us apart. Snow fell outside her window, rain fell outside of mine. And in this sweet shared song, I heard the gentle voice of God.

But the road to this melodious moment was long and filled with lots of silence—the type of silence that comes after receiving a phone call with devastating news. The type of silence born out of worry and fear. The type of silence that comes when we're waiting to hear a comforting word from God, only to be met with the sound of your own tears.



The path to God is often marked by sacred silences. The period leading up to the birth of Christ, between the prophetic words of Malachi closing the old testament and those of John the Baptist beginning the new testament, is known as the '400 years of silence.' It's a time when there is no lasting record of a prophet's words to the Jewish people. But it was also a time of preparing, and of God speaking new scenarios into existence to set the scene for the coming Messiah.

We often mistake a lack of 'audible words' from God for silence, when, in fact, silence may be an invitation to listen deeper, and to hear the God of the still, small voice. It is an invitation to lean into the quiet coos of a tender baby in a manger, instead of the calls of a ruling king.

It is in those quiet moments where we find the stillness within us that testifies to an ever-present God who has and will always take care of us.

There have been many days this year when God's apparent silence seemed loud. During those times, I'll go for a walk. In the stillness of the neighborhood, I'll listen to the chatter of chickadees high up in the Western Hemlocks, to the wind brushing against crisp autumn leaves, to the unconstrained laughter of children playing. On those walks I've learned that silence is rarely empty. It is full of quiet confirmations of a God who is always at work, if we are present enough to hear the melody.

Breath Prayer

Throughout the week, we invite you to find a few moments to center and focus on your breath.

Inhale: Quiet my soul.

Exhale: May I find You in the stillness.

Week 4 Embodiment Exercise

The Practice of Embodied Listening

A walk around the neighborhood is often a good time to catch up on your favorite podcast, listen to an audiobook, or explore new music. But this is an invitation to tune into nature's soundtrack. For this practice, we'll be going on a sound scavenger hunt to discover the voice of the Divine that is always speaking.

What you'll need:

- *A place to walk outdoors*

Go on a Sound Scavenger Hunt

Set aside 15 to 20 minutes to take a walk. Leave your earphones at home and let the natural sounds of the neighborhood be your soundtrack.

As you walk, take note of the noises you hear. First, let your ears tune into the sounds that are close to you—those under your feet, within twenty feet, or inside a block.

Next, cast your listening into the distance. Listen to the noises down the road a bit, those that are thousands of feet above your head, or those that are drifting toward you from miles away.

What do you notice? How is this walk transformed by your own silence? How is God's presence evident in the quietness? Where are you discovering the sounds of the sacred?

The Practice of Quiet Contemplation

Scripture can instill a grounding stillness within us, but it is easy to get to a place where we come to familiar passages knowing what the words have to offer. Silence has a way of disrupting, and making room for new revelations on God's character. For this practice, we'll be creating space for scripture to be alive and active in our bodies.

What you'll need:

- *Nothing more than a quiet space to reflect*

This is an opportunity to sink into silence, and listen for God's voice in the midst of it. For this, we'll reflect on the words of Psalm 46, slowly and intentionally.

Read the lines below, taking time to pause and contemplate the words before proceeding to the next line. Allow yourself to linger in the moment as you need. Let the quiet between each statement envelop you for a bit. Notice what exists there.

Be still, and know I am God.

[Take 5 deep breaths.]

Be still, and know that I am.

[Take 5 deep breaths.]

Be still, and know.

[Take 5 deep breaths.]

Be still.

[Take 5 deep breaths.]

Be.

[Take 5 deep breaths.]

What truth is God amplifying for you in the silence?

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which Christ looks compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good,
Yours are the hands with which Christ blesses all the world.

Christ has no body now but yours,
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

—ST. TERESA OF ÁVILA





Christmas Day - December 25

The Incarnation is here and now.

Christmas is to be felt in the body. It's the celebration of God taking God's own expansiveness and wrapping it in the delicacy of skin. In this tender skin, God chose to curl up in the darkness of a womb, surrender to all the traumas of the birthing process, and wail after the first gasp of breath. Christ entered the world as a tiny brown baby, subject to all the brokenness of human flesh. But God decided these vulnerabilities were worth the cost. Because it was in a body that the Word, which had been there since the beginning (John 1:1), could become more than words to us—more than stories passed down from our ancestors, more than scriptures to memorize and recite. In a body, the Word could become God with us, and God within us (Matthew 1:23).

It is only when we are able to find God in our own body—when Divinity is as near as our very breath—that we can become a community that truly reflects the wonder and interconnectedness of the body of Christ.

May the birth of Christ be the birth of us all,
fully embodied, fully present.





Embodiment Playlist

- Chariot by Mega
- Oh Come Emmanuel by The Clark Sisters
- Gratitude by Londrelle
- Break The Shell by India Arie
- Courageous by Common, PJ & Stevie Wonder
- Be Still by Aisea Taimani & Minor Islands
- Go Lay Down by NaJe'
- Pretty Brown Skin by Maverick City Music
- Silence by Lizz Wright
- Maybe God is Tryin' To Tell You Something by Quincy Jones
- BE OK by Samoht
- Refugee King by Liz Vice

Listen to the entire playlist plus bonus tracks on Spotify [here](#).



With Gratitude



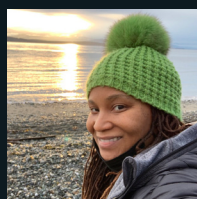
Thank you for journeying with us! This project was an embodied effort, our honest and true gift to you so that we might together welcome the Divine in our bodies together in this season. If you were blessed by this project and can support us to help offset the costs associated with its production, feel free to make a donation of any size through Venmo at [@beautifulle](#).



We also love hearing how your Advent is going and anything stirring up as you moved through the guide. [Let us know!](#)



Kimberly Goode is a lover of Jesus, outdoor adventures, reading, and all things ice cream. When she is not writing, you'll find her dancing unabashedly in grocery stores to background music that many people ignore.



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