



Workbook for
A Year of Living
Intentionally



Los Altos United Methodist Church

www.laumc.org

Fall 2013

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
GroupLife Commitment.....	4
How to Use this Workbook.....	5
Options for Children and GroupLife.....	6
OUR FIVE PRACTICES OF DISCIPLESHIP	7
MY PLAN FOR INTENTIONAL LIVING.....	9
Session One.....	11
Session Two	14
Session Three.....	17
Session Four	20
Session Five	22

Introduction

Welcome to GroupLife at Los Altos United Methodist Church! It's about fostering community with real people, real lives, and real faith. Groups of 6 – 12 people will meet regularly in homes, at church, or in the community to share fellowship, mutual caring and support, and spiritual growth. The goal is that each member of a group feels genuine trust, love, and encouragement and is accountable in community. As we embark on this journey together, we realize that it is not just a program, it is not just an event, it is not just a class. It is a new way to do church and to be church: a new culture. A way for a big church to become small. Going through life's ups and downs with a group is how Jesus did it. It's how the early church did it. It's how John Wesley started the Methodist tradition. And now it's our turn: It's how we do life!

We are pursuing GroupLife through an entire church community, in order for us to all experience the power of God's spirit through a common experience. We will be embarking on "A Year of Living Intentionally" as our topic for sharing and discussion. We will explore the five practices of discipleship, as first described by United Methodist Bishop Robert Schnase: Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Deepening Faith, Bold Mission & Social Justice, and Extravagant Generosity. This material will be the focus of sermons by our own pastors for five weeks. A companion devotional book, *Cultivating Fruitfulness*, is available to supplement the sermons and group sessions. In community, we will share ideas and work toward savoring the gift of each day and growing in relationship with God and each other.

Our prayer is that through GroupLife, all of us become closer to living the abundant life that God has planned for us as disciples. We encourage you to use this workbook as a personal journal that enables you to discover more about what it means to Touch Heaven and Change Earth with Head, Heart, and Hands. Thank you for making this commitment to experience community.

Workbook created from *Five Practices of Fruitful Living* by Robert Schnase, and *Five Practices of Fruitful Living Leader Guide* by Robert Schnase and Sally D. Sharpe, both copyright © 2010 by Abingdon Press.

Acknowledgements

Small group ministry, GroupLife, was initiated as the priority of Los Altos United Methodist Church by the Pastoral Staff, the Church Council, and the Vision Team in 2011.

We are deeply grateful to Pastors Mark Bollwinkel, Debbie Weatherspoon, Dirk Damonte, and Samuel Yun and the ministry staff at Los Altos United Methodist Church for their dedicated support and vision. The Church Council, headed by Margie Gong, has also been instrumental in generating enthusiasm and support.

The Practice Committee Chairs of the Church Council have provided key input to this series, and we are grateful for their leadership:

Radical Hospitality – Leslie Williams-Hurt

Passionate Worship – Kris Lockley

Deepening Faith – Carol Pugh

Bold Service & Social Justice – Leslie Carmichael and Yvonne Murray

Extravagant Generosity – to be named

We appreciate the valuable assistance we have received from the church ministry and office staff: Brittane Bryant, Dylan Damonte, Cindy Golden, Meghan Kinoshita, Lynda Monari, and Annamaria Muniz. Thank you for your cheerful help with essential details.

Please contact us if you have comments or suggestions about GroupLife. We welcome your input and ideas!

Members of GroupLife Task Force:

Emily Allen, Director of Communications

Alice Allman

Becky Everett, Director of Operations

Margie Gong, Church Council Chair

Ron Grace

Jeff Jenks

Kim Jones, Chair

Patricia Parfett, Director of Adult Ministries

Debbie Weatherspoon, Pastor

GroupLife Commitment

Small groups will foster community with real people, real lives, and real faith. To facilitate this endeavor, small groups hold the following values:

- R Take responsibility for what you say and feel without blaming others
- E Use empathetic listening
- S Be sensitive to differences in communication styles
- P Ponder what you hear and feel before you speak
- E Examine your own assumptions and perceptions
- C Keep confidentiality
- T Tolerate ambiguity and do not assume right and wrong

GroupLife is a safe place to express feelings and ideas without judgment, a place to receive encouragement and support. Out of respect for each other's time, meetings will start and end at the specified times. Please be prompt. If unable to attend, notify the host.

We encourage all members of the group to take on group responsibilities during this time, such as hosting, helping facilitate discussion, bringing refreshments, assisting with communication among the group, and planning any social or service events the group wishes to pursue.

Some GroupLife groups may elect to continue meeting after this five-week series. Resources are available to support any groups who wish to continue. We encourage everyone to maintain an active support system in some form, because that is how we do life best!

How to Use this Workbook

Prior to each small group session, we encourage everyone to attend church worship on Sunday to hear a message about the weekly topic. (Sunday worship times at LAUMC are 8:00am, 9:30am, 11:15am, and 5:00pm. You may also view live streaming online at www.laumc.org). Note this series begins with our “Changing Earth Together” weekend September 27-29 and ends with guest Jan Richardson on October 26-27. Below is a general schedule groups will follow, along with the corresponding section in the devotional *Cultivating Fruitfulness*:

Week of Sept 29th	Session 1	Bold Service/Social Justice	p. 61
Week of Oct 6th	Session 2	Radical Hospitality	p. 7
Week of Oct 13th	Session 3	Extravagant Generosity	p. 79
Week of Oct 20th	Session 4	Deepening Faith	p. 43
Week of Oct 27th	Session 5	Passionate Worship	p. 25

An easy-to-follow format for each session is provided in this workbook. Those elements are listed below, along with suggested time allotments for a 90-minute meeting. Adjust the time segments as needed.

Getting to Know the Group	15 min	This activity is designed to help the group get better acquainted with each other as people arrive. Good time to serve a snack as well!
Opening Prayer	5 min	A scripture, poem, or prayer is provided. Try different ways to pray: one person read aloud, everyone take turns reading a portion, do it silently, or any other method you wish.
Video Introduction	10 min	Consider watching a portion of the video from the Sunday church worship/experience (laumc.org), in order to stimulate and start discussion.
Discussion Points: Head Heart Hands	40 min	Some suggestions for group discussion are provided. Feel free to do all of them, some of them, or none of them if you have other thoughts and ideas to discuss. You may break up into smaller groups for discussion as well.
Closing Prayer	15 min	Spend some time allowing everyone to share praises or concerns. Close the group meeting with prayer – either one person praying, taking turns, praying silently, or even singing a prayer.

Options for Children and GroupLife

There are many ways to approach children and small groups. They are a valuable part of our community and benefit from experiencing genuine, Christian community in their lives. We can all learn from children, as well! Yet there are also situations where it is not appropriate to have children participate in order to allow deeper sharing among adults. Each group will decide how to handle this decision. Here are some suggestions:

- 1) Adult and children group – include children completely in the group the entire time, perhaps have potluck supper as part of the meeting.
- 2) Planned childcare group – anyone who has children works out their own childcare/babysitting needs.
- 3) Share sitting group – more than one family can use the same babysitter for their children, either in another room at the host home, or at the home of someone else in the group. Or one adult can take turns rotating out of group meeting each week and watch the children.
- 4) Partial participation group – everyone, children and adults, starts together for a time of fellowship, food. There is a short time of spiritual interaction among the generations with music and/or an activity to engage everyone. Then the children go to a different room to play with supervision (babysitter or an adult rotating out of the group each week to supervise the kids). The adults continue with deeper level of discussion.

Note there are books on the five practices for children and for teens:

Rita B. Hays, *Five Practices for Children*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2010.

Robert Schnase and Terry B. Carty, *Five Practices of Fruitful Youth Ministry*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2009.

OUR FIVE PRACTICES OF DISCIPLESHIP



The community of the Los Altos United Methodist Church is

Touching heaven, changing earth with head, heart, and hands.

We do this by faithfully committing to and intentionally growing in our five congregational and personal practices.

We have the opportunity to develop a relationship with God that is vibrant, dynamic, and abundant. How do we cultivate this type of purposeful life? How can we be better followers of God and Christ to experience God's love and make a difference in the world? We believe this life is developed by intentional pursuit of five essential practices of discipleship.

We Share. We Love. We Grow. We Serve. We Give.

These five areas “open our heart – to God, to others, to a life that matters, a life rich with meaning, relationship, and contribution” (Schnase, *Five Practices of Fruitful Living*, p. 9).

BOLD SERVICE & SOCIAL JUSTICE: WE SERVE

(Bold: beyond our comfort zone, exposing us to people, situations, and needs we would not ordinarily encounter)

- **Together as a community of faith** we desire to offer endless opportunities for people to make a difference in the lives of others through volunteer service projects, mission initiatives, and advocating for long-term solutions.
- **Individually as persons of faith** we seek to offer ourselves, our gifts, our abilities, and our passions, in purposeful service to others in need; to make a positive difference even at significant personal cost and inconvenience.

RADICAL HOSPITALITY: WE SHARE

(Radical: outside the normal; exceeds expectations; goes the second mile)

- **Together as a community of faith** we desire to demonstrate an active desire to invite, welcome, receive and care for those who are strangers and to help newcomers find a spiritual home and discover the richness of life in Christ.
- **Individually as persons of faith** we seek to say Yes to God, to invite God into our hearts, to make space for God in our lives, to accept God's love and acceptance of us, and to offer it to others.

EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY: WE GIVE

(Extravagant: exceed all expectations and extend to unexpected measures)

- **Together as a community of faith** we desire to provide ministries that address our spiritual need to give in ways that exceed expectations; to thrive by making willing sacrifices and giving joyously out of love for God and neighbor.
- **Individually as persons of faith** we seek to offer our material resources in a way that transforms lives, relieves suffering, enlarges the soul, and sustains the spirit.

DEEPENING FAITH: WE GROW

(Deepening: deliberate effort, purposeful action, and highest priority)

- **Together as a community of faith** we desire to offer opportunities to learn in community for people at all stages of faith; to offer ministries that help people grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.
- **Individually as persons of faith** we seek to do the soul work that connects us to others and positions us to grow in grace and mature in Christ; to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in our own spiritual maturation.

PASSIONATE WORSHIP: WE LOVE

(Passionate: intense desire, an ardent spirit, heightened importance)

- **Together as a community of faith** we desire to deliberately seek to encounter God in Christ, transform lives and heal wounded souls, renew hope, and bind people to one another.
- **Individually as persons of faith** we seek to learn to love God in return, listen to God, and allow God to shape our hearts and minds through prayer, personal devotion, and community worship.

MY PLAN FOR INTENTIONAL LIVING

Use this space to write down your personal goals for intentional living as you discuss each discipleship practice. Make a commitment to review these goals in three months, six months, and one year.

BOLD SERVICE & SOCIAL JUSTICE – I SERVE

RADICAL HOSPITALITY – I SHARE

EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY – I GIVE

DEEPENING FAITH – I GROW

PASSIONATE WORSHIP – I LOVE

Session One

Bold Service & Social Justice – We Serve

Cultivating Fruitfulness devotion pages 61-76

1. Getting to know the group

What service organizations were you involved with when you were growing up?

Pick a favorite cartoon character and tell the group how that character might focus on Bold Service & Social Justice. (For example, perhaps Popeye would seek to rescue victims of human trafficking).

2. Opening Prayer

O God, give each of us a heart like yours, full of compassion and love for the hurting people of our world. Help us find ways to make a difference for all of your children in need.

“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” -Matthew 25:40

3. Video Introduction

This past weekend you may have participated in one of the LAUMC service activities, such as Hope’s Corner, Freedom House, Imagine No Malaria. View some images from Change the Earth Together Weekend. Take a few moments to allow everyone to share how they participated. What was new for you? How did it affect you?

4. Discussion Points

Read aloud:

“The stretch of Christian discipleship is to love those for whom it is not automatic, easy, common or accepted.... To love those who do not think like us or live like us, and to express respect, compassion to those we do not know and who may never be able to repay us – this is the love Christ pulls out of us.... Bold Mission [and Social Justice] involves work that

stretches people, causing them to do something for the good of others that they would never have considered doing if it were not for their relationship with Christ and their desire to serve him” (Schnase, *Cultivating Fruitfulness*, pp. 64, 72).

HEAD

- A. Is there a difference between Christian mission and secular community service? If so, what is the difference and why is it important?
- B. Who are the afflicted, those suffering from poverty, conflict or oppression in our town, state, nation and world? How do our social systems continue to oppress them or keep them from rising above their circumstances?

HEART

- C. What are some motivations for why people help and serve others? What is your primary motivation?
- D. What bold service/social justice topics call to your spirit either to learn more or take action? (Examples: outreach/service, legislative advocacy, justice education, community organizing, committee or project leadership, simpler living, financially supporting justice work, public witness, global solidarity, an oppressed group, a particular social issue)

HANDS

- E. What obstacles have you experienced that have limited your capacity to carry out bold service & social justice? What would help overcome those obstacles?
- F. What is God calling you to do at this present moment? Think about what you can commit to do for 10 minutes, 10 days, or 10 weeks. What will help you stay intentional about it?

5. Closing Prayer

Welcoming God, thank you for sustaining us with your love and giving us what we need. Help us to open our hands and hearts to others.

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” -Micah 6:8

Prayer concerns for this week:

Session Two

Radical Hospitality – We Share

Cultivating Fruitfulness devotion pages 7-22

1. Getting to know the group

List all the things you have in common with your closest friend.

2. Opening Prayer

O God, you have welcomed us and shown us how much you value us and love us through the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. May we offer others the same welcome we have received through your grace, remembering that it is your amazing grace that enables us to reach out in love to others. Help us to let go of our fears and insecurities and prejudices so that we may boldly follow Jesus' example, inviting people to the banquet of your gracious love. Teach us to be a welcoming church that practices Radical Hospitality so that we may draw more and more people into the body of Christ—not for our own selfish pride, Lord, but for your glory alone. Amen.

3. Video Introduction

Watch the video excerpt from the Sunday worship service. What was new for you? How did it affect you?

4. Discussion Points

Read aloud:

“God’s love for us is not something we have to strive for, earn, work on, or fear. It is freely given. That is key: that we are loved, first, finally, and forever by God, a love so deep and profound and significant that God offers his Son to signify and solidify this love forever so that we get it. The journey to becoming what God would have us to be begins with opening ourselves to this love, and giving it a place in our hearts” (Schnase, *Five Practices of Fruitful Living*, p. 18, referring to a text by Paul Tillich).

HEAD

- A. It has been said that radical hospitality is the key to all of the other practices because one must receive God's love and grace first. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- B. How is it possible to have two seemingly disparate words, "radical" and "hospitality," come together to express one clear thought? Discuss the meaning of each word individually and the meaning when they are joined.
- C. How is radical hospitality a mark of discipleship? See Matthew 20:28.
- D. Discuss how radical hospitality applies to an *individual* following Christ and how it applies to a *congregation* carrying out God's love.

HEART

- E. Do you believe most people discover their need for God's grace and love through the experience of receiving it?
- F. "People offer themselves to Christ by offering Christ to others" (Schnase, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, p. 23). How can we live with the intention of doing this continually?
- G. What distractions and obstacles do we face in our society and in our lives that hinder us from more fully receiving and sharing God's love?

HANDS

- H. How do your present patterns of living invite God in or cause you to neglect your spiritual life? What can you do to be more open and inviting to God's love in your life? How will your openness to

God inspire you to reach out in love and hospitality to your neighbor?

- I. As a church, how do we anticipate the needs of others who walk through our doors? How do we anticipate the needs of those who do not walk through our doors?
- J. Consider with your small group what you could do together that would have an impact on building a culture of radical hospitality at LAUMC.

5. Closing Prayer

Jesus, make us continually aware of your presence so that we welcome others in your name. Lord, may we always remember that whenever we welcome one of the least of these who are members of your family, we are welcoming you. May we be disciples that intentionally welcome one another just as you have welcomed us, for the glory of God.

Prayer concerns for this week:

Session Three

Extravagant Generosity – We Give

Cultivating Fruitfulness devotional pages 79-94

1. Getting to know the group

What are you most grateful for in your life? What would your life look like without it?

In the last 24 hours, how much money have you spent? In the last week? What kinds of things have you spent it on?

Describe an experience in giving of your time and/or finances. How did you feel about it and why?

2. Opening Prayer

Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation. –Psalm 100

3. Video Introduction

Watch the video excerpt from the Sunday worship service. What was new for you? How did it affect you?

4. Discussion Points

Read aloud:

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,

To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.
-John Wesley

HEAD

- A. Think of someone whom you consider to be a generous person. What about their actions or character makes them “generous”?
- B. What are some benefits of being generous? Consider both secular and spiritual benefits.
- C. Discuss the difference between “owner” and “steward.” How does that influence our attitude about giving?
- D. How does contentment or discontentment affect our ability to be generous?
- E. Someone has said, “Giving is not a financial problem, it is a spiritual problem.” Do you agree or disagree, and why?

HEART

- F. Is it hard to be generous? Why or why not?
- G. What obstacles prevent us from being more extravagantly generous?
- H. Dave Ramsey has said, “We buy things we don’t need, with money we don’t have, to impress people we don’t know.” In light of that, discuss the difference between the societal view of giving and the Christian view. How do we separate what our culture says about riches from what God asks of our riches?
- I. What motivates you to give?

HANDS

- J. The Bible says that God supplies all of our needs: “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). Do you believe this is true? Does it include financial needs? Do you regularly budget to accommodate all of your needs?
- K. In what area(s) of your life do you have the greatest struggle with being generous? What can you do in the next week or month to focus intentionally on that area?
- L. What keeps you from experiencing contentment? How can the group help you change that?
- M. How could regular, joyful giving enable a more eternally focused world view? How would giving more than you are comfortable with affect your dependence on God? (Matthew 6:19-21) Are you willing to try that and see what God will do?

5. Closing Prayer

Closing thought:

“Being rich toward God means growing a soul that is increasingly healthy and good.

Being rich toward God means loving and enjoying the people around you.

Being rich toward God means learning about your gifts and passions and doing good work to help improve the world.

Being rich toward God means becoming generous with your stuff.

Being rich toward God means making that which is temporary become the servant of that which is eternal” (John Ortberg, *When the Game is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box*, p. 27).

Dear God, help us to remember how extravagant you are in your giving to us and strengthen us to become like that to the world around us.

Prayer concerns for this week:

Session Four

Deepening Faith – We Grow

Cultivating Faithfulness devotional pages 43-58

1. Getting to know the group

Share what you remember about the first time(s) you heard about the Bible, faith, and God's love. How did you learn about it?

2. Opening Prayer

Dear God, help us to be always open to learning more about you and growing more like Christ. Bless our time together as we seek you. Amen.

3. Video Introduction

Watch the excerpt from the Sunday worship service. What was new for you? How did it affect you?

4. Discussion Points

Read aloud: "Faith development refers to how we purposefully learn in community outside of worship in order to deepen our faith and to grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.... Priority, purpose, consistency, persistence, and commitment make faith development intentional" (Schnase, *Five Practices of Fruitful Living*, pp. 69-70).

HEAD

- A. Jesus taught people wherever he went, and the disciples learned from him. The early church "devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). John Wesley, founder of Methodism, intentionally organized people into small groups for the study of Scripture, prayer, and to watch after one another in love. What are some benefits of learning in community?

B. What inspires you to grow in faith?

HEART

C. Describe a time when you were encouraged by friends in a faith community to follow Christ more deeply or enhance your learning about God. What resulted?

D. Why do you think community is important to spiritual life and growth?

HANDS

E. Name some ways one can grow in relationship with God. Which one is most interesting/exciting to you? How can you incorporate that into your life in the next week?

F. What has kept you from pursuing or practicing intentional faith development in the past? How did you/could you overcome these obstacles?

G. What would a more dedicated, intentional faith life include for you? What will you do differently this week as a result of discussing deepening faith?

5. Closing prayer

Guide us, Lord, to be deliberate about finding time and ways to grow closer to you. Give us a desire to pursue you. Help us to overcome obstacles that get in the way of our deepening relationship with you. Thank you for your steadfast love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayer concerns for this week:

Session Five

Passionate Worship – We Love

Cultivating Fruitfulness devotional pages 24-40

1. Getting to know the group

What kinds of worship services have you attended (LAUMC traditional, contemporary, Taizé, special services; other churches or denominations; other religions)? How did these affect you? How did they engage you with God?

2. Opening Prayer

“Loving God, we are so thankful for your unconditional and unending love for us. Your love is so amazing that we want to respond by loving and adoring you in return.... Teach us to be passionate worshippers. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen” (Schnase, *Five Practices Leader Guide* p. 30).

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” -Luke 10:27

3. Video Introduction

Watch the excerpt from Sunday’s worship service. Was there anything new or different about Jan Richardson’s worship style? How did it affect you?

4. Discussion Points

Read aloud:

“Passionate Worship connects people to God and to one another. People gather consciously as the body of Christ with eagerness and expectancy; encounter Christ through singing, music, drama, prayer, Scripture, preaching, and Holy Communion. They respond by allowing God’s spirit to shape their lives. People are searching for worship that is authentic, alive, creative, and comprehensible where they experience the life-

changing presence of God in the presence of others. Passionate Worship engages all the senses, stimulates the mind and touches the heart. Passionate Worship includes the “aha” moments that change people and mold them, the touch of transcendence that pulls them out of themselves, deepens their understanding of life and their relationship to God, and makes them feel richer, stronger, and truer to what God has created them to be” (Schnase, *Five Practices Passionate Worship, Program Resources*, p. 9).

HEAD

- A. What is a definition of worship? What does it include?
- B. Are individual worship and communal worship equally important? Why or why not?
- C. Have you ever experienced an “aha” moment in worship? How did it change your worship life, your personal life?

HEART

- D. Schnase writes, “Passionate Worship [should] change us. Understanding the meaning of worship requires looking beyond what people do to see with the eyes of faith what God does. God uses worship to crack open closed hearts, reconcile broken relationships, renew hope, restrain harmful arrogance, heal wounded souls, shape personal decisions, interrupt destructive habits, stimulate spiritual growth, and transform lives. God reshapes the human soul through worship” (Schnase, *Five Practices of Fruitful Living*, pp 45-46). Have you ever experienced any of these outcomes of worship for yourself?
- E. “In worship, God, the gardener of the soul, clears the weeds, waters the seeds of hope and courage, helps us blossom in love, and flourish into wonderfully fruitful lives. Worship itself, and every element of it, is a means of grace, a way for God to accomplish our re-creation” (Schnase, *Five Practices of Fruitful Living*, p. 51). How have you been re-created through worship?

- F. Worship is mystery. Music is mystery. When have you been affected during worship by music? What music affects you the most, and why?
- G. The sacrament of Holy Communion recognizes brokenness. Share a powerful communion memory that resulted in healing or in change.
- H. Describe your favorite element of communal worship. Describe your favorite way to worship individually.

HANDS

- I. Schnase mentions five “P’s” of passionate worship:
 - a. Prioritize – shift schedules accordingly to make it a priority
 - b. Prepare – hearts/minds by praying and anticipating God
 - c. Participate – in multiple ways
 - d. Pray – develop a regular habit of prayer
 - e. Persist – wholeheartedly cultivate a relationship with GodWhich of these areas seems most important to you? Most difficult?
- J. What are some obstacles that keep you from worshipping more passionately? Come up with a strategy you can use to address this obstacle and ask a group member to help hold you accountable.
- K. What about worship refreshes and replenishes you? What can you do more intentionally to make sure that happens regularly?

5. Closing Prayer

May you find pleasure
In the practices
That draw you deeper
Into the heart of God.

(Jan Richardson, *In the Sanctuary of Women*, p. 309.)

Prayer concerns for this week:

BLESSING

May the Holy One
who never ceases to practice
the art of creating
keep us ever
at the edge of our skills,
our habits,
our vision,
that we may never
grow so content
in our creating
that we miss the God
who is ever about
to do a new thing.

(Jan Richardson, *In the Sanctuary of Women*, p. 242).