



LIFE
Together
APART

WITH KATE BOWLER

WHILE IT WAS YET DARK
A 7-WEEK EASTER PRACTICE

WEEK 1:

“The worst isn’t the last thing about the world. It’s the next to the last thing. The last thing is the best. It’s the power from on high that comes down into the world, that wells up from the rock-bottom worst of the world like a hidden spring. Can you believe it? The last, best thing is the laughing deep in the hearts of the saints, sometimes our hearts even.

*Yes. You are terribly loved and forgiven.
Yes. You are healed. All is well.”*

— FREDERICK BUECHNER,
THE FINAL BEAST

BEGINNING OF THE DAY LOVE BATTERY CHECK

Check in with yourself. How much energy do you have to give?
Indicate where you find yourself today on the spectrum below.



LOVE >> PRAYER

So many people are struggling right now. In the space below, make a list of who you are praying for today. You can think of specific people or more general categories.

LOVE >> RESPONSE

Say this prayer aloud.

*O Holy God,
Open unto me
Light for my darkness
Courage for my fear
Hope for my despair.*

*O loving God,
Open unto me
Wisdom for my confusion
Forgiveness for my sins
Love for my hate.
O God of peace,*

*Open unto me
Peace for my turmoil
Joy for my sorrow
Strength for my weakness.*

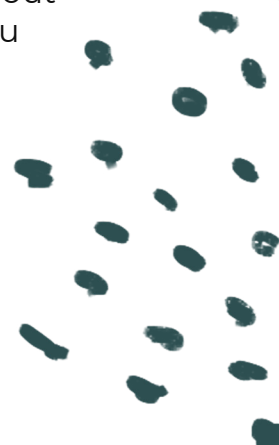
*O generous God
Open my heart to receive all your gifts.
Amen.*

—Howard Thurman (1899-1981)

**Gratitude to Duke Divinity Chaplain Meghan Benson
for sharing her collection of prayers.*

LOVE >> PRESENCE

Today, let's celebrate the spiritual community that surrounds us. What about your spiritual community has been life giving in the past? Where have you recently found spiritual community?



SIGNS OF HOPE

List three small places you found hope today. Share them online using **#LIFETOGETHERAPART**.

01.

02.

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END OF DAY REFLECTION

Whether you are tired or scared, weirdly cheerful or actually fine, I'd love to know: What was the best choice you made today?

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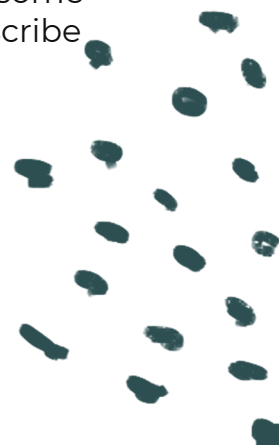
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Let's create something good and beautiful at the start of this week. Take some time to write, paint, compose, cook, build, or craft. When you're done, describe what you did below. Share what you made using #lifetogetherapart.



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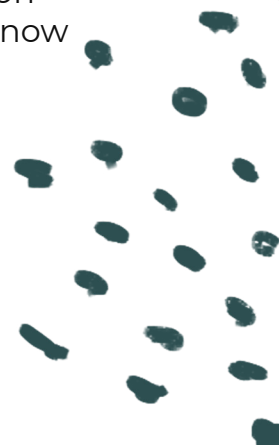
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Today, if you have a little extra in the tank, will you reach out to someone on your prayer list and let them know they are not alone. Even if they don't know you're praying for them, let's remind others how we are better together.



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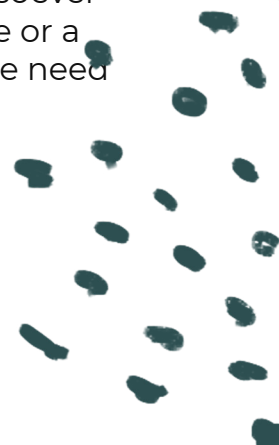
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LOVE >> PRESENCE

Today is Random Act of Absurdity Day. Do something for no reason whatsoever except to be delighted. Wear a costume. Learn a new dance. Try to whittle or a headstand (preferably not at the same time). In the face of uncertainty, we need to do things simply because we can.



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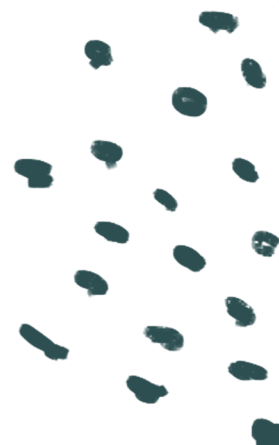
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We talked about precarity on this week's video teaching. How have you experienced precarity? What does it feel like in your body? In your mind?



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Today is Casual Friday. It's okay to give up. In fact, please do. Eat cereal for dinner or wear an absurd outfit on your next Zoom call. Even when we reach our limits, God never does. Where have you encountered your limits this week? How has God's love and your spiritual community sustained you when you hit the wall?



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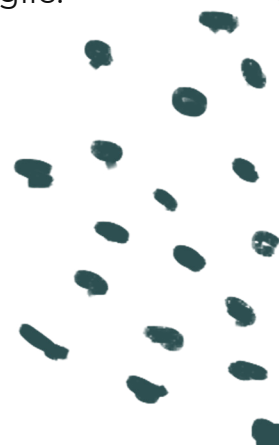
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Today, get outside. Nature helps to reconstitute us when we're feeling fragile. Open a window. Take a walk. Sit on your patio. What do you notice?



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