



continuing the journey of

# transforming grace:

transforming presence

Reflection for the week of February 4, 2024

## *Opening Song: Stone Circles*

by Anne Lister sung by SPIRITSONG

## *Opening Prayer*

Amanda Gorman

We lift our gazes not  
To what stands between us,  
But what stands before us.  
We close the divide,  
Because we know to put  
Our future first, we must first  
Put our differences aside

## *Spoken Poem*

Maya Angelou: Rainbow in the Clouds

## *Scripture*

Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed. Simon and those who were with him pursued him and on finding him said, "Everyone is looking for you." He told them, "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come." Mark 1:38-39

## *Practice*

### Understanding Polarization in the United States, Part Two

Choose one of these recordings on the forces of polarization

#### The Rise of Political Polarization

Dean Henry Brady, UC Berkeley, Goldman School of Public Policy

#### PBS: How political opponents became enemies in the U.S.

Find a 20-30 minute block of time for this practice.

Choose an audio, television or video recording of a news source that you trust.

Listen without interruption for 12 minutes. Identify words or phrases which strengthen polarization

Choose an audio, television or video recording of a news source that you ordinarily reject



Listen without interruption for 12 minutes. Identify words or phrases which strengthen polarization

Spend 3-5 minutes reflecting on your experience in light of the information from the last two weeks.

## *Reflection Questions*

What is emerging within you in this exploration of polarization at this time in your life?

Where might you experience curiosity or a desire to understand more deeply?

Standing in the deserted place with Jesus, see if there is a place you are led as he was led to the nearby villages?

## *Closing Prayer*

Lord,  
Lead us from death to life,  
From falsehood to truth.  
Lead us from despair to hope,  
from fear to trust.

Let peace fill our hearts, our world and our universe.  
Let us dream together, pray together and work together,  
To build one world of peace and justice for all.

*Author unknown - it is thought to be either an adaptation of a Hindu prayer or of a hymn. The first time that it was known to be publicly spoken was by Mother Teresa in 1981.*

## *Closing Song*

Rising Appalachia: Resilient