SESSION TITLES

PRAYER | ORIENTED TOWARD GOD

FOOD | EATING, WITH JESUS

WORSHIP | SEEKING GOD'S PRESENCE

SACRAMENTS | A TAPESTRY OF TRADITIONS

MONEY | THE JOY OF SHARING

SERVICE | THE NEEDS RIGHT AROUND YOU

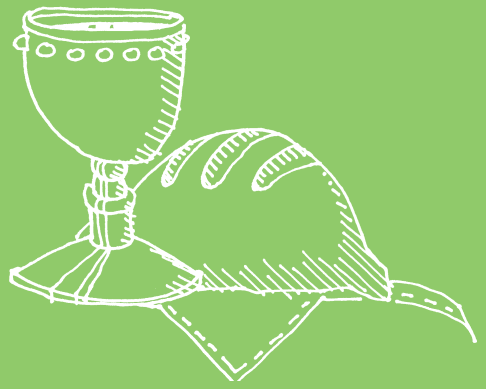
COMMUNITY | AN UNEXPECTED FAMILY

ABOUT THESE JOURNAL PAGES

Welcome to animate! This Journal is designed to accompany you on your journey through this session. Flip through the pages, jot notes, sketch ideas, and make it your own. This is your journal and you get to decide when to stop and linger and when to keep moving.

SACRAMENTS | A TAPESTRY OF TRADITIONS

PHYLLIS TICKLE



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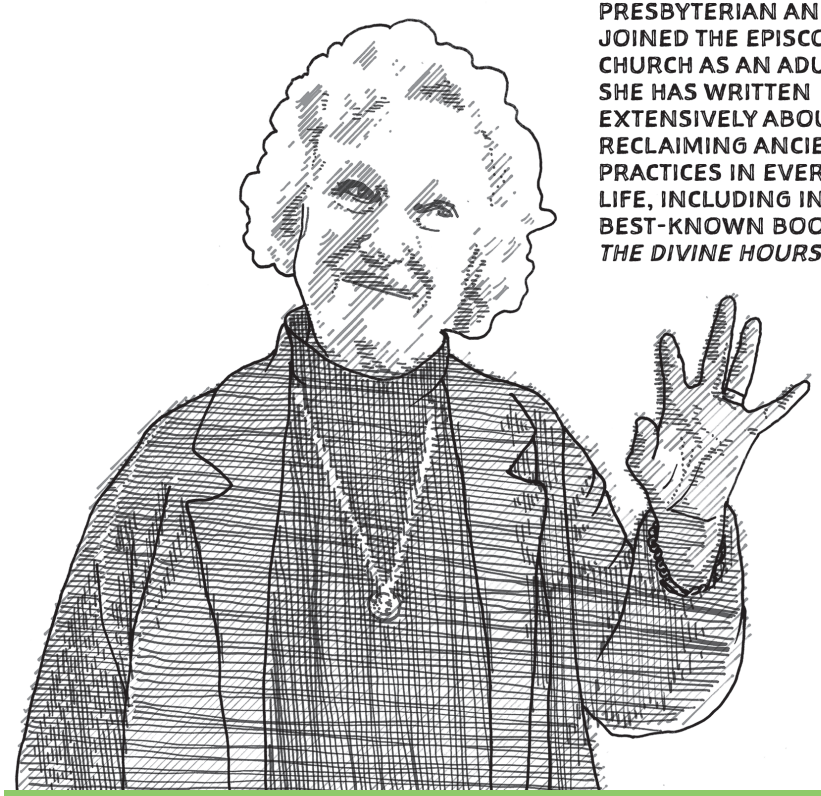
PHYLLIS TICKLE



PHYLLIS TICKLE GREW UP PRESBYTERIAN AND JOINED THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AS AN ADULT. SHE HAS WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY ABOUT RECLAIMING ANCIENT PRACTICES IN EVERYDAY LIFE, INCLUDING IN HER BEST-KNOWN BOOK, *THE DIVINE HOURS.*

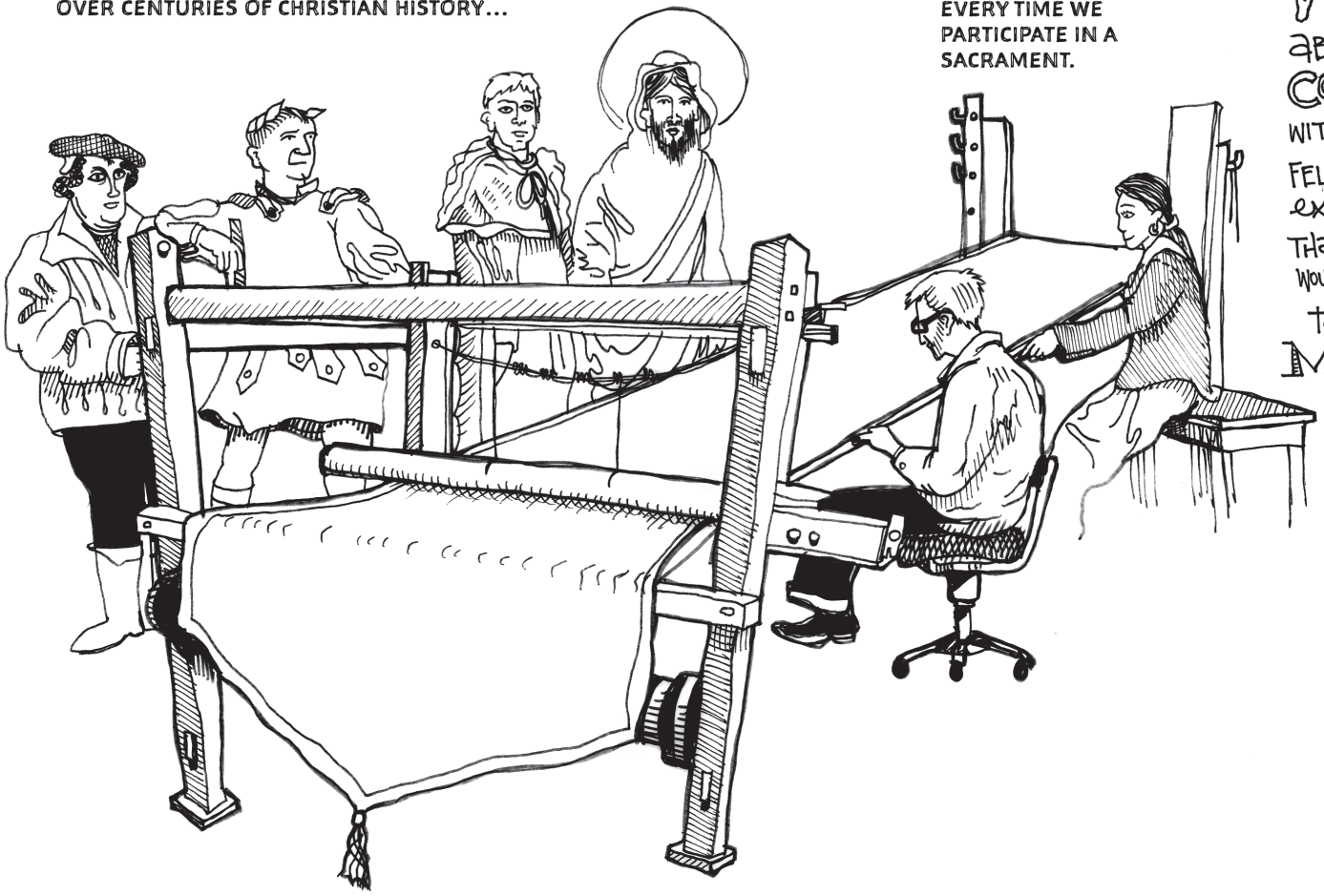
SACRAMENTUM: THE MOST SERIOUS VOW THAT CAN EVER BE MADE

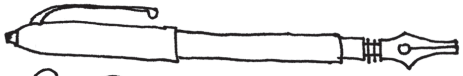
Phyllis unravels a bit of the knotted history of the Sacraments, tracing the threads all the way back to the Roman Empire. While the number and names of the Sacraments have changed over the course of church history, Phyllis reminds us that the meaning they hold has remained the same.

How does the historical meaning of the word *Sacrament* change your ideas about the role Sacraments play in the Christian faith?

PHYLLIS SUGGESTS THAT THE HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENTS IS LIKE A TAPESTRY THAT'S BEEN WOVEN TOGETHER THREAD-BY-THREAD OVER CENTURIES OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY...

...WE'RE STILL WEAVING THAT TAPESTRY TODAY, EVERY TIME WE PARTICIPATE IN A SACRAMENT.





Write down some thoughts about a time when taking COMMUNION or witnessing a BAPTISM felt like a truly spiritual experience for you. If that's never happened, what would it take for those sacraments to hold DEEPER MEANING in your life?

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, CHRISTIANS HAVE DEBATED WHETHER THE SACRAMENTS HAVE POWER UNTO THEMSELVES OR IF THEY ONLY HAVE POWER WHEN WE PERFORM THEM IN PARTICULAR WAYS. IN OTHER WORDS, IS IT *HOW* YOU DO IT OR *THAT* YOU DO IT THAT MATTERS?

For Phyllis, answering these questions is less important than our willingness to embrace the mystery embedded in the sacraments.

Why do we still get hung up on the logistics of the sacraments?

Where do you see the mystery of God's presence in communion? In baptism? In the other sacraments like confession and marriage?

THE SACRAMENTS ARE AN OUTWARD AND PHYSICAL SIGN OF AN INWARD AND SPIRITUAL GRACE

What does it Mean to visibly seal our lives to God through the practice of the Sacraments?

Day 1

This week, you'll be working through one of the less-common sacraments, confession. This might be a new practice for you or one that feels a little uncomfortable. That's okay. Each day, you'll move a bit deeper into the practice and have the chance to write about the feelings or thoughts it brings up. Today, think about a relationship in your life that might benefit from an act of confession on your part. Write down the name of the person you'd like to reconcile with over the course of this week as well as the part of your relationship that needs to heal.

Day 2

It's never easy to admit fault, but speaking our failures out loud can take some of their power and shame away. Start the process of confession by talking honestly with God about the issue. Confess out loud to God and allow yourself to feel God's grace work its way into you. What is this experience like for you?

"Confession heals, confession justifies, confession grants pardon of sin, all hope consists in confession; in confession there is a chance for mercy. Believe it firmly, do not doubt, do not hesitate, never despair of the mercy of God." —St. Isidore of Seville

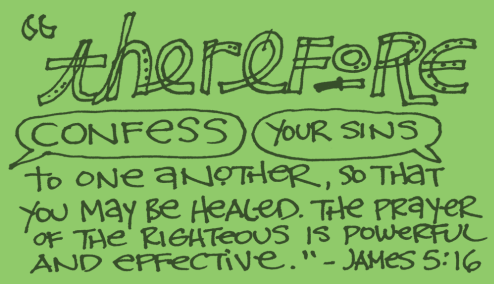
"A lot of people refuse to do things because they don't want to go naked, don't want to go without guarantee. But that's what's got to happen. You go naked until you die."
—Nikki Giovanni

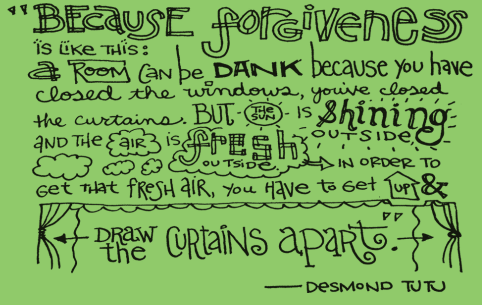
Day 3

It can help to bring another person into this process to offer support and encouragement. Today, ask a trusted friend or your pastor to listen to your confession. Journal a bit about what might be holding you back from moving more deeply into this practice.

Day 4

Now it gets real. Reach out to the person you need to confess to and ask to meet tomorrow. If it's not possible to get together in person, set up a time to talk on the phone or over Skype. No texting or email allowed here—this needs to happen in a face-to-face conversation. Write out any fears or anxieties you have about this step. And don't forget to lean on the person you asked to support you. This is when you'll need them most.





"In failing to confess, Lord, I would only hide you from myself, not myself from you."
- St. Augustine

Day 5

This is the day you make it happen. As you confess, keep the focus on you and the actions you regret. Ask your friend to listen and allow you to say what you need to say. Ask for forgiveness. You might not get it, but no matter what happens as a result of this confession, you will have made a significant step toward repairing a broken relationship. Then take some time to write down your thoughts about this conversation. How did it feel? What did you hope for? What might come from this?

Day 6

Today, take some time to reflect and write about this experience. Allow yourself to feel that weight of guilt lift off of you, no matter how the conversation went. You might not have gotten the response you hoped for from the other person, but you can find rest and peace in the grace of God.

"Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."
- Hebrews 4:16