

# The Work of the People

## *Becoming*

### A Season of Rebirthing

Where are you now? Not logistically (but, maybe), but in your life. Where do you stand? How have you come to be where you are today? How did you form your opinions and beliefs? Who you are today? How have you arrived to right where you are, to who you are? Who or what were your teachers?

We evolve, daily. We are made to change and grow. To learn and become. Think back a decade, five years, or even a year. Are you the same?

We spend a lifetime becoming, beloved. We are each in a constant evolution of body, mind, and spirit; that is if we aren't hindered by unresolved fear or pain. We are created by God constantly. It's an unusual truth to contemplate since many of us just assume we "grow up" into adulthood and that is it. We have awakenings, we have breakthroughs, we cross thresholds...but until our dying day we don't fully "arrive" to our finished self.

We simply show up to each and every moment. Each breath is an agreement to live, an invitation to newness. An allowing of fresh air to bring in what we need and exhale what no longer serves us. This is true for our biology and true for our thoughts. When we wake up to the idea that we are more than meets the eye, more than what we do and accomplish or fail at each day, more than systems and politics, more than our thoughts...we can start to conceive that we are a system of infinite particles held together by something greater.

That is something to contemplate, beloved.

It's what leads us *through* knowing the complexity that is "our self" to understanding how our humanity is connected to all of humanity, and every created thing. It leads us to empathy and compassion for others. We are led *beyond* ourselves to God and one another. Meister Eckhardt said, "No one has known God who has not known himself."

To know and be known is a basic human desire.

My grandmother died recently, and during her last days we held hands, and I spent time looking deep into her eyes—eyes that have seen 91 years of life—to the point that I lost track of myself as a separate person. I couldn't remember the last time I gazed into someone else's eyes, soul searching. The loveliness and sweetness of it broke me to tears. Death-times (should we not run from them) are great teachers.

The current of life is often so fast and strong that we have the tendency to live counterintuitively to our deepest desire to know and be known. Prayer practices help us reorient ourselves—to discover and confess (and by that I mean becoming fully transparent before God and remembering our right placement in creation-kind)—so that we can take up our part in our own becoming with God. Prayer is a way through and to. Cynthia Bourgeault has this to say about the importance of initiating a contemplative prayer practice in today's times:

*Contemplative prayer is no longer a luxury; it is an absolute necessity. Up to now, many have thought of contemplation as a devotional, wellness, or personal transformation practice. We're not just doing our meditation to chill out and get right with the world. We are trying to bring to bear a structure of perception, a system of consciousness, that allows us to empathize and relate to each other without fear, judgment, demonization, or division.*

*Contemplation is a nonnegotiable. If we want our world to come to oneness, each one of us must take on the responsibility of bringing the mind into the heart so we can become contemplatives not in lifestyle only, but in a complete revisioning and cleansing of the lens of perception. People at the non-dual level are much more useful, flexible, versatile, attuned cosmic servants.<sup>1</sup>*

To take responsibility means that we must become willing to bring awareness to our every-day-automatic-response to our lives. In other words, pay attention to what we are doing. What we are saying. How we are responding. We need to become students of ourselves and others. To be curious first—to learn, to understand so that we gain compassion and can exchange this information (prayer) for what it is to God and be free to integrate all things into (not resist) our becoming.

This five-film bundle was co-created between singer/songwriter Shellee Coley, visual artist Travis Reed, and myself who have grown over the years into dear friends. Shellee's Becoming Project created an opportunity for the three of us to open a conversation with you through the expression of our gifts about what we have found to be a surprisingly great teacher on the path towards God's wholeness dream: darkness. "Death times." It is our hope that these visual blessings will be an accompany in your ongoing relationship to breath, self, humanity and God's ever-

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<sup>1</sup> <http://email.cac.org/t/ViewEmail/d/35BA20FE75CB99ED/5B41CBEA1EB5E1DE44D0DD5392A9C75A>

present nature. Even the reflection segment for this bundle is intentionally short to leave room for your own discovery (okay, after this lengthy intro). There are many ancient and new ways to lead you toward meditation, we trust you can research those should they peak your interest. We are offering this from our experience of being humans who have found that without a practice towards them, we, too, forget to silence, still, listen, and breathe. We hope these expressions of our human experience bring you company in your onward search toward Love, Grace, Truth, God within and God among.

- Kelly Ann Hall

The series includes 5 sessions:

**SESSION ONE** // The Knowing

**SESSION TWO** // Wait for It

**SESSION THREE** // Story Like This

**SESSION FOUR** // Only Just Begun

**SESSION FIVE** // Mourning by Morning

### **Ways to engage**

- This film bundle can be used in a church service as benedictory blessings (side note: the poetry composed for these films were inspired and ordered by the lectionary readings for the first five Sundays of Lent for Year A but can be used for any inward journey during any part of the year).

1 Sunday: *The Knowing*

2 Sunday: *Wait For It*

3 Sunday: *Story Like This*

4 Sunday: *Only Just Begun*

5 Sunday: *Becoming*

- The five films can be used for small group or personal study with the accompanying curriculum to prompt deeper looking and promote discussion among the group. Watching each film more than once can lead you deeper into discovery. Consider watching each film three times, each time listening for different aspects.
- If you don't attend a church but would like to have a communal experience of inward journeying, consider inviting people to a film night and run all the films back to back. Allow people space to feel, journal, create and be created alongside.

## **Getting Prepared**

Set aside a good amount of time for this study, including maybe 10 minutes or so before beginning because it may take you a good few minutes to relax, shake off external issues, open and become present. Bring all the “things” you might need so you won’t be distracted: pen, paper or journal, coffee. Whatever helps you settle in. Get in a comfortable but alert position. Close or soften your eyes. Ask for God’s blessing.

Many traditions (ancient and new) use the breath as a focus. We’ve found centering prayer, Lectio and Visio divina practices to be expansive and helpful. If you are familiar with these practices, you’ll notice they continue to inspire us by the contemplative suggestions throughout. The following breath work will be repeated (in short) for each session, but you may want to make a note to return to this portion if you'd like to use this in full as part of your session.

Breathe in, focusing on what it feels like to take in air through your nose or mouth, down your throat, the expanse of your ribcage on all sides. Just breathe for 1-5 minutes, notice your natural rhythm of breath slow and deepen. A good aim to practice towards is 4 seconds of inhale and 4 seconds of exhale...but that is just a guideline.

Listen, things will come most likely come up. Some song, a to-do thing, the mind may take a bit to settle. It’s okay. Just reassure yourself that you will come back to whatever it is later. When you are ready, move around a little. If you want to write about your time, do it, offer gratitude for breath.

As you watch, welcome the poetic blessing and song lyrics as companions, ask your ears to hear, ask your eyes to lead you. What strikes you? Are there words or phrases or a lyric that resonates? Make note, either in your heart, your mind, or on paper.

Rest your eyes for a few minutes and breathe.

Open your eyes and play the film a second time. Go beyond the words into the images. Let your eyes lead you. What are you drawn to? What does it make you feel? Write about this deeper sense. Close your eyes again and breathe. Again, make note.

Open your eyes and play the film a third time. Allow Spirit to bring forward a message for you; a word, a phrase, or an emotion. Don’t judge what comes up, just

allow. What does this communicate to your life today? Breathe and take it all in. Soak in it. Spend time with God. With all this revealed, leave your heart open to God for just a bit longer. Let God roll around in all that has been exposed. Experience God's engaged healing presence. Make a note of your experience.

Respond to God in your own way. Ask God how you can take what you have learned into the world.

## **SESSION ONE // *The Knowing***

This session's pathway toward prayer traverses through honesty and transparency. Check in with yourself. What are you arriving to this study with today? If you are in a group, consider letting each member of the group speak one to three sentences describing their state of heart or mind.

### **Movement 1: Watch the *The Knowing***

Welcome the poetic blessing and song lyrics as companions, ask your ears to hear, ask your eyes to lead you. What strikes you? Are there words or phrases or a lyric that resonates? Make note, either in your heart, your mind, or on paper.

Rest your eyes for a few minutes and breathe.

### **Movement 2: Watch *The Knowing***

Open your eyes and play the film a second time. Go beyond the words into the images. Let your eyes lead you. What are you drawn to? What does it make you feel? Write about this deeper sense. Close your eyes again and breathe.

### **Movement 3: Watch *The Knowing***

Open your eyes and play the film a third time. Allow Spirit to bring forward a message for you; a word, a phrase, or an emotion. Don't judge what comes up, just allow. What does this communicate to your life today? Breathe and take it all in. Soak in it. Spend time with God. With all this revealed, leave your heart open to God for just a bit longer. Let God roll around in all that has been exposed. Experience God's engaged healing presence. Make a note of your experience.

### **Movement 4: Discussion/Going Deeper**

Read through the following poem written as a reflection on Adam and Eve hiding in the garden.

*Bless us O, God,  
with enough of You*

*to bring us out of hiding  
undressed of untruths,  
thin as leaves—  
bare our souls to be known.*

*Even as nerves are unwrapped  
and anxieties unbandaged  
even with our instinctual desire to cloak—  
to tailor a way out of exposure  
and cheat our way out of certain death—  
we come out to You.*

*Hiding is futile.  
Nothing goes unnoticed, nothing undiscovered—  
All existence is within Your sight.*

*So, we give You our willingness to recover,  
to become transparent and teachable,  
to be redesigned and redressed.*

*To our greatest ability, God,  
we bring ourselves to You,  
hoping you will take us as we are.*

Sometimes we come to a posture of humility, to honesty because we are exposed, sometimes because we are tired of hiding. Most of us have something we hope that stays under wraps (I mean, college anyone?). To live in denial about things, to hold them at a distance is to become a divided house. I don't mean to run out to the town square and air out your dirty laundry, but to come clean with God (who always already knows and loves and accepts us) and a safe, trustworthy person will help you integrate and take the next right step towards wholeness.

Is there a word, line or stanza that jumps out to you? Write it here.

What about it resonates with you?

What are ways you choose to hide from yourself?

Imagine what it might look like to fully accept yourself with all your ills...do you have a willingness to be made whole?

Ponder/discuss as a group your reflections of and/or resonance with the film, your thoughts on the poetry, or your thoughts on honesty, humility, or any other discovery that has come to you.

### **Movement 5: Reflection**

*I'll show you my heart, you whisper us through the dark and we'll go safely into the knowing—*  
Shellee Coley

We are always seen by God.

We are not, however, always seen by ourselves.

The most liberated I remember feeling was around second grade. I was absolutely open to God and myself. I knew my favorite color, food, song, game, person. I knew how lovely I felt snuggled into the neck of my golden retriever. I knew how free I felt swinging, laughing, enjoying a day on my tummy in the grass picking clover flower, puncturing the stem through blades of grass to make arms and legs for the newly appointed "Queen of Cloverbed." On hard days, I would go outside singing angry songs I made up while running for the treehouse. When I was sick, I would cry and my mother would come sit near me, placing a cool wet washcloth on my head.

I can see how much of a gift this time was now. I was an open book. I couldn't hide my love or my anger or my pain. Somewhere along the line I learned to hide all of these things because I was afraid of any intense feeling (including and especially love) and because exposing myself was a great risk. I have personally fabricated different cloaking devices to protect myself from appearing vulnerable. Sarcasm, misuse of substances and people, consumerism, habitual sickness, victimization, insane busyness, and blame shifting became ways to deflect from my weaknesses. I didn't know this was a problem, I didn't know I had encased myself in so much



falsehood. I became exhausted under the weight of my wear. I came to the end of my ability, of myself, whoever I was.

It was in my thirties when I awakened to God and without any other option but death, gained the courage to uncover and face myself.

I shed a lot of unhelpful belief during this time, a lot of falsehood, self-imposed expectation, and a lot of dead weight. This dying to myself led me through what my dad calls the "Land of Questions", to what St. John of the Cross wrote as the "Dark Night of the Soul" (and I survived to return again and again). If we are willing to go through it, if we are willing to let go and let God, to ask and adventure through the questions, we begin to recover what was true about God and us all along.

Willingness is the beginning of some important work. Willingness to be honest, to come clean is the threshold we cross to experience our own hallelujahs.

### **Movement 6: Watch *The Knowing***

Having done some work, and having heard reflections from the group, watch the film one last time. What are you willing to let go of? What are you taking with you?

### **Blessing**

I will lead you through the darkness, beloved.

My way: Grace

My love: compassion

My heart: wholeness.

You have always had My eye—  
and you are clothed in My presence, always.

Go with comfort and peace.

## **SESSION TWO // *Wait for It***

This session's pathway to prayer is acceptance of what is, surrender, and waiting. Check in with yourself. What are you arriving to this study with today? If you are in a group, consider letting each member of the group speak one to three sentences describing their state of heart or mind.

### **Movement 1: Watch *Wait For It***

Welcome the poetic blessing and song lyrics as companions, ask your ears to hear, ask your eyes to lead you. What strikes you? Are there words or phrases or a lyric that resonates? Make note, either in your heart, your mind, or on paper.

Rest your eyes for a few minutes and breathe.

### **Movement 2: Watch *Wait For It***

Open your eyes and play the film a second time. Go beyond the words into the images. Let your eyes lead you. What are you drawn to? What does it make you feel? Write about this deeper sense. Close your eyes again and breathe.

### **Movement 3: Watch *Wait For It***

Open your eyes and play the film a third time. Allow Spirit to bring forward a message for you; a word, a phrase, or an emotion. Don't judge what comes up, just allow. What does this communicate to your life today? Breathe and take it all in. Soak in it. Spend time with God. With all this revealed, leave your heart open to God for just a bit longer. Let God roll around in all that has been exposed. Experience God's engaged healing presence. Make a note of your experience.

### **Movement 4: Discussion/Going Deeper**

Read through the following poem written as God's response to the poem from the previous session.

*Recreation work can get dark, My loves—*

*Light so sparse it takes willingness to catch a glimmer.*

*It is not a comfortable time and space,  
and though you may not recognize Me,  
I AM in it, waiting alongside you.  
Speaking your eyes wide open,  
illuminating faces, guiding Lights,  
scattering flickers of hope  
and traces of warmth not only to sustain you...*

*but lead you by your willingness  
to holiness embodied,  
where we can reflect one another, altered—  
Me wearing your humanity, You hosting My divinity.*

*It sounds too good to be true, but I tell you...  
you will discover unmistakable beauty  
in unmade-up places.*

All too often in the age of instant gratification, we'd love to avoid the process, the development, and be fixed and fine already. We'd like to be made new, but we rather not be undone and put back together again. We'd like to be a beautiful sculpture, but we'd rather not feel the the cut of a sculptor's tool. There are things we have to go *through* for transformation. And, although the duration can be painstaking and hard to endure, the moment we are in is what we truly have for now. There are jewels to be found in the compress of ancient rock, and gifts to be received during the process, and in the wait.

Is there a word, line or stanza that jumps out to you? Write it here.

What about it resonates with you?

What is hardest about waiting? What are the potential gifts of waiting?

What is on your mind that you are willing to turn over to God, to relinquish control over? What will comfort you as you wait for God's solution? How will you remind yourself that you have turned over control?

### **Movement 5: Reflection**

*And we find our truth on the path, on the path. We find our truth on the path. And we're free from the chains of our past, of our past. We are free to move on...*—Shellee Coley

Dying to self is a process, unfortunately (or fortunately), one that leads us through surrender, letting go, decomposition, and reunion to the Source of Life.

Throughout any process, waiting can be expected. Are we willing to wait through God's process of recreation, are we willing to remain surrendered to God's will?

This is much like what happens to a caterpillar when it enters into the stage of becoming a butterfly. According to Scientific American, "To become a butterfly, a caterpillar first digests itself. But certain groups of cells survive, turning the soup into eyes, wings, antennae and other adult structures."<sup>2</sup>

Really, none of us remain the same, we all change. But I consider cocoon times an intense period of God's rebuilding from the most microscopic levels up through our bodies. Our work is to be willing to remain fully surrendered to this dark night of the soul, to this unknowing, to another womb-time, however long it takes.

Waiting is our job for now.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/caterpillar-butterfly-metamorphosis-explainer/>

**Movement 6: Watch *Wait For It***

Having done some work, and having heard reflections from the group, watch the film one last time. What are you willing to let go of? What are you taking with you?

**Blessing**

Stop resisting, beloved.  
Let down, let go, let Me.

You are encased in my Love.

Dissolve into Me,  
I AM holding you together.

I AM always around you.

### **SESSION THREE // *Story Like This***

This session's pathway to prayer is integration of self and right humility. Check in with yourself. What are you arriving to this study with today? If you are in a group, consider letting each member of the group speak one to three sentences describing their state of heart or mind.

#### **Movement 1: Watch *Story Like This***

Welcome the poetic blessing and song lyrics as companions, ask your ears to hear, ask your eyes to lead you. What strikes you? Are there words or phrases or a lyric that resonates? Make note, either in your heart, your mind, or on paper.

Rest your eyes for a few minutes and breathe.

#### **Movement 2: Watch *Story Like This***

Open your eyes and play the film a second time. Go beyond the words into the images. Let your eyes lead you. What are you drawn to? What does it make you feel? Write about this deeper sense. Close your eyes again and breathe.

#### **Movement 3: Watch *Story Like This***

Open your eyes and play the film a third time. Allow Spirit to bring forward a message for you; a word, a phrase, or an emotion. Don't judge what comes up, just allow. What does this communicate to your life today? Breathe and take it all in. Soak in it. Spend time with God. With all this revealed, leave your heart open to God for just a bit longer. Let God roll around in all that has been exposed. Experience God's engaged healing presence. Make a note of your experience.

#### **Movement 4: Discussion/Going Deeper**

Read through the following poem written as a prayer for the times when we cannot see the way through.

*God, we become disillusioned, disconnected,  
storming through days that often add up to a loss,  
dark nights of the soul that leave us withered and wanting,  
searching for water on hollow legs.*

*This is when it's easy to lose sight of Life as a gift.*

*And, that no matter how bad we'd like to escape,  
I doubt You lose anyone.  
To You we are not merely humans—  
broken vessels, cracked pots  
straining to hold one sip of Life—  
but Your beloved hand work,  
shaped to be filled,  
to draw upon Your heart and walk.*

*You pulled a fountain out of rock,  
so surely You can bring goodness from dust!  
Bless us to channel Love even through hardness  
To let Your water carve its way through us,  
like river brings Life through canyon,  
and saturate us through and through!*

*When we can't feel our way to You,  
make Your way through us.  
Help us receive Your outpouring of Love.*

Integrating the hardnesses/darknesses of life is a continual work. Uncomfortable as those times may be, they are part of who we are becoming. Have you found any beauty in your dark times? How about the beauty in your own humanity?

### **Movement 5: Reflection**

*Cause in the dark you just have to feel your way along, but I've always had the hope that I'm being led back home.—Shellee Coley*

Like Jesus with the woman at the well in John 4, God informs us of our story. Tells us like it is, but through a shameless lens.

In the muddled mess of our becoming, when we are finally wide open to God's hand in our redesign, we begin to understand right humility. We begin to see and

appreciate the life we have been gifted. We understand more about our limitations, our humanity. We see how we have hurt and been hurt. Tried and failed and learned. Loved and celebrated well. At the same time we are dissolved into the soupiness of our cocoon-time, we are integrating ourselves. Everything is all together now.

We begin to see more about who God is and the expansiveness of One that is No-Thing and yet Everything. We get to be willing during this rebirth, to let God flow through us, to flush out our cells and invigorate us with the vibration of new Life. We are learning the blessing of accepting our humanity as a gift rather than a curse.

These are the transformation chapters.

### **Movement 6: Watch *Story Like This***

Having done some work, and having heard reflections from the group, watch the film one last time. What are you willing to let go of? What are you taking with you?

### **Blessing**

I AM ever expanding, beloved.  
Not just “out there”  
But in you

and through you.

Everywhere you go,  
I AM there...  
even, and especially in the mess.

Yes, everywhere you go  
I go.



## **SESSION FOUR // *Only Just Begun***

This session's pathway to prayer is sanctuary. It's trusting that God is who God says God is: all encompassing. Connection, presence. Check in with yourself. What are you arriving to this study with today? If you are in a group, consider letting each member of the group speak one to three sentences describing their state of heart or mind.

### **Movement 1: Watch *Only Just Begun***

Welcome the poetic blessing and song lyrics as companions, ask your ears to hear, ask your eyes to lead you. What strikes you? Are there words or phrases or a lyric that resonates? Make note, either in your heart, your mind, or on paper.

Rest your eyes for a few minutes and breathe.

### **Movement 2: Watch *Only Just Begun***

Open your eyes and play the film a second time. Go beyond the words into the images. Let your eyes lead you. What are you drawn to? What does it make you feel? Write about this deeper sense. Close your eyes again and breathe.

### **Movement 3: Watch *Only Just Begun***

Open your eyes and play the film a third time. Allow Spirit to bring forward a message for you; a word, a phrase, or an emotion. Don't judge what comes up, just allow. What does this communicate to your life today? Breathe and take it all in. Soak in it. Spend time with God. With all this revealed, leave your heart open to God for just a bit longer. Let God roll around in all that has been exposed. Experience God's engaged healing presence. Make a note of your experience.

#### **Movement 4: Discussion/Going Deeper**

Read through the following poem written as God's response to the poem from the previous session.

*Come to Me, My flock, just as you are  
gather up, huddle together, amass—  
the dying world is thrashing its way out,  
exhausted of intelligent debate.*

*I AM keeping you close, opening My house,  
giving sanctuary.*

*With Me, even death's darkness will not trouble you.  
Even the wayward path won't bring you down.*

*I AM imparting clarity with truth and understanding,  
gifting glimpses of Me—belief through sight.  
I AM pouring guiding Light over you,  
blessing overflowing blessing,  
anointing you as one who carries Me within,  
and one who carries Me out.*

*Rest and recharge, Beloveds, soon we will rise.*

This film portrays one of my most favorite enlightenments. Throughout the film, in the distance, hidden in the fog appears a figure that might be our saving grace. The connection we've been looking for, the answer to our deep, long-whispered prayers. Could this be God? Why can we only get a glimpse? A shape, a mere movement, really, so far away. As the story progresses, we see ourselves and our walk...clearly. We see ourselves clearly, because God is not far off, but within and through. WITH. When we get clear on ourselves, when we get all of the dramatics and projections off of ourselves and God, it gets simple. God lives in and through us. Have you ever had this turning point in your life? Have you let yourself and God off the hook? Have you let you be you, and God be God?

#### **Movement 5: Reflection**

*So I wandered through the valley, I stood beneath an open sky. Just looking for somebody to lead me through the lonely nights.—Shellee Coley*

When telling or hearing a story, have you ever heard yourself or someone describing a disaster of epic proportion followed by a turning point statement like, “and that’s when God showed up”. I love this part in the story, because usually that means the good stuff is just getting started.

I often wonder how this phrase came to be, though. Because throughout everything I have experienced and learned, God doesn’t show up...we do. We awaken to the I AM.

And, we may have searched everywhere for God but within. Growing towards knowing the creative Source that imagines us into being from beginning to end, who takes up residence in our bodies and constantly builds and rebuilds the “who” of who we are around Godself is the work of reformation of being. We are coming together again, being regathered, and God is not withholding blessing, but pouring out Light and sight—and this is just the beginning.

### **Movement 6: Watch *Only Just Begun***

Having done some work, and having heard reflections from the group, watch the film one last time. What are you willing to let go of? What are you taking with you?

### **Blessing**

Just be you, beloved,  
And let Me be Me.

I AM that I AM,  
and that is more than enough.

Take Me as I AM,  
and know I take you as you are.

Together, Love.  
We are together, always.

## **SESSION FIVE // *Mourning by Morning***

This session's pathway to prayer is our agreement to live fully. To be reborn time and again. Check in with yourself. What are you arriving to this study with today? If you are in a group, consider letting each member of the group speak one to three sentences describing their state of heart or mind.

### **Movement 1: Watch *Mourning by Morning***

Welcome the poetic blessing and song lyrics as companions, ask your ears to hear, ask your eyes to lead you. What strikes you? Are there words or phrases or a lyric that resonates? Make note, either in your heart, your mind, or on paper.

Rest your eyes for a few minutes and breathe.

### **Movement 2: Watch *Mourning by Morning***

Open your eyes and play the film a second time. Go beyond the words into the images. Let your eyes lead you. What are you drawn to? What does it make you feel? Write about this deeper sense. Close your eyes again and breathe.

### **Movement 3: Watch *Mourning by Morning***

Open your eyes and play the film a third time. Allow Spirit to bring forward a message for you; a word, a phrase, or an emotion. Don't judge what comes up, just allow. What does this communicate to your life today? Breathe and take it all in. Soak in it. Spend time with God. With all this revealed, leave your heart open to God for just a bit longer. Let God roll around in all that has been exposed. Experience God's engaged healing presence. Make a note of your experience.

#### **Movement 4: Discussion/Going Deeper**

Read through the following poem written in honor of new life and awakening.

*I AM walking through the valley of death, beloved,  
opening graves, piecing together sets of dry bones,  
speaking them to Life.*

*“BREATHE.”*

*Soon you will see, I have restored us,  
reclaimed you from your suffrage and sorrow  
and made you whole again.*

*Hope, once long lost, is here again.*

*I am setting you upright,  
placing My presence deep within,  
reassuring once-hollowed legs  
they are good to stand, and well to walk.*

*My humans, along with My divine presence,  
know I gift you your humanity—Life itself!  
Accept and take your life, use it well.  
Use it for the common good,  
for the love of other.*

*Until you are unearthed completely,  
and we are wholly one,  
never stop becoming, My Loves.*

I have come to believe that breathing with intention is one of the great actions of acceptance and genuine loving response for the gift of life that we can make to God. To breathe while awakened is to say “I continue to choose life with you.” We so often forget to breathe well, friends. We rely on the mechanics of our bodies, and forget to really, truly, take in air. WE ARE ALIVE, and that is something. Let the Divine Wind in, let it course through you, let it enliven you until you shed this body and enjoin God soul-to-soul. In all this work, have you been able to find compassion for all the heavy things you can carry? What, if anything, can you leave in the dust as you journey on? What will you take with you?

## **Movement 5: Reflection**

*And we stand as the day closes dark on our face. We stand, and we wait here with you as we're becoming new.*—Shellee Coley

We have died to become new. We have expressed our worn out ways, turned ourselves inside out, upside down and eventually over to God for further examination and complete consumption. We have been reframed, reanimated by Spirit's breath, and embody something greater than ourself. Our new understanding of our humanity and God's absoluteness have instilled right confidence now. Confidence not based on what we have done, but in what God has done and will continue to do.

It's time to emerge, friends, to be unwrapped from our burial clothes. Take in the air here, we've come through some deep recovery. We have been led through death to new Life. To reconciliation. While we do not have certitude that "it is finished"—for we know we will have more dying to do—we have hope in our continued becoming with God.

Now we set out to live a more fully-human experience. Now we are being sent to bring our new sense and being into Light, into community to become manna for one another, to join and share our healing. "Out there" is where we express transformation, where we stretch out our new wings, raise up our colors and welcome Christ to shine through.

These are the stained glass windows of our inner sanctum.

God within us has made each of us a human sanctuary. We hold God's Presence within and practice carrying LIFE and LOVE and FORGIVENESS and WELCOMING everywhere we go.

### **Movement 6: Watch *The Knowing***

Having completed this study, having learned what you have learned and having heard reflections from others, watch the film one last time. What do you rise up with? What will you take with you for the healing of the world?

### **Blessing**

I AM sharing My breath, beloved,  
pause, and take it in.

It's time to rise, Love  
to walk and move.

It's time to share, more of yourself—  
one of My most treasured expressions of Love on earth.

We'll go on together through the ends  
into new beginnings.

We'll go on together.