



# renewal together

*8 Activities to foster Easter  
renewal in yourself & your  
neighborhood*



an Eastertide devotional  
created by Servant  
Partners Canada



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We seek God's shalom by pursuing holistic transformation of  
urban poor communities alongside our neighbours

[www.servantpartners.ca](http://www.servantpartners.ca)



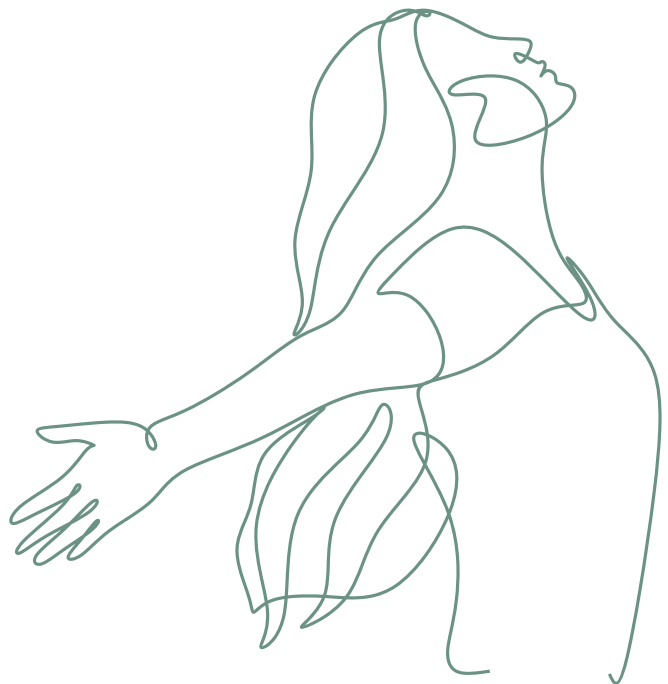
*In one limited mortal life  
You graciously gift us with a million resurrections*

*O Lord,  
Teach us to number our days  
And be present to what truly matters  
Yet live with the assurance of morning light  
That invites surrender to new mercies*

*May we live in the freedom to embrace  
mortality and eternity together  
And choose to witness the  
divine  
present  
moment*

*now*

- WENDY AU YEUNG



# introduction

**“The resurrection of Jesus is the action at the core of all Christian spiritual formation.”**

**-Eugene Peterson**

Christ has risen!  
He has risen indeed!

On Easter Sunday we celebrate the miraculous story of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. God is in the business of resurrection, bringing dead things back to life.

While bringing life back from death is beyond our capacity, we can participate in the hope and power of the resurrection through acts of renewal. We can participate in restoration, repair, starting over and bringing freshness in areas that are tired, worn out, and dry.

What might renewal look like within you?

What might a renewed neighbourhood look like this year?

This guide aims to inspire you to join in God's work of renewal throughout the entire Easter season. Traditionally, Eastertide lasts 50 days, covering 8 Sundays from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday.

***Our journey of renewal is meant to be shared in community - whom could you invite to join you in going through this booklet?***

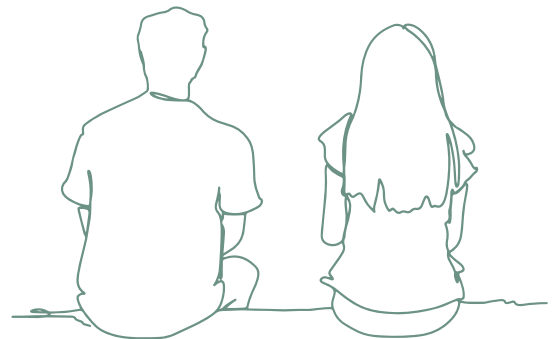
***We'd love to see how you embody Easter:  
Tag us with your reflections and pictures  
@servantpartnerscanada on Instagram or  
Facebook!***

## Renewal:

**to make like new, restore to freshness,  
vigor,  
to make new spiritually,  
to make extensive changes in,  
to begin again**

Renewal is a gradual and cyclical process, so we will suggest various ideas to try that build upon each other. So if one idea feels out of reach, ask yourself what your first step might be to be able to accomplish the out of reach goal next year.

We will explore 8 areas for renewal, one for each Sunday of the Easter season. Bill Wilson from Alcoholics Anonymous encourages us to move towards acting as, “You can't think your way into right action, but you can act your way into right thinking.” We encourage you to dedicate just enough time in the reflection section to listen for an invitation from Jesus and get you moving in a direction. Try to spend more time reflecting *after* the action than thinking about what you should do. Powerful shifts of perspective come from reflecting after you've tried something new.





# Renewing our vision

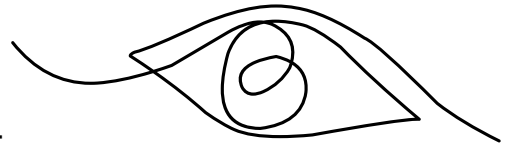
**Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. If you live squinty-eyed in greed and distrust, your body is a musty cellar. If you pull the blinds on your windows, what a dark life you will have!"**

**Matthew 6:22-23 The Message**

"What you focus on determines what you miss."

"What we focus on expands."

"What we focus on is where our energy goes."



All of these popular sayings have the same encouragement:  
Pay attention to what you are focused on!

Take a moment to reflect on how you see yourself within your neighbourhood. Where has your focus been? What do you long to see but haven't yet?

What type of shift might help you renew your vision for your local community? Do you want to broaden or narrow your focus? What does it mean for you to "open your eyes wide in wonder and belief?"

If you are finding these questions difficult, try the practice of visio divina and see how God might guide your interpretation of resurrection this year.

## *let's reflect: visio divina*

Assume a comfortable position and sit with both images for a few minutes. Is there one that draws you further? What details, textures, and colours are your eye attracted to? What thoughts or feelings are coming to the surface?

You could allow yourself to settle on one image and choose one aspect of the piece that sparks more significant curiosity. What might this piece be telling you about God or the resurrection? Let these ideas float on without judgment or the need to settle on a correct interpretation.

Now ask Jesus to give you a word or a phrase that embodies the feeling or thought that seems most prominent. Ask God to turn this word into an invitation to direct how you see your neighbourhood this season. Thank God after you sense an invitation to adjust your vision.



Above: "Children of the King" by Shin Maeng

Artist's notes:

In this modern day icon, Jesus is dressed as both a king and a priest who welcomes his children across the diversity of the African diaspora. He wears a crown and priestly robes which are reminiscent of Coptic church tradition, without the effect of colonization and Western theology. To this African and African American diaspora, he offers freedom, family, community, and joy. The rays that radiate out from his halo show generations of African-descended men and women connected across bonds of family and friendship, in all of their beautiful diversity. Instead of despair or sorrow, they live in joy. Chains have been broken, and they have been led out of bondage from Egypt. Living water and the fire of Pentecost anoint the heads of the man and woman dressed in royal robes of green, showing the new life, calling, and purpose they are being prepared for. A new city is embroidered around the cross on Jesus' chest.





A "Happy Easter" by Shin Maeng

You can see more of this artist here: <http://society6.com/shinhappens>

## *let's embody: seeing our neighbourhood through the lens of the Kingdom*



### Ideas to try:

- Go for a prayer walk around your neighbourhood a few times this week, noticing who you see regularly and what has changed.
- Ask the Holy Spirit for a scripture to pray over your neighbourhood as you walk
- If someone or some place came to mind in your visio divina, make space in your schedule to reach out to them to connect and care for them.
- Look for signs of Spring in the air, the plants, the temperature, thank God for them
- Identify strengths or assets in your neighbourhood that could be enhanced or greater utilized to build community wholeness.

*When I first moved on the 400 block of Alexander, I saw people living on the streets, motorhomes and vans filled to the roof, people suffering under addiction and a neighbour who did not answer their door when I tried to introduce myself. After 4 years of responding in love to what I saw, I saw these things with a different perspective. The people living on the streets became my daily conversation partners and friends, and those in vans became my neighbours and fellow allies who watched over the safety of my kids going to and from the bus stop. Those suffering in addiction became teachers of mercy, gentleness and compassion. And the neighbour next door became a fellow ally of peace and servanthood.*

# renewing our relationship with "the other"

Take a moment to reflect on the relationships in your neighbourhood. How many are familiar, how many are unknown?

In what ways are your neighbours different than you? In what ways are they similar?

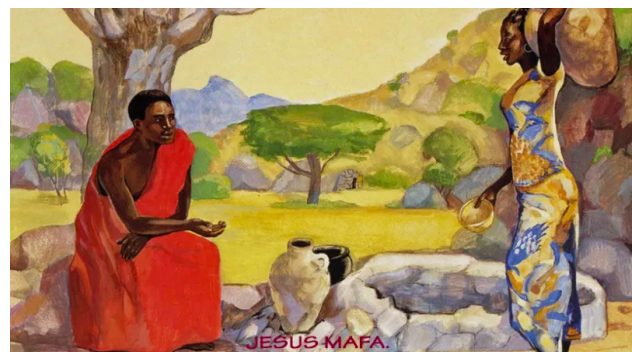
The story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4 is read in some Eastern Christian traditions during Eastertide. It is an excellent story to ask God to inform what you could do this week to build a relationship with someone who is quite different than yourself.

Jesus shows us that there are no boundaries to the extension of grace we can offer. He broke a number of Jewish taboos that are still very relevant to us today in order to build relationship with the woman at the well. Some differences include:

- Religion - Samaritans only held to the Torah and worshipped at a Mt. Gerizim. A different canon and place of worship
- Race - Samaritans intermarried with Assyrians in previous times. She was a part of a different, mixed-race people
- Social Strata - The Jewish law considered Samaritan females unclean from birth to death. Different societal class
- Gender - Jewish men could not look at or speak to a female other than his wife. Different rules for interacting around gender.

If you need some encouragement to engage cross-culturally this week, consider taking time to do a contemplative reflection of the John 4 passage. This way of praying comes from St. Ignatius. We use our imagination to enter the scene, participate, and let a scene from scripture unfold. Notice the people, listen to them and watch what they do.

You may sense an invitation to be one of the characters in the scene and converse with one of them. You can do this on your own, or use the text below as a guide.



*Jesus and the Samaritan Woman,  
Jesus Mafa*

## *let's reflect: Contemplative reflection of meeting Jesus at the well*

### 1. Quiet your body and mind

- Settle into a relaxing position. Breathe deeply several times and let your body relax.
- Breathe out any worries or stressful thoughts and put them in God's hands
- Become aware of God's presence here with you now, looking at you with love.

### 2. Ask for a grace

- Ask God for whatever you need at this time during this prayer time. If you can't think of anything, ask for a heartfelt encounter with Jesus.
- Read the scripture passage

### 3. Read John 4:1-26 slowly

Savour the words and begin to imagine the scene. Read it again if that helps you to visualize it.

### 3. Imaginative Contemplation

In your mind, see the scene described in this Gospel. See the well – what does it look like? Perhaps it's a well in the desert in the Holy Land, or perhaps one closer to home.

Widening your focus a bit, what's around the well? Is it in the middle of a town, in a forested area, or in the desert? Pause to let yourself see the scene.

And what kind of day is it today? Is it sunny or cloudy? Is it hot or cool? Is there a breeze? What can you hear – and are there birds chirping or voices in the distance? What can you smell? Pause to engage all of your senses.

Place yourself there by the well. You have just arrived, it's mid-day, you choose to come when you think not many others will be there.

Take another moment to see and hear and smell everything.

Notice that Jesus is sitting on the far side of the well. How does he look?  
Are his clothes ancient or contemporary?  
Can you imagine his face clearly, or not quite?

You approach him and he greets you. How does he greet you?

He asks you for a drink. How do you respond?

As you continue the conversation – do you draw near and sit down or remain standing? Perhaps you wonder if there is any insight about your own life that Jesus wants to offer you?

Ask him and listen to his response. Let your conversation continue for a while.

It is almost time for you to leave the well. Is there anything you haven't gotten a chance to say? Say it now.

As you get ready to leave the scene, how do you say farewell to Jesus?

When you are ready, end with your favourite prayer or offer gratitude in your own way.

You may now wish to spend some time reviewing your contemplation, noting down what was impressed upon you, any feelings and how Jesus might have met you in your ask for a grace.

Prayer adapted from Holy Trinity Catholic Church

## *let's embody: engaging with our 'other' in our community*

We have just finished reflecting on being met by Jesus. He was very intentional with this meeting even as he is engaging with the "other" from the definitions of his context.

It is out of our deep awareness of God's love for us that we are able to extend unconditional love to those who are different to us and even to our enemies.

Who might be the "enemies" and "others" in our neighbourhood? Are there groups of people my faith, cultural or class group has taught me to other?

Here are some ideas to pursue this week to bring renewal to your relationships with those you consider "other":



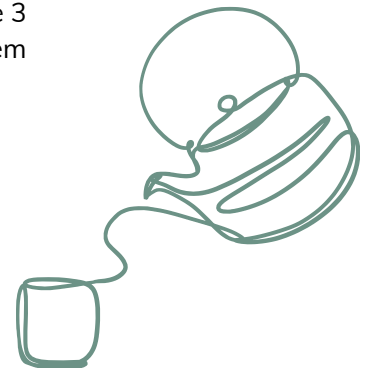
- Consider how you could treat someone you regard as an enemy as equally made in the image of God this week.
- Initiate a conversation with someone who is quite different than you that you don't know yet and ask for help, or to borrow something.
- Invite someone you'd like to get to know in for coffee and listen empathetically without judgment
- Build upon a cross-cultural relationship by asking questions about what issues of justice they are concerned about and how you could join them.
- Research resources to build skills in cross-cultural intelligence, asking open questions, or active listening.
- Listen to a podcast about loving your enemy. We recommend one from Stanley Hauerwas.
- Or learn about political theology in order to have a civil conversation with someone of a different political persuasion than yourself. We recommend one from Brad Jersak.
- If your neighbour is Muslim and you don't know them yet, wish them "Eid Mubarak" on April 9th for the end of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr.
- If you do know Muslim neighbours, or have a mosque in your neighbourhood, drop by with halal sweets for the 3 day celebration between April 9-11. You could ask them what causes they are donating to as a part of their celebration and join them in giving.



[Stanley Hauerwas.](#)



[Brad Jersak](#)





# renewing our table

**The next time you put on a dinner, don't just invite your friends and family and rich neighbors, the kind of people who will return the favour.**

**Invite some people who never get invited out, the misfits from the wrong side of the tracks. You'll be—and experience—a blessing. They won't be able to return the favor, but the favor will be returned—oh, how it will be returned!—at the resurrection of God's people.**

- LUKE 14: 12-14

This week let's turn our attention will turn to our dining table. Take a moment to reflect on who has gathered around your table so far this year? What topics of conversations happened around the table? What have been meals memorable, either positively or negatively?

Hospitality is deeply connected to justice. In Canada, our attempts at hospitality often leave people falling through the cracks – refugees who flee their homes and know no one in a new city, those struggling with their mental health, single people in a coupled world, elderly with family far away, those who live on the streets and those with chronic illness. We have professionalized many services for these people, and they offer food, shelter and activities but with power distance as clients. Basic needs may be met, but connection requires intimacy, vulnerability and mutuality.

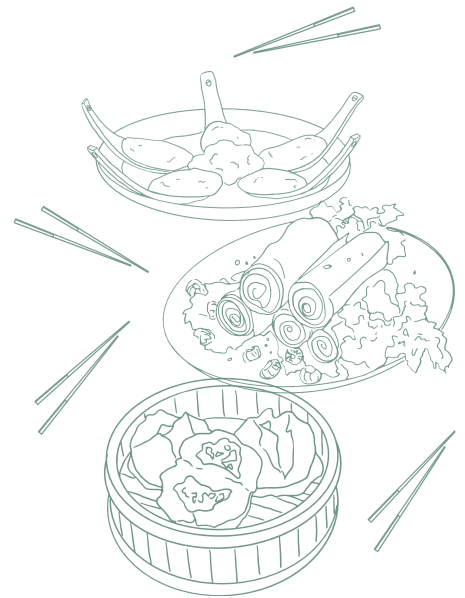
In the book "Making Room" Christine Pohl writes "Isolation from local needs and overexposure to overwhelming but distant need, make our responses to strangers uncertain and tentative at best."

What do you need in order to share your table with a stranger?

*One Sunday I received a text asking if I could give a newcomer a ride to church. I said yes and after worshipping together, I invited her to experience an American Thanksgiving meal with our family later that week. It was a new experience and introduced her to others in the city who had lived here longer than I. She came for Christmas, and then over to watch the Superbowl and the friendship grew to the point that we were willing to share a room in our home with her when her housing ended unexpectedly. Little did we know what valueable friendship would begin simply by giving someone a ride!*

**"If you really want to make a friend, go to someone's house and eat with him...the people who give you their food give you their heart."**

- CESAR CHAVEZ



## *let's reflect: Read through Luke 14*

The entire chapter of Luke 14 has three other stories of Jesus' teaching on hospitality and the core essentials of following him as Lord of your life. Themes of empathy, control, power, esteem, sacrifice and radical inclusiveness are all connected to our ability to host whoever is a "stranger" to us. If you are not ready to open your home and embody a resurrection feast, consider reading through the chapter and wrestling with God over your barriers to radical hospitality.

### *let's embody: a resurrection feast*

This week, consider designing a Resurrection Feast for someone who would likely not return the invitation.

Who comes to mind that might be hungry for a meal that symbolizes the hope and promise of new life?

Could you take a few minutes to jot down a few ideas to design a cohesive Resurrection dinner experience?

**"You have entered  
my home and eaten  
my food with me,  
and so now you have  
my trust."**

- ARAB EXPRESSION



**Menu:** what does new life taste like to you? Salty? Sweet? Fresh? Simple or complex? What dishes remind you of times when hope and possibility abounded?

**Environment:** What environment would you be most excited about hosting an experience of new life in? Your home, a park, a forest, a friend's place?

**Scents:** What might new life smell like? What might your guests smell as they enter your space?

**Visuals/symbols:** What might new life look like? What colours would you put on your table? Would they draw on their placemats or admire the craftsmanship of the weavers? What living elements would you put on the table to spark conversation about what new life means to your guests?

**Textures:** What might new life feel like? What textures would be on the tables, chairs, or floor underneath your feet?

**Sound:** What might new life sound like? What songs would be playing in the background? What questions could you ask your guests to consider areas of new life they long for throughout the Easter season?

**Conversation topics:** Ask your guests to share their answers to a few questions:

- "What's an area of your life that you would love to see renewal or restoration?"
- "What might sustain you in hope as you wait or actively pursue the renewal you hunger for?"
- "How could we come alongside and support you?"



# renewing our relationship with creation

Today our renewal practice encourages us to anticipate an action for Earth Day on April 22.

Jesus' resurrection enables reconciliation of humans to God and to each other as well as the restoration of Creation back to the excellent intent the Creator had. Just as we are called to be agents of reconciliation among people, we are also invited to follow Christ's example and participate in the earth's care and renewal.

The love of God is embodied in Creation through the wonder of trees, plants and the atmosphere, literally breathing new life into our lungs. Let's follow Jesus' example of learning from the wisdom of creation by watching birds of the air, admiring lilies in the field and paying attention to the growth of a humble mustard seed.

What does repair or renewal look like in your relationship to the land you are on? If nothing immediately comes to mind, take a contemplative walk through your neighbourhood to spark ideas.

## WHO ARE THE ORIGINAL CARETAKERS OF THE LAND YOU ARE ON?

The story of the land you are on began long before you arrived. If you don't already know who the original caretakers are and what treaties were made, visit [native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca) to find out whose land you have settled on. Considering praying a blessing for the well-being of the land and the communities who have cared for it.



[native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca)

We acknowledge and grieve that Indigenous people's wisdom, knowledge and traditional land practices have been left out of conversations and efforts around Creation care. Who are local elders and teachers that could inform your ideas for renewal?



**“He is the visible representation of our invisible Creator. All that the Father has belongs to this Son. He existed before Creation and is above all created things. It made our Great Father’s heart glad to have all that he is living in his Son. Through his Son he brought together everything in the spirit-world above and on the earth below into harmony with himself, making peace through his lifeblood poured out on the cross.”**

- COLOSSIANS 1:15, 19-20  
FIRST NATIONS VERSION

## *let's reflect: a contemplative prayer walk*

Allow yourself 20-30 minutes to go on a walk. Take a few deep breaths, look around you and find something that could act as a threshold: a tree, a crack in the sidewalk, etc.

Take a moment to determine if there is a specific question or intention you desire for this walk. Once you've settled on it, allow it to move to the back burner of your mind. Step over your threshold, inviting Creator God to speak through anything that may come before you during this time.

Begin to walk, intentionally slowing down your pace.

Open yourself to the presence of God. Focus and engage the elements of creation that surround you. Return to your physical senses whenever your question or concern takes hold of you.

Allow your eyes to gaze at something that captures your attention, paying attention to textures, shapes, sizes, and the things around it. What might God be communicating to you through it?

Notice what you hear: dwell on both sound and silence. Be aware of sounds inside yourself - hear your inner self, then direct your attention outside again.

Notice what is available to touch: the dew on the grass, the tree bark, leaves or stones? Take a moment to notice the wind around you and the warmth of sunlight or the cool rain on your skin.

How is God communicating to you through your senses?

As your time draws to a close, choose another threshold to mark the end of your walk. After you step over, give thanks for how Creator met you in this time.

You may want to photograph or pick up a physical object that reminds you of what you experienced.

You may want to discuss with God or a companion anything that came to your mind during the walk. What do you want to bring to your day that you learned from this experience?

**Lord, teach me to hear  
your voice  
to see your  
fingerprints and  
footprints**

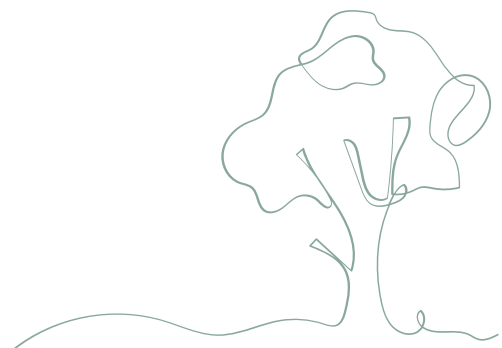
**Teach me to taste your  
goodness,  
to smell the aroma of  
liberation  
and to touch your  
warmth.**

**Teach me to welcome  
Your letters into my  
heart,  
as I still myself in  
your presence.**

-DOROTHY MATHIESON

**When all the trees have  
been cut down,  
when all the animals  
have been hunted,  
when all the waters are  
polluted,  
when all the air is unsafe  
to breathe,  
only then will you  
discover you cannot eat  
money.**

—A CREE PROPHECY



## *let's embody: renewing the earth together*

Is there a creation care practice in your neighbourhood you can incorporate into your daily rhythms? If you are already doing things within your own household, what might it look like to expand that to a neighbourhood activity?

Here are some ideas:



- Incorporating plant-based meals into your diet at a frequency that nurtures your culinary creativity
- Replace one source of single-use plastic from your life with a reusable choice
- Implement one car-free day in your household each week and choose to bike, walk or transit
- Opt out of purchasing new clothes for spring and style your existing pieces with a new lens (the fast fashion industry is the world's second-highest polluter after oil)
- Heighten your awareness around the environmental impact of businesses you buy from. Reconsider where you are directing your money.
- Evaluate the environmental impact of your investment portfolio and explore environmentally-friendly investment options.
- Amplify in your circles of influence Indigenous efforts in environmental advocacy, e.g. Autumn Peltier's activism for clean drinking water among Indigenous communities:



[Clean water for Canada's Indigenous communities](https://www.change.org/p/government-of-canada-indigenous-deserve-clean-drinking-water)

[www.change.org/p/government-of-canada-indigenous-deserve-clean-drinking-water](https://www.change.org/p/government-of-canada-indigenous-deserve-clean-drinking-water)

**"Restoration is imperative for healing the earth, but reciprocity is imperative for long-lasting, successful restoration. Like other mindful practices, ecological restoration can be viewed as an act of reciprocity in which humans exercise their caregiving responsibility for the ecosystems that sustain them. We restore the land, and the land restores us."**

—ROBIN WALL KIMMERER,  
BRAIDING SWEETGRASS

*Being new to a neighbourhood opens up natural avenues of conversation with neighbours about birds, animals and what plants thrive here. I've learned about native birds to the area and their migratory patterns simply by asking about the bird feeders I saw in a front yard. And new friends are sharing their local seeds for vegetables that will work well in this climate simply by asking if and when they garden.*

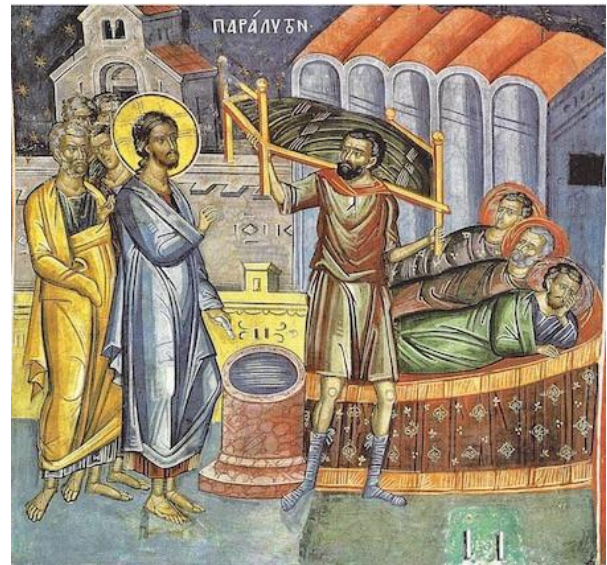
# renewing our connection to our bodies

In the Greek Orthodox tradition, the story of the paralytic being healed at the pool by Jesus is read this Sunday. In Western spiritual traditions there is often a de-emphasis of our bodies as lower or less important than our soul or spirit. However, God raising Jesus back to literal life - not only his spirit, but a restoration of his body - his organs, muscles, nerves, cells - is a hopeful testament to the deep concern and desire that God has for our physical well being!

How might you renew your sense of connection to your body this week?

What do you want to do to feel alive and well in your body this week? Would you change how you move, what or how you eat, or how you sleep?

If you need help listening to your body with Jesus, use the following reflection exercise.



Healing of the Paralytic Icon

**“While for some of us it may take an event - a serious illness or a trauma - to remember that we are bodies, many people do not have to wait for a specific event to remember the centrality of their body. That's because their body is placed outside the cultural hierarchy of the "ideal body", and so they learn early on that their body makes them "other". Most forms of oppression are directed against the body as "isms": racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, ageism, sizeism, and so on. The message underneath isms is this: You are less valuable in this society because of your body.”**

**-Hillary McBride**



By listening, respecting, and taking care of our bodies, we can become mindful supporters for individuals with different abilities. Many have faced exclusion or limitations imposed by others. If you are already attentive to your body's needs, consider advocating for those with diverse abilities in your community as a way to renew your commitment in this regard.

## *let's embody: encountering the presence of Jesus with our bodies*

If possible, lie down for this reflection in a comfortable position. Feel the sturdiness of the ground underneath your body. Take a few deep breaths to settle your mind and direct your attention to your body's sensations.



Listen to an audio version of [John 5:1-15](#).

Imagine yourself in the scene John describes. You are by the pool, surrounded by a great number of people with disabilities. Some are blind, some cannot walk, some are entirely paralyzed.

The man shares his experience of feeling stuck physically, and Jesus proceeds to invite him into movement, healing and restoration.

- What does your body want to communicate to Jesus who is with you now?
- Scan your body now, paying attention to your head, eyes, face muscles, neck, shoulders, back, arms, hips, legs, joints, feet. Where are you noticing pain, tightness and tension in your body? Allow yourself to be in touch with these sensations as much as you feel comfortable with.

Jesus approaches a person who has been paralyzed for 38 years and asks him, "Do you want to get well?"

- Rest in stillness for a few minutes. While paying attention to your body, listen to what Jesus might have to say to you today. Be open to how Jesus may be speaking to you through the sensations you're experiencing in your body right now.
- Slowly move in response to how your body want to respond. This might include gradual stretches, making circles with your joints in a way that brings release and relaxation or massaging areas that need it.
- Continue to allow your body to make larger and larger movements that feel good. This could move towards full body stretches or dancing!

Jesus later invites the man to choose a life of shalom and relationship with God to make way for holistic healing in his life.

- Again in conversation with Jesus and the wisdom of your body, consider if there is a lifestyle change you are invited to take on to best support your body's renewal this season. This could be daily mindful movement, stretching before sleeping, changing your work set up to support good posture, incorporating foods that energize your being, checking in with your body before decision making etc.

You may wish to end your time by paying attention to how your body feels when it's relaxed and at ease. Give thanks to Jesus's presence and touch in your own embodied way.

**"We heal  
when we can be  
with what we  
feel."**

HILARY McBRIDE,  
THE WISDOM OF  
YOUR BODY



# renewing our self-awareness

As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. But God kept them from recognizing him. He asked them, “What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?”

The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth,” they said. “He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago. “Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said.” –John 21

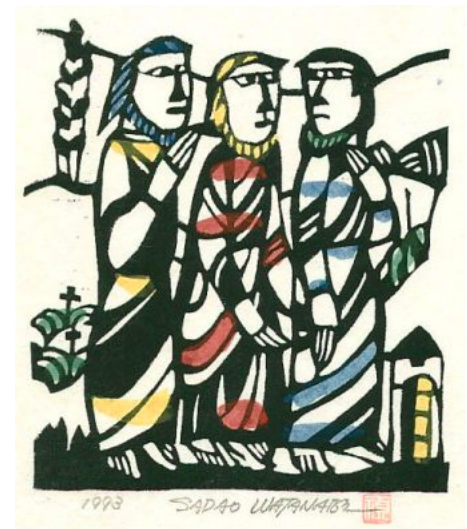
Most of us don't wake up throughout the Easter season and automatically feel jubilant and renewed. And yet we want to move towards the freedom and joy in the resurrection.

What might it look like to honour hope and resurrection in a faithful and prophetic way in your less than perfect neighbourhood?

How does Jesus want to renew your self-awareness this Easter season?

What could you do to renew your strengths as well as become more honest with your liabilities, limits, and shadow side?

Just like the friends of Jesus on the road to Emmaus, we may still be carrying experiences of grief, sadness, doubt, disappointment, and anxiety. There are tensions as a follower of Jesus in our current social realities where we are bombarded by stories of injustice, violence and brokenness every day. But Jesus is with us as we walk along the road in tension and we can find consolation in His loving initiative to join us on that road. Today we lean into the mystery of Jesus appearing to us as we are honest with our emotional dissonance. We can trust that He is bringing shalom into our hearts too.



Road to Emmaus  
by Sadao Watanabe

**"Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation. Healing is an act of communion."**

- BELL HOOKS



## let's reflect: inviting Jesus into our emotions

Read Luke 24:13-25.

Choose one of the following ways to engage the story:

- Contemplate the illustration of the story, by Japanese artist Sadao Watanabe. Gently name any emotions brought up as you notice the colours, shapes and textures.
- Mediate on the illustration to the right. Which emotions do you resonate with? Which do you long to experience?
- Draw your own road and fill it out by writing down or drawing out some emotions and questions you are holding lately

Invite Jesus along with you as you contemplate, draw and write. Simply notice how He might be making His presence known to you now.



Emotions on the Road by Wendy Au Yeung  
(inspired by Eric Crow)

## let's engage: an intentional walk with a neighbour



Christ at Emmaus by Sadao Watanabe

Invite a neighbour to walk with you with the intention of sharing something that is difficult or a question you're wrestling with. Offer your listening presence for the other if they choose share as well. Ask them if they would be up for reading the story that inspired you to ask for this walk. Begin your time together by reading the story again. Notice how might Jesus be revealing his presence as you walk.

Consider ending your walk by sharing a beverage, snack or meal, resting in Jesus' presence with you at the table. Take some time to imagine, listen for and pray for renewal and hope for each other.

If you don't feel you know a neighbour well enough to initiate this kind of walk, choose a friend and discuss together what you might need in order to be able to develop deep friendships where you live.

# renewing our sense of vocation

**When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” John: 21:15**

This week we focus on renewing our understanding of our vocation. If there's one thing you can rely on Jesus for, he won't leave any parts of your story and life untouched by his invitation for greater liberation, healing and resurrection. Tenacious and creative, Jesus can be counted on to show up in the very ordinary circumstances of our lives to help us surrender to his grace. His breakfast with Peter in John 21 perfectly exemplifies this. Take a moment to read through The Voice version if you are unfamiliar with the story.

Is there a question you have for Jesus about renewing your sense of vocation? Annie Dillard said in *The Writing Life*, “How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.”

Is how you are spending your days aligned with the values and truths you want to represent in the world?

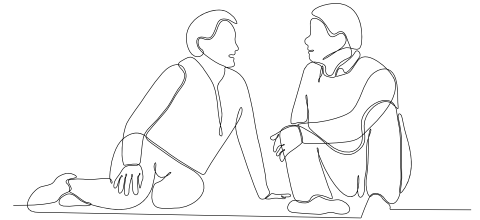
We long for our work to align with a deep sense of vocation, but we must begin the task of working long before we have an awareness of what our lives have been created for. So there are always opportunities to renew our sense of vocational calling.

Vocations - our deep passion for what we are meant to do in the world - can be shaken to the core by disappointment. Disappointment from others or from yourself can come from one shocking experience like Peter's denial, or from the realization that how we spent our days didn't add up to the life you had imagined.

Jesus' reinstatement of Peter's vocation is our **hope that new life can come from the shards of disappointment**. Jesus invites Peter to mend each of his three denials with three expressions of heartfelt love. He repairs Peter's three denials with three reinstatement phrases to care for his people. Jesus re-establishes Peter's vocation to become the "rock" of the church and care for his people.

This story reminds us that our vocations are nestled in abiding in Jesus. Jesus is the one who brings freedom to let go of worn-out passions and convictions that might not be ours even though we hoped they could be. He sees our aspirations for fame, relevance, power and security and asks us to trust him in our deepest motivations. He invites us to hear the searing words of grace pronounced over our most profound failures. Invitations to the new birth, new freedom, release into forgiveness.

No matter what we do or how far from the mark we have fallen, we can always come back to Jesus and sit together over breakfast.



**“Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you.**

**Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent.”**  
-PARKER PALMER,  
LET YOUR LIFE SPEAK



## *let's reflect: breath prayer*

Move to the table where you eat breakfast in the mornings. If that's not available, close your eyes and imagine sitting there. Make yourself comfortable; maybe hold a warm beverage in your hands and gently close your eyes. Notice whatever sensations you feel in your body and pray the Welcoming prayer to accept whatever you are feeling in the moment. If you like there is a wonderful video you can watch to center yourself.

Imagine inviting Jesus to come and sit next to you at the table.

How does it feel to be sitting with Jesus?  
What is he eating for breakfast?  
How is he looking at you?

Quietly together, breathe through this prayer for as long as you want.

**Inhale: Thank you, Jesus**

**Exhale: Your grace is enough for me**

Stay as long as you like. Notice what sensations you feel in your body. Attend to any part that needs care. Notice if there's anything you would like to say to Jesus before you end your breakfast together. Listen if there is anything he'd like to say back.

When you are finished, gently open your eyes. What was that experience like? Is there anything from that time in prayer that speaks a word of renewal to your sense of vocational calling?

**“Our strongest gifts are usually those we are barely aware of possessing. They are a part of our God-given nature, with us from the moment we drew first breath, and we are no more conscious of having them than we are of breathing.”**

PARKER PALMER  
LET YOUR LIFE SPEAK



### THE WELCOMING PRAYER

**Welcome, welcome, welcome.  
I welcome everything that comes  
to me today  
because I know it's for my healing.  
I welcome all thoughts, feelings,  
emotions, persons,  
situations, and conditions.  
I let go of my desire for power and  
control.  
I let go of my desire for affection,  
esteem,  
approval and pleasure.  
I let go of my desire for survival  
and security.  
I let go of my desire to change any  
situation,  
condition, person or myself.  
I open to the love and presence of  
God and  
God's action within.  
Amen.**

- FR. THOMAS KEATING &  
MARY MROZOWSKI



[Welcoming Prayer \(video\).](https://youtu.be/yIZexGqxiXQ)  
[youtu.be/yIZexGqxiXQ](https://youtu.be/yIZexGqxiXQ)

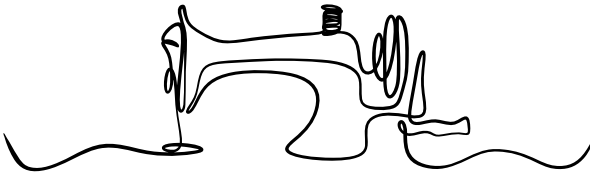
## *let's embody: an upcycling reflection*

As a symbol of renewal in your vocation, wander your house looking for something that isn't living up to its original purpose: a stained shirt, ripped pillow, chipped plate, or a leaky pot.

What new purpose could you use it for?  
Is there a way to mend it?  
If you broke it down even more, could you use those pieces for something different?  
What would it take to repair, repurpose or reconstruct it this week?

If you are able to hold this item in your hand before and after the re-purposing process and sit quietly to listen and receive whatever words Jesus might say.

How does this item speak to your sense of your vocation these days? Hold it gently as you listen and respond to Jesus.



*I found a lot of meaning in repurposing old found items around my home as well as restoring old furniture. I had the privilege of being a part of a team that restored a home in Vancouver built in 1889. It was full of past treasures, many that had weren't able to fulfill their original intent. Instead, they doorknobs became hooks, old milk bottles became a chandelier, chairs, benches and stools were refinished to support new bodies. Keeping and restoring found objects in the neighbourhood is a way of living into promises of Isaiah 58: "Some of you will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities. Then you will be known as a rebuilders of walls, and a restorer of homes."*

*I have learned to listen to the creaks and pops of all my homes now, and appreciate the flaws in the walls as evidence of past lives lived to the full.*

# pentecost: renewing our hearing

**The Holy Spirit had come down upon them and began to fill them with his life and power. New languages began to flow out from their mouths, languages they had never learned, given from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had come down upon them and began to fill them with his life and power. New languages began to flow out from their mouths, languages they had never learned, given from the Holy Spirit. We can hear them, in the languages of these nations, telling about the great and powerful things done by the Great Spirit!" Many were amazed and confused and began to ask each other, "What can this mean?" But others in the crowd just laughed and said, "They are drunk on new wine!" Acts 2:4, 11-13 First Nations Version**

We have arrived at the end of the Eastertide season - and what an ending it is! The Holy Spirit's presence at Pentecost comes in powerful natural elements: fire and wind. All of the senses are activated in the witnesses and participants alike. They see the fire, feel the wind, hear each other's mother languages and feel their tongues move in unfamiliar ways when speaking words they don't know,

This is a re-unification moment, a redemption of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9), where God scattered his people. Now through the power of the Holy Spirit, every language declares the same thing: "the wonders of God."

The Easter story begins and ends with God appearing to people in a method which allows for skepticism and doubt. On Easter morning, Jesus appears first to his friend Mary. Women are the first to see the angels and tell the disciples. In a patriarchal society, a man could override a woman's testimony in ancient courts. Yet Jesus chose to reveal himself first to those often neglected, considered unimportant, and not even allowed to hear the Torah read in the synagogue.

Fast forward to the end of Eastertide, and Jesus sends his Holy Spirit in such a bizarre manifestation that "some made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine." Acts 2:13



Pentecost by Sadao Watanabe  
Notice the various reactions in the eyes.

## *let's embody: listening, believing and amplifying voices that are different than your own*



Pentecost

by Indonesian artist Ni Ketut Ayu Sri Wardani

In Jesus' life, resurrection and giving the Holy Spirit, he has no problem speaking his truth through people and methods that seem "unbelievable" and not within the standard norms. Today we continue to live this challenge as our increasingly diverse world is full of Spirit-filled followers of Christ who love Jesus and don't have the same life experiences as we do.

The invitation in Pentecost is to recognize the Holy Spirit at work in the beautiful diversity of various cultures and lean in. Listen. Does what they say speak in some way to the goodness of God? Does their life embody the fruit of the Spirit even though they might have a different perspective on an issue than yours? Will you believe their experience even if theirs is not one you have shared?

Our world and church body is fracturing into smaller and smaller pieces. One lesson from Pentecost's story is to listen and be soft-hearted to learn, even if the message doesn't come in a package that makes sense to you. In an age of massive misinformation, we must listen critically for truth in the voices around us. Is what they are saying leading to greater love, generosity, servanthood and faith in the goodness of God?

The truth could come to you from people who differ in race, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, or nationality. Here are some ideas on how you can position yourself to learn from your neighbours this week:



- Invite a neighbour over who is of a different culture than yours, that could be a different ethnic culture, economic class or generation. Peter connects the experience of Pentecost to the story of Jesus to invite people to move closer to Jesus in faith. Try to listen closely to hear how the Holy Spirit is working in their lives to make those connections like Peter.
- Who is hardest for you to listen to in your neighbourhood? Try praying a blessing for them, that they would hear and experience the wonders of God. What would you need in order to do something kind for that neighbour this week?
- Elevate the voices of BIWOC (Black, Indigenous and Women of Colour) in the circles that you are in. Could you suggest a book you love to your pastor? Can you invite a friend of colour to share at an event you are hosting?
- Recommend BIPOC businesses or products you use to your neighbours and friends.
- Grow in your ethnic identity: If you are white, take our quick questionnaire to determine which learning experiences we offer might help you grow in your ethnic and racial healing journey this year. [Ethnic and racial healing questionnaire forms.gle/2m9c22VKKbgvr3qV8](https://forms.gle/2m9c22VKKbgvr3qV8)






# renewal together: beyond easter

**Thank you for joining us on this Eastertide journey of renewal!**

If you would like to explore further the themes in this devotional and Servant Partners' work of seeking God's renewal and transformation among marginalized urban communities, here are some opportunities:


*stay in touch for  
updates, stories &  
resources*

 [www.servantpartners.ca](http://www.servantpartners.ca)  
  [@servantpartnerscanada](https://www.facebook.com/servantpartnerscanada)

*explore our  
community  
transformation  
certificate  
(CTC)*

**Curious about pursuing mutual transformation alongside marginalized neighbours in your city or community?**


Learn to engage an under-resourced community by listening to the strengths and groanings of your neighbours and co-create a seed project in response. Join us in a unique 2-day online learning environment and discern how to put into practice the skills learned in your own community! The Summer cohort meets on June 6th and 17th and the Fall cohort on September 9th and 16th.

 Find out more at [servantpartners.ca/training](http://servantpartners.ca/training)

*learn and  
collaborate  
with us*

**If you or your church community is looking for ways to seek the welfare of the city, build greater shalom in your community or share the experience of holistic renewal in this devotional, we'd love to come alongside you!**

Our staff team comprises experienced practitioners, co-learners and ministry coaches. We are available to facilitate workshops, retreats, coaching and speaking engagements tailored to your group's needs.

 Check out our offerings: [Learning + Collaboration Portfolio](http://servantpartners.ca/learning-collaboration-portfolio)  
<https://bit.ly/3TN7okl>

Connect with Krista-Dawn at [krista-dawn.kimsey@servantpartners.ca](mailto:krista-dawn.kimsey@servantpartners.ca) to start exploring opportunities!

*May Creator God bless you as you continue past this Eastertide  
exploring and cultivating the new life that began in this season!*

## WHY EXPLORE EMBODIED PRACTICES?

In Jesus' death and resurrection, we remember and celebrate a unique and physical experience. But unfortunately, many spiritual devotionals are written from an exclusively Western worldview, heavily rooted in the influence of mind-body dualism. This theory argues that the matters of the mind and soul are separate from the body.

This dramatically limits a whole experience of God through the other facets of our existence. We were made to experience, interact with and respond to God in our minds, bodies, and the Created world. We are commanded to love God with all our strength, mind, heart and soul. Mark 12: 30 Easter can permeate our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being.



The Unction of Christ by Julia Stankova



In scripture, we also see Jesus himself regularly affirm embodied physical gestures as expressions of faith. For example, in John 12:1-8, Mary's anointing Jesus by pouring oil on his feet and drying them with her hair is praised by Him while others look on in scorn. Shabrae Jackson, a former Servant Partners staff, describes Mary's response as *aesthetic*:

*"There's an invitation that lies at the center of Mary's radical act...It's an invitation to a fully embodied presence with others...Mary modelled this holistic presence for us. She used what she had, oil and her hair, to honour Jesus with this unconventional act of love. And in doing so, she also began to unveil God's upcoming work of death and resurrection. It was an embodied act in which she responded intuitively to what was needed. It was lavish. It was unexpected. It was without reservations. And it was revelatory."*

We invite you to consider practices this Easter season that engage our bodies, senses and surroundings inspired by Mary's example: intuitive, lavish, responsive and revelatory.

**"This particular influence absolutizes the realm of the abstract (spirit, soul, mind) and reduces the importance of the concrete realm (earth, body, material), disengaging them from one another. In dualistic thinking, we are no longer an existing whole."**

- RANDY WOODLEY

# contributors



Wendy Au Yeung 歐陽詠慈 (she/her) is a settler of Hong Kong-Chinese descent. Since 2015, she has been living and working with Servant Partners Canada in the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood on unceded Coast Salish Territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), sə́lilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh), and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) nations. She has experienced God's shalom through journeying with newcomer families with refugee backgrounds, seniors and Muslim women through gathering, community organizing and social enterprise. In her current role in Communications, she's honoured to amplify dignifying stories and wisdom from the margins to inspire followers of Jesus to pursue greater justice and peace in their lives and communities.

She loves living at the intersection of hands-on justice and creativity: nurturing diverse community around food and cooking, growing food, making her clothes and occasionally drawing or writing poetry to capture moments of beauty. In this season she is longing for renewal and healing in her health while learning to listen to and honour her body's wisdom.



Krista-Dawn Kimsey is a descendant of Ukrainian-German Canadian prairie heritage, a mostly pleasant wife to Joel and often spontaneous parent to her two teenagers: Judah and Gabriella. She currently serves as Co-Executive Director of Servant Partners Canada as holds a Director of Learning and Innovation position.

For 25 years, her vocational passion has been to facilitate creative and transformational learning experiences to disciple, train and coach leaders to pursue greater justice worldwide.



*Behold, I am doing a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not  
perceive it?*

*I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.*

- ISAIAH 43:19

## renewal together

*8 practices for  
living into Easter  
resurrection*



an Eastertide devotional  
by Servant Partners  
Canada

