

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

AWAKE



We invite you to listen to **"Praying Without Ceasing,"** a guided meditation on Psalm 23, as preparation for our devotion.

"The Awakened Life" has guided us through this devotion series by inviting each individual to begin the day in a mindful way. Mindfulness is the most basic and enduring kind of prayer, much like contemplative or centering prayer. Simple words, such as "hallelujah" or "thank you, Lord" or "may I be safe," can be said to give focus, yet the essential thread that runs throughout the mindful state of devotion is our breath.

The Hebrew word for breath is *ruach*, which also translates as wind and Spirit. The Book of Genesis equates breath as God's gift of Spirit to humankind: **"then the Lord formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."** (2:7, NRSV).

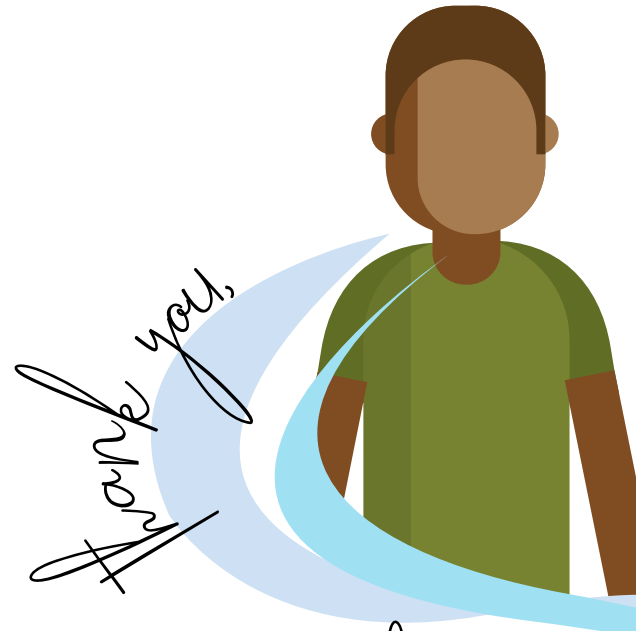
Awake today by being mindful of your breath as a gift (upon inhaling) and as a prayer of thanks (upon exhaling).

AWARE



The practice of mindfulness is about cultivating a sustained awareness of our breath. Whether we think about it or not, whether we are awake or asleep, we live within a rhythm of breathing-in and breathing-out. As we become intentionally aware of this ongoing rhythm, and as we feel gratitude for the Creator's Spirit that constantly flows, such thankful awareness becomes a natural form of prayer.

Think of the many opportunities throughout this day—while walking up a flight of stairs or cycling down the street—that your breathing can be a form of praying without ceasing.



PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

ALIVE

A Hindu word for breath is *prana*—the power of the transcendent, or Supreme Self, that invigorates life with meaning, wisdom and right purpose. The Hindu scriptures, known as the Vedas and Upanishads, are viewed as the life-breath of spiritual words that flood the heart, fill the mind and connect our divine essence (the Atman) with the cosmic soul beneath the world (the Brahman). Prana yoga is the spiritual practice of breathing and meditating so that the Atman is aligned with the Brahman.

To pray without ceasing is to be invigorated by the Creator's breath that makes us fully alive!

ABIDE

Islam teaches that believers abide in ceaseless devotion to Allah by the mindfulness of faith (*iman*) and the willfulness of good works (*amal*). There is no division between faith and works since they are viewed as two sides of the same coin of true religion. Islam's holy scriptures teach, ***"And those who believed and did good works, they are the inhabitants of Paradise, abiding therein eternally."*** (Quran 2:82)

Our lives are complete when faith and works, like breathing-in and breathing-out, are lived in balance as an abiding prayer.

ARISE

After Jesus had been resurrected, and just before he ascended to heaven, he gave this blessing to his followers, and to us: ***"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 20:21b-22, NRSV)

Arise, receive the breath of the Spirit, and be sent into the world with power and ceaseless prayer.

- Listen again to the Praying Without Ceasing meditation.
- Check in with your partner or virtual group.
- Continue to make contributions to your journal.

Write your reflections here

