

## Theological Conference 2024 Ghost Ranch Retreat Center

"I know I cannot paint a flower. I cannot paint the sun on the desert on a bright summer morning; But maybe in terms of paint color, I can convey to you my experience of the flower or the experience that makes the flower of significance to me at that particular time."  
Georgia O'Keeffe

Art: *The Cliff Chimneys* by Georgia O'Keeffe painted in 1938 at Ghost Ranch



# Theological Conference Schedule

Monday, September 16 – Thursday, September 19



## Monday, September 16

- 1:30 p.m. Registration Opens
- 4:00 p.m. Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, Partner Presentations (Portico and RMS-LDR), and Introductions – Agape Worship Center
- 5:30 p.m. Dinner – Dining Hall
- 7:00 p.m. Opening Worship – Agape Worship Center
- 8:00 p.m. Fireside Fellowship – Agape Courtyard

## Tuesday, September 17

- 6:30 a.m. Morning Hike –Pastor Katie Emery
- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast – Dining Hall
- 9:30 a.m. Morning Prayer on the lawn
- 10:15 a.m. Refreshment Break – Agape Kitchen
- 10:30 a.m. Embodied Faith: Incarnation and Mystery – Bishop Dr. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni  
Agape Worship Center
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch – Dining Hall
- 1:30 p.m. Workshops (options listed on pages 4 and 5 – all workshops will be offered both days)  
Refreshments – Agape Kitchen
- 3:30 p.m. Ghost Ranch hosted activities/Free time
- 5:30 p.m. Dinner – Dining Hall
- 7:00 p.m. Fireside Fellowship – Pot Hollow

## Wednesday

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast – Dining Hall
- 9:30 a.m. Morning Prayer on the lawn
- 10:15 a.m. Refreshment Break – Agape Kitchen
- 10:30 a.m. Embodied Faith: Virtual and Physical Spaces  
Bishop Dr. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni – Agape Worship Center
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch – Dining Hall
- 1:30 p.m. Workshops (options listed on pages 4 and 5 – all workshops will be offered both days)  
Refreshments – Agape Kitchen
- 3:30 p.m. Hike to Chimney Rock (2.5 hrs.) – Pastor Katie Emery  
Ghost Ranch hosted activities/Free time
- 5:30 p.m. Dinner – Dining Hall
- 7:00 p.m. Fireside Fellowship – Pot Hollow

## Thursday

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast – Dining Hall  
9:30 a.m. Morning Prayer on the lawn  
10:15 a.m. Refreshment Break – Agape Kitchen  
10:30 a.m. Embodied Faith: Bodies and the Body of Christ  
Bishop Dr. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni – Agape Worship Center  
11:30 a.m. Sending Blessing  
12:00 p.m. Optional Lunch – Dining Hall (lunch option is still available – ask RMS staff)

## POINTS OF INTEREST

Georgia O’Keeffe Home and Studio -- <https://www.okeeffemuseum.org/homes/>

The Monastery of Christ in the Desert -- <https://christdesert.org/>

Abiquiú Lake -- This 5,200 surface acre reservoir offers some of the finest fishing in northern New Mexico. Reptile fossils 200 million years old have been found in the area. The area includes a fine panoramic view of the Cerro Pedernal from the dam. It is surrounded by red sandstone formations on Hwy 84 and adjacent to historical Pedernal Mountain to the south on Hwy 96 -- <https://www.recreation.gov/camping/gateways/27>

Echo Amphitheatre (temp. closed – may reopen in September?) --

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/carson/recreation/hiking/recarea/?recid=44462&actid=50>

Purple Adobe Lavender Farm -- <https://purpleadobelavenderfarm.com/>

## OFFERINGS

Offerings received during Theological Conference will benefit RMS Leadership Scholarship Fund which provides scholarships for leaders to attend synod events. Thank you for your generosity!



## WORKSHOPS

### **Depolarization & Dialogue: Discipleship for our political times**

Across the church, people are hungry for a way out of our polarized political moment. “What do I say to someone who believes [X]?” “How can someone be a Christian and think [Y]?” Many people despair that we’ll never find a way forward together. People of faith have an opportunity at this moment to respond in a different way than what our ideologically fraught culture has to offer, rooted in Jesus’ call to love our neighbors. This workshop will be an introduction to depolarization and respectful dialogue in the context of faith-based advocacy, offering a model for loving engagement across ideological and cultural divisions that neither precludes passionate advocacy nor requires ‘watering down’ one’s own moral commitments, equipping you to lead constructive conversations in your ministry context. This workshop will be led by [Peter Severson, Director of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Colorado for the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA.](#)

### **Photography as a Spiritual Practice: Its all about the seeing – Agape Worship Center**

Photography requires us to pay attention to what is in front of us, right here and right now. Practicing photography as a spiritual practice can help us receive the gifts of God’s presence, right here and right now. Come practice and receive the God that journeys with us right here and right now. This workshop will be led by Pastor Michael TeKrony, St. Peter, Greenwood Village, CO.

### **Earthen Vessels: 10-12 participants**

This workshop will be messy and require work (don't wear your best clergy shirt). After short instruction, participants will practice hand-building with clay while reflecting on the potter's work as a metaphor for their own work. They may even leave with a new hobby or spiritual practice. The workshop will be 30-45 minutes long, allowing time for individual rest, reflection, or recreation afterwards. This workshop will be led by Pastor Katie Chullino, Bethlehem, Longmont, CO.

### **Exploring with Images**

As clergy, our lives are filled with words - studying and preaching and visiting and writing. I like to take a break from words by playing with color and image. Join me in creating collage to explore what is on your heart and mind right now. Or do collage with a Blessing for Pastors by Kate Bowler - I will bring copies. No art experience needed - this is just a time to practice playful creativity. This workshop will be led by Pastor Kristin Schultz, All Saints, Albuquerque, NM.

### **Conversation with Bishop Meghan Johnston-Aelabouni**

As the Office of the Bishop continues to journey through transitions, Bishop Meghan, wants to hear your feedback and insights. Conversation will begin with four questions: What is the office of the bishop doing well? What is the office of the bishop not doing well? What is a synod uniquely positioned to do? What can the synod stop doing?

### **Raising Up Leaders in the ELCA**

There are many new options for lay and rostered leadership formation in the ELCA! Come learn about these emerging opportunities and engage in conversation about how to accompany lay leaders in the process of discernment. This workshop will be led by Pastor Diana Linden-Johnson, Assistant to the Bishop for Rostered Ministry.



*Sky above Clouds IV* by Georgia O'Keeffe, Ghost Ranch, 1965



Opening Eucharist  
Monday 7:00 p.m.



*The Mother's Song, Images of God the Mother*  
by Meinrad Craighead

Opening Song: *Dance With Me* – author unknown  
This is holy time  
We're gathered together to worship you,  
To love one another.

And as we pray,  
And as we sing,  
And as we dance,  
And as we dream,  
Oh Lord, I beg of you, just this one thing:

Won't you dance with me!  
Throughout the heavens and beyond the seas,  
Up on the mountaintops, roll with the breeze,  
Come carry me,  
Oh Lord, won't you dance, with me.  
*Repeat*

Opening Litany of Confession and Healing  
Holy God, Creator and Lover of all that is,  
**We confess that we have sinned.**  
**We have failed in our care for one another and for this sacred land.**  
**We have been greedy, destructive, and wasteful of the bountiful resources entrusted to us.**  
**We have exploited the people who cared for this land.**  
**We do not know how to restore all that is broken and we repent in sorrow and distress.**  
**Forgive us, we pray, and have mercy.**  
**Give us grace to change our ways, to make amends, and to work together for the healing of the world.**

When we are buried in shame and guilt, God makes us alive with Christ.  
God transforms the world into a new creation.  
God transforms us into a beloved community.  
**Send your Holy Spirit.**  
**Renew our hearts.**  
**Save the earth. Amen.**

## Reading

Web art and story by Meinrad Craighead



*In the beginning, as one of the old stories says, there was nothing but Spiderwoman. She spun two threads and where they crossed she sat singing and her singing made everything and held it all together.*

*I remember my mother, sitting at the center, holding us together. I remember the apartment in Chicago as eternally dark yellow. It seemed always to be dead winter. There was only one room with sufficient natural light. We called it the dining room because it was next to the kitchen, but we never ate at the big table in this room. This is the room, the room with the light, where my mother sat with her three daughters.*

*She teaches us songs. We sing together, we lean together to her light. We listen to the radio, drawing pictures as we hear the serials. My mother sits at the table with us and sews.*

*One afternoon the two of us are alone at the table. She is sewing, I am drawing. She is always silent when she sews. I am aware of the passing afternoon and of our being alone. It is a great happiness. I want the afternoon to last. I ask, "What do you think about when you sew?" "I don't think. I am remembering," she replies. "When I am sewing, I hold you all together." She then asks me what I think about when I draw. I tell her I do not think; I tell her I am drawing stories.*

The gospel according to Matthew,  
**Glory to you, O Lord**

Matthew 6: 19-21

<sup>19</sup>"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The gospel of our Lord,  
**Praise to you, O Christ**

Opening Reflection



# Ubi caritas et amor

## *Where True Charity and Love Abide*

The image shows a musical score for the antiphon 'Ubi caritas et amor'. It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The first system contains the lyrics: 'U - bi ca - ri - tas et a - mor, / Where true char - i - ty and love a - bide,'. The second system contains the lyrics: 'u - bi ca - ri - tas, De - us i - bi est. / God is dwell - ing there; God is dwell - ing there.' The piano accompaniment features chords and moving lines in both hands, with some triplets in the second system.

Text: Latin antiphon, 9th cent.; Taizé Community; tr. *With One Voice*  
Music: TAIZÉ UBI CARITAS, Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994  
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### Prayers

God of the universe, your creation is infinitely beautiful and beyond our wildest imagination. You have blessed us with an intricate, fierce creation. Teach us to be wise caretakers of the earth. Teach us to tend the land with care and engage in sustainable practices. Heal our stubborn selfish ways and renew the earth with life.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

God of our ancestors, we honor the saints and sinners who walked these trails before us.

May we tell their stories, and in telling their stories, may we learn our own.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

God of the church, unite us. Heal the schisms of pride. Teach us to partner as equals for the sake of humanity. Transform our institutions and our ministries.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

God of change, calm our nerves and comfort our souls, as we embrace change in all facets of our lives. Teach us to be strong. Give us courage to daily face the realities of fear, pain, illness, violence, and death.

Tonight, we pray for . . . and we remember aloud or in our hearts . . .

Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

God of community, be with us as we engage in these four days of Theological Conference together.

Open our hearts to someone new. Open our minds to a new idea. Open our hearts to the possibilities.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen**

### **Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you always

**And also with you**

### **Offering**

Offerings received during Theological Conference will benefit RMS Leadership Scholarship Fund which provides scholarships for leaders to attend synod events. This fund is especially important as the 3E Lilly grant funding ends this year -- Thank you for your generosity!



Let us pray,

**God of all creation, all you have made is good, and your love endures forever.**

**You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine.**

**Nourish us with these gifts, that we might be for the world signs of your gracious presence, in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord – Amen.**

### **Great Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you

**And also with you**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them to the Lord**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**It is right to give our thanks and praise**

## Preface

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest!  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest!**

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, you have brought us this far along the way.  
In times of bitterness, you did not abandon us but guided us into the path of love and light.  
In every age you sent prophets to make known your loving will for all humanity.  
The cry of the poor has become your own cry; our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.  
In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant to preach good news to the afflicted, to break bread with the outcast and despised, and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this in remembrance of me

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes,

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection, we await the day when Jesus shall return to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.

Come, Lord Jesus!  
And let the church say, Amen.

**Amen**

*Invitation to pray the Lord's Prayer in any language*

## Communion

*Instructions and Invitation*

Communion Hymns  
Dona Nobis Pacem  
Eat This Bread  
There Is a Balm in Gilead  
Jesus, Remember Me

Art: *The Seat of Wisdom* by Meinrad Craighhead



# Dona nobis pacem

1 *Canon*



Do - na no - bis pa - cem, pa - cem. Do - na no - bis pa - cem.

2



Do - na no - bis pa - cem. Do - na no - bis pa - cem.

3



Do - na no - bis pa - cem. Do - na no - bis pa - cem.

Text: Traditional  
Music: DONA NOBIS PACEM, traditional

# Eat This Bread

## *Jesus Christ, Bread of Life*

*Refrain*



“Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and nev - er be hun - gry.  
OR Je - sus Christ, bread of life, those who come to you will not hun - ger.



Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in me and you will not thirst.”  
Je - sus Christ, ris - en Lord, those who trust in you will not thirst.

Text: Taizé Community


Music: BERTHIER, Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994

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# There Is a Balm in Gilead

*Refrain*



There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to make the wound-ed whole;




there is a balm in Gil-e-ad to heal the sin-sick soul.



1 Some - times I feel dis - cour - aged and think my work's in vain,  
2 If you can - not preach like Pe - ter, if you can - not pray like Paul,  
3 Don't ev - er be dis - cour - aged, for Je - sus is your friend;

*Refrain*



but then the Ho - ly Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain.  
you can tell the love of Je - sus and say, "He died for all."  
and if you lack for knowl - edge, he'll ne'er re - fuse to lend.

Text: African American spiritual  
Music: BALM IN GILEAD, African American spiritual

# Jesus, Remember Me

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

The first system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 7/8 time signature. It features a melody of eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, providing a harmonic accompaniment of chords and eighth notes.

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

The second system of music also consists of two staves in the same key signature and time signature as the first. The melody in the top staff concludes with a final cadence. The bass staff accompaniment also concludes with a final cadence.

Text: Luke 23:42; Taizé Community

Music: REMEMBER ME, Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994

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## Post-Communion Prayer

God of all creation, you have given us the elements to sustain us and filled us with good food.  
Through this meal, we are united with Christ, making us one with all of humanity.

**Amen**

## Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

**Amen**

Sending Hymn: Now Rest beneath Night's Shadow

## Now Rest beneath Night's Shadow

1 Now rest be - neath night's shad - ow the wood - land, field,  
 2 Lord Je - sus, since you love me, now spread your wings  
 3 My loved ones, rest se - cure - ly, for God this night

and mead - ow— the world in slum - ber lies. But you, my heart,  
 a - bove me and shield me from a - larm. Though e - vil would  
 will sure - ly from per - il guard your heads. Sweet slum - ber may

a - wak - ing and prayer and mu - sic mak - ing;  
 as - sail me, your mer - cy will not fail me;  
 God send you; the an - gel hosts at - tend you

let praise to your cre - a - tor rise.  
 I rest in your pro - tect - ing arm.  
 and through the night watch o'er your beds.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607–1676; tr. composite  
 Music: O WELT, ICH MUSS DICH LASSEN, Heinrich Isaac, 1450–1517; arr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*  
 Arr. © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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Sending: Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord, **Thanks be to God!**





## I Bless You, Lord, My God

*Ben - di - go al Se - ñor por-que es-cu - cha mi\_ voz. El Se -*  
I bless you, Lord, my God, for you hear me when I call. You, O

*ñor es mi fuer - za; con - fí - a mi co - ra - zón. Ben -*  
Lord, are my strong - hold; I trust you with all my heart. I

Text and music: Taizé Community  
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A reading from Exodus

Response: Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (*sung by Cantor*)

Reflection: Hamilton, Virginia, "The People Could Fly."

## Come Now, O Prince of Peace

*Ososö, ososö*

*O - so - sö o - so - sö, pyong - hwa - üi - im - güm*

1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.  
2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.  
3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.  
4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.

The second system of musical notation consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains the vocal melody, and the bass staff contains the accompaniment. The notes are in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a steady rhythm.

*u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sö.*

Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.  
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.  
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.  
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

The fourth system of musical notation consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains the vocal melody, and the bass staff contains the accompaniment. The notes are in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a steady rhythm.

Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope

Music: OSOSÖ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947

Text and music © Geonyong Lee.

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78

# Heleluyan

(Alleluia)

He - le - lu - yan, he - le - lu - yan; he - le, he - le - lu - yan;

5 he - le - lu - yan, he - le - lu - yan; he - le, he - le - lu - yan.





*Creation is a miracle of daily recurrence.*

*The creative mind plays with the objects it loves.*

*I joyfully anticipate creating extraordinary moments out of ordinary time.*

*Your ordinary acts of love and hope point to the extraordinary promise that every human life is of inestimable value.*

Art by Georgia O'Keeffe. *My Front Yard, Ghost Ranch, Summer, 1941.*

Quote by Carl Jung

## Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for  
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -  
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when  
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for  
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is  
 all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so  
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.  
 qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;  
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.  
 crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -  
 mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -  
 Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in  
 Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and  
 kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to  
 won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and  
 sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.  
 shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.  
 weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.  
 bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen

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## Scriptures

First Reading: Exodus 35:10, 25-35

All who are skillful among you shall come and make all that the LORD has commanded. ...

All the skillful women spun with their hands, and brought what they handspun in blue and purple and crimson yarns and fine linen; all the women whose hearts moved them to use their skill spun the goats' hair. And the leaders brought onyx stones and gems to be set in the ephod and the breast piece, and spices and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. All the Israelite men and women whose hearts made them willing to bring anything for the work that the LORD had commanded by Moses to be done, brought it as a freewill offering to the LORD.

Then Moses said to the Israelites: See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; he has filled him with divine spirit, with skill, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, in every kind of craft. And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. He has filled them with skill to do every kind of work done by an artisan or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and in fine linen, or by a weaver — by any sort of artisan or skilled designer.

Word of God, word of life,

**Thanks be to God**

Psalm 92:1-5

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,  
**to sing praises to your name, O Most High;**  
to declare your steadfast love in the morning,  
**and your faithfulness by night,**  
to the music of the lute and the harp,  
**to the melody of the lyre.**

For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work;

**at the works of your hands I sing for joy.**

How great are your works, O LORD!

**Your thoughts are very deep!**



Second Reading: Acts: 9:36-43

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them.

Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up.

Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Word of God, word of life,

**Thanks be to God**

Art by Georgia O'Keeffe, Gerald's Tree, for Gerald Heard, a writer interested in religion and mysticism, Ghost Ranch, 1937

The gospel according to Mark  
**Glory to you, O Lord**

Mark 8:22-26

They came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Can you see anything?" And the man looked up and said, "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking." Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently, and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. Then he sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even go into the village."

The gospel of the Lord,  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

Reader's Theatre by Pastor Jeff Carlson

Characters:

M: "Mark" the Gospel Writer  
B: Bezalel the Craftsman  
P: Paula Gunn Allen the Poet  
G: Georgia O'Keeffe the Painter

M Thank you all for gathering to help these good people consider how they can create faith experiences for themselves and others. Let's begin with brief introductions: I'll start. There are those who call me ... [pause] ... Mark?

B Is that a Monty Python reference? Really?

M Well, not taking ourselves too seriously can be a good place to start for creating faith experiences. Anyway, I wrote – or, edited? – eh, let's say I composed the Gospel that bears the name "Mark." [smiling]  
Consult your favorite commentary for more speculation on my identity. How about you?

B My name is Bezalel. Not many people know that I'm actually the first person in the whole Bible that God sent God's spirit on. Along with many others, I crafted the tabernacle and its decorations during Israel's wilderness wandering.

P: I'm Paula Gunn Allen. I lived right here in New Mexico. I wrote all sorts of things: poetry, novels, essays, biographies. My ancestors included Scottish- Americans, Lebanese-Americans, and Native-Americans. I always identified most closely with my mother's people of the Laguna Pueblo.

G And I'm Georgia O'Keeffe, a painter. I studied and worked and lived in many places, including right here by Ghost Ranch.

M Great. So, what thoughts do we have about creating faith experiences?

G Place is so important. Notice how the physical space you find yourself in shapes what you see. And how you see. Especially how it can help you to see in a fresh way.

- B What's an example of what that looks like?
- G "Two walls of my room in my Abiquiú house were glass and from one window I saw the road toward Espanola, Santa Fe, and the world. The road fascinated me with its ups and downs and finally its wide sweep as it sped toward the wall of my hilltop to go past me. I had made two or three snaps of it with a camera. For one of them I turned the camera at a sharp angle to get all the road. It was accidental that I made the road seem to stand up in the air, but it amused me, and I began drawing and painting it as a new shape. The trees and mesa beside it were unimportant for that painting — it was just the road."
- P Yes. Yes. And people need to pay attention to what's happening where they are. What they're literally feeling in their bodies.
- M Right.
- P "You can learn to enjoy your sensuality in each and every moment. Listening to music, let the music vibrate the pores of your skin. Washing dishes, let the suds bathe your hands. Walking the dog, learn to enjoy being pulled. Every day there are hundreds of things you can enjoy. You can enjoy the leisureliness of a stroll, or the sweat of jogging, or the tang of a breeze. Being open to all that and with all that will gradually turn you on to life more and more."
- B And practice tuning in to any spiritual echoes that might reverberate in a particular space. What's the history of the space? Of things in the space. How might something in your space, even something quite old, be a touchstone for experiencing God? For God inspiring new possibilities?
- P Mmm. Like what?
- B My fellow artists and I created beautiful things for God's tabernacle, which was God's tent as God accompanied the people on our journey. One of the things I made for that traveling sacred space was a bronze altar. Generations later, Solomon, the king who built the first permanent Temple, knelt before that same bronze altar that I had made for God's tent. He prayed and reported that God gave him the gift of wisdom so that he could rule the people with justice.
- M Okay, so paying attention to place can help create faith experiences. That makes sense. Jesus was always drawing his disciples away from the crowds to deserted places by themselves.
- G But it's not just the place. It's seeing differently. "If you take a flower in your hand and really look at it, it's your world for a moment."
- B Details matter. The specific aspects of every item that we created for the tabernacle were so important that the book of Exodus spends four whole straight chapters describing them.
- G "I often painted fragments of things because it seemed to make my statement as well as or better than the whole could. I once got half-a-dozen paintings from a shattered plate."

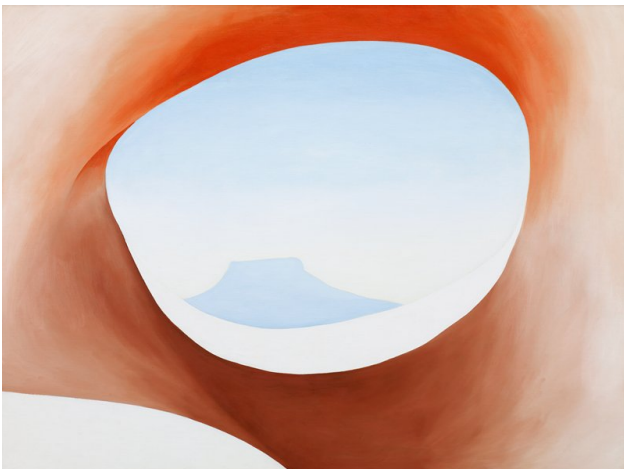


- P You have to focus. "I can talk or I can listen, but I can't do both."
- M Right. And creating faith experiences sometimes takes time. It might happen in stages. Like in Bethsaida, when Jesus put saliva on a blind man's eyes and laid his hands on him. At first, the man said, "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking." Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again, and only then was his sight restored and he could see everything clearly.
- P Remember, too, that creating faith experiences can't be exactly the same for everyone. People need to practice finding their own authentic voice.
- G Exactly. "I had to create an equivalent for what I felt about what I was looking at—not copy it. My painting is what I have to give back to the world for what the world gives to me."
- M People were struck that Jesus spoke with an inner, divine authority, not just parroting wisdom he'd picked up from others.
- B We had people with so many different skills: woodcarvers, stone cutters, people who worked in gold and silver, women who spun yarns and fine linen.
- G Focus on your particular experience, not meeting someone else's expectations. "Whether you succeed or not is irrelevant, there is no such thing. Making your unknown known is the important thing – and keeping the unknown always beyond you."
- M And, Georgia, you and Bezalel remind us that making our unknown known might not always, or only, be through words, right?
- G "I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way, things I had no words for. I have things in my head that are not like what anyone taught me — shapes and ideas so near to me, so natural to my way of being and thinking."
- P At the same time, even though these faith experiences are very personal, we don't create them in isolation. "Snowflakes, leaves, humans, plants, raindrops, stars, molecules, microscopic entities all come in communities. The singular cannot in reality exist."
- B God called a whole cohort of artisans together to create the tabernacle to signify God's presence with all the people. Even though we didn't all go inside the tent, it was still a focus point that helped all of us sense God's presence with us. For us.
- M Jesus called a community of disciples to follow him and learn together.
- P "My mother told me stories all the time. And in all of those stories she told me who I was, who I was supposed to be, whom I came from, and who would follow me."
- G "Nobody sees a flower – really – it is so small it takes time – we haven't time – and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time."

- P “Breath is life, and the intermingling of breaths is the purpose of good living. This is in essence the great principle on which all productive living must rest, for relationships among all the beings of the universe must be fulfilled; in this way each individual life may also be fulfilled.”
- B And God is also a part of the community that creates faith experiences. It helps if we count on God to show up. Trust that God will show up. Not necessarily in the ways that we expect. We sometimes experienced God’s presence as if in a pillar of cloud.
- P And when the divine does show up, it brings gifts.
- B True. God called me and the other artisans and appointed our tasks. And I experienced being filled with the divine spirit, and with abilities to do the task God set for me.
- M And Jesus himself didn’t just decide he’d maybe like to be Messiah. As he was coming up out of the water after John baptized him, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending on him.
- G Which is terrifying! You want to create faith experiences? Beware! Sometimes that means leaning into what frightens you.
- B Because meeting God can be not just exhilarating but alarming.
- G “I’ve been absolutely terrified every moment of my life and I’ve never let it keep me from a single thing that I wanted to do.”
- P “‘Sacred’ means when you encounter that other space that’s more real than the material space and then you move from there to walk in that way, in hozho, to walk in beauty, or to walk in balance. It has nothing to do with piety. It has nothing to do with being holy. It has nothing to do with being sinless. It’s respecting and revering the divine because it’s damn scary. It’s not necessarily mean. It’s just huge and scary.”
- G “To create one’s world in any of the arts takes courage.”
- M Oftentimes faith encounters that are true and powerful also lead us to somewhere fearsome. The Spirit that tore apart the heavens and descended on Jesus at his baptism, “immediately drove him out into the wilderness where he was tempted by Satan.”
- P We have to “commit ourselves to a wholehearted willingness to be what and how we are – beings frail and fragile, strong and passionate, neurotic and balanced, diseased and whole, partial and complete, stingy and generous, twisted and straight, storm-tossed and quiescent, bound and free.”
- G “Each time I left Ghost Ranch it was like a Death, and each time that I returned it was a Birth.”
- P “Medicine people are truly citizens of two worlds, and those who continue to walk the path of medicine power learn to keep their balance in both the ordinary and the non-ordinary worlds.”

- M Even the ultimate faith encounter, the Resurrection, was terrifying. The women went to the tomb and found it empty, which itself was upsetting. But then “they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe; and they were alarmed. He told them not to be alarmed because Jesus who was crucified has been raised and is going ahead of you, just as he told you.”  
Did they rejoice? No! “They went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”
- G Creating faith experiences is not for the faint of the heart. Remember to be attentive to place and to details.
- B Make it personal, distinct to you. Celebrate and make use of your individual gifts.
- P And also recognize, honor, the importance of your community helping to shape and support your faith experience. And to benefit from it.
- M And, embrace the truth that experiencing, encountering, the divine can be terrifying.  
Any last thoughts?
- P Yes. The God of the cosmos always meets each of us as unique individuals.  
Our limitations, our own distinct encounters, are somehow the way we meet the universal divine.
- B We create authentic faith experiences when we encourage each person’s own experience for a particular moment.
- M With both its expansiveness and its singularity.
- G “I know I cannot paint a flower. I cannot paint the sun on the desert on a bright summer morning. But maybe in terms of paint color, I can convey to you my experience of the flower. Or the experience that makes the flower of significance to me at that particular time.”
- M Amen, sister.

*Pause for personal reflection and prayer*

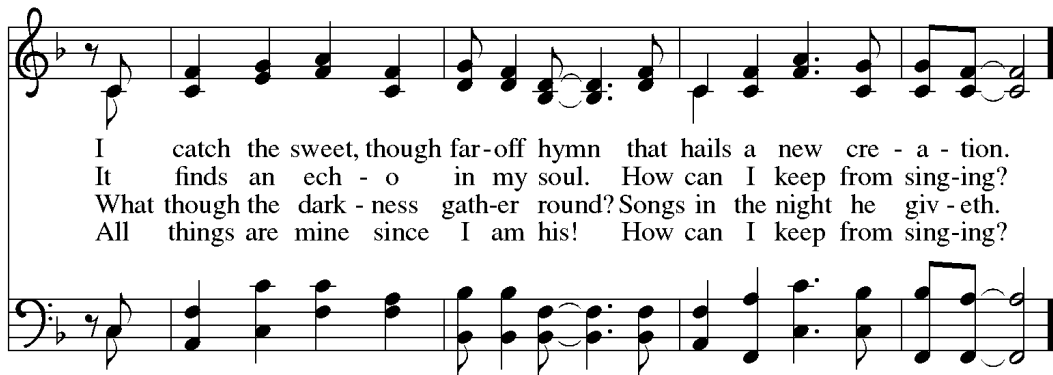


Art by Georgia O'Keeffe, *Pedernal – From the Ranch #1*, 1956

## My Life Flows On in Endless Song

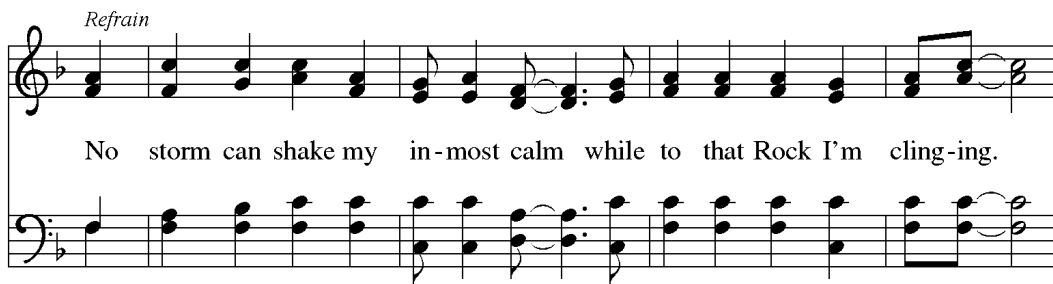


1 My life flows on in end - less song; a - bove earth's lam - en - ta - tion,  
2 Through all the tu - mult and the strife, I hear that mu - sic ring - ing.  
3 What though my joys and com - forts die? The Lord my Sav - ior liv - eth.  
4 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring - ing!



I catch the sweet, though far - off hymn that hails a new cre - a - tion.  
It finds an ech - o in my soul. How can I keep from sing - ing?  
What though the dark - ness gath - er round? Songs in the night he giv - eth.  
All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from sing - ing?

*Refrain*



No storm can shake my in - most calm while to that Rock I'm cling - ing.



Since Christ is Lord of heav - en and earth, how can I keep from sing - ing?

Text: Robert Lowry, 1826-1899  
Music: HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING, Robert Lowry, alt.

Poetry, art, and a blessing for a starry night



Photograph - *Milky Way Galaxy from the base of the Grand Canyon*  
David D. Dolton Photography - [daviddolton.zenfolio.com](http://daviddolton.zenfolio.com)

*Old Maps No longer Work* by Joyce Rupp

I keep pulling it out -  
the old map of my inner path.  
I squint closely at it,  
trying to see some hidden road  
that maybe I've missed,  
but there's nothing there now  
except some well-travelled paths  
They have seen my footsteps often,  
held my laughter, caught my tears.

I keep going over the old map  
but now the roads lead nowhere,  
a meaningless wilderness  
where life is dull and futile

"Toss away the old map!" she says.  
"you must be kidding!" I reply.  
She looks at me with Sarah eyes and repeats,  
"Toss it away!  
It's of no use where you are going."

"I have to have a map!" I cry,  
"even if it takes me nowhere.  
I can't be without direction."  
But you are without direction," she says,  
"so why not let go, be free?"

So there I am - tossing away the old map,  
sadly fearfully, putting it behind me.  
"Whatever will I do?" wails my security  
"trust me," says my midlife soul.

No map, no specific directions,  
no "this way ahead" or "take a left."  
How will I know where to go?  
How will I find my way? No map!  
But then my midlife soul whispers:  
"There was a time before maps  
when pilgrims travelled by the stars."

It is time for the pilgrim in me to travel in the dark,  
to learn to read the stars that shine in my soul.  
I will walk deeper into the dark of my night.  
I will wait for the stars.  
Trust their guidance.  
And let their light be enough for me.



*Spiral Galaxy NGC 3344 - Hubble Telescope Image - NASA*

**Benediction** - *A Blessing for Vocation* by Andrew M. Greeley

May you hear the voice of God

In the raging storm

In the quiet breeze

In the city tumult

In the desert silence

In the loving whisper

In the angry cry

In classic harmony

In hard rock beat

In a modest hymn

May you never miss the words, "I have fallen in love with you, O my beloved, Come - follow me."

And may the God of invitations, surprises, and mysteries

Bless you and guide you always

Amen.

Morning Prayer

Thursday 9:30 a.m.

*Service from Iona Abbey Worship Book*



Art by Lorraine Alexander, *Ghost Ranch Monument*  
©TheAdobeFineArt

Opening Words

*(standing in body or spirit)*

The world belongs to God,  
**the earth and all it's people**

*(a globe or map is brought forward)*

It is good to live in community,

**to work and talk with each other**

*(a towel is brought forward)*

Love and faith come together;

**justice and peace join hands**

*(a bible is brought forward)*

If the friends of Jesus keep silent,

**These stones would shout out loud**

*(a handful of stones are brought forward)*

We are glad to be in God's house,

**to listen and sing and pray**

*(a lit candle is brought forward)*

Morning Song: *Sanctuary* by Randy Scruggs and John W. Thompson

Lord, prepare me,

To be a sanctuary,

Pure and holy,

Tried and true –

With thanksgiving,

I'll be a living,

Sanctuary,

For you.

Saying sorry  
(sitting)

God you know me.  
You know that I can be loving and kind  
and you know that sometimes I get things wrong.  
I'm sorry for the times I hurt other people,  
forget to listen to you  
and don't bother to take care of your world.  
**May God forgive you,  
Jesus bless you,  
and God's Spirit help you to grow in love.**  
Amen.

**God you know us.  
You know that we can be loving and kind  
and you know that sometimes we get things wrong.  
We're sorry for the times we hurt other people,  
forget to listen to you  
and don't bother to take care of your world.**  
May God forgive you,  
Jesus bless you,  
and God's Spirit help you to grow in love.  
**Amen.**

Saying yes  
Because God cares for us,  
**we will care for each other.**  
Because we are part of God's creation,  
**we will care for the earth.**  
Because we are loved by God,  
**we will share God's love with everyone.**

Psalm 54

1 Save me, O God, by your name;  
in your might, defend my cause.  
2 **Hear my prayer, O God;  
give ear to the words of my mouth.**  
3 For strangers have risen up against me, and the ruthless have sought my life,  
those who have no regard for God.  
4 **Behold, God is my helper;  
it is the Lord who sustains my life.**  
5 Render evil to those who spy on me;  
in your faithfulness, destroy them.  
6 **I will offer you a freewill sacrifice  
and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.**  
7 For you have rescued me from every trouble,  
and my eye looks down on my enemies.



## A Story



*"I know I cannot paint a flower, I cannot paint the sun on the desert on a bright summer morning, but maybe in terms of paint color, I can convey to you my experience of the flower or the experience that makes the flower of significance to me at that particular time."*

- Georgia O'Keeffe

*Jimson Weed, 1936*

For words that tell stories,  
for words that make us laugh and cry,  
for words that make us think,

**Thank you God.**

We offer prayers of thanksgiving for *(all may name aloud or silently prayers of thanks)*  
Walk with them today, O God, **and keep us on your way.**

We listen for your word in the news and in the world  
*(all may name aloud or silently prayers for situations locally and worldwide)*  
Walk with them today, O God, **and keep us on your way.**

We seek your presence with us and with all for whom we pray  
*(all may name aloud or silently prayers for individuals and communities)*  
Walk with them today, O God, **and keep us on your way.**

It is a new day.  
Twenty-four hours of it.  
Time to go for a walk.  
Time to do the washing-up.  
Time to ask questions.  
Time to think and be quiet.  
Time to try something new.  
**It's a new day.**  
**Walk beside us God.**  
**Enjoy the day with us.**  
**We want to share it with you.**



*Red Poppy by Georgia O'Keeffe, 1927*

Closing Song, *Alleluia - Praise Ye The Lord*  
*Group A is in italic script, Group B is in bold script.*

*Allelu, allelu, allelu, alleluia*  
**Praise ye the Lord**  
*Allelu, allelu, allelu, alleluia*  
**Praise ye the Lord**

**Praise ye the Lord**  
Alleluia  
**Praise ye the Lord**  
Alleluia  
**Praise ye the Lord**  
Alleluia  
**Praise ye the Lord**

Closing Words  
This is the day that God has made:  
**we will rejoice and enjoy it.**

Today we will share with God  
**everything that is important to us.**

Go in peace and be kind.  
**Today we will help those around us.**

Go in the name of God,  
**God who loves us forever.**

*(The objects which were brought in during the opening responses are collected as we leave.)*



Photograph by Klaus Priebe, *The Storm at Chimney Rock*, Ghost Ranch  
<https://klauspriebephotography.bigcartel.com/>



# GHOST RANCH

ABIQUIU, NEW MEXICO, USA  
 GHOSTRANCH.ORG | 505.685.1000



Although we have been featured in a number of national and international travel magazines, Ghost Ranch is not open to the public. We are a private, non-profit organization and the only place in the world where you can see the original site of the 1909-1910 archaeological excavations of the Anasazi (Ancestral Pueblo) culture. The site is not open to the public.



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To:  
 HWY 84  
 Abiquiu Lake  
 Espanola  
 Santa Fe



Map Illustration by  
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 www.jlrendy.com  
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Great fossils in the site  
 include the first dinosaur  
 skeleton ever found in  
 North America. The site  
 is a National Historic Landmark.

Ghost Ranch offers  
 a variety of programs  
 including the famous  
 "Kilob" ghost tours  
 and the "Anasazi"  
 program. Ghost Ranch  
 is a National Historic Landmark.

In 1909, the first  
 dinosaur skeleton  
 was found in the  
 site. The site is a  
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