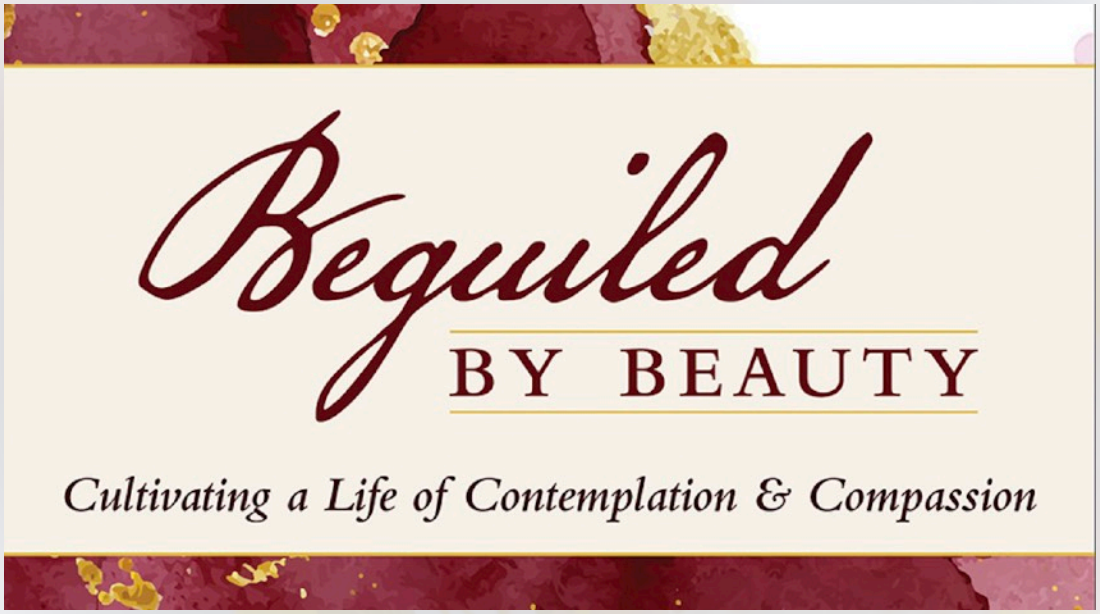


Overview of the Worship Scripts
from Dr. Marcia McFee

This series was inspired by the book of the same name by Wendy Farley, PhD, which lays out a theology of beauty that can lead us to greater compassion through spiritual practices of contemplation. Dr. Farley is a well-known theologian (www.wendyfarley.org) and a professor of spirituality at the Graduate School of Theology at the University of Redlands, home of San Francisco Theological Seminary, where I previously taught as well. I have long admired her teaching—both in content and style—and I am thrilled that you will get to experience her passion for life and creation in this worship series and small group materials.

This series was written in Spring 2020, when the world had been thrust deep into the COVID-19 pandemic. While spring burst out all around us, death and economic suffering were prevalent. At the time, it was difficult to imagine how to comprehend both simultaneously. Dr. Farley's work does just that. She helps us understand that faith in Divine Goodness is held together with suffering in order to make moments of crisis manageable. She shows us how a more intentional spiritual practice can deepen the well from which we draw in order to survive, and to thrive, during the trying times of our lives.

This series is the first one in which I have produced what I call "video packages" to use on screens in sanctuaries, or in online worship. In response to the pandemic, many churches moved worship services online, and we are continuing to live in a new "age" of live-streamed or pre-recorded videos. My hope is that the included videos will alleviate some of the time spent on production. If you want to use your own voices as readers of the synopsis or scripture, we include videos without our voiceovers as well. This series

also invites some natural opportunities for congregational contributions such as photography, and so you may find that there are congregants who would be happy to do or learn some photo compiling so that you can share the beauty you experience during the week. If you are doing low-tech worship without the use of projections or video online via phone conference call, the full scripts for each week include all the elements that are in the videos so you can have the flexibility for your situation.

This six-week series is designed to give you everything you need—all words, hymn and song suggestions, leader introductions, etc. We have not made choral anthem suggestions in this one, but you could certainly add solo/ensemble material as desired and as your context permits. Also please know that if you want to adapt to fit your current order of worship, you can easily lift any of the suggested material out of my scripts and place it in your more familiar structure.

This overview will give you a sense of what's included each week in the order of worship. The package also includes ideas for Visuals and Media, ideas for children and youth activities, Small Group ideas, an original prayer song for the series, and a video trailer you can use for publicity (or call it "evangelism" if you want).

The order of worship is the same each week. This goes with the concept I teach that repetition is a good thing and a solid foundation is necessary in order to be creative within it. Doing series can give you the opportunity to try on a slightly different order of worship or a different way of doing an element of the service for a season but keep it the same during that season, therefore offering some sense of familiarity and a rhythm. We have included a communion prayer separately from the scripts so you can fit that in whenever you have communion. If you do communion weekly, adapt my scripts by using that script as a model for how you might edit according to the theme each week. As always, adapt the communion prayer to fit your tradition.



The "Anchor Image" (main metaphor) for the series is wind chimes, an image that reminds us of the movement of the Divine Spirit. We recommend you purchase or create chimes for your worship space, whether that is in the sanctuary of the church or the sanctuary of your homes.

My prayers are with you, friends. May you find a deep sense of wellness through beauty through this series.

Peace & Passion,
Dr. Marcia McFee
Creator and Visionary
Worship Design Studio

Downloads
What's included and what to do with it

This Overview - Have your whole team read this to understand the theme and order.

Scriptures and Synopses - This is your at-a-glance look at the movement of the series and the non-lectionary scriptures highlighted.

Six Worship Scripts - You WILL adapt these for your context (Tip: Do this in one fell swoop before the season begins, and you'll feel amazingly prepared and your team will thank you!). We have provided two versions of the scripts. The "full scripts" on the main download page have all the words included for the threshold moments, scripture readings, and *visio divina* meditations (see more on these pieces in the "Video Packages" section below). The separate .zip folder titled "Video Package Scripts" contains slightly condensed versions of the weekly scripts, so if you are planning to use all of our video resources throughout the order of worship, you could use this truncated version of the scripts to simplify your planning. The video package scripts could also be used as an online mid-week special summer version for folks who are often out of town on the weekends in summer.

Children's Time Scripts - Decide who is doing this and get it into their hands early so they can have fun with it, adapt it, and connect it to what children are doing in other settings like education (be sure to look at our suggestions for children and youth in the Small Group document as well).

Communion Script - Incorporate this into whatever weeks you are doing communion as you adapt your weekly scripts.

Sermon Fodder - Our sermon fodder document contains exegetical notes on the scriptures by Dr. Allie Utley, Assistant Professor of Liturgy and Practical Theology at Phillips Theological Seminary as well as excerpts from Dr. Wendy Farley's book. I conducted a series of interviews with Dr. Farley discussing each of the weekly worship themes to bring even more depth to your experience of the materials. Those interview videos are linked in the sermon fodder document as well as in the guided reflection journal and the small group materials that we have included in the series.

Visual and Media Ideas - Make some time early in your planning process to go through the ideas with your team and land on how you'll apply the main images to your space, then get folks working on it (the earlier, the more fun they'll have, the more things they can create!).

Music Document and Files - We have included Chuck Bell's wonderful arrangement of "For the Beauty of the Earth," along with an original prayer song by my dear friend, Rev. Marsha Moors-Charles called "Look Around." See more about these pieces in the description of the order of worship below. We also created a separate music document that details how to utilize these pieces in worship and contains a list of all the song

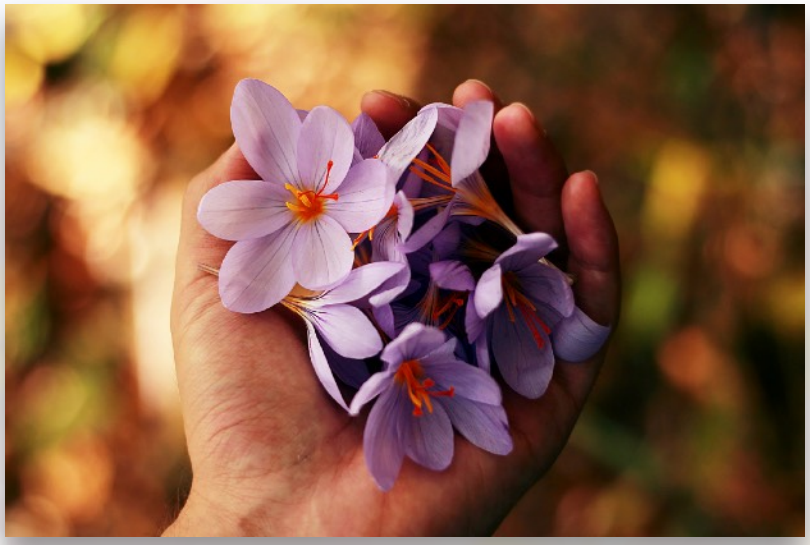
suggestions from the scripts for easy reference. For a fun extra to go along with this series, the WDS Staff crowd-sourced a Spotify playlist of uplifting secular music that you could play during gathering time or after worship, or just listen to for inspiration.

Video Packages - We have created **threshold moment videos**, **scripture videos**, and a *visio divina* **visual meditation video** for each week of the series. The threshold moment video can be used at the beginning of worship to introduce the theme and draw your community in to the experience of worship. The scripture video can be used during the *lectio divina* scripture reading. The *visio divina* mediation video can be used as a reflection piece following the sermon. We have provided two versions of the threshold videos and scripture videos: one with a voiceover of Dr. Marcia reading aloud the corresponding text, and one without a voiceover so your worship leaders can read the text aloud themselves. Use whichever version feels right for your community. Of course, you can use these videos as inspiration to create your own versions if you feel so moved! We have also included a Benediction video that stays the same every week.

Logo, Trailer, and Social Media Posts - Add your branding to these early (directions in the Visual and Media Ideas doc) so you can start to get the word out pre-season.

Small Group Suggestions - Take a look at our suggestions and decide if you will organize small groups or simply send out the guided reflection journal for individuals to use. We have created pages that include links to the interview videos with Dr. Farley along with discussion questions / journal prompts that can be used by groups or individuals to further their experience each week.

Guided Journal - We have included a guided reflection journal that can be printed and distributed to your members. Each week has a double-sided page formatted for 8.5”x11” paper for easy printing and sharing. We have also included a PDF as well as a plain Word version of the document if you’d like to make your own adaptations. If you have a Canva Pro account, you can use our Canva template link to create your own version of the journal on Canva.



The Order of Worship

WE GATHER

Threshold Moment

This concept of a “threshold moment” that I teach introduces people to the journey and the theme of the day at the beginning of the service so that everything is seen through that lens. This section is one of the video packages that I have created and includes imagery at the very beginning that is the same each time, re-introducing the series, but then goes on to offer the title of the week, a quote from Dr. Farley’s work, and a seminal question that always begins, “Are you ready….?” The video image and verbal synopsis that follows is different for each week, helping us to orient ourselves to a different aspect of the overarching theme.

Silent Centering

The Threshold Moment always ends with a snippet of our theme song, “For the Beauty of the Earth,” (arrangement by the incomparable Chuck Bell and his beautiful daughters, Lucy and Blakely, whose voices you hear on the recording) which fades into silence for quieting our hearts and minds. This worship series has a contemplative feel, allowing us to find respite from the frenzied pace of “normal” life. As the weeks go on, people will get more comfortable with silence, so you may want to consider starting out with about 30 seconds and then adding 15 seconds each Sunday to that length. The silence is broken with a chime or bell, and then a **Prayer of Opening** is offered by either a leader or an invitation for all to join in.

Hymn of Beauty

[Please note: I did not include a lot of unison speaking in this series because of the limits on speaking and singing in groups during the pandemic. If you are doing this series back in your sanctuaries, you may choose to have a soloist sing the suggested hymns and songs, or you can add more unison participation if desired.]

We have chosen hymns for more “traditional/classic” worship and songs for more “modern/contemporary” worship as suggestions. But you can also feel free to adapt our suggestions if you choose. Just look at the hymns/songs we have chosen and try to find something that keeps the “essence of the message” but is something more beloved by your congregation. See the music document for all the suggestions we have provided in the scripts.

WE PROCLAIM

Searching for Beauty: A Time for Children

We have written scripts for children's time that are included right in the scripts for each week of the series. Each one features an object that the children "search" for that will help illustrate the theme for the week. In the children's suggestions document, we have a list of the items so that you can send that list to parents if you are doing this series as online worship. Each item is an easy and common object that should not be difficult to produce, or to improvise at the moment if some folks didn't get the message. The script for this section ends with a repeat-after-me prayer.

Divina

Divina is of Latin and Italian origin, meaning "divine or heavenly." It is also a variant of *Davina* (Hebrew), meaning "loved one." In this series, we will encounter the Divine Loved One through "Lectio Divina" (scripture), through "Sermo Divina" (the Latin origin of the word "sermon"), through "Visio Divina," (images and poetry), and through "Musica Divina" (music). These are the words I wrote to introduce this practice in Week One:

"All of these are portals into a sensate experience of the holy. Some forms will pique your cognitive mind, but you can also allow some to simply wash over you, infusing your psyche and soul with a mysterious sense of wonder."

Lectio Divina

This scripture reading is one of the video packages we have provided. If you prefer, you can use the recording we offer that is labeled "NO VoiceOver" and add your own voices (see the Get-Ready webinar for a how-to). The scriptures for this series are all from the Hebrew Bible, drawing especially on poetic writings.

Musica Divina

We have made choral anthem / band song suggestions in the scripts. Give them a listen and feel free to choose others from your existing repertoire.

Sermo Divina

We have prepared a Sermon Fodder document in the downloads that does a bit of ruminating and exegesis to help jumpstart your sermon preparation. This is not a

substitute for your own deeper exegesis process, but can help begin it. It also includes my interviews with Dr. Farley that can be used for Small Groups as well as sermon preparation.

Visio Divina

This section is another one of our video packages that lets our eyes enter a contemplative state. Each week starts with a haiku, a form of poetry that uses three lines in a 5-7-5 syllabic pattern. You may want to invite your congregation into a spiritual practice of writing haiku (see Small Group suggestions for a resource). The video footage I use in this section is selected from online webcams that can be a wonderful contemplative spiritual practice itself!

WE RESPOND

Prayers of the People

Dear friend of Worship Design Studio, Rev. Marsha Moors-Charles, has written another song for this series that you can choose to use as “bookends” to community prayer. She was inspired to “Look Around”—certainly a wonderful metaphor in this series—to see prayer in action in the world. The song references the many kinds of support we saw in the world of pandemic, and invites us to remember that “things are going to be alright, we’ll get through this together.” This song is a great message of hope whether your community is actively facing crisis or simply navigating life together. Marsha has given us a recording by the arranger, Caleb Collins, which we made into two files “A” and “B” to use as bookends. The sheet music is included in case your musicians want to play it themselves. They can listen to the recording to find what we suggest to use as bookends, but they can also do the entire song at some point in the series as well. Thank you again, to Rev. Marsha for her creativity and gift to all of us!

Call for Offering

This is a moment when you can connect our focus on beauty with our compassionate action in the world. Depending on how you are handling your giving, whether worshiping online or in-person, you can announce that here as well as remind your congregation of ways to give such as food bank contributions, etc.

Offering of Peace

At the time this series was written, physical distancing practices were widely in place, so my suggestion was to teach the congregation a slight bow with hands together in front of you (a kind of “prayer” gesture used in some Asian cultures) so that they may do this to one another from across the sanctuary at a distance from their seats, or to each other at home. Of course, you may pass the peace in whatever way you are accustomed, perhaps while saying “Peace be with you—and also with you.”

Communion and/or Ritual Action

This is the place where you could insert the communion script I have written on the weeks when that is appropriate for your tradition. Again, please adapt what I have written. This one is based largely on the ecumenical standard from 2nd century Hippolytus prayer. Each week, I also suggest a contemplative ritual action that can be done daily at home, accompanied by a “note” reminder of the message. These Notes can be found in the downloads in a form that can be sent as a PDF to the congregation for them to print or use as a screensaver photo during the week.

SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

The closing song is an exclamation point on the theme for the day.
Again, always adapt to your context as needed.

Benediction

The blessing at the end of the service is the same each week and starts out with a phrase from Dr. Farley’s father, another renowned theologian, Dr. Edward Farley.

The world is so varied and beautiful.
Seek wisdom wherever it is to be found.
And may the goodness of the Creator,
the companionship of the Christ,
and the insight of the Spirit,
infuse your life now and always.
Amen.

Benediction Song Reprise

This reprise is the fourth video package for each service. It is the same for each one and consists of thematic imagery and the snippet of our theme song, "God of all to thee we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise!"

I hope this helps you get an at-a-glance feel for the scripts!

If you haven't purchased the series yet (free to WDS members), click HERE

If you'd like to get access to ALL our series, check out a Worship Design Studio subscription HERE

