

# WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER

## AWAKE

We invite you to listen to **“Daily Calm Live Stream: Disconnect to Connect”** as preparation for our devotion, What God Has Joined Together.

The Plains Indians of North America originated the sweat lodge as a place to say prayers, be purified, receive visions and emerge into the world as though awakening from a tribal dream. Upon entering and leaving the sweat lodge, the Lakota would say aloud to the Great Spirit, “We are all related.”

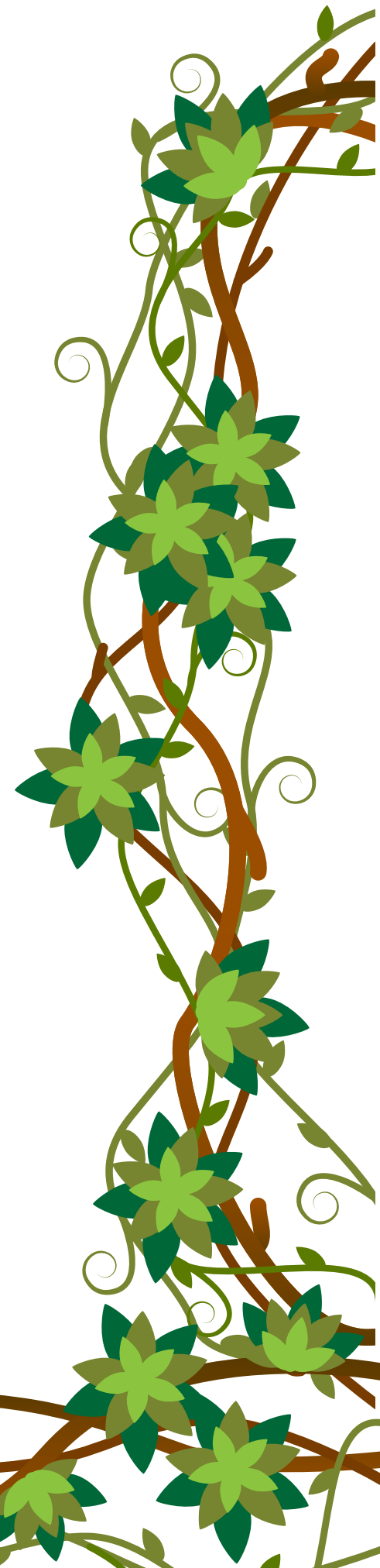
As you awaken to a new day, lift your own voice of thanks to the Creator for being related to all people and creatures. Awaken to the sacred truth that we are all in this world together, even when we must shelter apart.

## AWARE

The root of contemplative prayer is the simple awareness that we are all connected. We often work hard at connecting to others through all kinds of methods and media, but our spiritual connection—regardless of race, religion, gender or class—begins with the amazing, yet effortless, recognition that “we are all related.”

Why does this first step toward oneness with all others seems to elude so many? Rev. William Sloane Coffin, former Yale University chaplain, offered his sage insight when he said:

***“It is a religious truth that we all belong one to another; that’s the way God made us. From the Christian point of view, Christ died to keep us that way, which means that our sin is only and always that we put asunder what God has joined together.”***



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## ALIVE

When United Methodists gather for annual conference, they greet each other by singing the Charles Wesley Hymn, “And Are We Yet Alive.” On these occasions countless colleagues and friends have been removed from each other for an entire year. Implied by this greeting, which is a song of yearning as well as celebration, is that we are not “yet” fully alive to the degree that we have been disconnected or separated. Only do we become more perfectly alive in God as we reconnect with each other.

As annual conference concludes, and the mission of the Church has been set and clergy and lay leaders are sent out far and wide until the next gathering. This is an example of remaining alive within a sacred cycle of connection-disconnection-reconnection. The book of Ecclesiastes tells us, **“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven... a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.”** (3:1, 5b, NRSV).

In what ways are you alive and hopeful that this pandemic is a season of disconnection that will, sooner or later, give rise to a season of reconnection?

Write your reflections here

## ABIDE

To abide is to endure, to suffer with, and to dwell in difficult circumstances—in a state of expectation and not defeat. As the pandemic has forced us to endure our own personal hardships, it has also called us to suffer, and dwell with, our brothers and sisters who have experienced violence, death, poverty and breath-taking cruelty because of the color of their skin. As the Apostle Paul reminds us, **“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”** (Romans 12:21, NRSV)

## ARISE

Arise, and go with this benediction: **“Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.”** (Matthew 19: 2, NRSV)

- Listen again to the Daily Calm Live Stream.
- Check in with your partner or virtual group.
- Continue to make contributions to your journal.

