

The Thriving Rhythms Project...



...challenges us to move with thoughtful purpose toward a deepened sense of identity—that we are spirited, creative, and connected, called to be present, grateful, generous, and missional with our lives. We're exploring what it means to intentionally live into this particular series of life rhythms, which helps us bring some good to each moment, something better to each day, and our best to each other as we encounter the world around us.

We are ... Creative

As image bearers of the Divine, we are designed to be creative. We thrive as creative people by discovering our identity and purpose in the world, exploring our Sacred impulses, and reveling in the wonders of imagination and the power of innovation.

WELCOME | CHECK-IN |
Breath Exercise | Headspace | Breath

CENTERING | CREATIVE Thriving |

Spend some time reflecting on this image.

- What do you notice first about this image?
- What stands out most for you?
- What adjectives would you use to describe this image?
- How would you describe this image to another person?
- What story does the image tell?
- What would you say the artist is trying to convey?
- If this image produced sounds, what would they be like?



"Imagination does not become great until human beings, given the courage and the strength, use it to create."

~ Maria Montessori

ANCIENT WISDOM – Exodus 35:21-29

And they came, every one whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and brought the LORD's offering to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the sacred vestments. So they came, both men and women; all who were of a willing heart brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and pendants, all sorts of gold objects, everyone bringing an offering of gold to the LORD. And every one who possessed blue or purple or crimson yarn or fine linen or goats' hair or tanned rams' skins or fine leather brought them.



Everyone who could make an offering of silver or bronze brought it as the LORD's offering, and everyone who possessed acacia wood of any use in the work, brought it. All the skillful women spun with their hands and brought what they had spun 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 breastpiece, 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.

God filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them skilled workers and designers.

STORY | *The Lion Inside*

In the fall of 2017, Nancy Lee and I traveled to Florence, Italy's most beautiful, creative city. Walking through the streets of the ancient and mythically powerful city, I recalled the story of a little boy who lived in this city known for musicians, poets, painters, and stonecutters. On his way to school each morning, he would wander past the studio of a young painter and sculptor whom the world would eventually come to know simply as Michelangelo.

On an early spring morning, the little boy stood at the studio doorway and peered into the cluttered workspace. To his great wonder and curiosity, there was an enormous block of marble on the floor in the middle of the room. Fascinated, he slowly pushed the door open and quietly eased himself into the room. From his vantage point, he watched the artist slowly walking around the tons of raw stone, touching the ridges and edges, eyeing the indistinct shapes, making notes, and drawing small charcoal images on a tablet of paper. Over the next several weeks, the little boy visited from time to time, wondering what the artist was up to as he stood thoughtful and brooding before this massive stone. Then, finally, summer arrived, and the little boy was away on holiday with his family.

Many weeks passed until finally, the little boy was back in Florence. One autumn afternoon, as the boy made his way home from school, he walked down a familiar side street to the artist's studio. Standing in the studio's doorway, he could hardly believe his eyes. On the floor in the middle of the room, where the once-massive block of marble rested without any distinct

shape, was a magnificently carved lion. Overcome with wonder and awe, he burst into the studio, ran to the artist standing nearby, and asked, "How did you know the lion was inside that stone?"

Creative Conversation

- *We have been created to be creative.* Share about a creative gift that comes so naturally to you that it seems like you were born with it. Then, share about something you have had to work at to unleash or grow your creativity.
- *We thrive as creative people when we delight in the wonder of imagination and the power of innovation.* Share about either a "wonderful work of imagination" (such as a favorite song, movie, book, work of art, etc.) or a "powerful innovation" (such as GPS, the iPhone, the Keurig, etc.) that you delight in. How does it inspire you, improve your life, or bring you joy?
- *We thrive as creative people when we discover our identity and purpose in the world.* How would you describe your identity and purpose in the world? How has your identity and purpose remained constant over time? How has it evolved? What excites you about what you have yet to discover about your identity and purpose?
- *Imagination does not become great until human beings, given the courage and the strength, use it to create.* What gives you the courage and strength to create? What holds you back from fully exploring/expressing your creative impulses? Share stories from your life that illustrate your answers to these questions.
- Exodus 35:21-29 describes how God empowered the Israelite men and women to provide what was needed to do the work needed. Describe a time when you really "brought it." What did you bring to the task, and how did it help accomplish what needed to be done? Were you able to accomplish the task on your own, or did you creatively collaborate with others? Where did you see God at work in all of that?
- As illustrated by the story "The Lion Inside," creativity can be defined as "Where something wasn't... is." How would you define creativity? What are you currently working on creatively bringing into existence?
- As a group, brainstorm practical ways to thrive as a creative person. Share and celebrate the ways you are currently thriving as a creative person. What is one idea you can take away from this conversation to help you grow as a creative person?



A CREATIVE MANIFESTO

We believe we are creative human beings, created by the Source of all creation. We believe exploring the Divine Impulse of wonder and imagination within our lives has much to teach us. We believe that we thrive as creative people by discovering our identity and purpose in the world and delighting in the wonder of imagination and the power of innovation. We believe in claiming our creative inspiration for good, beauty, and purpose beyond ourselves and affirm that everyone thrives when each individual thrives.

MANTRA

I'm called and equipped to explore the Divine Impulses of wonder and imagination in my life.

INTENTION

Gracious God, we are your spirited people; you have created us in your image and called us into community together. As we dwell in the fullness of this moment, we acknowledge your generous love that frees us to be your missional people in the world. Inspire our creativity, animate our relationships, and enthuse us with your Spirit. In the name of Christ... Amen

BLESSING

As you move through this day, may you thrive as a creative person by discovering your identity and purpose in the world, exploring your creative impulse, and delighting in the wonder of your imagination and the power of innovation.