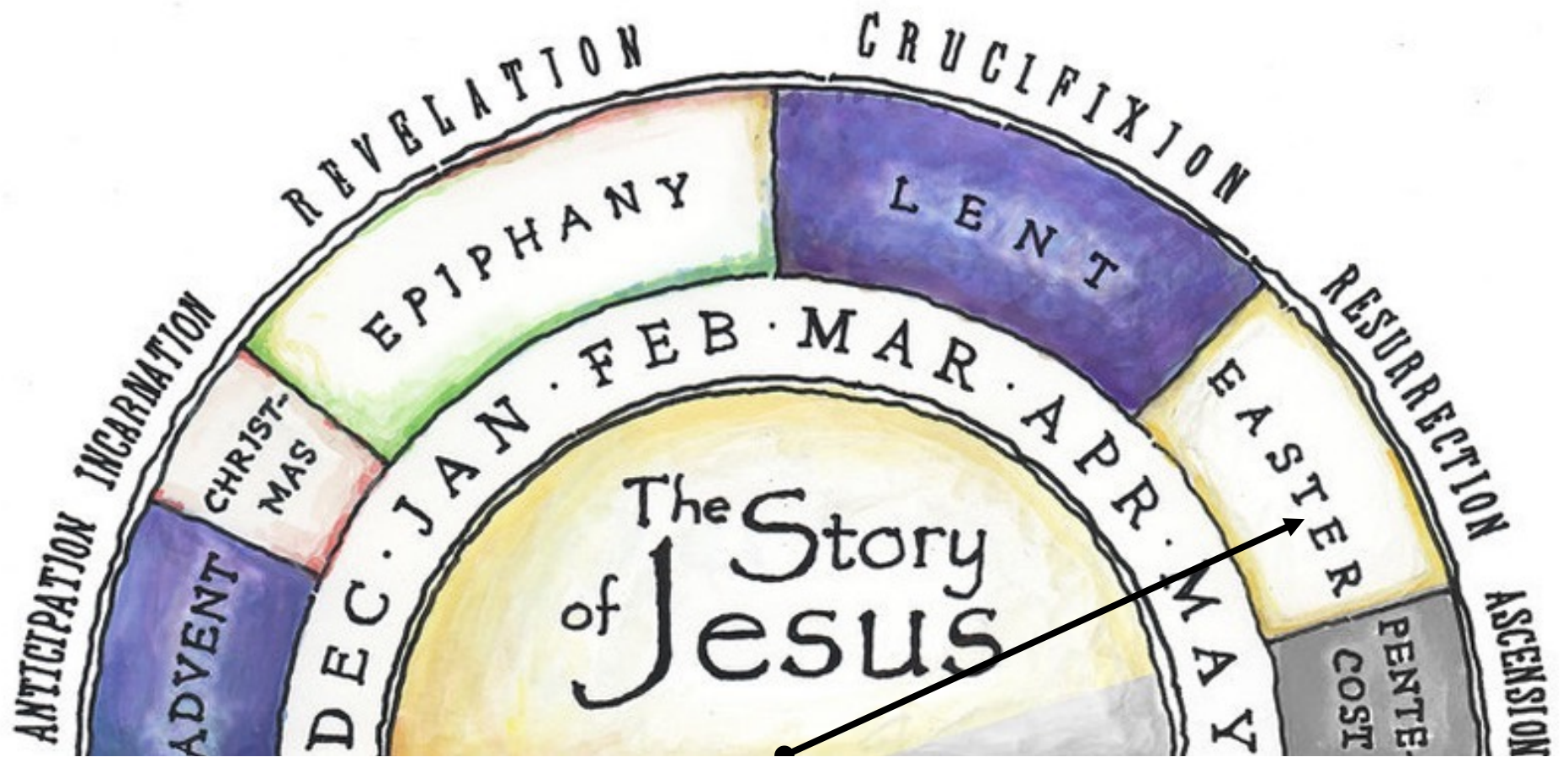


Holy God, you have called us
to follow in the way of your risen Son,
and to care for those who are
companions and strangers alike.
Fill us with your spirit that we may
love you as we love our neighbor,
not only with words of comfort,
but with acts of generosity and love. Amen

Opening Prayer

A decorative banner at the bottom of the page features a dark background with white line art of hands reaching out. Overlaid on this are several overlapping circles in red, green, blue, and purple, and a white fishnet pattern on the right side.

CHURCH CALENDAR



Two ripe peaches are shown against a white background. The peach in the foreground is more prominent, showing its characteristic fuzzy texture and a mix of red and yellow-orange colors. A single green leaf is attached to its stem. Another peach is partially visible behind it to the left. The text "THE GOOD and BEAUTIFUL GOD" is overlaid in the center in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

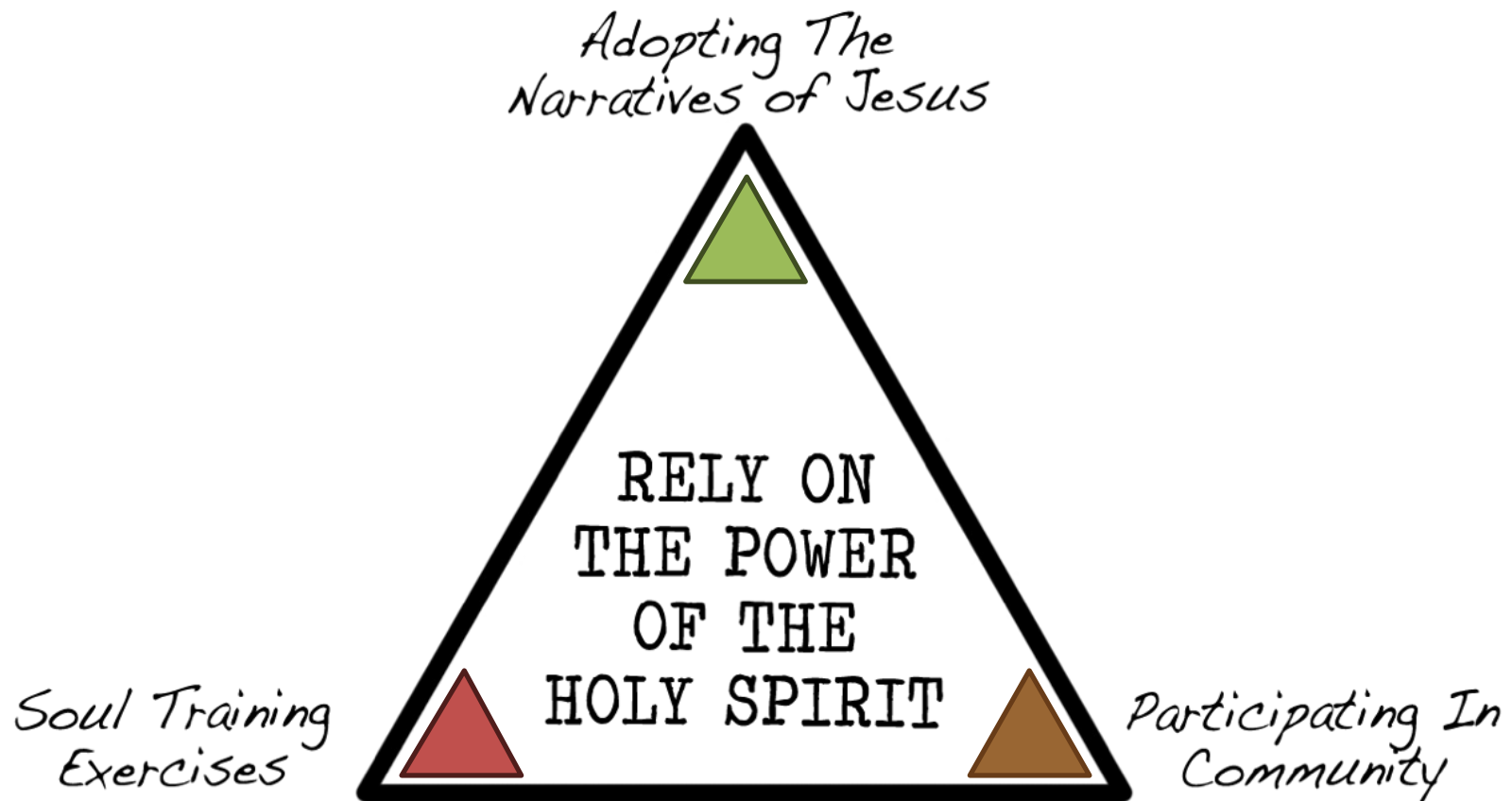
THE GOOD and
BEAUTIFUL GOD

*“What commandment is the foremost of all?” Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘HEAR, ISRAEL! THE LORD IS OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE; AND **YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.**’ The second is this: ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

HOLY
BIBLE

MARK
10:37-38

SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION



WHERE WE'RE HEADING...

God is **GOOD** ✓

God is **TRUSTWORTHY** ✓

God is **GENEROUS** ✓

God is **LOVE**

God is **HOLY**

God is **SELF-SACRIFICING**

God is **TRANSFORMATIVE**



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The Good and Beautiful

GOD

FALLING IN LOVE WITH
THE GOD JESUS KNOWS

"The best practice I have seen in Christian spiritual formation."

—DALLAS WILLARD

FALSE NARRATIVE #4

*Love/forgiveness are commodities exchanged for **PERFORMANCE**.
God's love/acceptance/forgiveness must be **MERITED** by "right living."*



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For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. About nine in the morning, he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So, they went.

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT
20:1-5a

He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. About five in the afternoon, he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?' 'Because no one has hired us,' they said. 'He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'"

**HOLY
BIBLE**

MATT
20:5b-7

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, "Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first." The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. So, when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius.

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT
20:8-10

When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. "These who were hired last worked only one hour," they said, "and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day." But he answered one of them, "I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?"

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT
20:11-13

"Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?"

*So: the last will be first,
and the first will be last.*

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

20:14-16

FALSE NARRATIVE #4

*Love/forgiveness are commodities exchanged for **PERFORMANCE**.
God's love/acceptance/forgiveness must be **MERITED** by "right living."*

TRUE NARRATIVE #4

***GOD** is utterly generous because it's who God **IS**.*



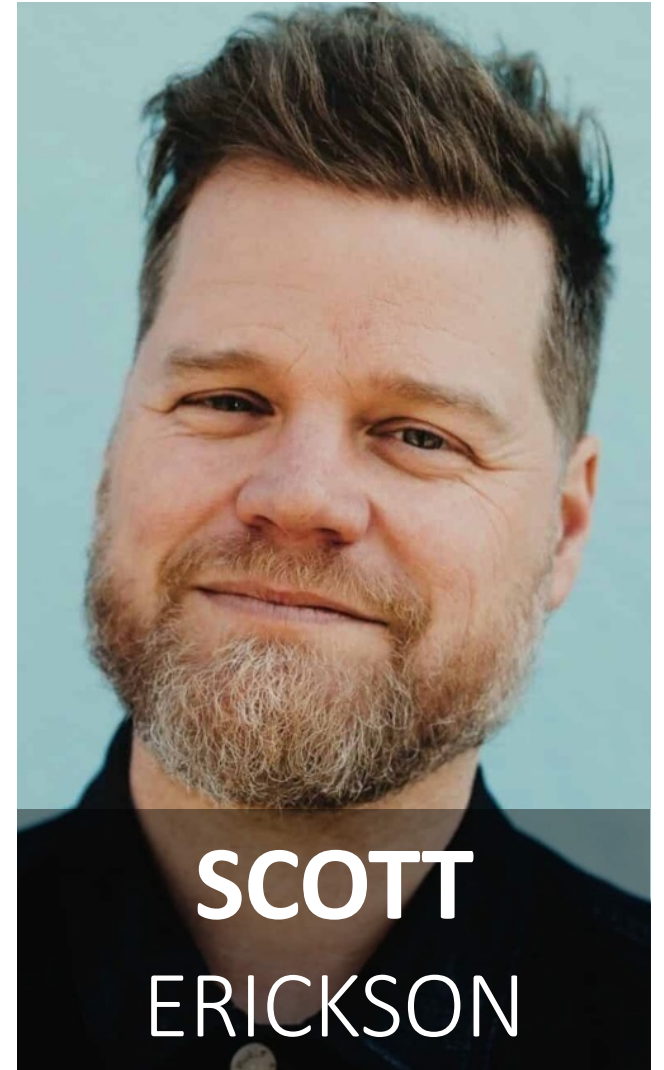
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GOD

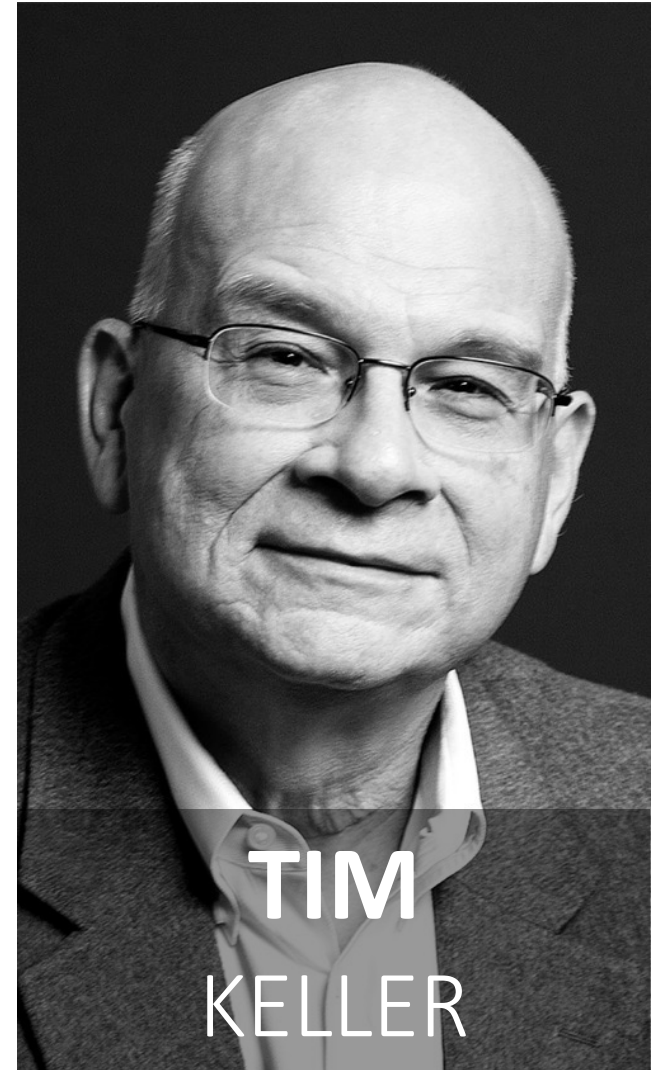
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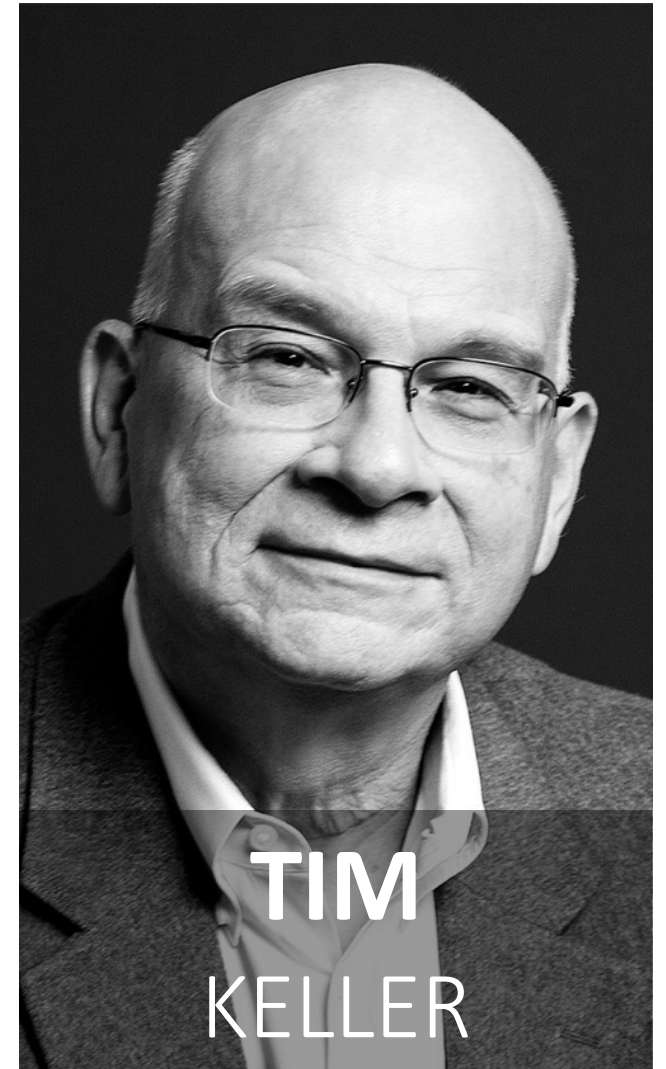


SCOTT
ERICKSON

The life of the Trinity is characterized not by self-centeredness but by mutually self-giving love. When we delight and serve someone else, we enter into a dynamic orbit around him or her, we center on the interests and desires of the other...At the center of the universe, self-giving love is the dynamic currency of the Trinitarian life of God.



Each of the divine persons centers upon the others. None demands that the others revolve around them. Each voluntarily circles the other two, pouring love, delight and adoration into them. Each person of the Trinity loves, adores, defers to and rejoices in the others....The persons within God exalt, commune with, and defer to one another...



A BIG QUESTION...

What does a spirit of generosity look like for us as human beings?



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Jesus sat down opposite the place where offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

HOLY
BIBLE

MARK
12:41-42

Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

HOLY
BIBLE

MARK

12:43-44

WHO IS MORE GENEROUS?

PERSON #1

Annual income = **\$150,000**;

Giving = **\$5,000**



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WHO IS MORE GENEROUS?

PERSON #1

Annual income = **\$150,000;**

Giving = **\$5,000**

PERSON #2

Annual income = **\$50,000;**

Giving = **\$3,750**



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WHO IS MORE GENEROUS?

PERSON #1

Annual income = **\$150,000;**

Giving = **\$5,000**

PERSON #2

Annual income = **\$50,000;**

Giving = **\$3,750**

PERSON #3

Annual income = **\$25,000;**

Giving = **\$2,500**



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WHO IS MORE GENEROUS?

PERSON #1 3%

Annual income = **\$150,000**;

Giving = **\$5,000**

PERSON #2 7.5%

Annual income = **\$50,000**;

Giving = **\$3,750**

PERSON #3 10%

Annual income = **\$25,000**;

Giving = **\$2,500**



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THE REAL ISSUE...

The wealthier you become, the issue is less about the total **AMOUNT** of your giving, but about the **PERCENTAGE** you are willing to live on so that your generosity can increase



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TRUE NARRATIVE #1

We CHANGE by indirect effort

TRUE NARRATIVE #2

God is a GOOD parent

TRUE NARRATIVE #3

God is TRUSTWORTHY

TRUE NARRATIVE #3

God is GENEROUS by Nature



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE #1

Read and reflect on Psalm 23

- Block off some time to read/reflect
- Focus on words expressing God's generosity
- Acknowledge there's nothing you've done (or need to do) to merit the gifts of God
- Listen for God's voice about your own generosity



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE #2

Revisit *GRATITUDE* from last week

- Reflect on what you're grateful for
- Take time to thank God specifically for whatever comes to mind
- Ask God to show you where God is leading you to demonstrate God's generosity to others



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Syracuse Cultural Work



**DAVID
BJORLIN**

Creator of the universe,
you made the world in beauty,
and restore all things in glory
through the victory of Jesus Christ.

We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice,
love, and peace, to the glory of your name.

Amen.

Closing Prayer

