

3-2022

## Adventures in Nurturing Belonging for Community through Nature and Soul Care

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

PROJECT PORTFOLIO:

ADVENTURES IN NURTURING BELONGING FOR COMMUNITY

THROUGH NATURE AND SOUL CARE



IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF LEADERSHIP

PORTLAND SEMINARY

BY:

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PORTLAND, OREGON

MARCH 2022





## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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## DEDICATION

Many of my most cherished memories, moments of deep healing, glimpses of true liberation, and soul care have been collected while walking, running, sitting, sleeping, or standing still on a trail, in the wilderness.

On the trail, my daughter Molly took some of her first steps. There, we walked together, learning along the way – watch your step, keep your balance, find your pace, stay the course, and have fun!

The trail can lead us into nature and to a deeper embrace of our being together with one another, with creation, the wonder of the vast ocean, ancient forest, the summit's expanse, sound of silence, and connection with God.

Along the way, out walking in nature, we may encounter threats to our survival – weather changing for the worse, a nasty fall, sudden illness, or the presence of big, wild things. All can provoke fear. Yes, facing and enduring these kinds of things on one's own out there can build character and be a source for great story. However, it can be inwardly easier and a tad more comforting to be out there with somebody else!

Thank you, mom for enduring, and praying with me through these uncertain and painful times. So often, I felt alone and you have been there.

Dad, thank you for reminding me of who I am. Teaching is not necessary to live *audacter et strenue* (boldly and earnestly), only truth and authenticity.

When I have felt alone with no one around, in a dark place with threats stirring, a still and small voice has emerged to console my heart, and I am reminded that “You are with me” (Psalm 23).”

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to acknowledge the Pacheedaht, Malahat, T'sou-ke, Scia'new, Esquimalt, Songhees, and Tsartlip peoples and generations on whose beautiful lands we live without legitimate consent.

To my friends, participants and leaders of “nature, journey 2021,” “nature, beyond the streets,” and “nature, in the city,” thank you for who you are, your courage, and your presence. Ubuntu!

Thank you, Dr. Clifford Berger and Dr. Julie Dodge, Project Faculties of this work. Thank you for your care, professional direction, and being present to me from day one. Thank you, Dr. Loren Kerns and Dr. Jason Swan-Clark for creating a prolific three-year learning adventure in the Doctor of Leadership and Global Perspectives. Thank you, Heather Rainey, Jen McNab, the Staff Team of Portland Seminary, and George Fox University.

To my classmates, the Top 10s, it has been beautiful journeying this bit on the highway to heaven with you. John McLarty, Darcy Hansen, Simon Bulimo, Shawn Cramer, and Steve Wingate, it has been a blessing to listen in a little closer to your hearts and observe your care for creation. Thank you, Nancy Blackman, for your gifted edits and caring vision over this portfolio.

Gipp Forster and Tom Oshiro, you are inspirations for this young grasshopper. Thank you for leading with love and living faith courageously and resiliently. Jame, Julia, Elsa and William, thank you for your lightness and humour ☺. When I think of you all, I know there is hope.

For those who have stolen bites and added sprinkles to this sundae, thank you. Ubuntu!

## EPIGRAPH

‘Into the forest I go to lose my mind and find my soul.’ John Muir



Figure 1. Molly made this sign to protest original growth logging in Ada-itsx. (Fairy Creek, BC)

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NPO – Need/Problem/Opportunity

MSSC – Mustard Seed Street Church

BTS – Beyond the Streets

RFP – Relentless Forward Progression

MVP – Minimum Viable Product

FB – Facebook

SMART – Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic, Time-related

## GLOSSARY

**Displacement.** An unnatural or forced action of oppression that an individual or group of people have no voice or control over.

**Marginalization.** An action of oppression meaning, to push away.

**Alienation.** An action of oppression that causes isolation. Being left out, or estranged.

**Poverty.** A state or feeling of being without. The experience of poverty may be felt socially, economically, emotionally, and other ways.

**Poverello.** A poor person.

**Belonging.** A state of being in which one feels comfortable, accepted, welcomed, and loved.

**Nurturing.** An action defining care for one's health and well-being.

**Third Space.** An in between place, a middle-ground between the spaces of two people. A shared place of meeting. For this, the third space may be considered as a place in nature.

**Ubuntu.** A word derived from an Indigenous dialect in South Africa. This word respects the ideal, "I am because you are," or "I am because we are."

**Wu-wei.** Non-action.



## RESEARCH METHOD

This Project utilized a blended methodology that draws upon bibliographic resources, data derived from stakeholder collaboration, and human-centered design and iteration processes to create a heuristic-based, application-oriented Project.

## ABSTRACT

All people who feel disconnected need equal opportunity for nurturing belonging, healing and community through nature and spiritual formation. Participants of the project ‘nature, journey’ benefitted from finding belonging in community, healing and connection through nature, and spiritual formation. Participants of the program also experienced an increased level of fitness, outdoor education and wilderness skills development. During a time of global Pandemic and increased social-isolation, community and connection are possible, perhaps even essential. The project ‘nature, journey’ offered the opportunity of community for individuals experiencing disconnection. The context for the community engagement of ‘nature, journey,’ begins on the street in the city, and comes together on the trail in nature. Every week, the group of participants journeyed to a new location wherein belonging was nurtured and healing connection was experienced through nature and practices of spiritual formation. The project ‘nature, journey’ was offered over a period of 8 weeks for individuals of the Mustard Seed Street Church community, a street church in Victoria, British Columbia (Canada). The program was extended to those who have experienced disconnection and who have expressed an interest in the possibility of finding belonging in community. Planned, weekly hiking excursions, throughout the first 7 weeks of the program, prepared participants for a concluding, multi-day, adventure on a rugged west coast Vancouver Island trail. Healing and belonging were encouraged in natural environments to draw connection between the wholeness and togetherness of the individual and community, alongside the wonderful example of life revealed through all of creation. The shared experience of healing and belonging was reinforced, as we journeyed together, in the offering of spiritual formation and soul care practices.

## INTRODUCTION

The community of the Mustard Seed Street Church (MSSC) in Victoria, British Columbia, an inner-city mission and member of the denomination, the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada (CBWC), was the ministry setting where a Need/Problem/Opportunity (NPO) was examined and resolved. The MSSC provides a safe place where all people can receive services, share compassion, and experience acceptance and belonging strengthened by faith in Jesus Christ and given inspiration by the Spirit of God.

Services at the MSSC are offered free and include, but are not limited to:

- a market for individuals and families struggling from poverty and food insecurity
- clothing boutique
- food distribution center (sharing food with other NPO/NGO groups throughout the lower island)
- an addiction recovery center (Hope Farm in the Cowichan Valley)
- daily meals for the homeless
- community for the lonely
- professional advocacy
- spiritual care through a motivated, and creative Church congregation

The point of departure, leading the reflections at the Discovery Session, was the NPO statement: Facing Challenges of Community and Cohesion in a Highly Active Ministry Setting.

Attendees consisted of leadership of the MSSC in specific capacity (past or present), offering a broad perspective and generous view on the NPO. The group organically achieved consensus regarding to the focal point of need within the community, the experience of liberation and belonging through community, and spiritual formation.

After having three one-on-one meetings following the Discovery Session, there was an agreement of heart for the community of the MSSC with a nudge of importance centering on call of leadership and the organization's missional integrity. As a result of this research, the NPO statement began its evolution, fostering deeper precision, encouraging care of the mission toward the incessant need of a disconnected community: Nurturing solidarity in community of the displaced, and creating opportunity for integration and belonging through active compassion and spiritual formation.

Following the exploration of the NPO in the discovery phase, an approach developed to implement measures that focus on nurturing belonging in context of the poor and displaced. The root causes of the revised NPO affecting the community of the MSSC were determined to be social-economic poverty, addiction, shame, or, as Richard Rohr puts it in his book, *Everything Belongs*, being "in utter exile."<sup>1</sup> The design workshop was attended by stakeholders who have experience in service and spiritual care with the MSSC community, and guided by innovative and thought-provoking team games.<sup>2</sup>

Three big ideas regarding the NPO emerged during the day-long group workshop with key stakeholders, which was further expanded on by interview meetings with four community

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Rohr, *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2014), 117.

<sup>2</sup> Dave Gray, *Gamestorming: A Playbook for Innovators, Rulebreakers, and Changemakers* (Newton: O'Reilly Media, 2013). Kindle Edition.

members. The individuals interviewed included a staff member, volunteer, homeless person, and an individual in the throes of addiction served by the MSSC. All involved in the design study offered vital perspectives on the NPO context and scope, and an increased understanding of root causes because of their diversity of experiences within the MSSC.

The three big ideas considered valuable for ‘nurture belonging’ in the community at the MSSC were: vulnerability, personalism, and love. The NPO discussion deepened with consideration of the important aspects of ‘nurture belonging.’ Their potential to be achieved in an environment (community/context) where the individual, and communal experience, and reciprocity in relation to belonging can be actively engaged and developed.

Correlating with three big ideas, these benchmarks were considered and reviewed through exercises and conversations in the group workshop and one-on-one interviews. Creating a safe and welcoming environment where individuals of the MSSC community can participate in the experience of belonging followed three benchmarks for success:

1. A willingness toward vulnerability
2. Upholding the ‘dignity of readiness’ for the experience of belonging
3. Interest for opening to a less anxious practice of love for one another

A third space, where all participants could find the same comfort and acceptance, was discussed as being a better place to explore belonging.

Project options were presented in concept or ‘napkin pitches,’ an effective method for addressing the NPO in project design. The first concept detailed a curriculum called ‘Street,’ which proposes summer internships geared to increase understanding of inner-city life, and to expand awareness for the potential to be a contributing influence of healing in an environment that nurtures belonging.

The second pitch, called ‘Furthest Out, Closer In,’ centered on those ‘furthest out’ in the margins of the community, and inviting them ‘closer in’ to learn the art of story-telling (a creative expression deeply rooted in heart and history of the MSSC).

Last, there would be two ‘big dream’ iterations of ‘nurture belonging,’ both intended to uphold the dignity of the individual. The first would be a store-front coffee house called ‘community.’ The second is the development of a property called ‘Beyond the Streets’ for an amplified version of ‘belonging’ through life lived together.

Components for further research to tackle the NPO include: shame, discrimination, systemic and/or structural oppression, addiction, mental health barriers, the creation of innovative environments (third spaces), and the development of imaginative story lines where healing and reconnection is experienced. Two project prototypes for the NPO concentrate on the shared experience of belonging through movement in the outdoors, practices of spiritual formation, and conversations of soul care. These first project iterations, perceived a potential MVP (Minimum Viable Product), were specified by the space where participants of the MSSC would discover community, belonging, and venture together.

The first prototype, called ‘Beyond the Streets,’ invited participants into nature. The second, called ‘In the City,’ centered on a group experience of belonging in an urban context. The implementation and evaluation of these prototypes, which both offer creative community engagement, revealed the desire for new and effective ways to nurture belonging in the MSSC. The first workable project iteration, called ‘nature,’ sought to implement components to nurture belonging through the process of prototyping. The core pieces of the prototypes which would encourage an attitude of ‘nurture belonging,’ included: a group of people from the MSSC being

in nature with some physical activity (movement), spiritual formation/soul care, and eating together.

At the beginning of the Design Phase the NPO statement was, ‘nurture solidarity and fraternity within a community of the displaced and create opportunity for belonging through compassion and spiritual formation.’ It was adjusted after the execution and evaluation phases to ‘all people who feel disconnected need equal opportunity to nurture belonging, healing, and community through nature and spiritual formation.’

Using the SMART method, the benchmarks proposed for MVP ‘nature, journey’ are based on attendance, participation, consistent presence, numbers of participants who complete the program, and continued, respective interest after a participant’s completion of the program.

1. Participation: At least eight people will join the "nature, journey"
2. Attendance: 50% of the participants will finish the program.
3. Outcome/Continuation: 50% of those completing the program will continue to meet in community after the initial "nature, journey" ends.

In addition, qualitative benchmarks will assess spiritual formation, soul care, and connection with nature. These will be assessed through individual listening sessions and some written feedback, to include how each person experienced healing (reconnection) and deeper belonging. Some information will also be gathered through leaders’ observation of conversations during the journey.

The project ‘nature, journey’ spanned an eight-week period between July and August 2021. The participants of the program consist of houseless individuals who were formerly addicted, as well as persons accessing MSSC community services, and frontline staff members. Beginning with an orientation in early July, participants met on Saturdays for a morning rally,

before heading out to hike on a local trail. Every week the hikes increased in difficulty (distance, elevation, and terrain), preparing the group for the concluding hike, a three-day ramble on a challenging west coast Vancouver Island trail, the Juan de Fuca Trail. Transportation, nutrition, hydration, and equipment were provided as participants needed. Time was given on each of our excursion to practices of spiritual formation and conversations of soul care, thereby enhancing our experience of connection and belonging.

A weekly commitment of communication with participants and key stakeholders was essential from the beginning of program preparation all the way through to completion, and in the follow-up phases. This consistent engagement made it convenient to relay important program information, and receive feedback to make necessary adjustments for best delivery, experience, and results. Feedback concentrated on spiritual formation/soul care and practical logistics of each outing. The feedback came in a variety of forms: through group conversation, emailed ideas or concerns, texted questions, and a follow-up questionnaire. Participants of ‘nature, journey’ expressed interest in a ‘next’ iteration of the program in 2022. Planning and preparations are underway for ‘nature, journey’ 2022, an eight-week adventure experience in community with the goal of a three-day hike to the summit of one of Vancouver Island’s highest peaks, Mt. Albert-Edward.

Certain obstacles and challenges arose over the last three years which inhibited progress, encouraging a change of direction or pace. To begin with, the global pandemic caused by COVID 19 created public concern and adherence to new guidelines for personal health evaluation and social gathering practices determined by medical and government officials. This caused a dilemma as we listened closely in order to overcome with best practices for executing ‘nature, journey.’



In the last few years, the MSSC community has faced even greater concern than the global pandemic, with the opioid crisis devastating the inner-city people we serve where their home is on the streets. Every week, our community who struggles with opioid addiction faces the possibility of overdose.

In Spring 2021, I was diagnosed with PTSD and Complex Trauma because of the overdoses I have been present to and had to care for, along with the increased level of aggression and tendency towards violence from the street-entrenched community we serve. While this diagnosis was enlightening and led me on a journey of deeper personal awareness and understanding, I had to talk with the supportive faculty of Portland Seminary regarding direction, pace, and certain agreed detours.

Gaps and shortcomings were present in the first iteration of ‘nature, journey.’ One that stands out is the lack of inclusivity in the assumption of fitness and mobility of the participants. Also, improvement could be established for spiritual formation and soul care. An ever deepening and imaginative vision for engaging new spiritual care and formation practices from other cultures and faith practices will need to be researched to effectively engage with participants.

The assessment of ‘nature, journey’ is ongoing as the focus turns towards the next iteration. A growing awareness of the restorative and healing value of time in nature has been solidified through the sharing of ‘nature, journey.’ An offering of ‘nature’ for individuals who are less mobile, elderly, or injured inspires development of the program into a stationary nature experience. Broadening spiritual formation and soul care will increase interest and inclusivity for a community atmosphere.

‘Nature, journey’ has stretched the vision of viable alternative approaches to the NPO. Using SMART as a set of criteria for feasible, credible new ideas for ‘nature’ exploration, there

are two distinct courses that stand out. The first potential option is in the formation of a community called ‘nature-ch’ that meets in wild places, centering on nature connection and spiritual formation.

The second alternative will be achieved in a more relaxed version of the first iteration, called ‘nature, preamble.’ The idea is to introduce ‘nature’ for all to attend, regardless of age, or physical ability. This program will contain the same attributes of ‘nature, journey’ without the strenuous, goal-oriented activities.

Nature as a place to nurture belonging is the locale for the ‘third space,’ which is a key point learned from ‘nature, journey.’ Adventuring into this ‘third space’ together where we are all guests to explore ‘nurture belonging.’ It belongs to all and is not dependent on the leadership of one, nor the tacit expectation of a human establishment.

There are areas that require further research to deliver the best quality in the next offering of ‘nature.’ The first area could be categorized as ‘nature therapy’ or ‘eco therapy.’ Martin Jordan, author and counselling psychotherapist, acknowledges that nature has become a foreign entity apart from the contemporary human being. He writes that healing and harmony within us and around us can and will be established as a result of “remembering one’s connection to the natural world as essential to ‘coming home.’”<sup>3</sup>

Studying and sharing valuable tenets of personalism and vitalism will enhance the experience of belonging within the community and awaken us to our place together within creation. The hope is to expand spiritual formation and soul care practices while in nature as we include indigenous spirituality, ancient Celtic (Christian) and west coast First Nations cultural

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<sup>3</sup> Martin Jordan, *Nature and Therapy* (London: Routledge Publishing, 2015), 17.

expressions. In order to stimulate interest in certain physical aspects of the forest, participants will be provided with research information of the edible and medicinal plants found in nature on the west coast. Finally, the review of environmental protection and protests will continue with the intention of educating and inviting participants to an educated activism for the protection of nature.

‘Nature, journey’ was launched in the Summer 2021. Following graduation, there are two programs in the planning stages to launch. The first is ‘nature, journey,’ a sequel to the first iteration of Summer 2021, with the final goal of summiting Vancouver Island’s third highest peak, Mt. Albert-Edward. Every week, the hikes are intended to prepare the group for the final three-day adventure, along with new spiritual formation practices and an adapted conversation of soul care themed, ‘the mountain.’ The second program is ‘nature-ch,’ with tentative launch dates set for Spring Equinox (March 20) and Summer Solstice (June 21). The context of ‘nature-ch’ gatherings will call participants into the story of ‘nature,’ deep belonging, and adventure while, the content will be similar to a church service, with an openness to innovative adjustments as the community envisions their evolving expression of interbeing. First public promotions for ‘nature, journey’ Summer 2022 have recently been put forward through the Facebook page, and public promotions of ‘nature-ch’ for Spring Equinox invitation are set for late February.

This research journey represents the culmination of three years of character-building leadership development, commitment to process, reclining into imagination through global chaos, and a belief in the creation’s Conductor to bring hope in the wild places. The adventure of the NPO statement was reflective of the movement through each chapter of the research journey from discovery, to design, to delivery; from organizational leadership, liberation theology,

solidarity with the oppressed, life-restoring spiritual formation practices, belonging in community, and healing in nature.

Because of the global pandemic of the last two years, isolation maintaining distance from others and public spaces was encouraged while this project invited participants to come closer together. The project ‘nature, journey’ safely kindled an intrinsic encounter with deep belonging as we walked together in earthy-green places, a unified stream of vulnerable acceptance between us, and a splash of welcome nurtured by an ever-awakened connection with the One whom we may all find belonging. Participants continue to meet together, unaided by an itinerary, in the life-giving pattern of exploring trails and wild places in nature.

Authentic leadership has lived and died, been restored, and surrendered all. The process toward surrender can be stretching and painful. Awakening into a life that is mindful of ‘letting go’ is ongoing and timeless; it cannot be rushed, taught, or pretended. There is a silence in power dynamics, the noise of charisma is nullified, and the archaic male arrogance for control is liberated of its painful striving in a leadership that has surrendered. The enlightened flow of this kind of leadership presence can be recognized by the saying ‘heshook ish tsawalk’<sup>4</sup> which is a lived understanding of Western Vancouver Island’s Nuu-chah-nulth Peoples that ‘all is one.’ The vulnerability explicit with surrendered leadership demonstrates ‘belonging’ not only as an initiator (one nurturing), but also as a recipient (one being nurtured).

My vocational aspiration is to serve with people in nature, or as First Nations people refer to life that is lived in conscious care and awareness with creation, to be ‘in a good way.’ Also, I would like to continue exploring a deep sense of belonging, one that has been referred to by the

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<sup>4</sup> Richard E. Atleo, *Tsawalk: a Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 117.

late Buddhist monk and peace activist, Thich Nhat Hahn as ‘interbeing,’ which resonates as the presence of Christ who ‘is all, and is in all.’<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the dreams for the future of ‘nature’ may be effectively explored in two prototypes that were not feasible during this project. The first aspect of the dream ‘nature, community’ is an inner-city storefront sandwich shop and coffee house. ‘Community’ will be a place for family and friends to serve together and to celebrate life together. The storefront will be connected to the second aspect of ‘nature, community,’ which involves a portion of land outside of the city. It is a self-sustaining off-the-grid farmable plot where people can work, create home, find healing, rest, and belonging.

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<sup>5</sup> 1 Colossians 3:11 (New International Version).

## PROJECT

NPO STATEMENT: All people who feel disconnected need equal opportunity to nurture belonging, healing, and community through nature and spiritual formation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project ‘nature, journey’ was offered for 8 weeks to individuals of the Mustard Seed Street Church community (MSSC), a street church in Victoria, B.C., who were interested in finding belonging in a community. Planned, weekly hiking excursions prepared us for a final multi-day, adventure on a rugged west coast Vancouver Island trail. Healing and belonging were encouraged in natural environments to draw connection between the wholeness and togetherness of the individual and community, alongside the wonderful example of life revealed through all of creation. The shared experience of healing and belonging was reinforced, as we journeyed together, offering spiritual formation and soul care practices.

PROJECT SCOPE: Each week, our adventures began at a set rally point, the MSSC. We returned to the rally point, from our hike, no longer than 8 hours following our departure. Transportation was shared, before a 12-seat passenger van was offered for use midway through the program. Each week, the hike was discussed for its distance and difficulty. Waiver forms (including COVID 19 self-evaluation) were signed by participants each week. Nutrition, hydration, and equipment needs were provided for weekly. The conclusion of the ‘nature, journey’ program was a three-day hike and camp on the Juan de Fuca Trail. Leaders were knowledgeable of the trails of Southern Vancouver Island and were First Aid and/or Wilderness First Aid certified.

Spiritual formation practises of ‘nature, journey’ centered on formative, ancient Judeo-Christian disciplines. Every week a handout was offered, leading the group into an individual practise that could be reflected upon and practiced following the excursion. The Tree of Life<sup>6</sup> was offered as a metaphor leading our weekly, trailside Soul Care discussion. Also on the handout, our Soul Care conversations and meditations drew us deeper into our lives as we shared and honoured individual stories of personal foundation, life blessing, traumatic memory, and hopeful restoration. Every step along the way of ‘nature, journey’ gave participants opportunity to nurture belonging in community, experience healing within, connection with nature, and relationship with Creator. Our space together was safe. The foundation and values of the ‘nature, journey’ group conversation and story-telling circles followed the definition, care, and modelling exemplified through Parker Palmer’s Circles of Trust approach<sup>7</sup>. The spiritual formation practices and soul care direction required weekly preparation and expertise for group leadership and conversation facilitation.

BENCHMARKS: The benchmarks of ‘nature, journey’ emerge from the NPO Statement. At the beginning of the program, ten to twelve participants will be present for orientation and first adventure. It is hoped that six to eight participants will complete the program and that four to eight participants will continue to gather following program completion. The quality of the program’s ‘nurture belonging’ component will be demonstrated through consistent involvement of participants. The success of the ‘spiritual formation and soul care’ connection will be

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<sup>6</sup> “Trauma Healing and Empowerment Workshops,” Tree of Life, last modified, December 4, 2021, <http://www.treeoflifezimbabwe.org/node/65>.

<sup>7</sup> Parker J. Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward and Undivided Life* (San Francisco, Ca.: Josey-Bass, 2004), 71.

measured by the participant's engagement in weekly group exercises. Finally, the experience of healing through nature will be confirmed by the participant's expressed encounter of a deeper connection with the environment. All documentation of multimedia communication will be kept in order for ongoing program evaluation and benchmark reflection.



## PRESENTATION/DOCUMENTATION OF PROJECT

### Orientation

Location: The Mustard Seed Street Church

Date: Thursday, July 1, 2021

Time: 2 pm

### Original Informational Booklet



Figure 2. *Left*, Orientation Booklet title page; *right*, table of contents.

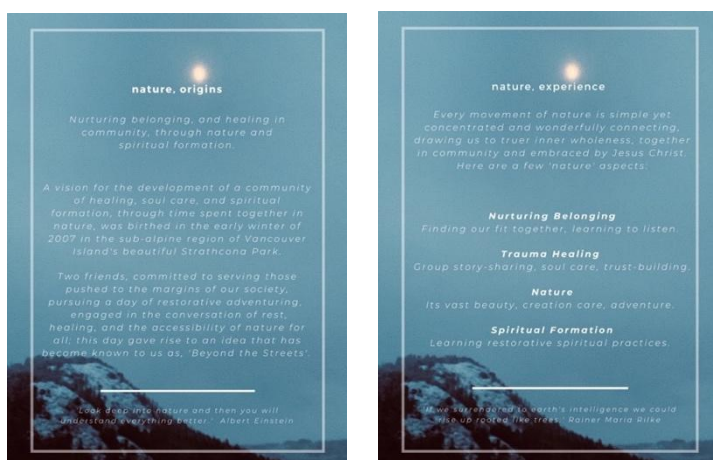


Figure 3. *Left*, nature origins; *right*, nature experience.

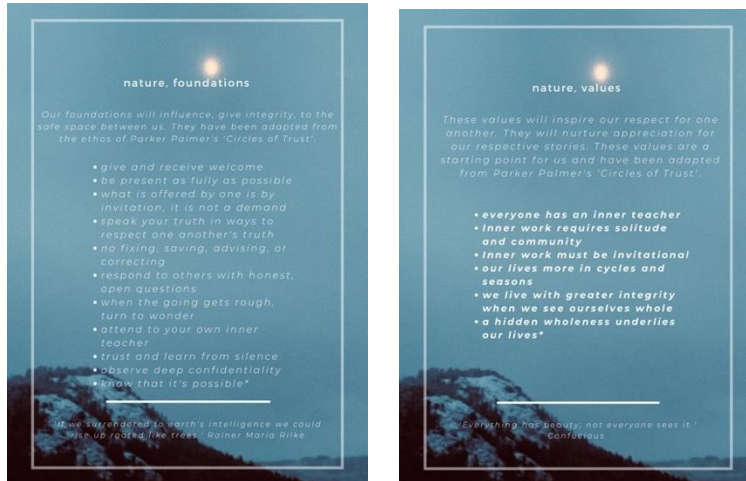


Figure 4. *Left*, nature foundations; *right*, nature values.

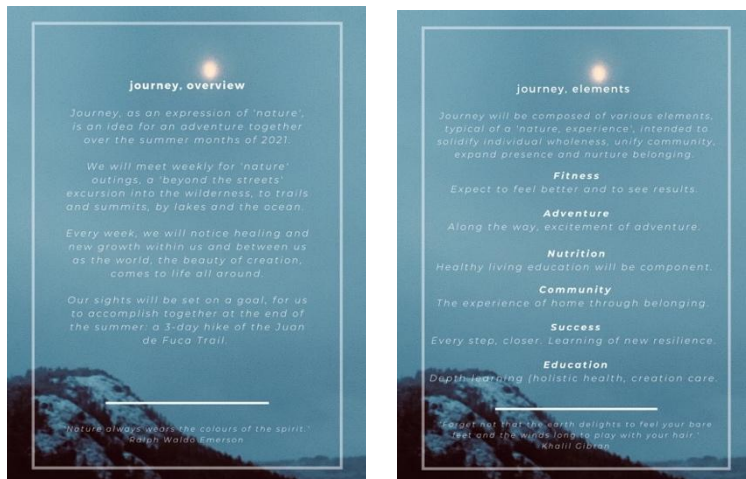


Figure 5. *Left*, journey overview; *right*, journey elements.

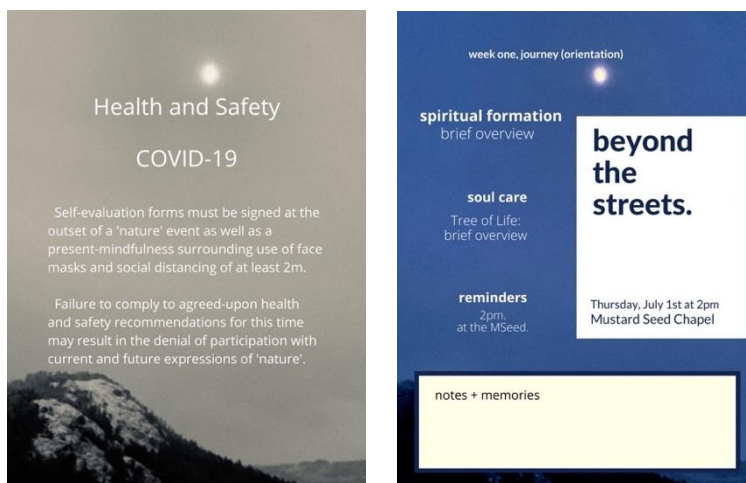


Figure 6. *Left*, Health and Safety; *right*, Week One, journey (orientation).

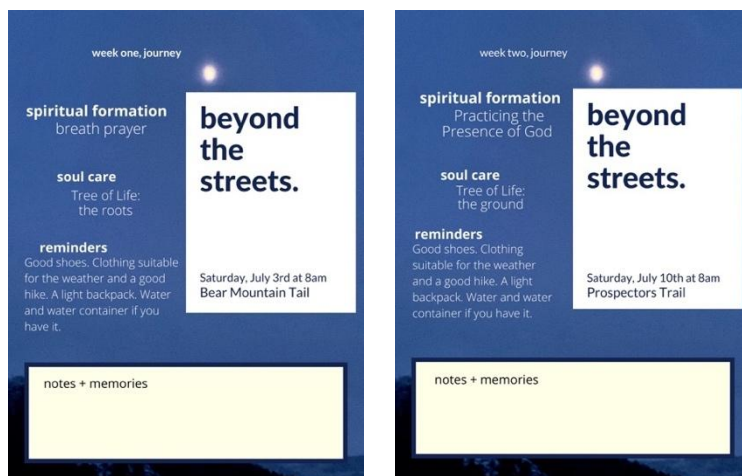


Figure 7. *Left*, Week One journey; *right*, Week Two journey.

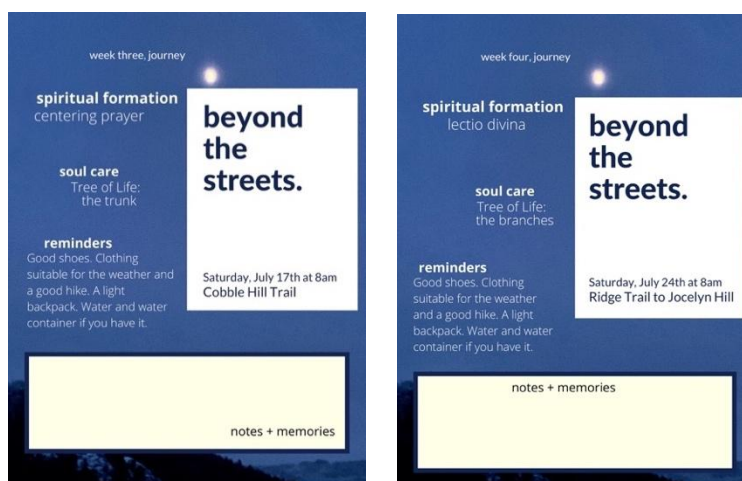


Figure 8. *Left*, Week Three journey; *right*, Week Four journey.

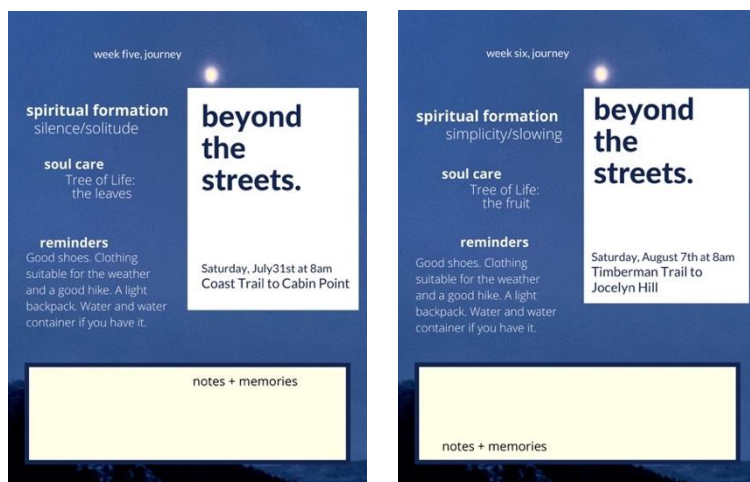


Figure 9. *Left*, Week Six journey; *right*, Week Seven journey.

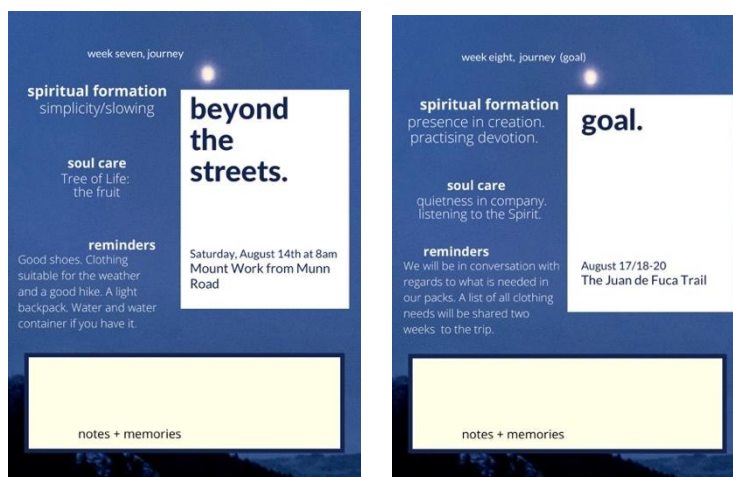


Figure 10. *Left*, Week Seven journey; *right*, Week Eight journey.

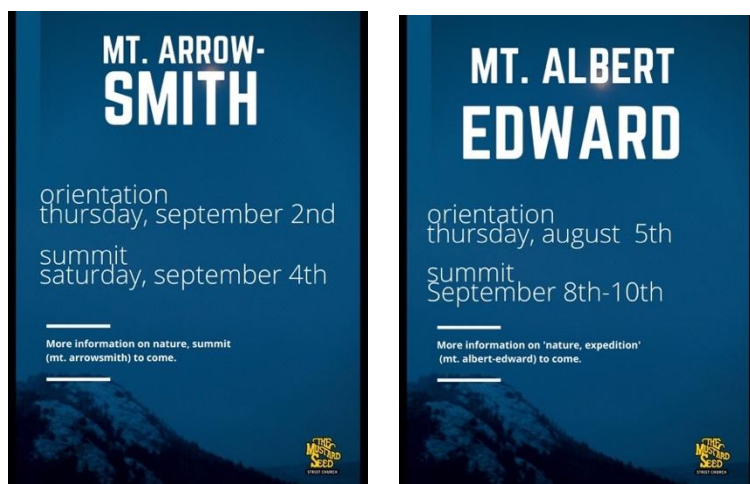


Figure 11. *Left*, Mt. Arrowsmith (summit); *right*, Mount Albert-Edward (expedition).

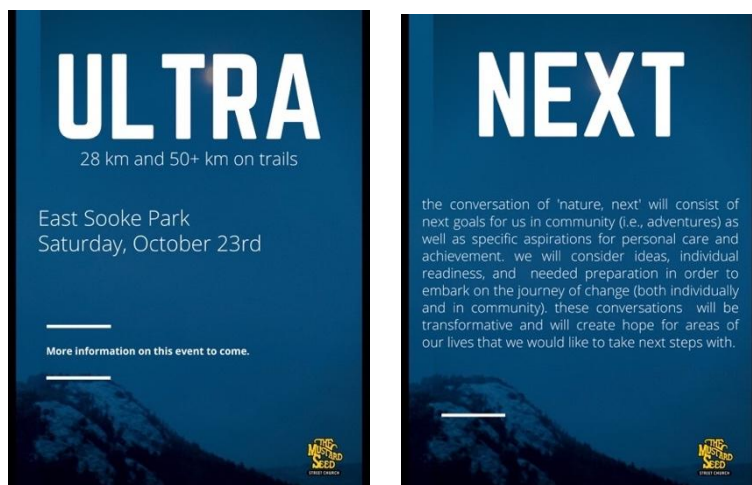


Figure 12. *Left*, Ultra; *right*, Next.

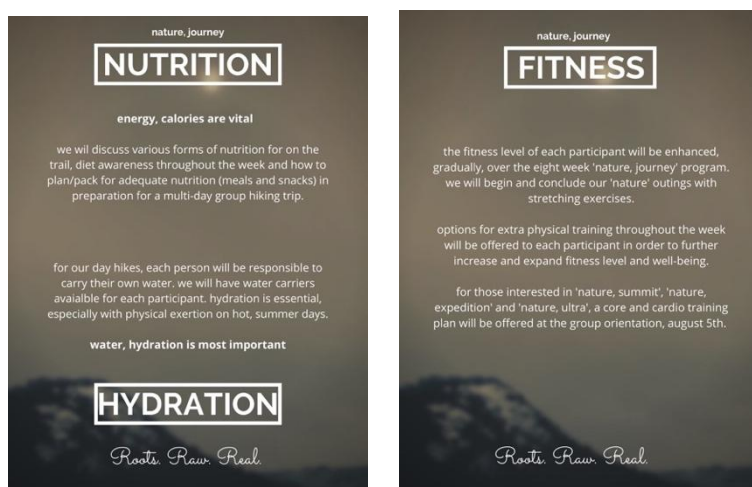


Figure 13. *Left*, Nutrition and Hydration; *right*, Fitness.



nature. journey

## EQUIPMENT

**summit beyond the streets**

- trail, hiking or running shoes
- shorts, light pants
- small, light backpack
- t-shirt (s-l if needed)
- light windbreaker (if needed)
- light, ankle or calf socks
- water carrying equipment
- simple first aid material
- nutrition (snacks and lunch)

**journey expedition**

- equipment and materials lists to come.

*Roots. Raw. Real.*

nature. journey

## COVID-19 WAIVER

We thank you for wanting to join with us as a participant in this 'nature' event: \_\_\_\_\_ through The Mustard Seed Street Church during this unprecedented pandemic. Due to the government guidelines over social gathering sizes, combined with the current research on how the virus is transmitted, we continue to restrict our service appropriately and access to our buildings.

With regards to this 'nature' event/activity, each participant self-evaluate for wellness and symptoms prior to arrival. We ask that social distancing be adhered to, mask wearing when indoors, mask wearing outdoors when in close vicinity with another person, and diligent hand washing (especially before and after eating).

By signing this form you are stating that you understand, agree, and declare that as you participate in this 'nature' event/activity with the Mustard Seed Street Church during the COVID-19 pandemic that you are and will be solely responsible for your own health and safety during your time of participation with us.

Signature of Participant _____	Date _____
Signature of Staff _____	Date _____

*Roots. Raw. Real.*

Figure 14. *Left*; Equipment; *right*, COVID 19 Waiver.

nature. journey

## PROGRAM WAIVER

Event Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Event Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

**Allergies/Medical:**  
Mustard Seed Street Church is not responsible for health or well-being of participants as a result of the information provided.

In case of Emergency we will notify your (relative, friend or neighbor)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Assumption of Risk/Conditions:**  
 I recognize there may be some element of risk of accidental injury, property loss or damage throughout the day event of all nature outings through the Mustard Seed Street Church. Also, with regards to lead-in, program involvement and group participation, I understand and will not hold the Mustard Seed Street Church, or staff, or representative volunteers liable given that there may be some psychological risk involved. I understand alcohol and non-prescribed drugs are strictly prohibited and must adhere to the Mustard Seed Street Church Code of Conduct on any day trip. I understand that if I am found to have broken items listed in the Mustard Seed Street Church Code of Conduct, I may be excluded from further participation in nature outings and may not be eligible for future involvement, pending review. I, the undersigned participant, on behalf of myself, my heirs, legatees and assigns, agree to indemnify and hold harmless the The Mustard Seed Street Church or any of their representative employees, or volunteers for my health, safety, and injury or property loss or damage arising out of or resulting from this signature.

Signature of Participant _____	Date _____
Signature of Staff _____	Date _____

*Roots. Raw. Real.*

nature. journey

## STATEMENTS OF AGREEMENT

I understand that 'nature, journey' is an 8-week program.

I agree, with my committed involvement, to be present for the 'nature' outings every Saturday from July 3rd to August 14th.

I understand that there will be times of 'open' sharing and storytelling and that these moments of personal, life-story sharing in community will be kept in confidence.

I understand that Christian practices of spiritual formation will be offered. I agree to be open to the unique expression of spirituality, without judgement and with appreciation, of each person.

I understand that 'nature, journey' has been designed in view of the successful completion of the goal, to hike the Juan de Fuca trail (47kms, from Botanical Beach to China Beach on the southwest coast of Vancouver Island).

I agree that the goal to hike the Juan de Fuca trail, as a group, from August 17/18 to August 20, will require my devoted commitment to the entirety of 'nature, journey' as it has been presented.

Signature of Participant _____	Date _____
Signature of Leader _____	Date _____

*Roots. Raw. Real.*

Figure 15. *Left*, Program Waiver; *right*, Statements of Agreement.

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Figure 16. Bibliography.

**Week One: Beyond the Streets** (complete documentation)

Location: Skirt Mountain, BC

Date: Saturday, July 3, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

**Leading Infographic**

Figure 17. Week One, Skirt Mountain, July 3, 2021.

**Email Communication**

(All communication for the Saturday ‘Beyond the Streets’ adventure was offered on Thursday evening at the orientation.)

**FB Group:** ‘nature, journey’

**Graphic**



Figure 18. Week One, Skirt Mountain hike. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

**Content** (as it was written, not presented, on the FB page):

Journey, as an expression of 'nature', is an idea for an adventure together over the summer months of 2021.

We will meet weekly for 'nature' outings, a 'beyond the streets' excursion into the wilderness, to trails and summits, by lakes and the ocean.

Every week, we will notice healing and new growth within us and between us as the world, the beauty of creation, comes to life all around.

Our sights will be set on a goal, for us to accomplish together at the end of the summer: a 3-day hike of the Juan de Fuca Trail.

'Nature always wears the colours of the spirit.'

Ralph Waldo Emerson



## Rally Map

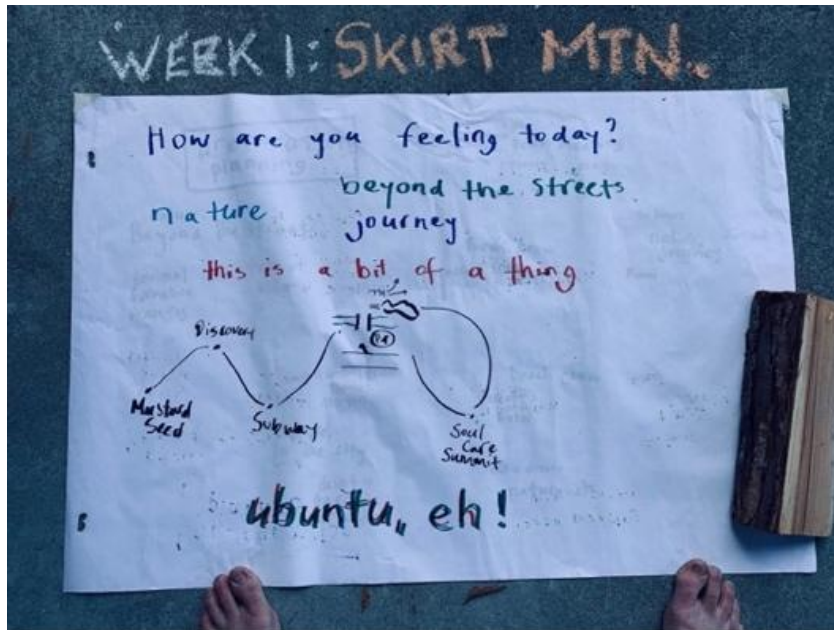


Figure 19. Week One, Skirt Mountain rally map.

**Week One Handouts** (formatting, font and style adjusted from original)

Spiritual Formation Handout

**SPIRITUAL FORMATION** (learning practices)

Sometimes, I forget that I'm breathing. How about you? Have you ever thought that the air we are breathing in, the particles of oxygen we are respiring, may have circulated through the first organisms on the planet, Socrates, Jesus, and Joan of Arc, etc.? Another neat thought about our breath that in the Jewish tradition it was regarded as the utterance of the name of God, YHWH; the name of God was never spoken because it was considered by its essence, as breath. Imagine, everything breathing, every single breath, uttering the name of the Creator.

Scripture reflection: Acts 17:28 (Slowly read. Be in the presence of God) It is through him that we live and function and have our identity; just as your own poets have said, 'Our lineage comes from him.' Connect this with breath. your breath and ours and the breath all of creation. What comes to mind?

Meditation: choose a word or phrase as you breathe in and a continuation/or response to the word or phrase on your in-breath, as you breathe out. For example: "Creator...thank you for creating me." Or, "I need Your help...Spirit of Love." Or, "Christ in me...Christ in all things".

Listen.

God is with you.

Soul Care Handout

**SOUL CARE** (remembering home)

The Tree as a metaphor of Life. Remember our 'nature' foundations and values.

In consideration on how our history shapes who we are today our reflection centers on what is under the soil, our ROOTS.

1. What roots do you in your life? How important are these?
2. Does your past influence who you are today?
3. Do you have any favorite memories?
4. Has your perception of your roots changed over time?
5. Where were you born? Where did you go to school?
6. Who was an influence for strength and character for you in the past?
7. What aspects of your heritage stand out as sources for strong rooting in your life?

‘Deep roots are not reached by the frost.’ J.R.R. Tolkien

### **Week One Review** (informal Journal Recapitulation, as entered)

Distance: 5.6 km

Elevation: 300 m

### **Rally Point**

On Saturday morning at 8am, we met together for our first outing. I think everyone was nervous for ‘a first’ coming together. Everyone who had been there for the orientation meeting was there on Saturday morning. Two participants, missed it; however, two others were both

there. Also, one other participant did not show up. My heart leaned toward this participant, on this day. Hoping that he is alright.

Thankful to have people prepared to help with transportation. My mother, a friend and a participant were all able to help with transportation.

Unfortunately, despite two months' notice, the Mustard Seed and other sources, could not come through with a vehicle. Somehow, things that are meant to be, find a way. I understand that there are two donors willing to put in \$5000 each for a vehicle in an emergency.

Upon entry, participants were invited to sit at a table to sign waiver forms and a letter of agreement. Also, we were sure to create a contact list to maintain connection throughout the week. We had bag lunches with snacks and drinks ready for each participant.

At 830am, we sat together in a circle, and I painted the 'picture of the day' on the wall in the Chapel area at the Mustard Seed Street Church. This is an 'overview' time, mapping out our movements (each significant 'stop point'), the content and simple reasoning of our movements. Also, we look at the big picture, the end-goal of 'nature, journey' and the Juan de Fuca Trail.

Before we made our way to the cars, we had a cheer. This is sure to become one of our group-defining things, '1-2-3' (aloud by one of the participants) and the group, with hands in the middle (touching), 'ubuntu!'.

### **On the Road**

I am hoping that in the vehicles, along the way each week, that these times can encourage community-building and our sense of belonging as a part of the group. Here is the hope for sweet chemistry and for friendships to be made as we journey together.

Our first stop was Discovery Coffee. We had some time to chat and wait for our drinks to be made. This is always a treat; this coffee stop is a tradition of ‘beyond the streets.’ This did take a little bit of time, but that’s ok. We are trying to encourage ‘slowing’ and patience in the journey, as well. So many little pieces that ‘the journey’ can open our hearts and minds to; that our experience together be as wonderful, calm, and easy as possible. If struggle arises, there are ways of facing it, acknowledging it with wonder and caring-slowful consideration. Once we had our drinks, we were (basically) on our way.

Next stop took a little longer. Subway, and 10 subs for the group. The Sub-sandwich maker was talented and took his ‘slowful’ time with each sub; impressive. A few people went ahead to the trail area in Goldstream Park, just outside of Victoria, off the island highway.

It took so long that we realized we would have to figure out another way for sandwich in the weeks to come.

## **Trail**

Our meeting point, after we had parked our cars, would be the bridge over Goldstream. From there, we walked to the ‘Bridge Trail’ loop for a time to connect, stretch and prepare our hearts for the trail and the Presence. The situation of ‘Bridge Trail’ is amid protected old growth Cedar and Fir trees, beautiful. Following the light stretch, we started to the trailhead. Those participating: there were ten of us (names not included).

We stopped to look at the map of the route we would be taking. Skirt Mountain, and its trail, are not on the map. So, this called for trust with the group. The first movement was a 5-6 storey staircase, that would be stretching for each person, right from ‘go’. I advised that we take

it slow. (Also, it was iterated that if at any point in time anyone feels it necessary to stop, or to turn back, that is totally alright. We will find a way, together).

The staircase was very difficult, everyone was breathing heavily (which is normal). I noticed that one of the participants was having a particularly difficult time. He stopped at the top of the staircase to sit and take a break. Another participant was there with him. It was time, he shared, to turn back. He thought that he could do it, but realized following the stair climb, that he wasn't quite ready. While the group carried on to the next checkpoint/trailhead/map I walked with the participant down the steep staircase, back to the trail head.

I would catch up with the group afterwards. On the way, I was present with the participant, enough to assess his health (in case there was an emergency) and to identify the potential for another iteration of 'nature', one accessible to those who are elderly and challenged, in ways, with mobility. We planned to talk later in the week about ideas for this. He seemed encouraged. We left on very good terms; he seemed healthy and ready for some rest. I ran back up to meet with the group.

As I ran to catch up, two others met me on the trail. They ran back to be sure that I was ok. (I love this kind of care and group-awareness 'already'). We ran together and caught up with the group for the next leg of the trial from the checkpoint where they were. It was such a blessing to see different people leading the group on the trail through the day. Everyone had a chance in the lead. There were some who had to go slower, and that's totally ok. No one was left alone. The conversations along the trail were wonderful, as well. Everyone had some time to connect with others. We all had times of quietness while being together, too. All nourishing, community engagement.

The next leg was quite steep, up switch back trails and some scrambling in sections (all fours needed). We stopped along the way, after certain ‘climbs’, to reconnect before carrying on. At one point, we stopped to listen closely to the sounds of ‘nature’. All of us were quiet, it became a bit of a ‘quiet contest’. One participant was the first to say something (which was quite funny for all of us there). It was a beautiful hike. Finally, we arrived at the summit of the hike and decided to stop for a break.

Handouts for ‘soul care’ and ‘spiritual formation’ were passed around. Thankful that eventually, after a brief introduction to talk about our ‘foundations’ and ‘values’, the group took the lead on the time of ‘soul care’. Today’s focus on the Tree of Life, ‘the Roots’. Not everyone shared, but those who were comfortable did. About 5 people shared of the roots in their lives, and the significance of their roots. Each one received a round of appreciation, story-offerings were all welcome and received with open hearts and care. We will become ‘less strangers’ to one another through this time, step-by-step.

The hike down was easier. We only had one ‘stop point’ to enjoy a different kind of caterpillar than we had seen before. Beautiful, lighter walk down through trees and by streams. The down slopes can be just as challenging, not so much on cardio-system, but on the leg and core muscles. Some people had trekking poles, and we had extra just in case others could find them useful for balance, etc.

We met at the Bridge Trail, toward the trailhead, and found a nice, open place amidst the trees to have lunch. It was a beautiful situation. We were all very relaxed; comfortable for conversation and silence it seemed. We had completed the first hike. After lunch, we shared in a practice of Spiritual Formation, ‘Breath Prayer’. We did not enter this time as naturally as we

had ‘Soul Care’. Finally, the right moment presented itself and we focused in on our breathing. There was quietness.

We met on the bridge over the river before finding the cars for the return to the Mustard Seed.

### **Spiritual Formation/Soul Care**

Soul Care: this portion seemed to be easy-flowing and the situation (context) was a space in which some people felt vulnerable enough to be open about their lives. ‘Roots’ is such a great place to start in consideration of the Tree of Life and getting to know one another.

Spiritual Formation: ‘Breath Prayer’ is a wonderful subject to consider in the middle of the forest, where breathing can be deepest, clearest, and most fulsome. Finding the right time, not space, is the challenge for Spiritual Formation, as this has to do with a slight bit more teaching, leading, caring. At the time I was about to start leading it, another conversation surfaced, that I did not want to ‘break’ or cut into. So, I waited, was patient for a quiet, better moment to open the practise. I sensed that it was only somewhat well-received. I think people were tired by this point, and ready to move on. I’m wondering if there could be a better time to open the practise. Perhaps at the pre-hike ‘stretch’ circle?

### **Closing**

We met on the Bridge to close our time together. While there may be some connection at the Mustard Seed upon return, this seemed like the right time. A few of the participants had to go



to the washroom, so while waiting at the Bridge to say goodbye, I led the group in an old ‘repeat after me’ with ‘actions’ camp song. It was a lot of fun; a pleasant surprise for those there. By the end of the song, all had returned, so we gave it one more big cheer, ‘ubuntu’, before jumping in the cars and heading back.

### **Adjustments?**

I am noticing that it is life-giving for a few of the participants to be involved in leading the group. It is a blessing to hear their feedback with regards to potential changes that could make the day flow with a sweeter smoothness.

- Sandwich ordering.
- The Coffee Stop.
- Timing of Spiritual Formation.
- Pace for the group.

### **Photos**



Figure 20. *Left*, hiking towards Mt. Finlayson; *right*, giant Douglas Fir trees.



Figure 21. *Left*, the climb up Skirt Mountain; *right*, a beautiful river bed.

[Note: weeks two through eight are not included in Final Project Milestone presentation/documentation. Content for these weeks may be reviewed in Appendix V.]

## **Week Two: Beyond the Streets**

Location: Prospectors Trail, BC

Date: Saturday, July 10, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

### **Leading Graphic**

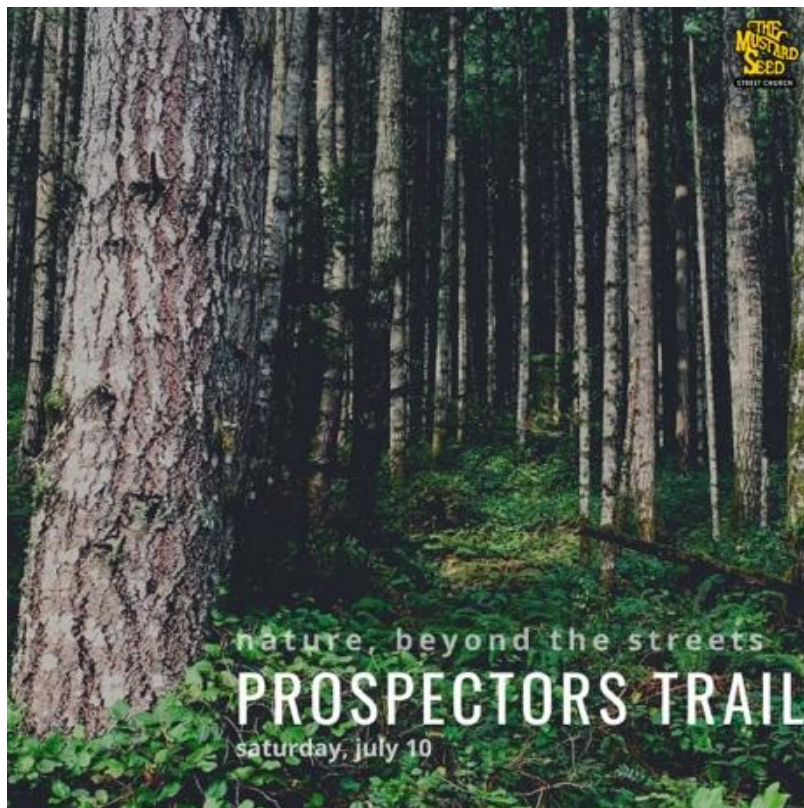


Figure 22. Week Two, Prospectors Trail, July 10, 2021



### **Week Three: Beyond the Streets**

Location: Cobble Hill, BC

Date: Saturday, July 17, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

### **Leading Graphic**

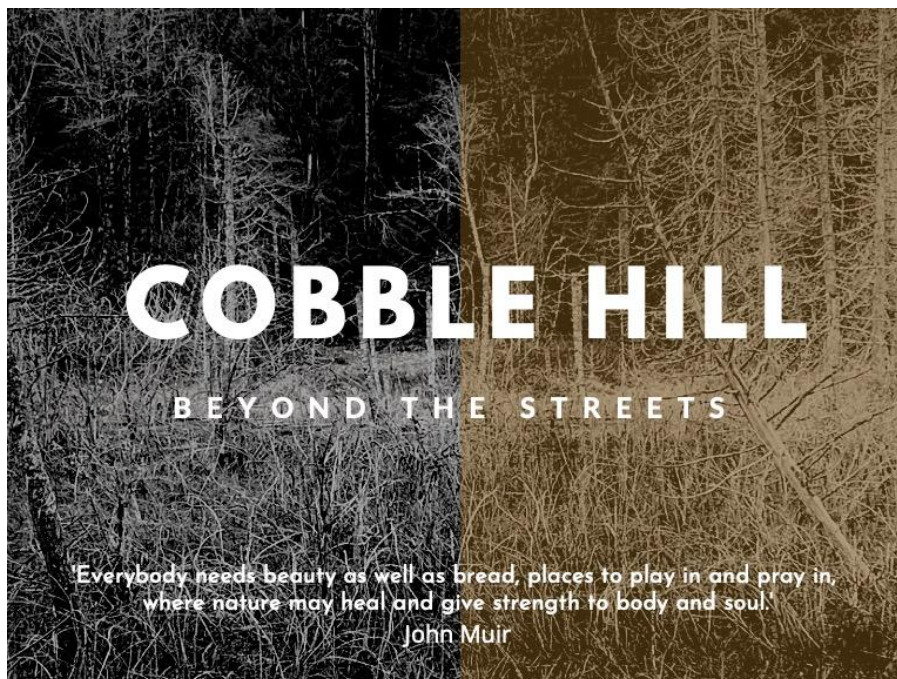


Figure 23. Week Three, Cobble Hill, July 17, 2021.

## Week Four: Beyond the Streets

Location: The Ridge Trail, BC

Date: Saturday, July 24, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

### Leading Graphic



Figure 24. Week Four, the Ridge Trail, July 24, 2021.

## **Week Five: Scavenger Hunt**

Location: Mt. Tolmie, BC and Thetis Lake, BC

Date: Saturday, July 31, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

### **Leading Graphic**

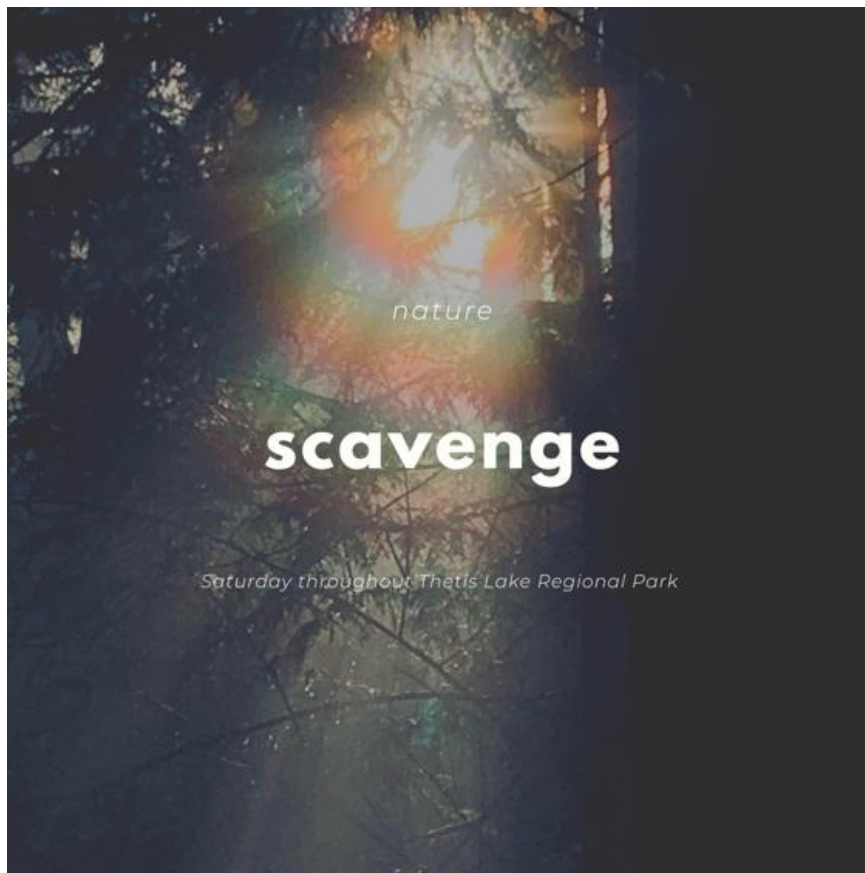


Figure 25. Week Five, Scavenger Hunt (Thetis Lake Park), July 31, 2021.

**Week Six: Beyond the Streets**

Location: East Sooke Park, BC

Date: Saturday, August 7, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

**Leading Graphic**

Figure 26. Week Six, Coast Trail, August 7, 2021.

## **Week Seven: Beyond the Streets**

Location: Timberman Trail, BC

Date: Saturday, August 14, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

### **Leading Graphic**

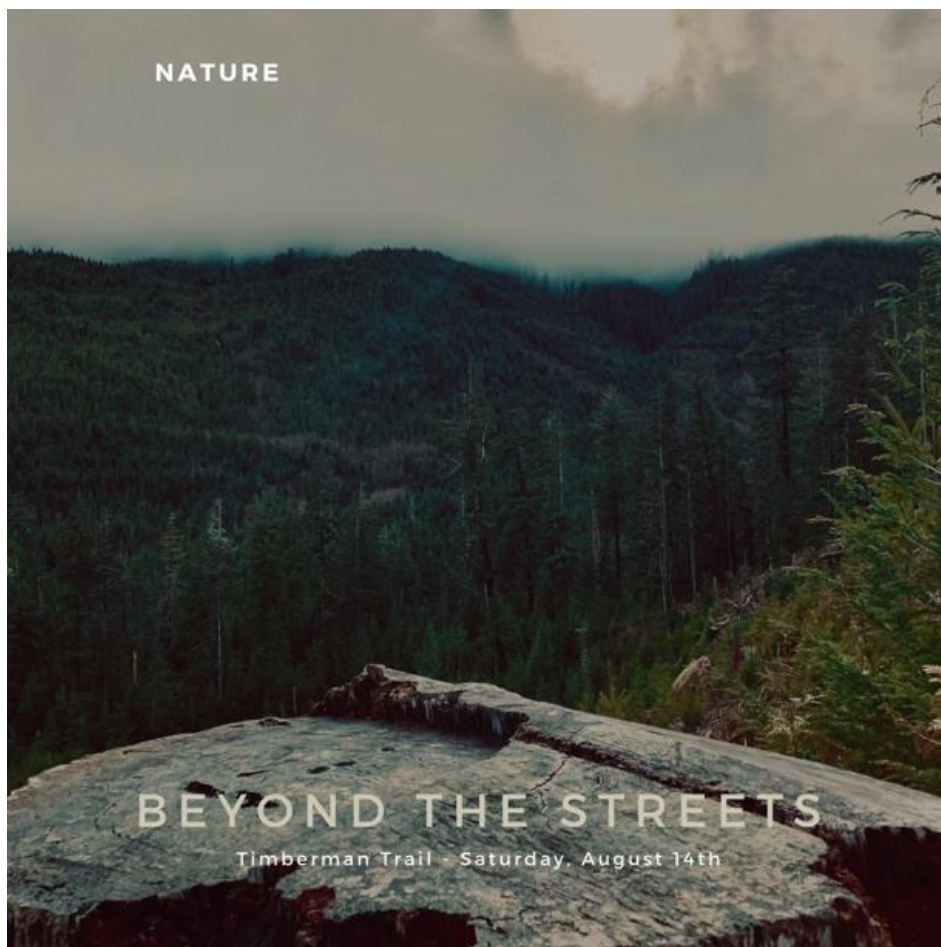


Figure 27. Week Seven, Timberman Trail, August 14, 2021.



**Week 7: Taper**

Location: Mt. Work, BC

Date: Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Time: 4 pm to 8 pm

**Leading Graphic**

Figure 28. Week Seven (Taper), Mount Work, August 17, 2021.

## Week Eight: Journey

Location: The Juan de Fuca Trail, BC

Date: Saturday, August 20, 2021 to Monday, August 23, 2021

### Leading Graphic

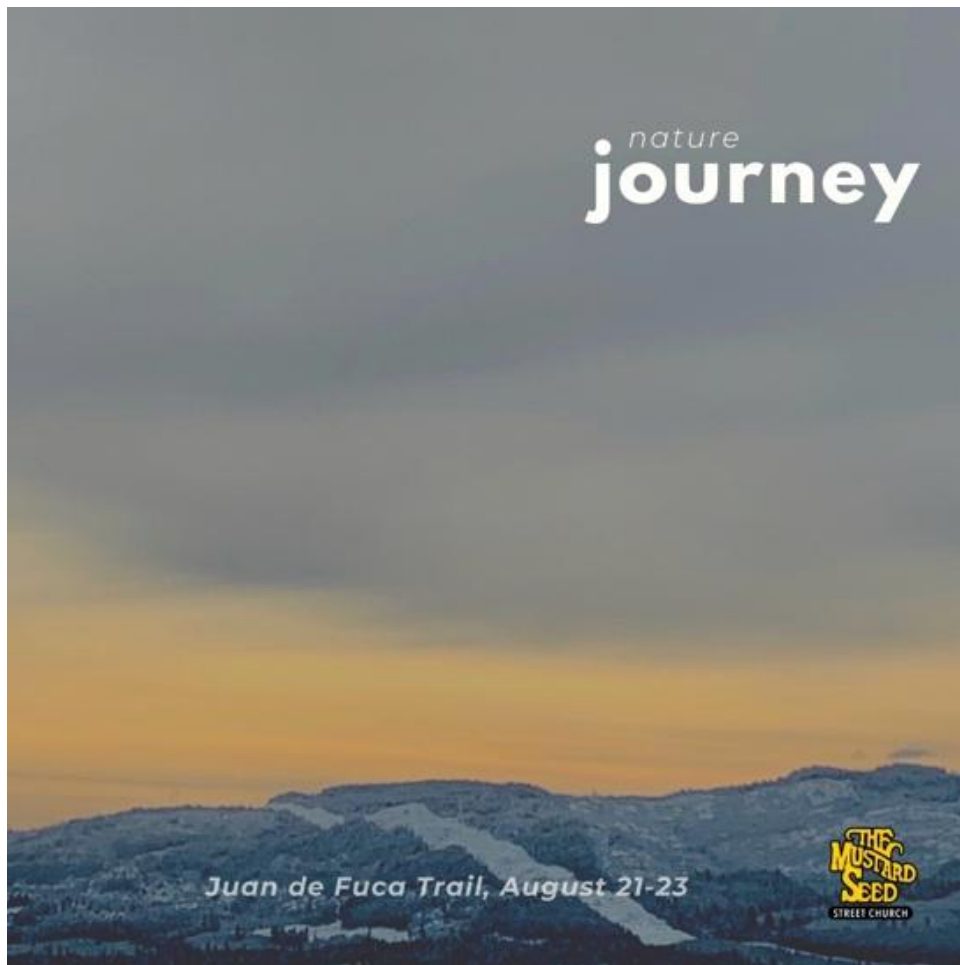


Figure 29. Week Eight, Juan de Fuca Trail, August 20 to 23, 2021.

## ASSESSMENT

The assessment of the Critical Success Indicators (CSI) of the project ‘nature, journey’ occurred weekly, and where appropriate, on the basis of necessary adjustments to improve the quality of the program, the integrity of the group and the individual’s experience. The quantitative CSI focused on number of participants and their experience through the program. A qualitative CSI centered on the belonging felt by participants through the program. Another qualitative CSI measured the deep involvement and curiosity in spiritual formation and soul care practices.

The experience of belonging and the individual interest in the group-related practices and conversations surrounding spiritual formation and soul care could have had an impact on the numbers of participants throughout the delivery of the project. An unpredictable limitation on the numbers of participants during the eight-week project ‘nature, journey’ was physical injury. Project assessment was compiled and evaluated through a dedicated weekly journaling recapitulation to focus closely on the story of the project’s movement. Also, the assessment broadened to include participants in the growth process of the project through weekly emails, face-to-face meetings, and Facebook group postings (open for commenting and personal story telling).

With precision, the map of the eight-week project and its components was shared with potential participants. It was deemed that the maximum number of participants for the first iteration of ‘nature, journey’ was ten to twelve, and the optimal number of participants was six to ten. These numbers were based on available resources for program operation, best offering of project content, and potential for group connection. The eight participants who decided to attend

the orientation meeting was indicative of the initial interest and curiosity of the ‘nature, journey’ project. The orientation meeting attendants were either invited individuals to the project, had seen a poster, heard an announcement or shown an interest in learning more.

The number of participants involved in the program fluctuated from the first outing to the last. Each of the individuals who attended orientation meeting, participated in the first two weeks of the program. The consistency of the participants adjusted slightly in weeks three and four; two participants were injured on the trail, and two others took their place, having just learned of the program that week. Assessment of risks and safety and follow-up with those injured participants became focus over the following weeks. The participants who had to discontinue their involvement with ‘nature, journey’ were discouraged because they had enjoyed being a part of the group.

By the fifth week an optional scavenger hunt was introduced as participants were beginning to physically tire due to the increased distance and difficulty of the hikes. Only two participants attended this activity. There were only slight shifts in participation in weeks six and seven, with seven to nine individuals coming on each outing. Leading up to our final hike, a three-day adventure on the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail, an optional tapering hike was offered that four attended. The culmination of our journey, a multi-day hike on the northwestern half of the Juan de Fuca Trail was completed by six participants.

Developing an environment of belonging was a positive factor to the project ‘nature, journey.’ Each participant contributed to acceptance, and each experienced (and expressed) a deep sense of belonging during the eight-week program. This sentiment was shared and articulated clearly by participants who completed the follow-up questionnaire. A few of the various project pieces that contributed to ‘belonging’ was team cheers, group discussions, eating

lunch together, weekly rally points, mid-week communication, stretching time, and singing fun songs. The time in nature allowed participants to reconnect with the Creator and find belonging in creation as creation.

These moments of belonging may have been captured in the following ways:

- as silence in the presence of giant trees
- the beauty of a mountain
- the wonder of colours, or
- within stillness found through a spiritual formation practise.

The trail was challenging at times, but there were times when participants exhibited belonging, care for one another, encouraging each other on, or waiting patiently for one another when a break was needed.

Natural, non-human, and wild spaces, on their own, can offer a ‘place’ for an individual to experience reconnection, healing, and wholeness. The project ‘nature, journey’ provided healing through belonging with one another, nature, God (through spiritual formation practices) and with oneself through reflections of soul care. Handouts were distributed at the beginning (rally point) of each week’s outing to guide this movement. The respective impact of the spiritual formation and soul care engagement was assessed through weekly follow-up conversations, and finally, through feedback from project questionnaires.

Key stakeholders involved in and/or supporting ‘nature, journey’ were instrumental in project feedback, from the vision process to the final assessments and revisions of the program in preparation for the best, next iterations of ‘nature.’ Feedback from participants will consist of open conversation and group assessments throughout the program reflecting on the benchmark components of the project, as well as general feedback on the practical and operational aspects of

‘nature, journey.’ Two months after ‘nature, journey,’ a one-page survey/questionnaire was offered to participants.

The ‘nature, journey’ program created a community that continues to meet. Every week the group communicates online, making decisions on different locations for weekend hikes. At the start of the program, there was a houseless participant who has since found more secure living accommodations and has even started a business. Because of the new business, he has been able to offer employment to two of his friends. Those two friends, along with others, have also joined the hiking group since the program ended in late August.

It has been a delight to observe the ‘nature, journey’ community continue to meet and plan time in nature together. I have had the opportunity to join their expanding group over the last couple of months. On the trail, we have had some time to reflect on the questionnaire regarding the program offered in the Summer of 2021 and to imagine what the next adventure could be.

## PROJECT LAUNCH PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

This is a template for the Project Launch Plan for the fulfillment of the Doctor of Ministry/Doctor of Leadership course DMIN/DLGP 951. This template is formatted to the specifications for the assignment and may be used in several ways. You may download and write directly into the template, use it to copy and paste formatting styles into an already-written essay, or use it as a guide for your formatting.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

All people who feel disconnected need equal opportunity to nurture belonging, healing, and community through nature and spiritual formation. The project ‘nature, journey’ will be offered over eight weeks for individuals of the Mustard Seed Street Church (MSSC) community. Healing and belonging are cultivated in the natural environments to establish connection between the wholeness and togetherness of the individual and the community, alongside the wonderful example of life revealed through all creation. The shared experience of healing and belonging will be reinforced as we journey with spiritual formation and soul care practices.

### AUDIENCE

The MSSC community represents guests accessing services, volunteers, and staff. Participants will be recruited from this community group. Participation is best suited for healthy, fit, and mobile adults who are open to learning spiritual formation practices. The opportunity to

participate is presented to potential candidates, an information booklet shared with them, and a follow-up to identify their interest in signing up. The optimal number for the group of active participants will be eight to twelve. Ultimately, the audience for ‘nature, journey’ will range from closely involved participants to distant supporters and those who follow the course of the program virtually or by word-of-mouth.

## **DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE**

### **I. Program Visioning, Original Planning, First Connections, Orientation Meeting**

Date: May-June 2021

#### **Key Deliverables:**

- Vision for ‘nature, journey’ clear for presentation with key stakeholders, community, and one-on-one meetings, posters put-up in MSSC community areas
- Program overview and itinerary prepared for first stakeholder meetings
- Orientation manual completed and distributed to participants
- First group communications: email list compiled and Social Media links created
- Orientation Meeting (Wednesday, June 30, 2021. 2 pm to 4 pm)

#### **Key Assessment Metrics:**

- Stakeholder interest, financial support, and resource assemblage •  
Assessment of interest for participation, forecasting presence



## II. Weekly Outings

First Outing: Skirt Mountain Trail	Date: Saturday, July 3, 2021
Second Outing: Prospectors Trail	Date: Saturday, July 10, 2021
Third Outing: Cobble Hill Trail	Date: Saturday, July 17, 2021
Fourth Outing: Ridge Trail	Date: Saturday, July 24, 2021
Sixth Outing: Coast Trail	Date: Saturday, August 7, 2021
Seventh Outing: Timberman Trail	Date: Saturday, August 14, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

### Key Deliverables:

- Overall planning and communication (email and Facebook (Meta) group).
- Transportation (and any adjustments needed).
- Nutrition and hydration (lunch and snacks, consider dietary restrictions, etc.)
- Successful execution and delivery of the event and follow-up

### Key Assessment Metrics:

- Adequate group communication and number of participants present and absent
- Sufficient transportation (safety, number of cars, cost), nutrition and hydration
- Experience of belonging, connection with nature, engagement with God

- Reassessment of safety and risk, participant fitness and injuries

#### Fifth Outing: Scavenger Hunt

Date: Saturday, July 31, 2021

Time: All day

#### Key Deliverables:

- Development of the scavenger hunt story and preparation of maps
- Set up and clean up around Thetis Lake
- Prizes for winners

#### Key Assessment Metrics:

- Assessing general interest by involvement

#### Eighth Outing: Mount Work

Date: Tuesday, August 24, 2021

Time: 4 pm to 8 pm

#### Key Deliverables

- Easy hike, spiritual formation devotional at sunset, ice cream

#### Key Assessment Metrics

- Number of participants attending and morale for three-day hike

### III. Three-day hike on the Juan De Fuca Marine Trail

Date: Friday, August 20, 2021 to Monday, August 23, 2021

Key Deliverables:

- Three-day itinerary, spiritual formation, soul care and ‘nature-ch’ preparation
- Friday evening rally, backpack preparation, and van loading
- Door-to-door transportation to and from the trail
- Trail safety, nutrition, hydration and equipment (as needed) provided

Key Assessment Metrics:

- Participation and completion (injuries and fatigue considered in assessment)
- Distance hiked from trailhead entry to exit
- Participation in spiritual care practices and soul care conversations
- Involvement in meal preparation and/or the group’s wellbeing

#### IV. Program Follow-Up

Date: August 2021

Key Deliverables:

- Final email and Facebook (Meta) group communication to complete the first iteration of ‘nature, journey’
- Presence and availability for any concerns or conversations regarding the program

- Meeting with key stakeholders for debriefing of the multi-day hike

#### Key Assessment Metrics:

- Numbers of participants celebrating completion of ‘nature, journey’
- Number of participants disappointed with ‘nature, journey’ (specific concerns noted)
- Follow up with key stakeholders, overall program and three-day hike assessment

#### V. Final Follow-Up (re-visioning for ‘nature, next’)

Date: November 2021

#### Key Deliverables:

- Questionnaire distributed to participants of ‘nature, journey’ 2021
- Re-engagement hikes with participants of ‘nature, journey’ 2021

#### Key Assessment Metrics:

- Assessment based on participant’s questionnaire responses
- Number of participants involved in re-engagement outings
- Interest in ‘nature, journey’ 2022

Total Hours: ~247

## ITERATION PROCESS

Key stakeholders involved in and/or in supporting ‘nature, journey’ will participate in project feedback of the vision process, final assessments, revisions of the program to prepare for best successive iterations of ‘nature.’ The project feedback plan for participants will comprise of week-by-week, open, conversational, group reflections and assessments on the project’s benchmark components, practical, and operational aspects of ‘nature, journey.’

The documentation strategy for the development process will follow the project’s delivery timeline from May-June 2021 to November 2021. The documentation components will communicate the story of ‘nature, journey.’ Following are aspects of the documentation include in the program’s Progress Report and Final Project:

- Orientation document and waiver form templates
- Weekly emails, follow-ups, and journal reflections (recaps)
- Facebook group posts
- Rally maps, spiritual formation, and soul care handouts
- Follow-up questionnaire template and responses
- Photographs from weekly excursions and final three-day adventure

The benchmarked components center on original, general and sustained participation, belonging, spiritual care, and connection with nature. The practical/operational aspects of interest for appropriate feedback will focus on safety, physical ability, nutrition, equipment, and anything else that may arise. This feedback will be gathered and noted in weekly reflections. Adjustments to the program may occur subsequent to weekly assessments.

Four to eight weeks following the completion of ‘nature, journey’ a one-page questionnaire, comprising open-ended, benchmark-oriented questions, will be given to the

participants with the option of face-to-face meetings (to review the document together). Finally, key stakeholders will be invited to a meeting for program evaluation to consider the feedback of the participants' feedback and vision/planning for the next 'nature' offering.

## APPENDIX A—MILESTONE 1 THE NPO CHARTER

### NPO CHARTER

#### Personal Research Manifesto

“The NPO research will be present to the details of listening closely, accepting the challenge of detours, and open-handed learning to the heart with humility and courage.”

#### NPO Statement

“Nurturing solidarity in community within the context of the displaced and creating opportunity for integration and belonging through active compassion and spiritual formation.”

#### NPO Scope

The scope (extent/boundaries) of the NPO will be set within the community of the Mustard Seed Street Church (MSSC) community in Victoria, BC. Costs associated with the NPO may arise as a result of research expenses and meeting coordination. Academic resources will be outside of the scope and sought out for their expertise on particular subject matter relating to the NPO. Further, there may be a cost associated with the project that will stream from care so to find a solution for the NPO in the context of the MSSC.

\*Costs to planting a street level café called *Community* (for all twitching, interested in perceiving ‘something more’ to find place, belonging and geared for the life-giving connections and conversations on the heart of Christ for community, solidarity and liberation from oppression) will be worked out at a later time.

### NPO Context

The context for the NPO is the Mustard Seed Street Church (MSSC) community in Victoria, BC. The inner-city of Victoria, BC is the geographical location of the focus group. Closer still, the lives of those living near sidewalks and storefronts, emergency shelters and low-cost housing as well as those who find home and family in service alongside those in such a living struggle, this is the situation of the community of interest for the NPO. The MSSC is a member of the denomination, the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada (CBWC). The culture of the NPO focus group is thoroughly multi-faceted though could be described as creative, addicted, hyper-sensitive, health-compromised, traumatized, dependent and homeless. The demographic consists of all ages, sexes and can be classified as the ‘poverty-stricken’, ‘economically-oppressed’, ‘socially-marginalized’ and/or ‘street’. In solidarity, those who are in service at the MSSC, experience the imminent struggle of the aforementioned cultural descriptors. Ministry type of the MSSC is Christ-based, charitable and non-governmental, centering on social justice and relief for the oppressed and outcast of the city. The population or group size of said demographic, who would identify as (or, be referred to as) community at the MSSC is in the hundreds (perhaps, thousands).



## Discovery Session Stakeholders

Of the stakeholders present at the Discovery Session, included were: MSSC Board Members, Chaplains, Pastor, Director of Development, a former Staff Member and a Missionary.

## One-on-One Interviews

Three MSSC community members were interviewed: a staff member, a volunteer and a church congregant.

## Root Causes

Root Causes of displacement as observed in the community of the Mustard Seed Street Church (MSSC), summed up as ‘oppressive forces’ in the Discovery Session, are vast by measure. The key is that we are defining Root Causes corporately, each one identifying from experience as ones ‘within the displaced’. Therein we can all find need for community, belonging, integration, spiritual formation even, place to share compassion. As well, perceiving our NPO from within the culture of the displaced, though our living contexts may be different, we can appreciate the diversity of our Root Causes. These Root Causes, which validate the NPO as expressed in the Discovery Session, may include but are not limited to the following (or, issues arising therefrom): loneliness, trauma, poverty, addiction, disconnection with God, social insecurity, rejection, shame/guilt and physical/psychological/social health issues. The words

‘oppressive forces’ was used to capture the scope of the Root Causes which gives rise to the relevance of the NPO statement.

#### Academic Resources

First approaches to academic resources will consist of the following:

1. Tim Dickau of Calvary Baptist Church in Vancouver. His expertise in community and belonging will be sought out.
2. Shane Claiborne of the Simple Way in Pennsylvania will be approached out of interest for his experience and understanding pertaining to community and Theology concerning the subject matter.
3. Catherine Pohl, of Regent College in Vancouver, for her grasp on the expression of Christian Hospitality.
4. Gustavo Gutierrez, Prof. Emer. of Notre Dame University, will be sought out for his understanding and experience on the front lines of Liberation Theology.
5. Richard Rohr of the Centre for Action and Contemplation in New Mexico will be approached for his deep concern of Spiritual Formation in Christian Community.
6. Parker Palmer, renowned author, will be addressed for his help regarding the subject matter as it pertains to leadership and social change.

## APPENDIX

### Discovery Session Report

The Discovery Session was set on Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup> at St. Matthias Church in the Fairfield/Oak Bay area. The starting point for the meeting was the Need/Problem/Opportunity (NPO) statement: *Facing Challenges of Community and Cohesion in a Highly Active Ministry Setting*. All attendees were chosen to be a part of this group for their diversity in Christian Ministry experience, leadership, organizational view, denomination and ministry context.

While I expected (and, in part was hopeful) for a certain direction in the flow of conversation and viewpoint streaming from the original NPO, the corporate leading and outcome occurred in a thoroughly agreed upon way that was unanimous and whole-hearted toward the well-being of the community we serve at the Mustard Seed Street Church. It was interesting that from an NPO focusing on community and cohesion, the centering would tend toward those we serve (outward) and not the organizational dynamics (inward) that may have, over the course of our history, deeply affected our community and cohesion even, our integrity.

It has thus been observed that the integrity of our community and cohesion is connected to our vision and mission. It is clear that there is a shared yearning for those we serve to experience a better quality of life, even such ‘abundant life’ as we are called into as Jesus’ followers. Also intriguing, as we discovered our ‘audience’, attendees of the meeting identified themselves as ones of the ‘audience’. Evidently, there is an understanding of the need for Christian community and spiritual formation for those who know Jesus and as a result a desire for those who don’t know Jesus, struggling and alone in the midst of oppressive forces. Hope can

be elusive for individuals, who are seemingly on their own, to find freedom and belonging. So, the hoped-for dynamic with those who attended the Discovery Session, is a shared experience of liberation and belonging (ongoing) that arises through life together in community with Christ.

The Discovery Session took more time than was planned. Between thought-experiments and collaborative group exercises (and, eating pizza) we engaged in wonderful conversation wherein the heart in the direction we were heading was worked out. Unfortunately, we did not have enough time to finish the exercises ‘face-to-face’, so the final steps were sent to the group by email. Email responses were adequate and the Discovery Session, through to the last step, was completed.

The Revised NPO Statement (compiled following the Discover Session) is as follows:

*Considering the people at the Mustard Seed Street Church, we’ve discovered a need for Christian community and spiritual formation, which comes about as result of certain oppressive forces. If (the NPO could be) solved, it would mean a deeper sense of belonging and liberation (for all those who identify as community members of the MSSC).*

#### One-on-One Interviews Report

Two weeks following the Discovery Session I had the opportunity to meet with three deeply caring and dynamic individuals for the NPO One-on-One Interviews. Each interviewee was chosen specifically for their particular involvement as a community member of the Mustard Seed Street Church (MSSC) and for the potential diversity of perspectives with regards to the subject matter (ref. the NPO).

The first interview was conducted with a volunteer, who is a musician of the MSSC. Reference was made that a clear or renewed vision is needed at the MSSC for the community that we serve to find belonging. While the focus is set toward those we are serving, concurrent is a renewed sense of belonging for those who are corporately inspired by the vision, that being geared toward service. As the ‘serving’ community (donors, leadership, staff and volunteers) rallies together, understanding the direction and reasoning for service, a deep sense of belonging to the cause is strengthened. Even, the sense of community and belonging in the outreach and care ministry of the MSSC is enhanced/empowered when stakeholders involved in serving (aforementioned) are given the opportunity to speak into the process of vision creation and ministry proliferation.

The second interview focused on the thoughts and viewpoints, with regards to the NPO, from the perspective of a MSSC Staff. The topic of belonging encouraged a realization on the importance of oneness and wholeness both for the (oppressed) individual and the community of which the individual is a part. The experience of oneness may be found by the individual as a result of finding value and purpose as a part of the whole. In other words, as a part-to-play is realized within community a part-lacking (value/meaning/purpose) is filled within the individual. The interviewee went on to say that compromising vision for the individual and community once it has been deeply established could have detrimental effects.

Finally, the third interview was with one of our guests (better, one of our ‘community members’ who accesses our services on a daily/weekly/monthly basis) who is also a congregant of the MSSC. The third interviewee made absolutely clear that influencing his lens of perception with regards to the community of the Mustard Seed was not only his deep Christian Faith but also, his connection to First Nations culture and heritage. He spoke of the hope we have in Christ

that is easy to speak of in the context of the MSSC. There is a beauty in the transformation of a life occurring naturally, over time and not forced (necessarily) by the sweeping emotion of a church service. His conversation centered on being present with people, a source of consistency as encouragement toward hope and a way of living that we were intended for, one liberated by Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, the information acquired in these interviews was irrefutable and excellent. All three interviews added to the strength of the NPO statement both on points of agreement and disagreement. Two further interviews, one with a board member and another with a donor of the MSSC could have rounded out the 1on 1 interviews nicely as both of these groups carry significant place in our community, decision-making and general operation.

## APPENDIX B—MILESTONE 2 NPO TOPIC EXPERTISE ESSAY

The focus of this essay centers on the hope for followers of Jesus Christ to be leaders in the world regarding nurturing solidarity in community within the context of the displaced and creating opportunity for integration and belonging through active compassion and spiritual formation. All this with the hope to present an example of liberation in a world in which oppression (in so many forms) is rampant. So, it is vital that we listen closely to understand the oppression in the world around us that keeps us from knowing life more abundantly (conscientization) thereby, learning how to stand together in Christ for our collective liberation.

Elsa Tamez, in her book *Bible of the Oppressed*, defines a biblical theology of oppression as a ‘real experience that is directly related to agents of oppression and to the logic which leads the rich to augment their possessions at whatever cost’<sup>8</sup>. She goes on to write, with regards to the seemingly unrestrained continuation of accumulation amongst the apathetic wealthy, ‘the oppressed and the poor suffer exploitation and death, both physical and psychological; they suffer discrimination and degradation’<sup>9</sup>. The biblical account of the impoverished and oppressed emphasizes the solidarity of God, the presence of God at their side. From this biblical truth, God’s preference for those bullied, those enduring inhumane poverty and pushed to the margins of society as political, social, economic misfits, the central tenet of liberation theology arises,

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<sup>8</sup> ElsaTamez, *Bible of the Oppressed* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1982), 41.

<sup>9</sup> Tamez. *Bible of the Oppressed*, 3.

‘the preferential option for the poor’<sup>10</sup>. God does draw sides and from the biblical account it is clear that God has chosen the side of the oppressed. Therefore, God is in enmity with those who victimize and cause harm on the vulnerable.

Jesus is God’s champion of the oppressed. Miroslav Volf writes, in his book *Captive to the Word of God*, ‘at the center of Christian theology and Christian life in general is Jesus Christ, God’s self-utterance to humanity’<sup>11</sup>. Jesus was sent not only to uplift the degraded and disenfranchised but also, to encourage loving community amongst them. In the context of community centered on Jesus Christ, the experience of life redeemed from the experience of struggle in the world would not only be realized but expressed to the world as the Gospel. Regarding the parasitical powers of this world, John records the words of Jesus, ‘A thief has only one thing in mind—he wants to steal, slaughter, and destroy’ (the utter despoliation that empowers oppression), ‘but I have come to give you everything in abundance, more than you expect—life in its fullness until you overflow!’<sup>12</sup>. Jesus has come to restore life, to reconcile life and God’s way of accomplishing this is invincible.

## THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

### Invitation to Hospitality

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<sup>10</sup> John Dear, “Gustavo Gutierrez and the Preferential Option for the Poor,” *National Catholic Reporter*, November 8, 2011, <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/road-peace/gustavo-gutierrez-and-preferential-option-poor>.

<sup>11</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Captive to the Word of God: Engaging the Scriptures for Contemporary Theological Reflection* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Grand Rapids, Michigan: 2010), 6.

<sup>12</sup> John 10:10 (The Passion Translation).



**Matthew 25:31-46.** These verses contain an eschatological pronouncement of Jesus with regards to the blessing of His Father, God (the ‘King’) from the Gospel of Matthew. Within these words, an invitation into the Kingdom of Heaven for those who have responded well to the brokenness and need in the world. Jesus is depicted as the judge of character, who will enter the kingdom of heaven (the sheep) and those who will not (the goats). The measuring stick could be identified generally as ‘care’ and amplified upon as ‘empathy’, ‘compassion’ in connection with ‘service’. While the sheep exhibit these qualities, it can be said that the goats exhibit apathy or indifference, the absence of compassion, the lack of feeling (a-pathos) and care<sup>13</sup>. Evidently, God is not an advocate for this detached attitude of being and common human insouciance. There is a difference and, Stanley Hauerwas points out ‘the difference between followers of Jesus and those who do not know Jesus is that those who have seen Jesus no longer have any excuse to avoid ‘the least of these’<sup>14</sup>.

In service toward those who have been victimized by the systems of power and control in this world, followers of Jesus bear witness (this is a political, non-violent resistance) to another way of living, that from under the liberated rule of another Kingdom whose foundation is the entire Universe. Dorothy Day, in her essay *The Scandal of the Works of Mercy* considers both the spiritual and corporal acts of mercy giving some poetic license to scripture, she writes:

“The spiritual works of mercy are to admonish the sinner, to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to comfort the sorrowful, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive all injuries,

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<sup>13</sup> Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 220.

<sup>14</sup> Stanley Hauerwas and Matthew Brazos, *Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 211.

and to pray for the living and the dead. The corporal works are to feed the hungry to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to ransom the captive, to harbour the harbourless to visit the sick, and to bury the dead.”<sup>15</sup>

The call to compassion is the call to mercy. Jesus identifies himself as ‘one of the least of these’ and further, refers to ‘these’ as ‘brothers of Mine’. The Saviour of the World, Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth identifies himself with the broken and exclaims that as we have offered merciful, compassionate care to the oppressed, so we have expressed Him love. Jesus exemplifies to us the humble movement of the kingdom of God in a world so puffed-up cocky and unhesitatingly proud, in his (seeming-to-us) downward mobility. T.J. Martinez The author of an article in *The Houston Catholic Worker*, writes of his close-to-the-ground experience amongst impoverished immigrants, ‘in God’s world, strength is found in weakness, power is found in empathy, and courage is found in humility’<sup>16</sup>. Compassion requires a keen attentiveness to perceive the need in others then, an imaginative empathy<sup>17</sup> to contemplate the struggle and a relentless courage to embrace the victim.

### Hospitality to Liberation

**Matthew 11:28-30.** There is an invitation, for all those who are oppressed, including those who have assumed this position as a protest and caring choice for solidarity, to come to

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<sup>15</sup> Dorothy Day, “The Scandal of the Works of Mercy,” *Commonweal*, November 4, 1949, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/scandal-works-mercy>.

<sup>16</sup> T.J. Martinez SJ, “The Sacrament of the Poor,” *Houston Catholic Worker*, August 1, 1997, <https://cjd.org/1997/08/01/the-sacrament-of-the-poor/>.

<sup>17</sup> Bouma-Prediger and Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness*, 219.

Jesus. The invitation is for those who have need of him and the promise is rest, ‘not so much (as result of) the absence of activity as it is the presence of God’<sup>18</sup>. In the midst of these verses the cry of the oppressed can be heard by the informed acknowledgement and compassionate assurance of a Savior. Tim Chester, in his book *From Creation to New Creation*, references this ‘coming to rest’ of Jesus as ‘not an existential statement of individual piety’ but, an “exodus” statement that promises liberation<sup>19</sup>. Jesus was accustomed to observing the ruthless oppression that both the Roman empire and Jewish religion imposed on people. ‘Come to me’, as Jesus beckons, is an invitation out of an abusive situation in which pain, exclusion, sorrow, exploitation (and the like) entangle and make vulnerable its victims. Those affected are called out of their enslavement to enter into the Hospitality of God, which is rest, healing and restoration. This is the locale of shalom, the life that we are intended for, that God has made a way for us to know through his Son, Jesus.

The metanarrative of “exodus” in the call of Jesus to come is comparable to the call of Moses for Israel to come out of the bondage and slavery imposed upon God’s people in Egypt. God is faithful, he hears the cry of His people and he hastens to be involved. Derek Flood, in his book *Healing the Gospel*, describes the focus of Jesus’s ministry as ‘to the sinner, the unclean, the demonically oppressed and the poor – to people who had been “exiled” to the margins of society’<sup>20</sup>. Out from under the heaviness of oppression, the profound socio-economic privation

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<sup>18</sup> Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan: 2001), 239.

<sup>19</sup> Tim Chester, *From Creation to New Creation: Making Sense of the Whole Bible Story* (UK: The Good Book Company, 2010), chap. 3, Kindle.

<sup>20</sup> Derek Flood, *Healing the Gospel: A Radical Vision for Grace, Justice and the Cross* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books: 2012), chap. 5, Kindle.

that the margins entail, Jesus offers Home and becomes Protector. This has not come about ‘through power and violence, but rather through the weakness of the cross’<sup>21</sup>. No power or violence needed for the humility and the integrity of Jesus only needs to whisper truth to break the chains, saying ‘take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.’<sup>22</sup> Flood refers to this movement, this conceptual framework of humanity’s liberation from evil, as ‘*nonviolent restorative justice*.’<sup>23</sup>

### **Liberation to Faithfulness**

**Romans 12:2.** Delving into these words of Paul in his letter to believers in Rome, it is important to consider the risky, subversive call for believers to come out of common empire thinking, weak-manipulated obeisance and popular conformity and into a new way of thinking after Jesus Christ. Through the book of Romans Paul portrays that there is something ‘deeply wrong with us individually, and with the world as a whole, from which we need to be saved’<sup>24</sup>. The book of Romans gives followers of Jesus Christ not only an idea as to how God is saving us from it but also, the way to break free. In this verse, Paul is encouraging an “exodus” movement in the form of a metamorphosis from one form (way of thinking, way of living, way of ‘willing’) to another. What is denoted by his words is a coming out of death, slavery, deception and a

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<sup>21</sup> Flood, *Healing the Gospel*, chap. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew 11:29 (New International Version).

<sup>23</sup> Flood, *Healing the Gospel*, chap. 5.

<sup>24</sup> “Romans and Work,” *Theology of Work*, last updated Jan. 31, 2022, <https://www.theologyofwork.org/new-testament/romans-and-work#the-community-of-grace-at-work-romans-12>.

breaching through or breaking forth into new life, a new way of perceiving the world and freedom. John Piper exclaims, ‘you are free in Christ, because when you do from the inside what you love to do, you are free — if what you love to do is what you ought to do’<sup>25</sup>. Here is the challenge, knowing what we ought to do, are we willing to ‘take heart’ (John 16:33) with Christ, are we willing to faithful?

The ‘social and community aspects of salvation’<sup>26</sup> resound in this chapter that begins with a call into a new frame of being alive together, an ‘other’ conformation stirred by a willingness toward transformation. This entails a ‘letting go’ of the former ways in which life was interpreted through a ‘renewing of the mind’ (‘enlightenment’ is a word that can be used for this ‘waking up’). In Walsh’s *Romans Revised*, streaming application from Romans 12’s trail-blazing word ‘Therefore’ to our current socio-political state, a Targum is offered<sup>27</sup>. Resounding in this descriptive, contemplative revelation of the invitation of God (the appellation of Jesus Christ) is a call into a different kind of community than what can be found in the world, ultimately from corruption to faithfulness. Walsh is imagining toward the depth of intention and the scope of impact this portion of Paul’s letter is lining into, while thereby centering on our individual and corporate faithfulness. The hope and in this discernment clarity, that our minds are not being renewed from one corruption only to conform to another but, that in this transfiguration of reasonable understanding we are awakened to not only to be inclined toward

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<sup>25</sup> John Piper. “The Renewed Mind and How to Have It”. *Desiring God*. August 15, 2004, <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-renewed-mind-and-how-to-have-it>.

<sup>26</sup> “The Community of Grace at Work (Romans 12),” *Theology of Work*, last updated Jan. 31, 2022, <https://www.theologyofwork.org/new-testament/romans-and-work/the-community-of-grace-at-work-romans-12>.

<sup>27</sup> Sylvia Keesmaat and Brian Walsh, *Romans Disarmed: Resisting Empire Demanding Justice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2019), 297, Kindle.

but, to know the will of God and to be inspired to live (resolutely developing integrity) by the way, the truth and the life of Jesus Christ.<sup>28</sup>

## FOUR THEMES

Four themes compel the above theological approach to the consideration of developing community in solidarity with the displaced: invitation, hospitality, liberation and faithfulness. The unhindered love of God is affected in and through ‘connection with need’. Throughout the world, oppression creates the context of need. The desire through poverty is to find relief, that somehow the struggle would cease. In our struggle and our need is the locale of Christ (herein, the opportunity of conscientization). Our invitation is to be in this struggle and need with our risen Saviour offering hope; hospitality through our experience of being loved into the healing of a Saviour who meets us here; liberation in rest; and, faithfulness together in community with us, the poor and oppressed, where God is.

## VALUES

Compassion will be at the heart for the theological encounter that this study requires. Along with Jesus and other key figures within scripture, the nature of Saint Francis of Assisi will be reviewed for deeper connection with the subject matter and for his heart of compassion. The value of poverty and the value of freedom in the context of community will also be considered.

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<sup>28</sup> John 14:6 (TPT).

Following with the words of Gutierrez, ‘the preferential option for the poor’ and in considering the option of God for the poor by the social-economic condition he chose to break forth through, humility in presence will be a core value that will implicate the engagement with scripture, key voices and in the explication of the study into being.

## COMMITMENTS

In the theological foundations of this study, there will be a commitment to reveal the presence of God with the poor and oppressed and, conversely to expose the absence of the presence of God with those oppressing (whether coherently so or not) and in the context of systems that oppress. Liberation Theology (along with concepts associated) and relatively in-depth research streaming from its theologians will inspire without overwhelming the work. To this end, there will be a word on Marxism. It is unfortunate the incredible stamp that has been placed on Liberation Theology as a result of certain disapproval being pushed by some fearful critics affecting the general, popular perception on this theological encounter.

## CONCLUSION

In a portion of writing by Dorothy Day she recalled a conversation that she had with a Carmelite nun regarding the nature of Jesus, “it is the crushed heart, which is the soft heart, the tender heart”. Dorothy followed this with the reflection that perhaps being crushed ‘is one way to

become meek and humble of heart like Jesus'<sup>29</sup>. The value of poverty is one that draws us into humility, into the crushing of Christ, the lightness of his burden, the salvation of our souls (1 Peter 1:9). The scriptures included here are more than mere beginning points to unravelling the relative poverty (oppression/affliction) that we can find ourselves in and the way out that God has provided for us.

## INTERLUDE

### **I look at the World**

I look at the silly walls  
Through dark eyes in a dark face –  
And this is what I know:  
That all these walls oppression builds  
Will have to go!  
I look at my own body  
With eyes no longer blind –  
And I see that my own hands can make  
The world that's in my mind.  
Then let us hurry, comrades,  
The road to find.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Dorothy Day, "The Dorothy Column: The Scandal of the Works of Mercy," *The Catholic Worker Writings*, Advent 2006, <http://wp.catholicworker.org.nz/the-common-good/scandal-of-the-works-of-mercy/>

<sup>30</sup> Langston Hughes, "I Look at the World." Poetry," *Poetry Magazine*, 2009.  
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/101581/poems-of-protest-resistance-and-empowerment>.



## NPO HISTORY AND VOICES

### INTRODUCTION

Oppression, relatively speaking, can reveal that something is wrong, that something is ‘off course’ or ‘off center’ and causing pain. However, there is something, in the midst of oppression, in the face of the oppressed, a Presence, that is most True, not obvious though utterly connected. God is listening and hears our cry for help. God is present and waiting for our hearts to come to rest in order to hear his still small voice<sup>31</sup>, ‘The Lord is close to all whose hearts are crushed by pain, and he is always ready to restore the repentant one.’<sup>32</sup>

Jesus, who endured oppression, was relentlessly targeted and killed with tact on a cross, encouraged his followers to ‘take heart’<sup>33</sup>. The apostle Paul, an oppressor (as we all are) to begin with, fell into solidarity with the deeply oppressed of the time as a follower of Jesus Christ standing up in defiance to, with the call of Life and Love in his Saviour, systems of power and control that depleted and denigrated the people; this, to his physical end believing, ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’<sup>34</sup> Today, the earth and all of creation are crying out for help. Who is listening? How will we respond?

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<sup>31</sup> 1 Kings 19:11-12 (The Message).

<sup>32</sup> Psalm 34:18 (TPT).

<sup>33</sup> John 16:33 (NIV).

<sup>34</sup> Philippians 4:13 (New King James Version).

## HISTORY

The heart beyond its wondrous physiologic is, as Henri Nouwen describes ‘at the very core of our being, the spiritual center of our being’<sup>35</sup>. The heart is the place of connection, where in quietness, we may hear and respond to the Voice who speaks. The heart is the place of loving compassion and inspiration. We are embraced by the love of God in this place of-the-heart and we learn the language of incarnating this embrace into a desperate world, terribly independent, sorrowfully apathetic and fearful. Nouwen continues, ‘one of the most amazing things is that as you enter deeper and deeper into that place, you not only meet God, but you meet the whole world there.’<sup>36</sup>. The heart is a place of revelation, of cries and reconciliation; the heart is a place of listening and learning. Leonardo Boff, Brazilian theologian of liberation, refers to an “ecstatic emotionality” of St. Francis, resulting from a such a committed encounter with God, that achieved in him a ‘desire to identify with the other, especially the lesser and most suffering by way of gentleness and compassion.’<sup>37</sup>

God ministers to our hearts, opens our hearts, encourages us while creating a deeper sensitivity to both His presence within us and around us; to what He is saying and doing even, how He is doing it. Dorothee Soelle, in her book *Window of Vulnerability*, references Jesus as John recollects His words ‘Christ came into the world in order that all people “might have life

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<sup>35</sup> Henry Nouwen, “Your Heart is the Center of Your Being,” *Henri Nouwen Society*, January 3, 2020, <https://henrinouwen.org/meditation/your-heart-is-the-center-of-your-being/>.

<sup>36</sup> Nouwen, “Your Heart is the Center of Your Being.”

<sup>37</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation* (New York, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982), 28.

and have it to the full,” or, in another translation, so that “they might live and have abundance of all they need” (John 10:10).<sup>38</sup>

‘What is this “life to the full”? Where does it happen? Who lives it? I see two ways in which it is destroyed in our world: poverty without and emptiness within.’<sup>39</sup> God reveals to us in glimpses His way of fullness, of life for us the way it was intended to be. We can learn, quietly listening, coming alongside the poverello Jesus as one of his ‘brothers’ and sisters ‘the least of these’.

Here is a picture to help our vision and conscience toward the posture of Christ, of truth and life: two men, in dirty-beaten clothes seated on a curbside in the middle of any of our thoroughly globalized cities, one is holding the other. One is leaning back on the other and losing consciousness, his face nears blueness for lack of oxygen and comes back to pink as the other gently reminds him of his presence. An overdose beckons and would have its way if not for the gentle presence of a caring friend.

May we see something more in this scene than pity. God, who whispers and attracts those who are listening (His sheep, who know His voice), comes and incarnates with us between life and death. He is the Friend who is with us and comes to be with us when we are vulnerable. Beside us, the oppressor dressed up in superiority stands cringing looking at us as something less than human. And, Jesus did not come to be what they wanted him to be, as if to become a

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<sup>38</sup> Dorothee Soelle, *The Window of Vulnerability: A Political Spirituality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 12.

<sup>39</sup> Soelle, *The Window of Vulnerability*, 14.

commodity to satisfy the ever empty; God knows the heart of man<sup>40</sup> and, that it will never have enough.

Gustavo Gutierrez reminds us in his book, *We Drink From Our Own Wells* that ‘Jesus freely decides to give his life in solidarity with those who are under the power of death. Freedom exercised within a communion of life: such is the meaning of Christian freedom; such is the context for its full development.’<sup>41</sup> Jesus is revealed to us as one who is poor, outcast, targeted, excluded and he calls for us to join with him, to know life more abundantly, to abide in Him<sup>42</sup>.

Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. Learning about Jesus and ‘good ways of being’ is different than living for Him. Apprehend this call to solidarity: Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you”<sup>43</sup>. Everyone leaves and He turns to his Twelve, questions their decision to stay and Simon Peter answered him, “But Lord, where would we go? No one but you gives us the revelation of eternal life. We’re fully convinced that you are the Anointed One, the Son of the Living God, and we believe in you!”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> John 2:25 (TPT).

<sup>41</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984), 92.

<sup>42</sup> John 15 (TPT).

<sup>43</sup> John 6:53 (NIV).

<sup>44</sup> John 6:68-69 (TPT).

Once again, take a glimpse to the curbside and witness Jesus. He knows there are those standing, grumbling, shaking their heads; what matters to him, is life, true life, life abundant. Listen. This is not a problem to be solved, Jesus is the solution. How will we respond? Segundo Galilea writes, ‘there is no lasting way for justice and human solidarity without a change of heart.’<sup>45</sup>

Listening to the heart of the oppressed, the movement toward liberation can only occur as a led and lived experience by and through them. The process of conscientization, of ‘knowing THAT you know’<sup>46</sup> as developed by Paulo Freire, encourages the Voice of the voiceless and can be spurred on by those who choose solidarity, coeur-à-coeur the oppressed. In consideration of Freire’s Liberation Theology, James Kirylo writes ‘only when the people of a dependent society break out of the culture of silence and win the right to speak – only, that is, when radical structural changes transform the dependent society can such a society as a whole cease to be silent toward the director society.’<sup>47</sup>

Solidarity, a committed-sacrificial humility by way of downward mobility, as Nouwen relates it, is essential in developing awareness, understanding and growing empathy toward those who have been categorically dehumanized. Genuine solidarity will lead to a grounded and real fraternity, the kind of brotherly love that seeks to shield from harm and to resist violence sacrificially. The closing words of Archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero’s final homily

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<sup>45</sup> Segundo Galilea, *The Way of Living Faith: A Spirituality of Liberation* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 193.

<sup>46</sup> Ann E. Berthoff, “Paulo Freire’s Liberation Pedagogy,” *Language Arts* 67, No. 4, Liberation Education (April 1990): 362-369. National Council of Teachers, 365.

<sup>47</sup> James D. Kirylo, “Liberation Theology and Paolo Freire,” *Counterpoints* 385, Paul Freire: The Man from Recife (2011): 167-193, Peter Lang AG, 177.

resounds, “In the name of God, then, in the name of this suffering people whose cries rise daily more loudly to heaven, I plead with you, I beg you, I order you in the name of God: put an end to this repression!”<sup>48</sup>

Liberation is at least a correction to unbearable systems and burdensome structures that are dehumanizing. Liberation Theology connects this correction with God, who is Just, and the profession of faith in Jesus Christ who is preferentially inclined to the heart’s cry of the impoverished, distressed, alienated, marginalized: the poor. ‘Faith shows us the poor and all the oppressed in the light that liberation theology seeks to project (and, here we anticipate the hermeneutical mediation): the disfigured image of God; the Son of God made the suffering servant and rejected; the memorial of the poor and persecuted Nazarene; the sacrament of the Lord and Judge of history.’<sup>49</sup> Liberation, theologically, is at the heart of God for His people and His original economy yet, it was only formulated into a Theology for practise in the mid-1960s.

Streaming from the inspiration of Second Vatican Council in 1963 and the 1968 Second General Conference of Latin American and Caribbean Bishops in Medellin (Colombia), Latin American Theologians such as Gustavo Gutierrez, Leonardo Boff and Jon Sobrino developed a Theology of Liberation and with scriptural clarity, defined and reasoned the ‘preferential option for the poor’. Unfortunately, there has been an effort to discredit Liberation Theology, drawing comparisons and amplifying the potential influence of Marxism.

That particular tenets of Marxism and similar methods of analyses of social and economic realities that are found within Liberation Theology, does not necessarily fashion

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<sup>48</sup> Oscar Romero, Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Martin-Baro, *Voice of the Voiceless: the Four Pastoral Letters* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985), 18.

<sup>49</sup> Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011), 31.

Liberation Theology as Marxist, nor proponent to communism. James Kirylo references Gutierrez with regards to the common ground of Marxism and Christianity concerning relief for the poor, 'Jesus preached liberty for the oppressed 1800 years before Marx was even born; and he got it straight from the book of Isaiah, written at least 700 years before that (and) to dismiss contemporary calls for the liberty of the oppressed as 'communist-inspired' is not only perverse thinking but faulty chronology.'<sup>50</sup> Finally, Leonardo Boff declares that a liberation Theology to be a 'spiritual experience of protest and love' and, at its heart 'a holy ire, the very virtue of the prophets, against the collective misery of the poor.'<sup>51</sup>

## VOICES

Voices whispering out from individual lives, who've followed the One who has whispered to them, of truth and justice, of solidarity and fraternity. Ones whose hearts have been touched with the Divine Empathy for the made-broken, these will speak and continue to reveal to us the nature of God.

Saint Francis of Assisi and Dorothy Day, their hearts were transformed by the movement of the Spirit of God within them and their encounter with Jesus in the poor. Martin Luther King Jr. and Oscar Romero were voices for the voiceless. In their cry for truth, justice and change, fraternal love and solidarity were proven and, the ultimate sacrifice of these men, their lives: both, were martyred. These four individuals chose to live the Gospel, expressing their love for God in their love for people.

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<sup>50</sup> Kirylo. "Liberation Theology and Paolo Freire," 187.

<sup>51</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation* (New York, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982), 83.

In reference of the encyclical ‘Pacem en Terris’, written by Pope John XXIII in 1963, Thomas Merton, author and Trappist monk, writes, in his book ‘On Peace’, ““Civilization” must learn to prove its claims by a capacity for the peaceful and honest settlement of disputes, by genuine concern for justice toward people who have been shamelessly exploited and races that have been systematically oppressed, or the historical pre-eminence of the existing powers will be snatched from them by violence, perhaps in a disaster of cosmic proportions.’<sup>52</sup>

It has been a while since ‘Pacem en Terris’ was written, awhile since Merton’s seeds of faith, awhile since Romero offered his last Mass and, King had a dream; it has been awhile since Dorothy Day’s radical-loving personalism, awhile since St. Francis tamed the wolf of Gubbio. It has been awhile and, is anyone still wondering how much longer, as all of creation continues to groan, with increasing volume, for truth and justice?

Only with God can we discern the truth, as the genuine-original article may only be found in the depths beyond the surface, on the other side of what is visible and so-attractive; recall that day and the revelation of Samuel that ‘the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.’<sup>53</sup> God was seeking a man after his own heart<sup>54</sup>; the camera angle adjusts, embracing the image, clarifying the vision and focusing on him ‘out keeping the sheep’: David, Son of Jesse. And, further on into the depths of history, Jesus the Son of Mary, the son of a carpenter: Shepherd of our souls, Saviour of the world. The hearts of these four individuals, resolute for the liberation of the oppressed, impassioned voices for the Kingdom of Heaven to break through: Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone, Dorothy Day, Martin

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<sup>52</sup> Thomas Merton, *On Peace* (New York, New York: The McCall Publishing Company, 1971), 183.

<sup>53</sup> 1 Samuel 16:7 (English Standard Version).

<sup>54</sup> 1 Samuel 13:14 (ESV).



Luther King Jr., and Oscar Romero, were fixed<sup>55</sup> and focused on Jesus, in whom to live is life, inspiration ‘to seek and to save the lost’<sup>56</sup> and with whom to die, is gain.<sup>57</sup>

### **Saint Francis of Assisi**

Lives that speak. It must be more than mere words on paper put together somehow to describe the life of St. Francis of Assisi; to engage with such a person as we are only able to somewhat honestly through words in stories in books, the imagination needs to be awake. A beautiful life that would not exist for us to learn from had he chosen to remain asleep when God came near to change him and open his heart to his still small voice calling. Leonardo Boff, in his book ‘St. Francis’, highlights three noteworthy movements that would help to define the life and nature of Francis, this poverello of Christ and ‘jongleur de Dieu’<sup>58</sup>: declassification, disappropriation and trans-descendance. Boff writes, referring to Francis’ conversion, that it was ‘effective’ in that ‘it accepted the social position of the other; from the solidarity of the good bourgeois he went to the identification of the rich man who becomes truly poor and like the poor.’<sup>59</sup> Birthed into certain affluence and life security, Boff considers Francis’ downward mobility to poverty as a ‘dialectical negation’<sup>60</sup>, seemingly backwards in consideration of the

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<sup>55</sup> Hebrews 3:1 (NIV).

<sup>56</sup> Luke 19:10 (NIV).

<sup>57</sup> Galatians 2:20 (NIV).

<sup>58</sup> Gilbert K. Chesterton, *St. Francis of Assisi* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923), 74.

<sup>59</sup> Boff, *Saint Francis*, 69.

<sup>60</sup> Boff, *Saint Francis*, 69.

Capitalism that was beginning to shape the world at the time, even his own family. He wore the simplest of clothing, walked barefoot and was affectionately described by GK Chesterton, prolific writer and philosopher-theologian, as ‘one of the strongest, strangest and most original personalities the world has ever known.’<sup>61</sup>

Francis’ rejection of security and commitment to powerlessness, a disappropriation, is regarded by Boff as ‘a liberation for others, liberation of wanting to know, being right and dominating, it is to be small.’<sup>62</sup> He extends the definition of disappropriation, connecting Francis’ progressive embrace of brokenness and vulnerability in solidarity with the downtrodden, as evident ‘in poverty, in humility, joy, service, obedience, simplicity, and purity of heart, love.’<sup>63</sup> Consider Jesus, being released from the safety of heaven, the entitlement and ‘advantage’ of such a position, ‘equality with God’ surrendered, that ‘he made himself nothing by taking on the very nature of a servant’; consider the humble willingness of God in his coming down in order to be with us, even to the ruthless, apathy of self-interested people; He was suffocated and dehumanized for Love even, to being broken in the worst of deaths, the cross.<sup>64</sup> The disappropriation of our Saviour, who considered it all joy.<sup>65</sup>

A discipline of spiritual formation, as portrayed by the Way of Jesus Christ, transcendence describes a meta-physical movement downwards and beyond, as opposed to the commonly described “climb up” and beyond of transcendence; and, this to a “superior state”.

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<sup>61</sup> Chesterton, St. Francis of Assisi, 94.

<sup>62</sup> Boff, *Saint Francis*, 71.

<sup>63</sup> Boff, *Saint Francis*, 71.

<sup>64</sup> Philippians 2:6-11 (TPT).

<sup>65</sup> Hebrews 12:2 (TPT).

Trans-descendence, from the outset, appears as an openness to ‘what is below’. Then, a climbing downward ‘toward the shadow of the stigmatized poverty of the bodies of the exploited and leprous.’<sup>66</sup> It has been written of Francis that a ‘spiritual revolution’ in his life emerged as ‘a reversal of a certain psychology took place’; he had disappeared inwardly into a dark cavern from which he reappeared as if turned upside-down, affecting with extravagance his attitude toward the actual world.

Chesterton explains that Francis, ‘looked at the world differently from other men as if he had come out of that dark hole walking on his hands.’<sup>67</sup> It can be observed in these three movements: declassification, disappropriation and trans-descendence that there is an intentional calling or a desired involvement for the courageous, empathetic heart toward a solidarity and fraternity with the oppressed, even as witnessed in such a life as St. Francis.

### **Dorothy Day**

A revolution is defined by a sudden, radical and complete change; a “revolution of the heart” is what Dorothy Day believed was necessary in order ‘to see Christ in others, and to love others as God loves us.’<sup>68</sup> Jesus incarnates in the poor, those in need<sup>69</sup>, God is present in the image of every person, though with the poor and oppressed, his image has been regarded as

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<sup>66</sup> Boff, *Saint Francis*, 24.

<sup>67</sup> Chesterton, *St. Francis of Assisi*, 79.

<sup>68</sup> Casey Cep, “Dorothy Day’s Radical Faith: the life and legacy of the Catholic writer and activist, who some hope will be made a saint,” *The New Yorker*, April 6, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/04/13/dorothy-days-radical-faith>.

<sup>69</sup> Matthew 25:35-40 (TPT).

disfigured and deviated. Yet, in such brokenness and dehumanization, the presence of Jesus Christ. Day's love of God set her apart as she perceived his presence with and amongst the poor and oppressed.

She was considered an anarchist and a radical, 'for Dorothy Day, social injustice demanded dissent, and – given the challenges and the political fault lines of her time – political protest simply came with the Christian territory.'<sup>70</sup> She recognized Jesus's solidarity with the poor, God's preference for the poor and in that, a certain clarity with regards to her calling as a follower of Jesus Christ.

Dorothy was devoted to prayer, listened to God and was arduously active in her faith; often given to protest against systemic and structural evil that imposed poverty on the lives of many by the interest of the perpetual accumulation for the few, Day's passion for the non-violent pursuit of truth and justice, was unstoppable.

Peter Maurin, a social activist who was often referred to by Day as "the French peasant" or "the peasant of the pavements", was essential in the vision and founding of the Catholic Worker, a magazine intended to give voice to issues affecting the poor in America and to awaken the Church to injustices causing oppression. She professes that, 'If it were not for Peter there would be no Houses of Hospitality and Farming Communes'<sup>71</sup>; their partnership was vital not only for the movement of the Catholic Worker but also, for their unified approach to the cause

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<sup>70</sup> Robert Inchausti, *Subversive Orthodoxy: Outlaws, Revolutionaries, and other Christians in Disguise* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2005), 93.

<sup>71</sup> Dorothy Day, "On Hospitality," *Dorothy Day Library*, Web (DDLW), The Catholic Worker Movement [https://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/themes/On%20Hospitality%20\(Dorothy%20Day\).pdf](https://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/themes/On%20Hospitality%20(Dorothy%20Day).pdf).

advocating ‘for the centrality of the person, one who was not to be used but loved.’<sup>72</sup> Purity of compassion and solidarity was an essential component of Dorothy’s expression of loving care for those in need.

In her earlier years, Dorothy had an interest in Marxist ideals, which, over time metamorphosed into a social-political propensity for non-violent resistance and personalism which ‘emphasized the responsibility we all have toward one another.’<sup>73</sup> Communitarianism was an influential element, the context for her praxis, as she cherished the human-personal connection, the knowing of love together in community and living life as a whole.

She states, in ‘The Long Loneliness’, her autobiography, that "we cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other. We know Him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone anymore. Heaven is a banquet and, life is a banquet, too, even with a crust, where there is companionship."<sup>74</sup>

Dorothy Day not only sacrificially committed her life toward solidarity with the oppressed (a natural response to the Voice of Life within her), depth of conscientization (for the heart of those marginalized) and biblically-founded interest for a universal fraternity but also she knelt down to listen closely to the needs of those made-broken, quietened ones losing hope so as

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<sup>72</sup> Carl E. Olson, “Author: Dorothy Day’s personalism and faithful orthodoxy too often overlooked,” *The Catholic World Report*, May 5, 2020, <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2020/05/05/author-dorothy-days-personalism-and-faithful-orthodoxy-too-often-overlooked/>.

<sup>73</sup> Olson, “Author: Dorothy Day’s personalism and faithful orthodoxy too often overlooked.”

<sup>74</sup> Dorothy Day, “The Final Word is Love,” *The Catholic Worker Movement*, May 1980, <https://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/articles/867.html>.

to become their voice as ‘God draws close to those in greatest need: the poor, the orphans, the widow, the foreigner. He supports those who have no one to speak for them.’<sup>75</sup>

### **Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.**

Martin Luther King Jr., like Dorothy Day, was determined proponent for non-violent activism in the cause of liberation for the suffering and oppressed, specifically a dehumanizing, oppression of colossal impact that has lasted hundreds of years and continues to this day: racism that derives from former enslavement.

While he was incarcerated in Birmingham Jail for his solidarity and leadership in opposition to widespread disinterest of truth and care toward human rights, he wrote a letter addressed to a collection of his less-than-courageous colleagues with regards to ‘the call’ to stand and ‘this (opportune) time’. ‘This “Wait”’, he writes, ‘has almost always meant “Never.” It has been a tranquilizing thalidomide, relieving the emotional stress for a moment, only to give birth to an ill-formed infant of frustration.’<sup>76</sup> He carries on in this manner, to encourage the leadership of his colleagues for the hope of his people, ‘There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into an abyss of injustice where they experience the blackness of corroding despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.’<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer, “The Witness of Dorothy Day and the Future of Liberation Theology,” *Dialogo*, 2013: Vol. 16, No. 2, Article 3, <https://via.library.depaul.edu/dialogo/vol16/iss2/3>.

<sup>76</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., *I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches that Changed the World* (New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 1992), 88.

<sup>77</sup> King, *I have a Dream*, 89.

The heart of his voice and resolve in his stance streamed from the passion of God for mankind. For Martin Luther King Jr., inspiration coursed from scripture and the life of Jesus Christ whose life was given for the Love of God: all the world. His prayer life, contemplative engagement, quiet moments with God, in which spiritual truths enlivened further his resolve to protest injustice and to non-violently resist oppression, a courage that only deepens the silences<sup>78</sup> to kindle the next fire in quietness with God.

Truth is a searing threat to the oppressor. For the oppressor, the truth of their oppression spoken and lived with resolve turns the tables on their self-centered, capitalistic agenda; in the unbearable unveiling that truth causes, anxiety arouses within the oppressor to silence it (the voice, the people, the threat) at any cost. Mahatma Gandhi, whose life was esteemed by Martin Luther King Jr., writes that, ‘if man has a divine mission to fulfil, a mission that becomes him, it is that of non-violence, *ahimsa*.’<sup>79</sup>

This path of nonviolence was highly respected in his encouragement for a resolution of the structural violence and pain of ongoing segregation, a ‘slavery covered up with certain niceties of complexity.’<sup>80</sup> Solomon, in his proverbs, declares that ‘there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death’<sup>81</sup> and, Ghandi connects this to non-violence and the

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<sup>78</sup> Inchausti, *Subversive Orthodoxy*, 109.

<sup>79</sup> Mahatma Gandhi, *The Way to God: Selected Writings from Mahatma Gandhi* (Berkley, California: North Atlantic Books, 2009), 31.

<sup>80</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., “Sermon at Temple Israel in Hollywood,” *American Rhetoric*, last updated June 23, 2021, <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlktempleisraelhollywood.htm>.

<sup>81</sup> Proverbs 14:12 (NIV).

spirit of man awakening from violent animalistic inclinations of violence, that ‘either he progresses towards *ahimsa* (non-violence), or rushes towards his doom.’<sup>82</sup>

In his Noble Peace Prize winning speech, Martin Luther King says, with the baritone of fraternal love gushing from his heart and through his voice to his audience (of which, as listeners, we are component), “‘After contemplation, I conclude that this award which I receive on behalf of that movement is a profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral question of our time – the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression. Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts.’”<sup>83</sup> This is truth, searing truth singing pride and oppression

Herein, the whisper for us of love and, encouragement of God for an ever-humanizing progression in care for our ‘least of these’ brothers and sisters, that the exodus of all people from all oppression may ensue.

### **Saint Oscar Romero**

Oscar Romero, faithful voice for the voiceless, in his years as Archbishop of San Salvador exemplified his immovable faith and fearless approach by non-violent resistance of oppression with absolute honesty. Truth upends and makes uncomfortable the forces of tyranny. Romero was shot, ‘one well-aimed shot, fired with the professional precision’, while sharing in Mass with a community of believers in the Chapel of a hospital in San Salvador on March 24,

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<sup>82</sup> Gandhi, *The Way to God*, 32.

<sup>83</sup> King, *I Have a Dream*, 109.



1980.<sup>84</sup> His blood poured over the elements of the eucharist, in his final breaths these words: ‘may this body broken and this blood shed for human beings encourage us to give our body and blood up to suffering and pain, as Christ did – not for self, but to bring justice and peace to our people.’<sup>85</sup>

Simply a humanizing Love, empathetic toward those victimized and abused, Romero spoke unreservedly, unswerving with revelatory and cutting conviction. His humility was unquestionable and his integrity, inspiring. Romero, with entire confidence could say what ‘Jesus too had said, that in more than two years of preaching no one could ever accuse him of lying’<sup>86</sup>; Ignacio Martin-Baro affirmed this self-pronouncement that ‘it is impossible to understand the archbishop’s words out of context’<sup>87</sup>, his words and his person ‘became a catalyst’<sup>88</sup> for salvation and liberation in his community of faith; Romero ‘fired consciences and united spirits.’<sup>89</sup>

Romero was faced with a broken and oppressed people, bent over by the unjust and exploitative structures of an oligarchy and corrupt government (one aided by the US in its operations of unflinching domination and control). He could not remain quiet withholding the truth as he witnessed the need for justice and good action to counter the repression that was pushing the pressure of the people backwards, leaving its casualties in wide-open places, scenes promoting fear and forcing ever-subservience. In his writing and his sermons, Romero assured

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<sup>84</sup> Romero, Sobrino and Martin-Baro. *Voice of the Voiceless*, 1.

<sup>85</sup> Oscar Romero Jon Sobrino, *Romero: Martyr for Liberation* (Coleman Fields, London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1982), 35-36.

<sup>86</sup> Romero, Sobrino and Martin-Baro. *Voice of the Voiceless*, 25.

<sup>87</sup> Romero, Sobrino and Martin-Baro, *Voice of the Voiceless*, 2.

<sup>88</sup> Romero and Sobrino and Martin-Baro, *Voice of the Voiceless*, 9.

<sup>89</sup> Romero and Sobrino and Martin-Baro, *Voice of the Voiceless*, 9.

his Salvadoran people of God's faithfulness and attention to their cry for help. He realized that for change to arise, the struggle could not be led by the oppressor whose biochemistry is said toward domination, that the struggle for liberation and a new order must be a story for the underside of history, the oppressed 'from their stifled humanity', to lead with the prize of a 'fuller humanity'.<sup>90</sup>

In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire describes that within the non-violent movement of liberation, though the process be, the prospect is worthwhile, an emergence of 'a new man, viable only as the oppressor-oppressed contradiction is superseded by the humanization of all men.'<sup>91</sup>

Romero's heart broke for the people of El Salvador, he yearned for change and for the 'abundant life' that Jesus spoke of for his people. Jon Sobrino collects the hope of Romero in simplest truth, that 'He was guided by an unshakeable faith in a God who wills a new kind of society and a new kind of human person.'<sup>92</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Claudio: a man who I met while serving as a watchkeeper and motorman on a mission ship while we were berthed in the port city of Acajutla, on the Pacific Coast of El Salvador, in 1997. He was a fisherman. Claudio became a good friend and, though we have not been in contact for so many years now, I will never forget him and the conversations we shared. I

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<sup>90</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, New York: The Seabury Press, 1970), 32.

<sup>91</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 33.

<sup>92</sup> Romero, Sobrino and Martin-Baro. *Voice of the Voiceless*, 25.

remembered he opened with me once, tears in his eyes, of the Civil War in El Salvador and he showed me where on his leg he had been shot.

Ricardo: a refugee and combatant of the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) from El Salvador who escaped the country in the mid-1980s. Not unscathed, he was shot in the stomach. Ricardo is a part of the community at the Mustard Seed. He has shared some of his stories; one recently, of being at the funeral (03/04/1980) of Archbishop Oscar Romero's and being shot upon by El Salvadoran army. Dozens of people were killed that day.

These men, Claudio and Ricardo, two men who St. Oscar Romero stood with in solidarity, in whom he observed the presence of Love, and the cause of Christ. St. Francis of Assisi felt the immanence of his Saviour in the midst of poverty and, he was drawn there for his Love of Jesus and, there Jesus' Love for the poor became his love. Dorothy Day was compelled by the depth of her compassionate feeling to not only be amongst the poor but also, she followed her resolute empathy, for those disenfranchised by systems of oppression, to fight for justice. Martin Luther King Jr., sensitive toward the unceasing struggle of segregation and relentless racial subjugation, had a dream that all men, being created equal, might consider one another equal and know the harmony of oneness.

These four individuals, who lived for the lifeless and hopeless, became voices for the voiceless, continue to speak to us of the possibility for the waning of apathy and oppression as truth and justice arise through a committed resistance for the cause of liberation for all people in every way, in the name of Jesus Christ. Leonardo and Clodovis Boff pose the deliberately challenging question, 'how are we to be Christians in a world of destitution and injustice? There can be only one answer: we can be followers of Jesus and true Christians only by making a

common cause with the poor and working out the gospel of liberation.’<sup>93</sup> The inclination of God is with the poor. If one’s inclination is to be with God and to follow Jesus Christ then, naturally the individual will gravitate toward being with the poor.

### **Invitation to Hospitality**

‘God’s guest list includes a disconcerting number of poor and broken people, those who appear to bring little to any gathering except their need. The distinctive quality of Christian hospitality is that it offers a generosity to the “least”, without concern for advantage or benefit to the host. Such hospitality reflects God’s greater hospitality that welcomes the undeserving, provides the lonely with a home, and sets a banquet table for the hungry.’<sup>94</sup>

The poor are often the recipient of invitation and care by those who have the resources. Dorothy Day encourages a movement beyond mere charity to actions that display an interest in justice. The invitation consists of an appeal for education, particularly in the case of downward mobility, humility. Paulo Freire’s scholarship and progressions will be source for ongoing study and understanding of conscientization. Dorothy Day, St. Francis, Martin Luther King Jr. and Oscar Romero all refer to the importance of community as the medium wherein original solidarity and fraternity may be realized. There’s a tension in the way of methodology and living the heart of God in the movement of invitation to hospitality, the context of initial connection wherein the dynamics between the inviting influence and the recipient could be challenged.

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<sup>93</sup> Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011), 7.

<sup>94</sup> Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 16.

There may be gaps in the scholarship and literature regarding the underlying inspiration that is the bona fide fuel in the practise of hospitality, the heart of hospitality.

### **Hospitality to Liberation**

‘Alienation was evidence of frustrated communication, the product of segregation between races, between cultures, and even between aspects of the self. And agape was not a private psychological experience but a form of communication that could not exist in isolation from community. It found its highest expression in hospitality and service.’<sup>95</sup>

I will continue to explore the heart and voices of the individuals highlighted on this paper. I hope to encounter and follow after some other ‘life’ examples as well in order to learn more about the heart of those who have practised solidarity and passionate activism in opposition to forces of oppression. I want to learn about ‘how they encounter love’ and ‘what makes them dance’, how they’ve connected with the rhythm of life in solidarity and service of the impoverished. This exploration in order to consider invitation, messaging (storytelling) and application, in the situation of service.

The credibility of Liberation Theology has been commonly challenged due to its perceived and sometimes pronounced connection with Marxism and aspects of communism. I’m curious about this disconnect as it seems that a number of the Voices and Lives that I have had a chance to learn from are inclined to Marxism to various degrees, even proponents of the certain ideology expressed in Marxism. Liberation Theology has been quietened over the last decades

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<sup>95</sup> Inchausti, *Subversive Orthodoxy*, 107.

therefore, I'm interested in the possibility of a contemporary expression as we are navigating through a tumultuous, historical moment.

### **Liberation to Faithfulness**

‘The prophetic church proclaims and enacts the doctrine of the brotherhood of man; it recognizes that man is a spirit; it invites each person to recognize that he or she is representative of humanity. That is what it means to become a subject, as Freire says. It is a subjectivity which is realized in a social context and made possible by reason of our species-specific powers of language.’<sup>96</sup>

Martin Luther King Jr. and St. Oscar Romero invited their listeners into a new story and a new way of living, one wherein all could experience liberation, both the oppressor and the oppressed. This trust in God, that believes Him who comes, ‘If I am for you, then who could be against you.’ With God there is nothing to fear. In this movement of faithfulness, even as St. Francis committed to with extreme devotion, there’s a supreme trust in God, one that liberates in the annihilation of fear. Dorothee Soelle, in her writing, helps frame liberation as a positive result of becoming vulnerable and contemporary Christian spiritual formation forerunners like Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen and Carlo Carretto will be sought after to connect the personal, spiritual journey in relation to faithful solidarity and authentic fraternity.

**True heart.** Dorothy Day could perceive what was real and fake. God knows whose hearts are genuinely for him and whose have darkened, fallen asleep. The street knows plastic.

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<sup>96</sup> Berthoff, “Paulo Freire’s Liberation Pedagogy,” 368.

There is tension today in locating the genuine article, even the true, faithful voice that is surely advocating and abiding in honest, caring interest. Narcissism is an ugly, manipulative force in our midst. Truth is unveiling. I hope to engage with more Voices and Lives who speak truth and ‘actual’ solidarity in order to perceive the expression of the heart of God. This, while nurturing courage in those who care to enter into the fray, this battle that presents a stance in opposition to the dark forces of oppression. The threatening strength of forgiveness and vulnerability while presenting, non-violently in resistance to any injustice; in effect, ‘what this kind of love looks like’ in a world that targets and ever-represses the weak.

## FINAL WORDS

**Back to the Curbside.** To close, reflecting back on the picture of the curbside and the two men; they made it through the OD together. It wouldn’t be long until one of them would fall into the others arms for help through another close-call, life-or-death moment. Following that, it would happen again and, again. What matters, is the coming-alive moments between one OD and next. These moments by invitation into community, learning of liberation and the faithfulness of God and His enduring Love, that: we’re loved, we’re not alone and there’s always hope.

## APPENDIX C—MILESTONE 3 DESIGN WORKSHOP REPORT

### NPO STATEMENT

‘Nurturing belonging in the context of the poor, displaced.’

### NPO SCOPE AND CONSTRAINTS

The boundaries, non-negotiables and costs associated with ‘Nurturing belonging in the context of the poor, displaced,’ are encompassed in an open attitude, willing to be led the direction that God may direct the study. The important boundaries to be mindful of will include people who are involved in the work. Sensitivity to boundaries and non-negotiables will be necessary in order to keep to the integrity of the course by which vulnerability is an essential component. This must not be manipulated. There may be an expense associated with regards to the creation of ‘context’ for the accomplishment of the study. Parameters for involvement, donorship, volunteerism will be worked out with precision in order to keep the integrity of the cause intact.

### NPO CONTEXT

The context whereby the study of ‘Nurturing belonging in the context of the poor, displaced’ will transpire could be the Mustard Seed Street Church in Victoria, BC. Engagement



with participants for the project will begin here, a street church of the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada (CBWC). Those of the Mustard Seed community may be actively homeless and struggling with addiction, some participants may exhibit mental/physical and social barriers. A sensitivity for cultural differences and expressed, diverse sexual identity is essential in the way of nurturing belonging in the context of the inner-city street church. The Mustard Seed is a home and place whereby thousands in our city find belonging and essential services in the way of groceries, meals, clothing, advocacy and Christ-centered spiritual formation. All this disclosed, it may be that the setting or context of the NPO ministry be elsewhere, other than the street church. Regardless, those who will be affected by the ministry of the NPO will stream from this location.

#### NPO ROOT CAUSES

Root causes of the NPO, ‘Nurturing belonging in the context of the poor, displaced’, result from poverty, addiction and shame. Furthermore, mental, emotional, spiritual, physical and social health issues may factor in, affecting those who are experiencing displacement in their lives and keeping them from a sense of belonging within the community of the Mustard Seed Street Church. Other root causes for the NPO may be found in feelings of woundedness, being judged, lack of trust and disbelief. Richard Rohr, in his book *Everything Belongs*, describes the experience of being ‘in utter exile here’ as being without the knowledge or hope of the presence of God who hides in everything and waits patiently for our coming to him.<sup>97</sup> ‘Nurturing Belonging’ will work to encourage this exploration, our belonging to Him, as we adventure into

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<sup>97</sup> Richard Rohr, *Everything Belongs: the Gift of Contemplative Prayer* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003), 117.

life in community that seeks to create an atmosphere of belonging with one another. As we learn more about ourselves and one another, we will draw nearer to God, his Love and good, liberating plan for our lives.

### THREE BIG IDEAS

‘Vulnerability’, that we may be most open at our point of greatest need, was determined to be our first Big Idea. ‘Personalism’ was our next Big Idea, that we are unique and have diverse needs that require care and respect for space and time if connection and belonging within community is the desired outcome. Finally, the ‘Practise of Love’ in a less invasive fashion, by what we referred to as ‘negative capabilities’, was our third and final Big Idea. We arrived at these ideas through two Brainstorming exercises (‘Dot Voting’ and the ‘\$100 Test’) and careful, detailed discussions.

### DEFINITION OF ‘DONE’

‘An increased awareness and understanding of the ‘belonging’ experience, the understanding of person-specific factors inhibiting belonging and attitudes for personal/community development in order to reinforce the sense of belonging in a given context.’

### 3 NAPKIN PITCHES

#### **Napkin Pitch One**

**Big Idea:** ‘Street’, is a curriculum of adventure, will be developed to explore the possibility of belonging in what may be deemed, for many, as an unlikely place.

**Audience:** Two internship positions will be created for the Mustard Seed Street Church intended for those who are attending university and are interested in the possibility of a life commitment to Christian Ministry. Perhaps, more specifically, to inner-city Christian ministry.

**NPO:** ‘Nurturing belonging in the context of the poor, displaced.’

**Benefit:** Street, could benefit the student as course credits. The connections made and friendships formed through ‘Street’, as well as the deeply transformative experience of belonging will also be of benefit to the student.

**Approach:** ‘Street’ will be a program that is intended to education in situation of practise. Teaching and dialogue will occur in situation, on-the-ground; in practise, there will be the opportunity for different paradigms to emerge surrounding inclusion and belonging.

**Risks:** Risk to the origin, development or sustainability of the ministry will be felt: there are not applicants, or if the curriculum becomes unappealing, or if the student is not willing to allow the shaping of new understanding to occur.

**Assumptions/hypotheses to test:** The possibility of teaching, in practise, ideas and opportunities for enduring and nurturing belonging.

**Benchmarks of success:** Completion of the program, to begin with, may be a benchmark for success. Also, the testimony of transformation and interest for continuation of relationship with the Mustard Seed community will be a benchmark for success.

**Other Approaches:** The entire program of ‘Street’ is ‘on-the-ground’ and in practise. The teaching and conversation, dialogue and exercises, writing and testing of ideas are all in context with the subject matter of ‘nurturing belonging.’

## **Napkin Pitch Two**

**Big Idea:** The idea for Napkin Pitch Two concerns those who seem unreachable, at the outermost region of the margin-lands. This idea is called ‘Furthest Out, Closer In’ (FOCI).

**Audience:** This is intended for those who are deemed the furthest out, set apart, on the margins of the inner-city street-entrenched community.

**NPO:** ‘Nurturing belonging in the context of the poor, displaced.’

**Benefit:** A benefit is being accepted, welcomed, for ‘who you are’ and, that there’s no rush to it, only grace and patience. With this, the hope for a new beginning/story through finding belonging in a different context (kind of community).

**Approach:** The story is an important aspect of FOCL. Also, there’s the consideration of the real possibility that, those ‘furthest out’ are closer to God (the one who is nearest to the broken). So, there is a story of belonging to be shared and a nurturing to explore with grace, together. An expert storyteller may be a helpful aspect to the approach and finding articulation and method for expressing our truths.

**Risks:** A potential risk may arise in exclusion if trust does not find initiation. Also, if there’s a refusal toward vulnerability, despite space and time. And, if hope and motivation are somehow extinguished.

**Assumptions/hypotheses to test:** The test is the possibility of connecting with those who may look most lost but, who have the most real stories with God.

**Benchmarks of success:** That people might be able to come together in community and to wholeness personally through storytelling, acceptance and belonging.

**Other Approaches:** This approach is the story of next steps and, following FOCI, perhaps employment with ‘Community’ or a new environment with ‘Beyond the Streets’. What sets FOCI apart could be that there will be a disinterest toward finding a format or template or formality or strategy, to capitalize and highlight stats on transformed and changed lives. People are more than mere objects.

### **Napkin Pitch Three**

- Big Idea:**
- a. ‘Beyond the Streets’, another option to living and healing in community.
  - b. ‘Community’, a place to get away from the plastic of life and to talk about the real thing, what that looks like. Belonging.
- Audience:**
- a. Creating hope and community together. Belonging. Personalism and expression of love and hope.
  - b. An inner-city gathering point for people of all walks of life who are interested in the possibility of a different way of life and experience of liberation.

**NPO:** ‘Nurturing belonging in the context of the poor, displaced.’ How may all of us be able to identify ourselves as the ‘poor, displaced’ in need of love?

- Benefit:**
- a. Home, belonging, reason and safety. The opportunity for a different way of living in an environment that nurtures belonging and healing.

b. The encouraging message, quality music and life-giving atmosphere will set 'Community' apart. It may also give opportunity for employment and training.

**Approach:** a. Beyond the Streets (BTS) will be a community of people living and learning and growing together. There will be connections with local believers and faith communities and building, farming professionals. Other aspects of the approach will include skills development, tenets and practise of creation care, farming, tiny house production and connection with Christ. BTS will be another option for the distressed, displaced.'

b. A coffee shop, a gathering place for people of all walks of life. 'Community' will be a place to serve and a place to consider new ideas and ways of being. Beautiful music from a stage area, speakers to share eloquently from their expertise, to encourage life and thought. Employment opportunities will abound. Innovation to community and connection with BTS.

**Risks:** a. It might fail if the vision for BTS isn't caught and if the funding is not materializing. Also, if those carrying the vision get tired and/or disillusioned.

b. Mission drift will be a risk to 'Community'. If the original and ongoing plan is not to trust God first, the ministry will be at risk. If there is a decrease to vision and funding, risk to its proliferation. Also, internal struggles could extinguish the fire in the heart of 'Community'.

**Assumptions to test:** a. a new idea for community, nurturing (like a beckoning) belonging out of lostness and exile back to hopefulness.

b. testing vulnerability and possibility for connection and belonging through all walks and ways of life. Considering the nature of God's love, connection and hope for the future.

**Benchmarks of success:** a. Sense of connection, resiliency through challenges and evening fireside stories.

b. Audience, subject matter and music proliferating, storytelling becomes an exciting aspect of 'Community'.

**Other Approaches:** a. The community of BTS may be similar to Catholic Workers approach however, there may be a greater inclination for wonder and inclusivity with BTS that may make it surprising and unique. "All that is created".

b. 'Community' will not center on numbers but on the care of hearts and souls. The approach will be concerned for the liberation of people (of all sorts) from systems and structures of oppression. A place, not as an escape but as another option; a place to consider what love and truth and justice and other important things are. A place where the hope for change rises up in the music, the friendships, the conversation and the movement.



## DESIGN WORKSHOP STAKEHOLDERS

There were five people at the Design Workshop, though nine were expected (myself included). I was the facilitator of the workshop.

- One of the attendees offered some expertise streaming from the subject and history of Liberation Theology as well as being from an impoverished country and knowing the experience of oppression closely.
- Another person who derives from the experience and learning as a minority. Also, serving the impoverished as the coordinator of the Mustard Seed's free Food Market for many years denotes a deep grasp with regards to the needs of our poor, displaced.
- A woman who is extensively experienced in Non-Profit organization, street outreach and carries an expertise in progressive, next-generation leadership.
- A man who is a musician and teacher. He has been serving at the Mustard Seed Street Church and the expression of Street Café, a unique café-style restaurant-type atmosphere provided for our displaced community every Friday evening.

## ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

The One-on-One interview were difficult to line-up. A few more than are represented here were approached to be involved in the interviews. Thankful to these ones who offered their thoughts and time.

- The first interview was a man, an activist and ordained clergyman of the Anglican Church. He also leads a community of people in simple practices of Christian spiritual formation. His perspective is informed by a depth of both theory and practise.
- The second interview was with a man who has experience living very closely to the street, addiction and shame. This man is one who nurtures belonging everyday with us here in community. Many lives are being encouraged through him.
- Another man was approached to share his thoughts on the subject matter that streamed from the Design Workshop. He is currently living on the street and represents one who is living ‘the furthest out’, the outermost regions of the margins of our street-entrenched people in Victoria.
- Finally, a man who has been homeless, is currently living in temporary housing, has found employment with us at the Mustard Seed and has experienced as sense of transformative belonging with us here in community.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 1. Brene Brown – Braving the Wilderness (from the one side)

Brene Brown, in her book *Braving the Wilderness*, seeks to explore what true belonging can be at a time when division and exclusion are dominating aspects of our modern, contemporary world. Brene Brown is a researcher of vast renown, a TED Talk champion for her ‘The Power of Vulnerability’<sup>98</sup> and popular lecturer on subjects predisposed

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<sup>98</sup> Brene Brown, “The Power of Vulnerability,” filmed December 23, 2010 in Houston. Ted video, 20:04, [https://www.ted.com/talks/brene\\_brown\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_vulnerability/up-next?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability/up-next?language=en)

toward vulnerability, shame and empathy. She writes that ‘belonging to ourselves, means being called to stand alone – to brave the wilderness of uncertainty, vulnerability and criticism.’<sup>99</sup> Brown discovers and offers her account of the courage that we are called into as we seek belonging. The audience intended for the enjoyment in this book is one desirous of greater connection and experience of belonging. Ultimately, the audience is one that has not lost hope in the possibility of belonging and story. This book and other pieces of Brown’s work will serve to increase and hone the vision for the nurturing of belonging in the context of the poor, displaced in the inner-city.

2. Henri Nouwen – The Wounded Healer. (The Inner Person, Compassion and Contemplation.) Henri Nouwen’s *The Wounded Healer* offers some direction for the Christian leader in the context of the NPO, ‘Nurturing belonging in the context of the poor, displaced’. His work reveals the nature of the struggle implicit to disconnection between people. There is a glimpse of opportunity through his study in finding avenues for deepening the experience of ‘welcome’ and ‘belonging’ between people in the world today; a world that is deluded by relentless, justifiable individualism, the distraction of too many battling voices and a kind of self-centered thriving. Nouwen desires to breakthrough and deliver a new vision of connection. His center is Jesus Christ, that ‘his appearance in our midst has made it undeniably clear that changing the human heart and changing human society are not separate tasks but are as

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<sup>99</sup> Brene Brown, *Braving the Wilderness: the Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone* (New York: Random House, 2017), 32.

interconnected as the two beams on the cross.’<sup>100</sup> There is an alignment between application of *The Wounded Healer* to this study of ‘nurturing belonging’. Aspects of this work of Nouwen’s and others will serve to direct the research, study and delivery of a project that will draw people not only closer to themselves and one another, but also to God.

### 3. Richard Rohr – Everything Belongs

Richard Rohr’s *Everything Belongs* provides the reader with deeper understanding of contemplation in relation to the self, the world and to God. There is a nurturing to our individual and corporate belonging; interlacing his words, hope that we are not lost, we are intended to be found, created to be together and to be in relationship. Rohr seems like a jolly fellow, is an impressive author, prolific speaker and is the founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation. His focus on the spiritual life and prayer, resonate through his book. On the importance of forgiveness, he writes that it ‘is God’s entry point to powerlessness, as we see in his image on the cross.’<sup>101</sup> Vulnerability is demonstrated the image of powerlessness to forgiveness which may play a significant role in the connection desired through the encounter of the NPO in the context of the Mustard Seed.

### 4. Bouma-Prediger – Beyond Homelessness. Vulnerability (from the other side)

Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian Walsh, in their book *Beyond Homelessness* review the scope of homelessness, the raw reality of the struggle, the roots, history’s scope of the

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<sup>100</sup> Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (New York: Image Books Doubleday, 1979), 20.

<sup>101</sup> Rohr, *Everything Belongs*, 134.

alienation, theology of exile and homecoming, as well as the varied current experiences of displacement both locally and globally. The authors are established writers and professors. Their polished academic approach along with ‘real life’ story will assist our commitment to the NPO, nurturing belonging. Keeping the dignity of the person resounds in their study as they seek to expand the vision of homelessness to even the space that a person needs to discover their own needs and readiness for change. Coercion and manipulation, encroaching on space can proliferate a greater alienation, despite best intentions. This understanding is important for belonging, the respect of space and time for the person to determine readiness; for a movement into community and relationship cannot be rushed or manipulated. The authors refer to liberating imaginations, that ‘captive imaginations cannot conceive of life outside the constrictions of normalcy.’<sup>102</sup> Through patience and the sharing of stories, perhaps in the context of the NPO, imaginations might be liberated, and we might be free enough to perceive the opportunity for belonging, even new beginnings and the hope of a fresh story.

## 5. Parker Palmer – A Hidden Wholeness

Parker Palmer’s *A Hidden Wholeness* concentrates on the soul of a person, the sense of wholeness and the possibility of finding belonging together with others who are journeying toward wholeness. Palmer is the founder of the Center for Courage and Renewal and is author of a number of potent pieces of literature. He refers to ‘circles of

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<sup>102</sup> Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian J. Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 316.

trust', in his work, as a safe context between people that is intentioned toward exploration of healing and wholeness within community. In his book he reflects on the words of Maria Rilke, as he considers the situation of a circle of trust, 'who wrote of "the love that consists in this, that two solitudes protect and border and salute each other."'”<sup>103</sup> The safety of the circle will be gleaned from and, perhaps adapted in ways as we consider the movement of nurturing belonging. This kind of respect for one another as we journey into deeper connection, that doesn't overlap but allows for space to breathe and live into the liberation of the experience.

## APPENDIX

### **Design Workshop Description**

The Design Workshop was held from 9am to 3pm on Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 625 Queens Avenue in Victoria, BC, The Mustard Seed Street Church. The Design Workshop

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<sup>103</sup> Parker Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward An Undivided Life* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 2004), 62.

(see artifacts in Design Workshop Documentation) began with a welcome, introductions and ground rules. We moved into Brain-Storming games, revisiting the NPO and engaging with the context for application of the subject matter (Context Map and Pain-Gain Map). After Lunch we shared in two more activities in order to explore the NPO further (Anti-Problem and The Blind Side). Keeping to the schedule plan, we closed with two more activities (Dot Voting and \$100 Test) before proceeding to Napkin Pitches and a time for debrief.

Invited to the Design Workshop were eight people who have a depth of knowledge surrounding the NPO and practical, on-the-ground experience with the NPO. On the morning, four people turned up. Each of the participants who attended were actively involved in the activities and discussions. Those who missed the meeting were approached with an update of the meeting afterwards. Their reasons for missing the workshop varied.

On a 5-point ‘Likert Scale’, according to a ‘Professional Event Feedback’ scale<sup>104</sup> as follows:

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Not so helpful
- Not at all helpful

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<sup>104</sup> “What is a Likert Scale,” Survey Monkey, accessed December 9, 2020, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/likert-scale/>.

My assessment of the Design Workshop is ‘Very helpful’. The line-up, for those who were invited, was solid. In other words, we came together knowing why we were coming together that morning. Information was shared from expertise in practise. Voices that were missing at the table for our discussions and feedback on activities were that of an Academic, a (professional theoretician with the NPO book knowledge and intellectual acumen) and individuals who represent the ‘in-situation’ experience of ‘not belonging’. By 2pm, we were crawling. Physical and mental fatigue was setting in for each one of us. A couple people remained behind to complete the ‘Napkin Pitches’ and, a couple people decided to do the Napkin Pitches at home and send them to me. Unfortunately, I only received two Napkin Pitches. I have ‘filled the order’ with three extra Napkin Pitches that center on the ‘Big Ideas.

### Design Workshop Documentation



Figure 30. *Left*, Design Workshop setup; *right*, Gamestorming.



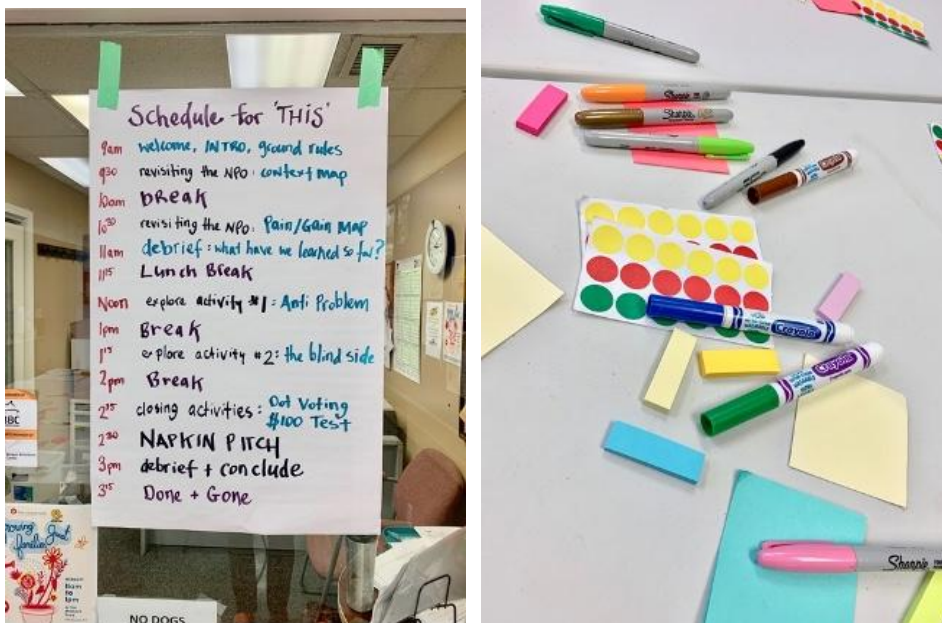


Figure 31. *Left*, Design Workshop schedule; *right*, the games pieces.

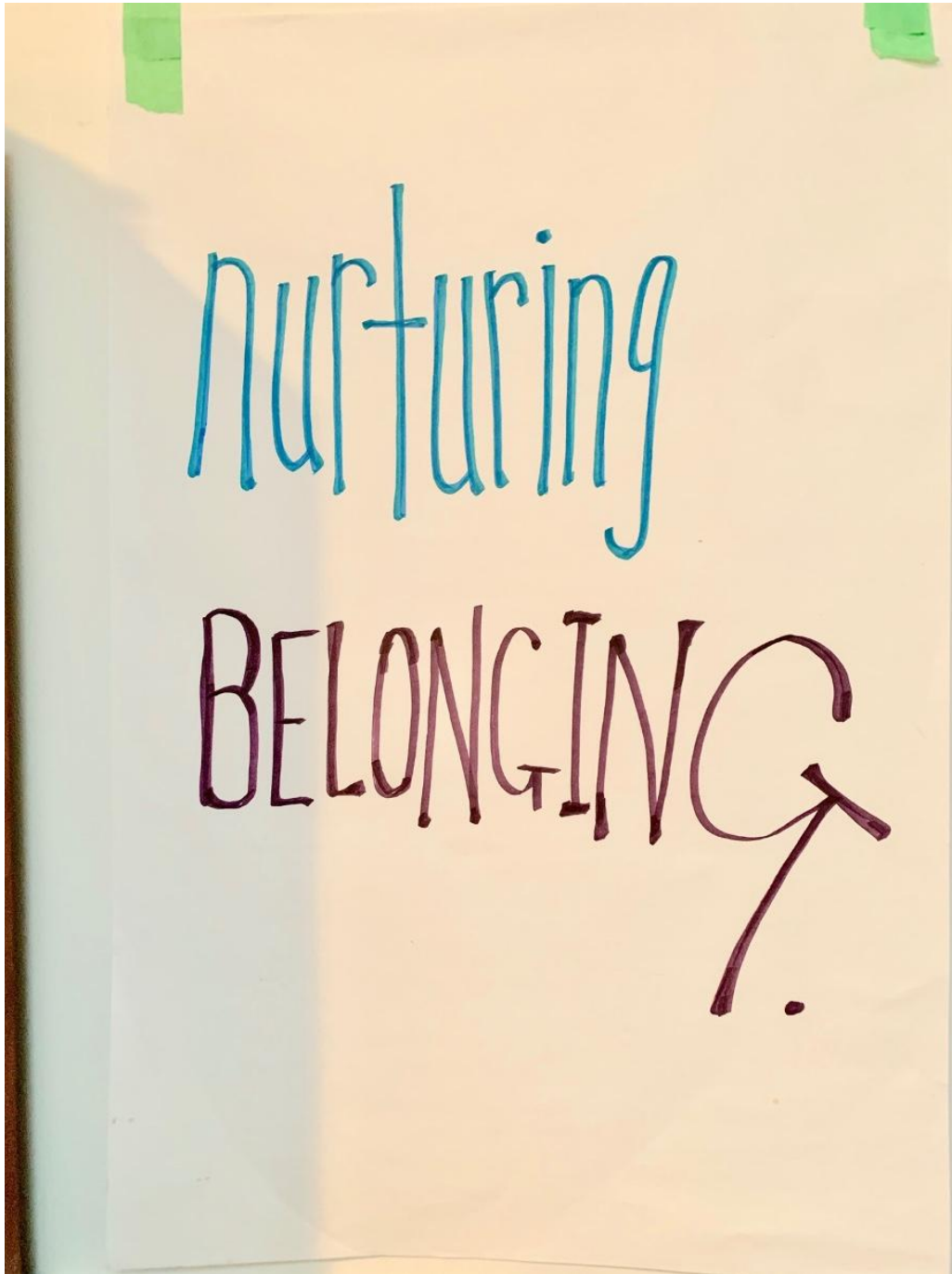


Figure 32. This was a highlighted theme of our games and conversation.

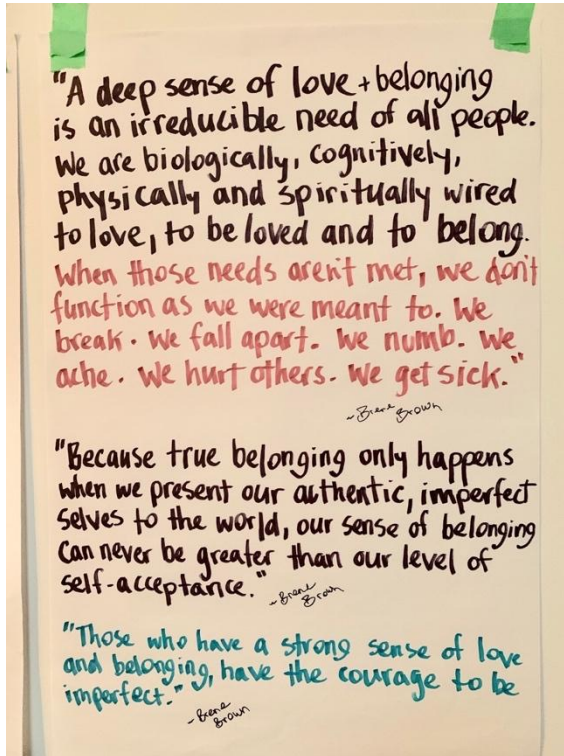


Figure 33. Quotes of Brene Brown that apply to the NPO.

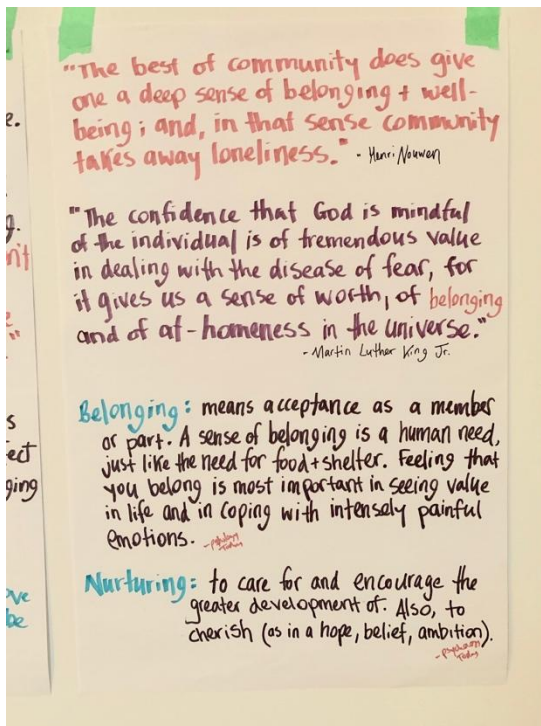


Figure 34. Quotes and definitions to inform our approach to games.

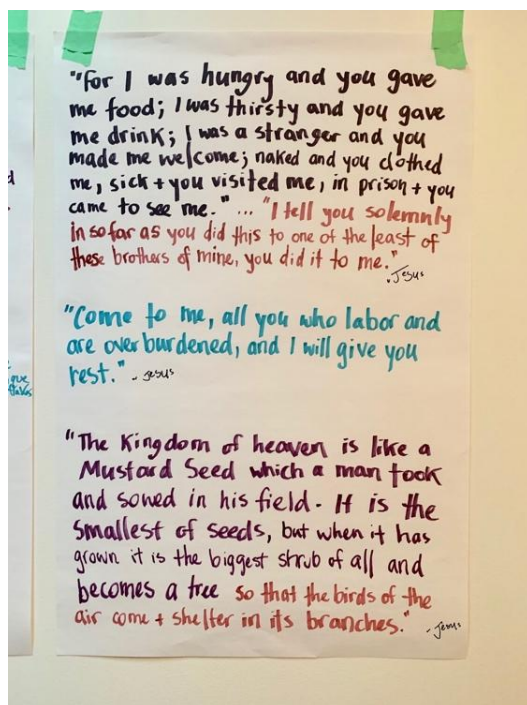


Figure 35. Scripture to inform our approach and remind our focus on Christ.

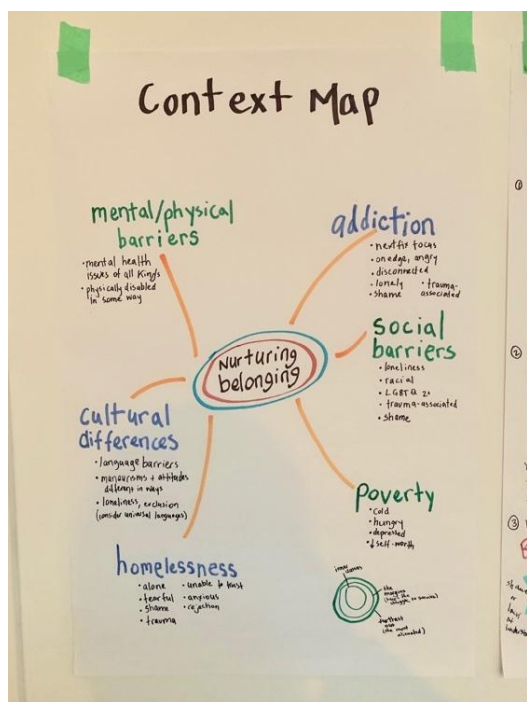


Figure 36. Context Map on barriers at the MSSC.



# NURTURING BELONGING DEFINITION Questions

① What key issue of **Nurturing Belonging** are we trying to address? (why is it important?)

- Barriers:
  - NO IDEALISM!
  - X
  - SIMPLICITY
  - FEW EXPECTATIONS
- Isolation
- hopelessness
- connections
- placeless
- listening
- time
- efficiency

② Who is impacted by **Nurturing Belonging** should our focus be (toward 'belonging') here.

- those who are vulnerable
- THE POOR WOMEN
- TEENAGERS
- CHILDREN
- \* Everyone
- Children
- immigrants
- homeless
- All who are longing for connection
- elderly
- homeless
- teens

You can't force belonging!  
? could nurturing belonging have to do with or letting go of the 'how to?' to let it happen.

③ What social, cultural factors shape **Belonging here?**

- shame
- lack of understanding
- shame as barrier?
- How to express the struggle?
- shame within
- How much is too much in the way of opening?
- other disconnected trust?
- CELEBRATION
- RITUALS
- VALUES
- DISCIPLINES
- (SPIRITUAL)
- ART
- People don't want to be known.
- connection point: just Fridays
- safe place to eat + be anonymous
- accepting rejection
- that people have the way they want to belong
- Trifft + motives
- Church: children's struggle.
- power + control issues.
- Victorian Canadian Culture

Figure 37. Nurturing Belonging definition questions.

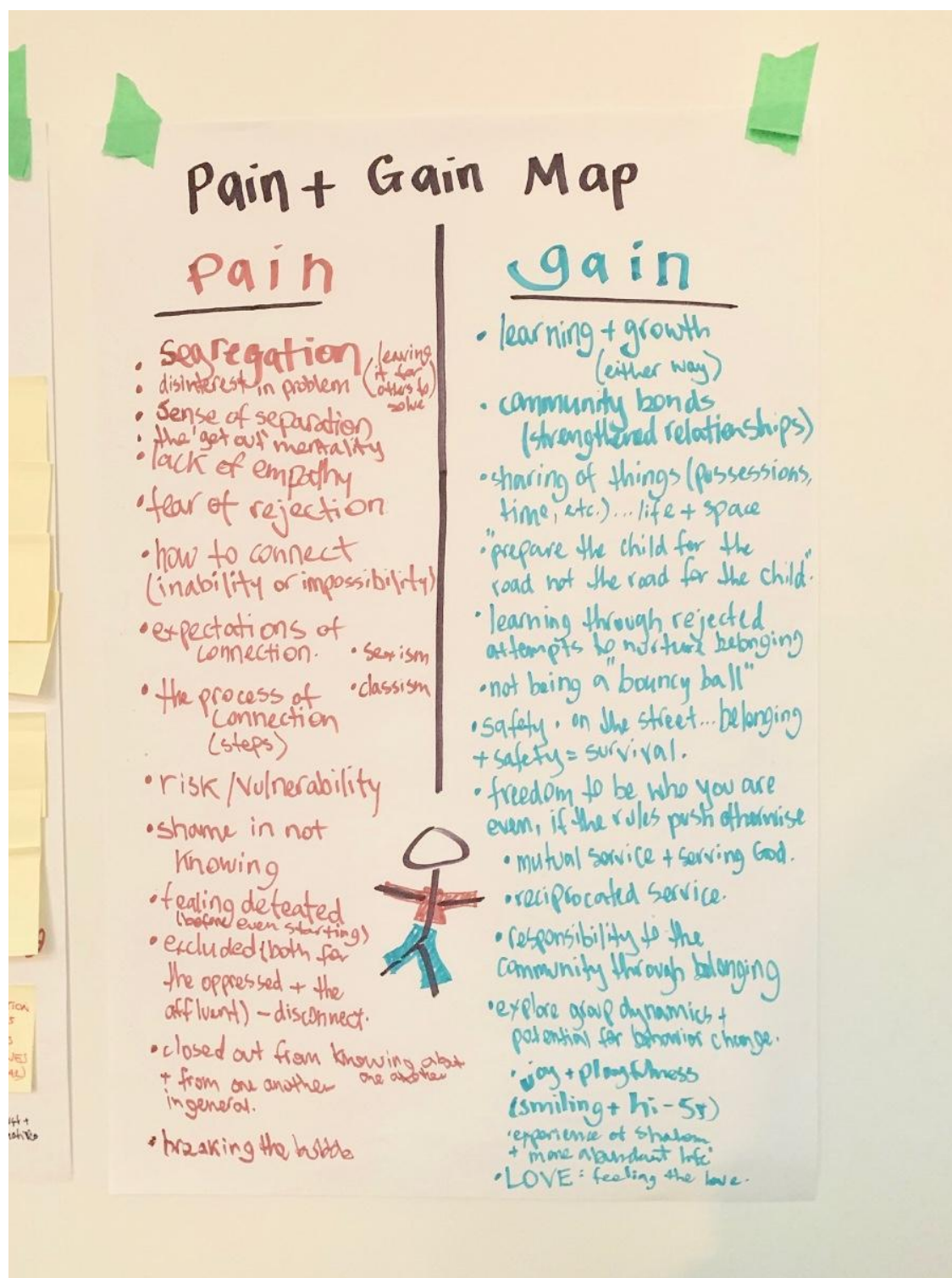


Figure 38. Pain and Gain Map.



Figure 39. The Blind Side, a thought-provoking game.



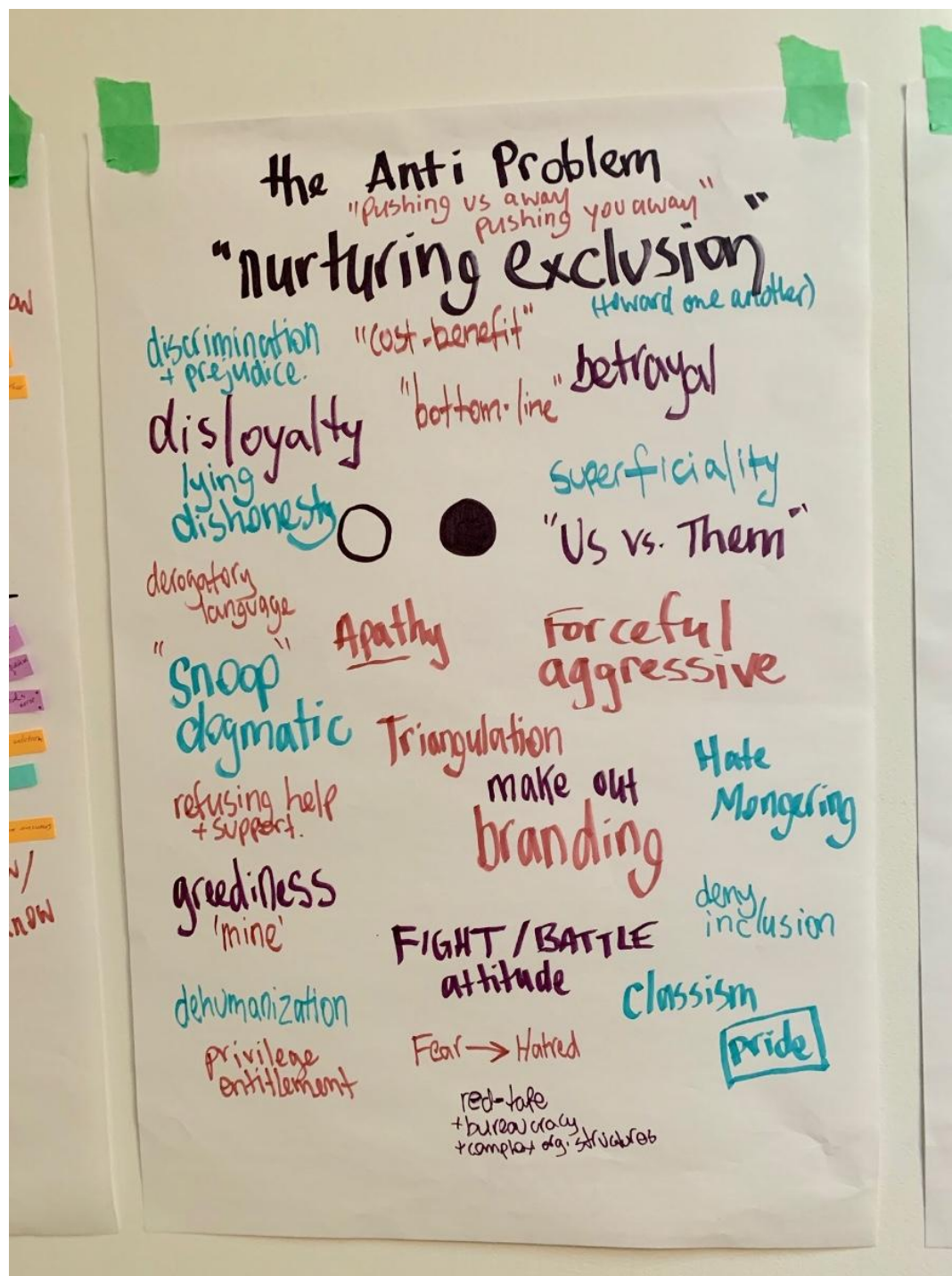


Figure 40. The Anti-Problem, nurturing exclusion.

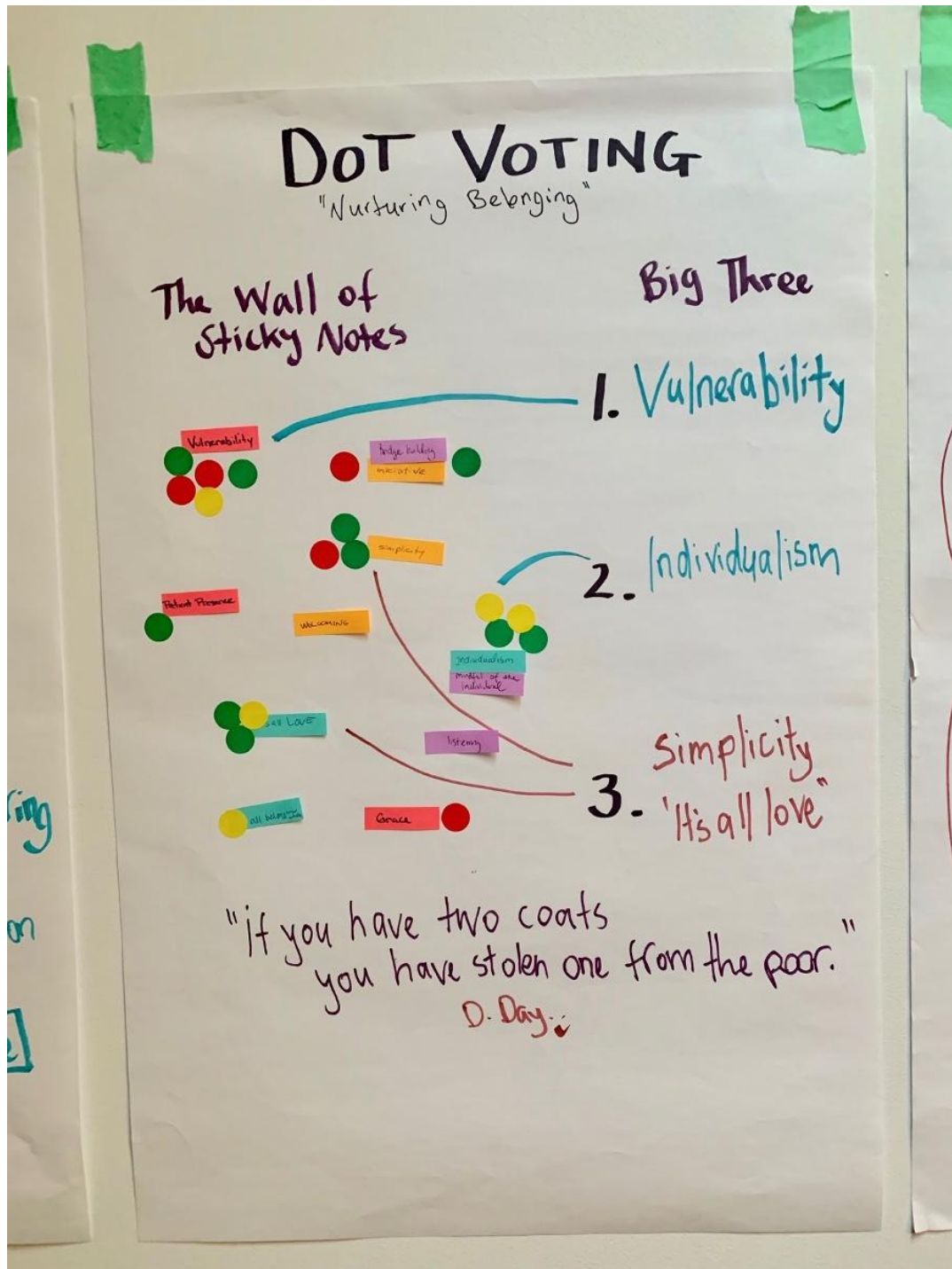


Figure 41. Dot Voting, the three big ideas.

# \$100 TEST

TOPIC <small>Nurturing Belonging</small>	\$	WHY
Vulnerability	\$50	most open at greatest need
Simplicity	\$10	time, ↓ expectations ↓ struggle... foots
initiative/ bridge-building		
welcoming		
patient presence		
individualism	\$30	Everyone's needs are different: focus for unique snowflakes
grace		
'it's all love'	\$10	Foundational to nurturing belonging
Everyone belongs		
listening		

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Figure 42. One Hundred Dollar Test, testing the three big ideas.



## Napkin Pitch Worksheet

Use this template to solidify an idea. Gain clarity on how to execute and pitch your idea. A good idea can be communicated simply, often on the back of a napkin.

Create a napkin pitch for each concept you propose to address the NPO.

<p><b>WHAT IS THE BIG IDEA?</b></p> <p>Nurturing belonging is being vulnerable to each other, being yourself, not pretending or representing another, being loving, basic and simple.</p>		
<p><b>WHO IS IT FOR?</b></p> <p>The poor of Victoria through The Mustard Seed Church</p>	<p><b>WHAT IS THE NPO?</b></p> <p>Nurturing Belonging</p>	<p><b>HOW DOES THE USER BENEFIT?</b></p> <p>Providing a space to develop relations, fellowship, through meals and conversations</p>
<p><b>ILLUSTRATE OR DESCRIBE HOW IT WORKS</b></p> <p>The poor, homeless, addicts, lonely hear about the Mustard Seed Church and come. They are welcomed and accepted to their place through service. Meals are provided, conversations happen, connections established. The boutique and the market, bingo, karaoke, etc. all are organized services for them. But, does serving allow vulnerability an actual attitude?</p>		
<p><b>WHY MIGHT IT FAIL?</b></p> <p>serving without reaching out to the poor</p>	<p><b>WHAT SPECIFICALLY ARE WE TESTING?</b></p> <p>our capacity to be a fellowship</p>	<p><b>HOW MIGHT WE MEASURE SUCCESS?</b></p> <p>intimacy</p>
<p><b>WHAT MAKES THIS STAND OUT FROM OTHER APPROACHES?</b></p> <p>Being more than a philanthropic enterprise.</p>		

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Figure 43. Napkin Pitch Workshop, focus on nurturing belonging.

## Napkin Pitch Worksheet

Use this template to solidify an idea. Gain clarity on how to execute and pitch your idea. A good idea can be communicated simply, often on the back of a napkin.

Create a napkin pitch for each concept you propose to address the NPO. <sup>NEED</sup> ~~PROBLEM~~ <sub>OPP</sub>

WHAT IS THE BIG IDEA?

Vulnerability  
Individual

Connecting vulnerable individuals with a sense of belonging.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Anyone feeling: lost, unloved,  
invisible, disconnected,  
longing, confused, detached  
forgotten, alone.

WHAT IS THE NPO?

Nurturing  
Belonging

HOW DOES THE USER BENEFIT?

- Sense of belonging.
- Understood
- Loved
- Connected
- Cared for

ILLUSTRATE OR DESCRIBE HOW IT WORKS

a simple non judgemental love, provided to the user no strings attached zero expectations. Time and love provided to the user to build trust. Understanding everyone's individual needs, stories, paths, goals and working together to build a sense of belonging. Establishing good rapport instilling self worth in individuals, providing patience and unconditional love.

WHY MIGHT IT FAIL?

- mistrust
- past experiences
- feelings of worthlessness

WHAT SPECIFICALLY ARE WE TESTING?

if keeping it simple and helping vulnerable individual can help them open up to the idea of belonging, knowing their worth.

HOW MIGHT WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

increased volume in social settings, individuals opening up, sharing. Showing up and being present.

WHAT MAKES THIS STAND OUT FROM OTHER APPROACHES?

There is not ulterior motive. Seeing ~~and~~ a vulnerable individual and accepting them for who they are and at the state they are in and still willing to love, show grace and support is a healthy start that is often overlooked.

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Figure 44. Napkin Pitch Workshop, focus on vulnerability.

## Napkin Pitch Worksheet

Use this template to solidify an idea. Gain clarity on how to execute and pitch your idea. A good idea can be communicated simply, often on the back of a napkin.

Create a napkin pitch for each concept you propose to address the NPO.

WHAT IS THE BIG IDEA?

- a. Beyond the Streets
- b. Community

WHO IS IT FOR?

Recreating home + community together.  
 an inner-city gathering  
 Point for people of all  
 walks of life.

WHAT IS THE NPO?

Nurturing  
 Belonging  
 in the context of the  
 displaced, poor.

HOW DOES THE USER BENEFIT?

- a. Home, belonging, peace, safety
- b. Encouraging message, life-giving atmosphere, opp. for employment.

ILLUSTRATE OR DESCRIBE HOW IT WORKS

- a. Beyond the Streets (BTS) - a community of people living + learning and growing together. Connections with local believers and professionals, skills development, self-sustaining, creation care, farming, tiny house, connection with Christ deeply. Safe. Another option for the distressed, displaced.
- b. A coffee shop - gathering place for people of all walks of life. a place to serve + a place to consider ideas. music from a stage. speakers stage to encourage life + thought. Employment opportunity. Innovation. Connect to BTS.

WHY MIGHT IT FAIL?

- a. Vision not caught. Fatigue. No \$ to go.
- b. Mission Drift. Lack of vision + ↓ funding. Internal struggles.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY ARE WE TESTING?

- a. Community, nurturing belonging all of lostness back to hopefulness.
- b. testing vulnerability + possibility for connection + belonging through all walks

HOW MIGHT WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

- a. sense of connection, resilience through challenges, Fireside Stories.
- b. audience, subject matter, music, storytelling, story telling becomes exciting.

WHAT MAKES THIS STAND OUT FROM OTHER APPROACHES?

- a. Community may be similar to Catholic Workers approach however; there may be a greater inclination for wonder + inclusivity with BTS that may make it surprising + unique. All that is created.
  - b. not a centering on members but on the care of hearts + souls. approach is concerned for the liberation of people of all sorts from systems + structures of oppression. Safe space + road.
- No escape. Only love + truth.

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Figure 45. Napkin Pitch Workshop, focus on prototypes.



## Napkin Pitch Worksheet

Use this template to solidify an idea. Gain clarity on how to execute and pitch your idea. A good idea can be communicated simply, often on the back of a napkin.

Create a napkin pitch for each concept you propose to address the NPO.

WHAT IS THE BIG IDEA?

Farthest Out, Closer In (FOCI)

WHO IS IT FOR?

• for those deemed  
farthest out on the  
margins of the inner  
city.

WHAT IS THE NPO?

Nurturing  
Belonging, in  
the context of the  
displaced, poor.

HOW DOES THE USER BENEFIT?

Being accepted for  
who they are - no rush  
to this - only grateful  
patience. The hope of  
a new beginning/story  
through finding belonging

ILLUSTRATE OR DESCRIBE HOW IT WORKS



In this space  
is dark void.  
Nothingness...  
Perhaps death or,  
Perhaps here is God.

the dwellers  
on the outside,  
just outside  
the doors.

beyond the  
outskirts. These  
ones are on the  
other side of the  
street - the farthest  
out on the margins

• Story is an important aspect of  
FOCI. That, perhaps those  
farthest out on the margins are  
closest to God. (the One who is  
new to the broken hearted).

• there is a story of God to be  
shared as belonging is nurtured.

• context for story telling and  
availability of expert 'creators of  
stories' will be essential & helpful.

WHY MIGHT IT FAIL?

- no trust
- refusal to ward  
vulnerability
- lack of readiness
- lost hope & motivation.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY ARE WE TESTING?

- testing the possibility  
of connecting with those  
who may look most lost  
but, who may have the most  
real stories with God.

HOW MIGHT WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

- How people  
individually might be  
able to come together,  
to wholeness through  
story, acceptance & belonging.

WHAT MAKES THIS STAND OUT FROM OTHER APPROACHES?

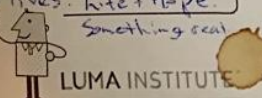
- the story of next steps, following FOCI, perhaps employment  
with 'community' or a new environment with 'Beyond the Streets'.
- not finding a format or template or seeking to formalize a strategy  
to capitalize & highlight for stats, transformation & changed lives. Life + Hope.

Something real

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Figure 46. Napkin Pitch Workshop, focus on prototypes.

## Napkin Pitch Worksheet

Use this template to solidify an idea. Gain clarity on how to execute and pitch your idea. A good idea can be communicated simply, often on the back of a napkin.

Create a napkin pitch for each concept you propose to address the NPO.

WHAT IS THE BIG IDEA?

*Summit: A Curriculum of Adventure.*

WHO IS IT FOR?

*Two Internship Positions at the Mustard Seed in Spring 2021. for students considering Christian Ministry*

WHAT IS THE NPO?

*Nurturing Belonging, in the context of the displaced & poor.*

HOW DOES THE USER BENEFIT?

*• Credits for degree program or degree?  
• the connection, friendship experience of belonging, as Practitioner will be transformative*

ILLUSTRATE OR DESCRIBE HOW IT WORKS

- 1. Education for students interested in learning about the possibility of connection with those who may, by what is seen, be perceived as 'the most lost' + 'the most broken'.*
- 2. Students interested in Christian ministry amongst the poor, displaced, for them to come vulnerable + willing to find belonging, themselves, amongst the poor, displaced. The possibility for shifting paradigms, in consideration + questioning of stories we've believed, imagined + wondered in new ways. PRACTISE.*

WHY MIGHT IT FAIL?

- no applicants*
- the curriculum does not 'fit the bill'*
- unwillingness to 'let go' in order to 'see new'*

WHAT SPECIFICALLY ARE WE TESTING?

*• the possibility of teaching, in practice, ideas + opportunities for nurturing belonging ( caveat: 'No one has arrived' )*

HOW MIGHT WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

- completion of program*
- testimony of transformation and new inspiration.*

WHAT MAKES THIS STAND OUT FROM OTHER APPROACHES?

*• the entire program is 'on-the-ground' in practice. the teaching + conversation, dialogue + exercises, writing, testing + practice all in context with the subject matter of 'nurturing belonging.'*

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Figure 47. Napkin Pitch Workshop, focus on prototypes.



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Figure 50. *Left*, exploring exercises; *right*, closing activities.

## ONE PAGE POST WORKSHOP MESSAGE TO STAKEHOLDERS

### Summary of NPO

The Need/Problem/Opportunity (NPO) Statement has been a source of direction for study and focused care over the last 14 months. In the Fall of 2019, following a Discover session, an agreed upon NPO to begin exploration and for further consideration was: ‘Nurturing solidarity in community within the context of the displaced and creating opportunity for integration and belonging through active compassion and spiritual formation.’ Recently, this NPO Statement has been streamline, solidified as: ‘Nurturing Belonging in the context of the poor, displaced.’ For easiest description regarding the focus of this study and transparent, foundational intentions within projects-to-arise, simply ‘Nurturing Belonging’ will suffice as the NPO Statement.

### Three Big Ideas

The ‘three Big Ideas’ discovered through our group exercises that pertained to the NPO ‘Nurturing Belonging’, were from greatest to least:

- Vulnerability: most open at point of greatest need.
- Personalism: everyone’s needs are different, respecting space and time.
- Practicing Love by Negative Capabilities: simplicity, patience, presence, listening.

The determination of these three Big Ideas, in this order, was explored and concluded together as a team in the Workshop. There was an agreement and reasoning together as these were discovered as vital Big Ideas for the NPO, ‘Nurturing Belonging’.

### **Definition of “DONE”**

Our definition of ‘done’ with regards to ‘Nurturing Belonging in the context of the poor, displaced of Victoria is: ‘an increased awareness and understanding of the ‘belonging’ experience, individual-specific factors inhibiting belonging and attitudes for development in order for the naturally-come-about sense of belonging in a given context.’

### **Benchmarks of Success**

- The willingness of an individual toward vulnerability in a given context whereby belonging may be nurtured.
- The upholding of the dignity of each person and respective readiness for belonging.
- Deeper understanding of an approach to loving our neighbour that is less anxious.

### **Key Insights**

An insightful perspective arose as we considered the difference between ‘ideas’ of belonging. For example, one’s on ‘the inside’ may desire for those on ‘the outside’ to come in so

as to find belonging inside. However, it may be that the context for ‘belonging’ that those on the inside may deem ‘best suited for all’ is not what those on the outside are inclined toward or find comfort in. Desire for belonging has many facets. Approach to nurturing belonging, therefore, requires a deep phronesis. Belonging will not be achieved in a ‘snap’; nurturing belonging calls for a lived wisdom and patience.

### AREAS REQUIRING FURTHER RESEARCH

Along with crafting/fine-tuning meeting facilitation skills, areas of research for further study include that may be of use in the development of depth/area regarding the NPO and ‘project execution’: shame vis-a-vis vulnerability, individualism vis-à-vis vulnerability, negative capabilities of love and the ‘furthest out’ layers of our societal/cultural margins.

- Shame and Vulnerability
- Negative Capabilities of Love
- Personalism and Vulnerability
- The ‘furthest out’ Layers

### **Project Options**

Streaming from the focus of our NPO Statement, the brainstorming exercises of our Design Exploration Workshop and napkin pitches, the following three project prototypes are being developed according to our 3 Big Ideas.

- Street: A Curriculum of Adventure (for two internship positions at the Mustard Seed Street Church in Spring 2021). The experience of belonging between two worlds. An adventure in Nurturing Belonging through the expression of Love by Negative Capabilities.
- Furthest Out, Closer In (FOCI): an invitation to those who are furthest out on the margins. To share their story. Nurturing Belonging in the practise of Vulnerability. (Various practises and opportunities to engage with).
- ‘Beyond the Streets Living’ or ‘Community’. Nurturing Belonging in the intentional toward upholding the dignity of the Individual.
  - a. ‘Beyond the Streets Living’ (BSL), creating home and community together; the situation will be on property somewhere on the outskirts of Victoria. A roadblock, from the outset, will be funding and finding those interested to partner.
  - b. ‘Community’, an inner-city gathering point for people, from all walks of life. Coffee, entertainment, employment opportunity (as well as lots of other things) will be aspects of ‘Community’. However, predominantly, what will set ‘community’ apart is the super-intention (almost ‘lab-like’ setting) toward ‘nurturing belonging’.

### **Questions for next steps and feedback**

- With what do you agree? Why?
- What do you disagree with? Why?
- What is missing?

### **NOTE OF APPRECIATION**

Thank you for your care and involvement in the Design Workshop, activities and discussions. Your help is a blessing to this work of Nurturing Belonging and the ministry of the Mustard Seed Street Church. Let's keep in touch with any ideas or questions that may arise along the way. Peace of Christ and Hope in Him, Chris

### **ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW DOCUMENTATION**

#### **Interview One (>1 hour)**

- Language points: individualism and personalism.
- Personalism Study: Dorothy Day, Mournier and Martienne. Personalism: Catholic Workers definition. Catholic Teaching reflecting on the person; attentive toward 'personal' (as 'Individual) needs.
- Response to individualism can be negative.
- Kenosis and Phronesis: definitions and inspirations needed.

- Book recommendation: Wounded Healer and negative capabilities (focus).
- How to focus the three big ideas, because they interweave (comparatively, same origins).  
Embodying 'Nurturing Belonging' in projects. Consider the 'container'. Re: the people on the edges (furthest out).
- To be on the edges together: Catholic Worker. Finding wholeness together on the edges.  
Considering Persons – creating safe place. De-professionalizing the context, riskiness toward authenticity and more 'real' safety. De-constructing the 'church leader' in order to 'meet' with people.
- Healing: 'places and community' – deconstructing the real encounter; opening way for 'real' vulnerability.
- Can we ask for vulnerability from those furthest out? Where trust is most damaged?  
Furthest out, perhaps there is a closer experience of 'self' for less attachment; as the things of life have all be broken away from the person. So, out there is a deeper sense of brokenness too.
- The 'safer the situation' the more challenging for true encounter (ie. the vulnerability of the rich is not easy to come by).
- Respecting the different ways of sharing stories (the sharing of shadows).
- Grief and shame (grief) – shame can inhibit vulnerability. Shame and systems/structures – shame and guilt; virtue signalling as cover, what is 'real world'?
- Relationships of vulnerability: transformation. Creating place of healing/transformation.
- Anger to vulnerability, consider shame: bitterness, jealousy, 'that something has been stolen.' 'Pain that is not transformed is transmitted.' Rohr (remember this).

- Bitterness: what I have is a source of pride, 'do not take it'. Being on the outside looking in to 'where I once was': bitterness. So, the inclination or encouragement to integrate (the only way 'back in'). The only way 'back in' is to integrate. This is not fair?
- Posture of Kenosis: the invitation of God. Find literature.
- Community of the oppressed. Coming 'back in' requires giving up the last little bits of 'who I am'. Consider 'control' in the movement. When integration has to do with conformation? (playing the game). Abiding by 'the script' that calls for conformation. Considering the 'shame of not fitting the mould'.
- Fear – destabilizing the 'power and control). The attitude of stepping back (negative capability) and letting go of control
- Open to the idea as 'what coming back in' looks like for those angry and on the outside of the margins. How to create a culture of vulnerability for those angry and on the outside.
- Finding ourselves in and through all kinds of systems. (ie. denominations, faiths, religions). Then, upholding spaces as learning places – for our meeting together in (practising) life.
- Appreciating diversity: our stories and inspiration and how it all applies. Weathering disorientation (big concept).
- For example: 'not getting' stories. If you're willing to see the beauty, find the application even of all the disorientation – weathering the movement, being patient and finding the presence, being open to the practise of God, in all of it.
- Nurturing Belonging – has to be a two-way movement for the possibility of connection, acceptance, welcome to be realized.



- Disorienting approach; aggressive and divisive attitude on the surface...weathering this in order to possibly find belonging in the 'just beyond'. This patience gives opportunity to find compassion and empathy for others' story in the 'just beyond'.
- Disarming approach – negative capability – leads to (thinking 'battle-wise' contra dark forces for the betterment of al) vulnerability and surrender.
- Being enough as we are – a key inhibiting attitude keeping us from being vulnerable. Loss of sense of self-worth and not being loved. Being loved and have the opportunity to 'love' are such important experiences fueling the process of nurturing belonging (reflecting on what has been learned in these ways over the course of our lives.)
- Absence of love is a detriment to the human experience.
- Self-differentiation – recognizing oneself as being loved. I am enough. No need to fight for acceptance or acknowledgement. It just is. Disarming oneself, glimmers of the 'real thing', the 'actual thing' of acceptance become a little more noticeable.
- IMPORTANT for consideration: To find the sense of 'being enough' with God's love alone. This ancient reality that is original and within each one of us to begin with. This is scandalous in this world, which aims at the body and our minds to distract us. This world flourishes on the deception of 'not enough' and 'not being enough'. If this were to change, the world would flip upside down. Motivation would change. Manipulation and exploitation would have nowhere to play anymore.
- Becoming aware of the smokescreens and the deceptions of 'not being enough' and 'not enough'. How does this inhibit our sense of belonging? Ability to find belonging and nurture belonging?

- Concept of Chiros – fore readiness – for the other and one’s own self. That ‘God knows’ timing.
- Consider the riskiness of vulnerability. Being patient, waiting, and the letting go of the ‘why’?

### **Interview Two (45 mins)**

- Vulnerability:
  - a. Looking for an open door to share, for shared humanity.
  - b. Discernment as to whether or not the door is open, being mindful that, the something more of this can lead to fragility.
  - c. Trust is the key to vulnerability.
  - d. Plastic doesn’t work. Mainly, ‘the Street knows plastic’. And, ‘we all live and play in a plastic world.’
  - e. Fear, past ‘let-downs’ can inhibit vulnerability.
  - f. Longevity – without an attitude of long-suffering, vulnerability ‘down the road’ may be missed.
- Learning back stories – the importance of STORY. Understanding the parameters of vulnerability on the street. How to gain trust – be smart with words.
- Wavelength and level (be intentional and natural, finding these in order to create a space in which one might be able to feel at home).
- Consider the moment of fragility and vulnerability (perceptions).
- Leading with examples – finding a common bond and a meeting point.

- Personalism:
  - a. Don't try to change people.
  - b. Accept people where they're at.
  - c. Find out what works with each person.
  - d. Find the sweet qwerks, the beauty, 'the Christ' in each person.
- How could negative capabilities play into the approach of nurturing belonging.
- Finding 'the Peter Pan' in each person.
- Be careful with labelling (de-label) in order to really see people. Being 'seen' can encourage vulnerability – open the door for nurturing belonging.
- Categorization, discriminate, segregate, inclusive or exclusive labelling.
- The more time spent in community, the more inequalities may become noticeable, may have the opportunity to be broken away. Community, a place where we are all equal. Becoming one, regardless of our differences. Learning to see the beauty in our diversity.
- How to nurture belonging when there's a greater separation between.
- Leadership: encouraging teams toward connection. Challenge leader, to led. Best leadership comes from within (Parker Palmer, Let Your Life Speak).
- Leaders and lifting and caring. Be willing to help – find balance in work.
- Take input – value toughest positions, involve people in their own decisions and choices.
- Sense of belonging – it's easier to find belonging in the context of respect and appreciation.
- Nurturing Belonging has to do with integrity to a cause, leading by example. Entrenched within a problem, some leaders will scramble, and others will find a way to solve it.

- Looking out for the interests of others. There must be no hidden agendas (transformation and salvation stats are not real). Everyone is approachable. No one is higher or lower than another.
- Best interest of one another in mind, that all would have the chance to succeed.
- Arrive at a place of proven respectability, of trust.
- Personal sovereignty, tempered empathy.
- Being careful with the damaging effects of empathy in the context of nurturing belonging. Facing the fire with the other, enduring and overcoming, celebrating times like these together.
- Learning how to walk by falling. An element of negative Leadership in nurturing belonging.
- Find the sweet spots in each person and their hidden talents. Positive exposure of good things. Taking the focus off shame.

### **Interview Three (15 mins)**

This interview was very different and extremely informal. An opportunity arose on the curbside of the Mustard Seed with an individual who I would consider the furthest out on the margins of our street community. Find belonging became the central focus of our conversation. Following are some key notes from our conversation:

- Belonging can be nurtured through understanding and acceptance. It was shared with me of the impact that addiction to Fentanyl has had on his life. Communication is vital, through the struggle/battle of challenges that arise.
- Interest is absent with regards to rules and boundaries when it comes to survival and finding relief for the pain that his addiction causes at times.
- (Tension will give rise to tension, aggression to aggression. This way is not the solution to connection and finding opportunity to nurture belonging with those ‘furthest out’ on the margins.)
- It was mentioned that ‘help’ could nurture belonging and a willingness to walk alongside him into recovery, when he is ready. Readiness cannot be pushed.
- Shame was mentioned. That he is ashamed of his addiction. The feeling of waking up in the morning and not being able to move until he has a ‘hit’. The feeling of being paralyzed in the morning and not able to take a ‘hit’ without help from someone else. This, he believed, causes him to feel ‘ashamed’.
- ‘Reason for Being’ was mentioned. Nurturing Belonging for him could come about through the responsibility of offering his help. He mentioned that it could be as easy as being offered the job of ‘sweeping up’ in the morning. In the past, sweeping has been a therapeutic chore for him to focus.
- A realize now, that our conversation nurtured belonging for both of us with one another. Our conversation about ‘Nurturing Belonging’ opened the door for us both to become vulnerable with each other, for the first time.

### Interview Four (30 mins)

- On Inspiring Belonging
  - a. Not being (or, feeling) judged can be disarming.
  - b. Understanding (the best we can) people we serve are going through tougher stuff that we are.
  - c. Nurturing a sense of Purpose (ie. odd jobs, chores)
  - d. Referring to story and testimony; that belonging, and acceptance are possible.
- What does it take to get to 'vulnerability'?
  - a. Opening up inspires opening up (truth and truth, hope and hope, etc.)
  - b. Forced vulnerability is not real.
- What do you think it would take for someone 'furthest out' to find belonging?
  - a. A trustworthy environment and people.
- How does the Mustard Seed become something more than 'just a location' for people to come to, for whatever reason?
  - a. A personal awakening to Jesus; that something different, another option is happening here.
  - b. The informal, natural path to acceptance (of self and one another). Welcome and belonging, the experience and expression, is different for everyone.
- It has something to do with Jesus then, it has something to do with Love.
  - a. This can be an enlightening kind of experience (Matthew 11:28, [NIV]).

## APPENDIX D—MILESTONE 4 PROTOTYPE ITERATION REPORT

PROTOTYPE #1: “nature, beyond the streets”

### **Prototype Description**

Nurturing belonging through community, conversations of soul care and practices of spiritual formation while on a nature outing and walk to the beach.

### **Goldilocks Quality Strategy**

A walk with stops along the way, for drinks or directed conversations, and an extended timeframe, allowing for an easier movement and natural flow.

### **Research Question**

Can belonging be nurtured through the shared experience of nature, movement and spiritual formation?

### **Assessment Benchmarks**

- The participant has experienced a deeper sense of personal wholeness, belonging with God and connection with community.
- The participant has found opportunity for solitude, quietness and presence on the ‘nature outing’.
- The participant has experienced some relief and healing as a result of the time away with others in conversation and community.

### **Prototype Participant Demographic description**

The demographic range of participants spanned from individuals accustomed to marginalization, social exclusion, financial insecurity and homelessness, to an individual with a mental/developmental disability, to an individual who is financially independent, to the leader of the outing.

### **Brief Summary**

Our time together, on a walk and stopping in various places was a blessing for each of the participants. Despite having to remain in the city, due to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, we focused on nature over a long walk to the beach for a picnic, fellowship and a directed soul care reflection. As it turned out, the walk was too long. Also, fewer numbers resulted not only from the concerns regarding COVID-19 but also, because it had rained that morning.



### **What was the important discovery?**

The participants felt at home and welcome with one another and to share from their hearts.

PROTOTYPE #2: “nature, in the city”

### **Prototype Description**

Nurturing belonging through community, conversations of soul care and practices of spiritual formation while on a nature outing and walk through the city.

### **Goldilocks Quality Strategy**

A walk with stops along the way, for drinks or directed conversations, and an extended timeframe, allowing for an easier movement and natural flow.

### **Research Question**

Can belonging be nurtured through the shared experience of city-life, movement and spiritual formation?

### **Assessment Benchmarks**

- The participant has experienced a deeper sense of personal wholeness, belonging with God and connection with community.
- The participant has found opportunity for solitude, quietness and presence on the ‘nature outing’.
- The participant has experienced some relief and healing as a result of the time away with others in conversation and community.

### **Prototype Participant Demographic description**

There were six participants who were involved in this expression of ‘nature’. Four new participants were with us. The demographics of the group, once again, ranged. Similarities included poverty, homelessness, social exclusion and addiction. One of the participants was physically disabled and one of the participants was financially secure.

### **Brief Summary**

We journeyed together through the streets of the city, stopping for coffee and sandwiches along the way. On the top floor of the city’s tallest parkade, we stopped for lunch and a group conversation streaming from a soul care reflection. It was an adventure for us, the journey there, as one of the participants had certain physical limitations. What mattered to us was arriving together and considering our movement and direction as a group of friends.

### **What was the important discovery?**

Our conversation as we walked slowly and together through the streets. We allowed space for our time together to adjust, and the plan that was set out ahead of time to develop differently.

PROTOTYPE #3: “nature, farm crew”

### **Prototype Description**

Nurturing belonging through community, conversations of soul care and practices of spiritual formation while on a nature outing and work on a farm.

### **Goldilocks Quality Strategy**

A drive to the farm with stops along the way for drinks and directed soul care reflections, and an extended timeframe, allowing for an easier movement and natural flow.

### **Research Question**

Can belonging be nurtured through the shared experience of nature, work and spiritual formation?

### **Assessment Benchmarks**

- The participant has experienced a deeper sense of personal wholeness, belonging with God and connection with community.
- The participant has found opportunity for solitude, quietness and presence on the ‘nature outing’.
- The participant has experienced some relief and healing as a result of the time away with others in conversation and community.

### **Prototype Participant Demographic description**

Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and a light outbreak of the sickness on southern Vancouver Island, there were far fewer participants than anticipated. Four of us travelled to the Cowichan Valley in two cars. We were mindful and attentive to safest care given our proximity to one another.

### **Brief Summary**

It was a beautiful day. Our journey together allowed time for new connections to be made. We stopped in Duncan, for a coffee, light devotional and conversation. The work we committed to on the farm was refreshing and life-giving. Our fellowship and spiritual formation teaching shared by the farm’s caretaker, following a nice picnic lunch, was deeply impactful. Each of the participants is looking forward to returning to the farm in May.

### **What was the important discovery?**

Working together added a different positive experience to our fellowship and sense of belonging in this expression of ‘nature’.

#### MOST VALUABLE PROTOTYPE/MOST VIABLE PRODUCT (MVP)

The MVP will be ‘nature, beyond the streets’, with an expression called ‘summit.’ I hope that we will be able to connect with a group of people once per week for four-to-six-weeks, leading up to this two-to-three-day adventure in late August or early September.

#### **What was learned through the prototyping process?**

The prototyping process was a challenge due, in large part, to the time of global pandemic that we are having to navigate through. Restrictions advise that we do not meet in large groups, so there has been some hesitation in our coming together for ‘nature’ outings. We have had to be innovative with regards to our movements together, especially when we drove in cars for our ‘farm crew’ outing in the Cowichan Valley.

Belonging has been nurtured within our community as a result of the various ‘nature’ experiences. There is a depth of connection that occurs in the movement of a group together. In our movements, walking or working, we not only have an opportunity for a bit of exercise, but we also have the time to talk together informally. Our moments for to eat together, for soul care reflection and to practices spiritual formation are stop points that focus our attention to God within us, the one beside us and all around us.

**What was learned through the experience of the prototype participant?**

The prototype participant began a journey of discovery through the various expression of ‘nature’ toward new levels of belonging and vision with regards to personal wholeness and life together in community.

**Viability of the MVP in consideration of skillset, available resources, and time limitations.** The MVP, ‘nature, beyond the streets (summit)’, based on the successful prototyping process, is viable and has great potential for life-giving results with its participants. Participants will be given the opportunity to build a skill set, in the weeks leading up to the ‘nature’ outing. We have resources (equipment and finances) to share with those who would like to be involved in this expression of ‘nature’.

## APPENDIX

### Recruiter Screener: Template ('nature, beyond the streets')

#### 1. Who are the ideal participants?

The ideal participants, for the execution of the first expression of Prototype #1 (Nature, beyond the streets) will be those individuals who are on the fringes of our community at the Mustard Seed Street Church.

#### 2. What are their characteristics?

The characteristics of the ideal participants (male or female or both or neither) may be that they are lonely and lack a sense of belonging. There may be a history of trauma, that lingers (and, manifests) unresolved. Other characteristics may also include proneness to addiction and mental health struggle. There will be an interest toward personal healing and a curiosity toward the possibility of observing, experiencing and upholding the presence of God in the midst of His creation.

#### 3. What exact criteria will you use to identify these people?

- Physically fit, evaluate according to excursion plan. (ie. hike distance, elevation, etc.)

- Underlying health concerns?
- Social Behavior (i.e., chemistry with the group.)
- Interest in deepening presence within the community of the MSSC.
- Desire to overcome certain trauma or current struggle.
- Ability to listen.

4. What questions will you ask for each criterion to screen participants?

- Are you physically able to join us? (explain the itinerary)
- Do you have any underlying health concerns that we should be aware of?
- Is there anyone in the group that you do not feel comfortable to be around?
- Would you like to deepen relationships with others in the Mustard Seed community?
- Are you willing to be a part of a sharing circle wherein stories of ‘struggle and overcoming’ are expressed?
- Are you curious about growing in your spiritual life?
- Could you be interested, as well, to listen closely and encourage those who share their stories of ‘struggle and overcoming’?

5. Who is to be excluded?

Finding a way to be inclusive, with regards to those interested in participating, will be the focus as best fit is identified for ‘Nature, beyond the streets.’



If the trip proves to exclude a participant, for whatever reason, we will look ahead at another adventure/opportunity that may be more suitable for the individual.

If the group chemistry will be set-off by a participant interested or, if there is the potential for unrest within the group as a result of known problems between one and another in the group, we will look ahead to another adventure/opportunity and group dynamic that will be more suitable for the individual.

The hope is for both the group and the individual to enjoy the time and to be comfortable/safe enough to be vulnerable in the way of storytelling and sharing.

6. What exact criteria will you use to identify these people?

- Fitness level is not adequate enough for the trip.
- Underlying health concerns could pose a risk to both the individual and group.
- Chemistry in the group is not workable.
- There is a lacking interest in the community of the Mustard Seed Street Church.
- No interest to grow spiritually.
- An obvious unreadiness toward openness for positive growth/change in life.
- Unable to listen and exhibit respect for others.

7. What questions will help to distinguish best fit for this Prototype?

- Are you interested to be a part of small group of people who will come together once a month for an adventure out of the city, to grow together, share stories of

some of the tough things we've been through (or, are going through) and encourage each other toward overcoming and living well as we learn more about God's will for our lives?

- Would you be interested in growing deeper in your spiritual life and life in community at the Mustard Seed Street Church?
- Is there a desire or curiosity within you regarding nature? Would you like to have the opportunity to explore different trails, beaches, lakes and mountains on the lower island?

# PROTOTYPE 1: 'nature, beyond the streets'

## Storyboard



Figure 51. Storyboard, "nature, beyond the streets."

**Promotional Material**

Figure 52. Photo of poster of Prototype #, “nature, beyond the streets.”

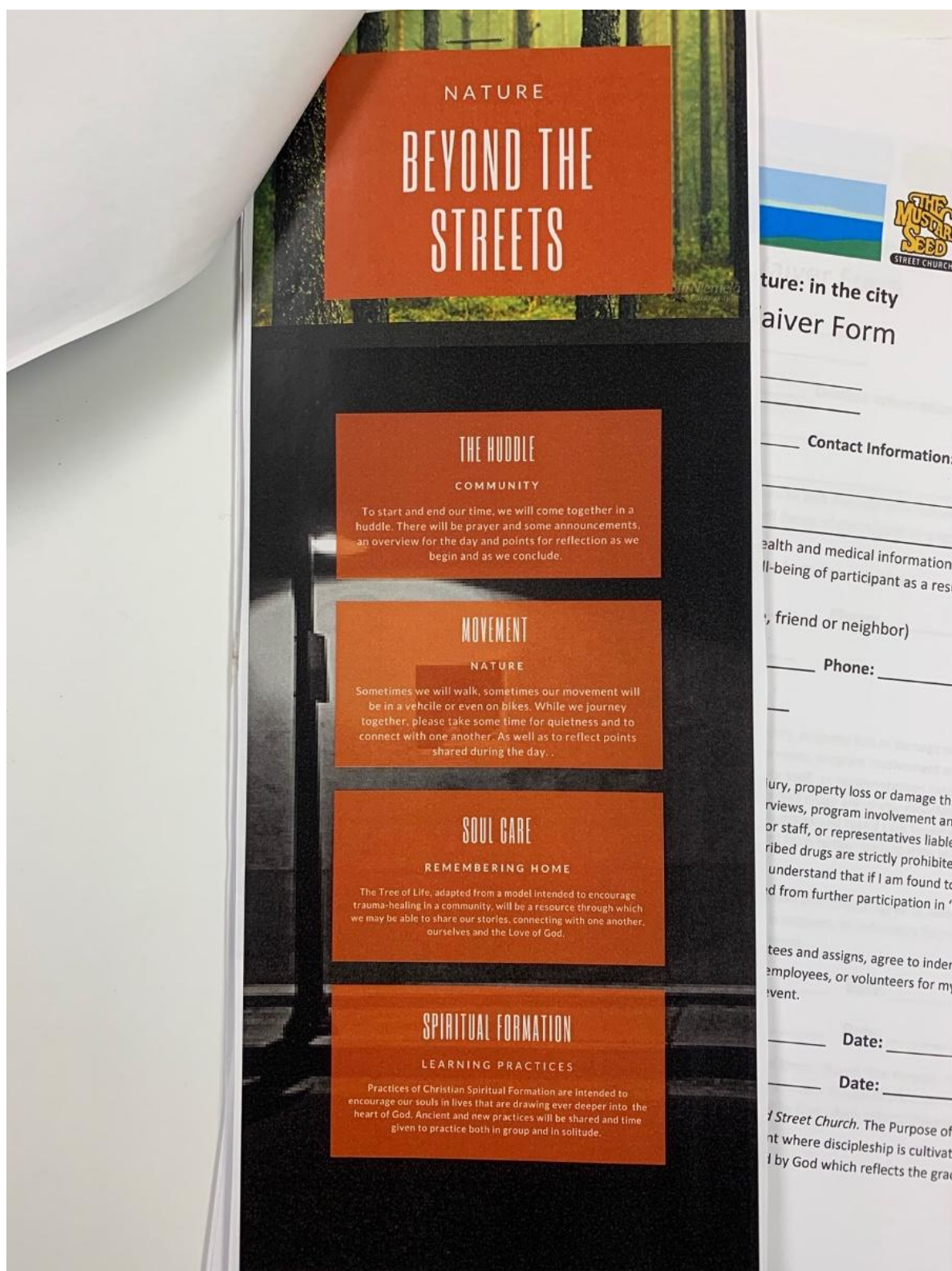


Figure 53. Front page of handout for Prototype #1, “nature, beyond the streets.”



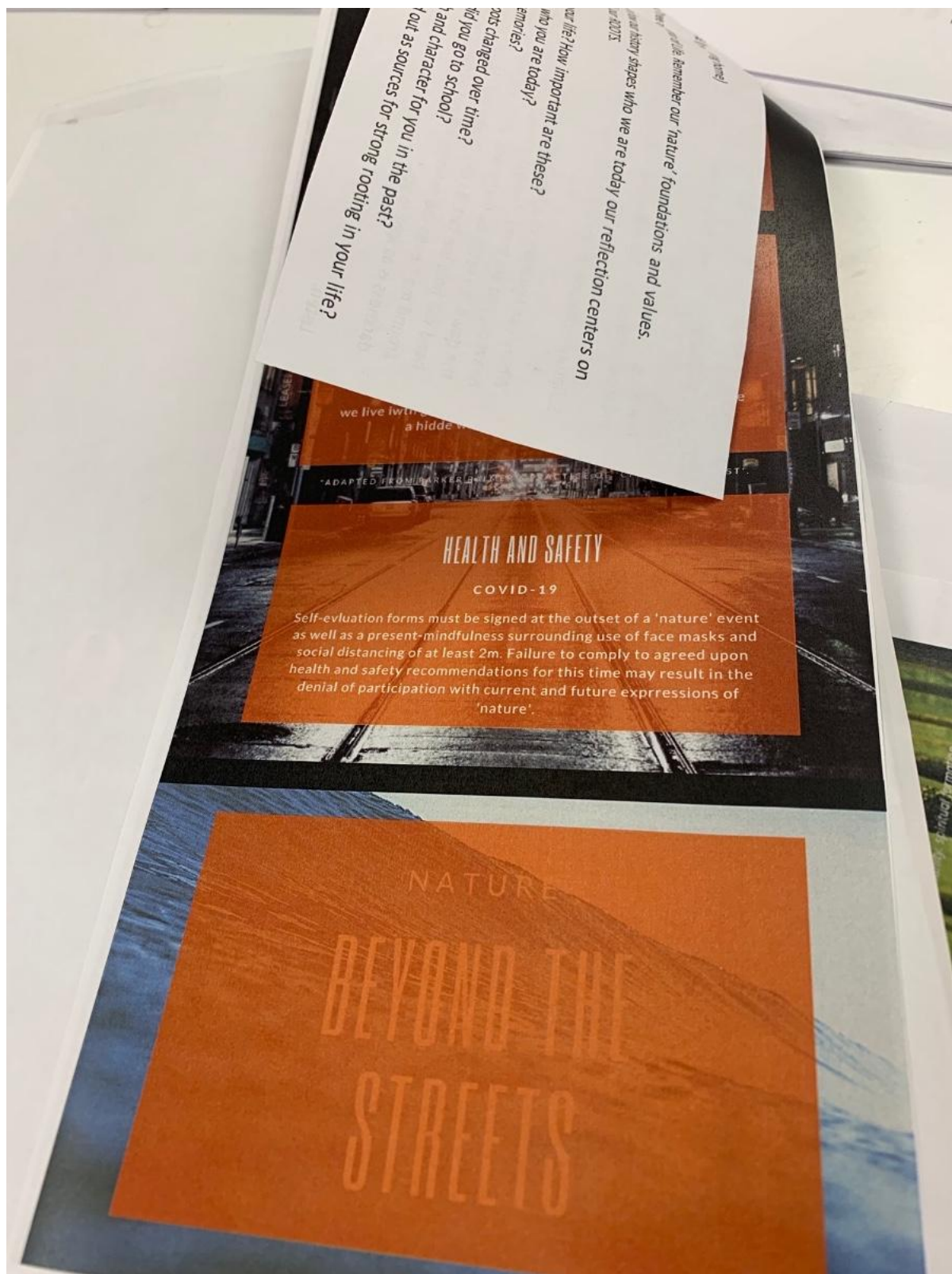


Figure 54. Back page of handout for Prototype #1, “nature, beyond the streets.”

## Waiver Form



### nature: beyond the Streets

#### Waiver Form

**Event Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Event Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Optional) Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Allergies/Medical:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*Note\* Participants are advised to carry pertinent health and medical information on their persons at all times.

In case of Emergency, we will notify your (relative, friend or neighbor)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Relationship:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Assumption of Risk/Conditions:

I recognize there may be some element of risk of accidental injury, property loss or damage throughout the day event of ‘nature: beyond the streets.’ Also, with regards to lead-up interviews, program involvement and group participation, I understand and will

not hold the Mustard Seed Street Church, or staff, or representatives liable given that there may be some psychological risk involved. I understand alcohol and non-prescribed drugs are strictly prohibited and must adhere to the Mustard Seed Street Church Code of Conduct on any out-trip. I understand that if I am found to have broken items listed in the Mustard Seed Street Church's Code of Conduct, I will be excluded from further participation in 'nature: beyond the streets' and may not be eligible for future involvement, pending review.

I, the undersigned participant, on behalf of myself, my heirs, legatees and assigns, agree to indemnify, and hold harmless the The Mustard Seed Street Church or any of their representatives, employees, or volunteers for my health, safety, and injury or property loss or damage arising out of or resulting from this trip/event.

**Signature of Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Beyond the Streets is a ministry of Hospitality with the Mustard Seed Street Church. The Purpose of the Hospitality Ministry of the Mustard Seed Street Church is: providing a welcome environment where discipleship is cultivated through maintaining a safe, supportive space; we seek to nurture a community empowered by God which reflects the grace and acceptance Christ demonstrated.*



## **Manuscript/Overview**

**Nature: Beyond the Streets**

**Starting Point:** The Mustard Seed Street Church

**Date:** Sunday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Timeframe:** 10am to 4pm

### **Journey Points (+ ETA)**

The Mustard Seed Street Church	10am
Discovery Coffee Shop	1030am
Subway Subs	11am
Dallas Road Waterfront	Noon
Beacon Hill Park	2pm
The Mustard Seed Street Church	330pm

### **Foundations** (from Parker Palmer's, Centre for Courage and Renewal)

1. Give and receive welcome.
2. Be present as fully as possible.
3. What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.
4. Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.
5. No fixing, saving, advising or correcting.

6. Learn to respond to others, with honest, open questions.
7. When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.
8. Attend to your own inner teacher.
9. Trust and learn from silence.
10. Observe deep confidentiality.
11. Know that it's possible.

**Principles** (from Parker Palmer's, Centre for Courage and Renewal)

1. Everyone has an inner teacher.
2. Inner work requires solitude and community.
3. Inner work must be invitational.
4. Our lives move in cycles like seasons
5. Appreciating paradox enriches our lives and helps us hold greater complexity.
6. With live with greater integrity when we see ourselves whole.
7. A hidden wholeness underlies our lives.

**“nature: beyond the streets” key words:**

community – home – story – play – adventure – soul care – nature

**Location: The Mustard Seed Street Church**

- a. Welcome: overview the intention, movement, learning and adventure of the day.
- b. Name Game: share your name and something you enjoy doing, a life-giving activity.

- c. Circles of Trust: iterate foundations of the circle (see above).
- d. Tree of Life: brief overview. The Tree and focus on the roots.
- e. Spiritual Practice: brief overview. Practicing the Presence of God.
- f. Scripture: a story of Jesus, Mark 11:12-25.
- g. Reflection for the Road: During the walk, focus in on the trees along the road. Consider the lifetime of the trees. Consider what the trees have encountered with regards to seasons, its joys and pains of growth, its usefulness, it's fruits and flowers. Consider the storms the tree has had to endure over time.

### **Movement: The Walk**

Discovery Coffee on Discovery Street

Subway sandwiches at Douglas and Johnson Street

- Enjoy the coffee and the walk together.
- Focus on the reflection offered at the opening huddle.

Reminder at the various stop points to carry on with the reflection, considering the trees.

Challenge: learn two new things about someone you're walking with.

(If you feel uncomfortable with this, just enjoy the walk together.)

**Story: Tree of Life** (Tree of Life, Zimbabwe)

The tree can be a metaphor for life.

Reminder on foundation and Principles. Focus on respect and support for one another.

Question: Remember the reflection on the walk to the beach. ‘What does the tree say to me about my life?’

First exploration on the Tree of Life: The Roots Circle

"I share the same ‘mutupo’ with you and you." – ancestry and roots, something we all share in common. We can identify with each other on this, that we each have roots that have shaped us, hold us and bring integrity to our being.

Participants share their ancestry and learn that we are part of a long line of history that began before us and will continue after us. We begin to see how history also shapes who and where we are today.

In this circle, participants reflect on how their history shapes who they are today, and how their line will continue on into the future.

**Questions:** on where you come from and your family.

1. What roots do you have in your life? How important are these?
2. Does your past influence who you are today?
3. Do you have any favorite memories?
4. Has your perception of your roots changed over time?
5. Where were you born? Where did you go to school?
6. Who was an influence for strength and character for you in the past?
7. What aspects of your heritage stand out as sources for strong rooting in your life?

### **Movement: Beach and Field**

We will walk from the Beach area, just down from 'Mile 0' the group will walk up and over Flag Hill in Beacon Hill Park to the Baseball Park area near Beacon Drive-In.

Walk slowly.

Find time for mindfulness.

Take a moment along the way to reflect on the Tree of Life exercise.

Listen closely.

Scripture for reflection along the way. Psalm 46:10, 'Be still and know that I am God.'

Enjoy the time.

### **Centering: Practicing the Presence**

We will sit together on the bench in one of the dugouts on the baseball diamond.

Devotional papers will be handed out with a spiritual practise on them, direction for practise and questions to consider.

### **Spiritual Practice: Practicing the Presence of God**

“I cannot imagine how religious persons can live satisfied without the practice of the presence of GOD. For my part I keep myself retired with Him in the depth of centre of my soul as much as I can; and while I am so with Him, I fear nothing; but the least turning from Him is insupportable.” Brother Lawrence

“The difficulties of life do not have to be unbearable. It is the way we look at them - through faith or unbelief - that makes them seem so. We must be convinced that our Father is full of love for us and that He only permits trials to come our way for our own good.” Brother Lawrence

“Let us occupy ourselves entirely in knowing God. The more we know Him, the more we will desire to know Him. As love increases with knowledge, the more we know God, the more we will truly love Him. We will learn to love Him equally in times of distress or in times of great joy.” Brother Lawrence

Psalm 139 (focus vv. 1-7)

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me

and the light become night around me,"

even the darkness will not be dark to you;

the night will shine like the day,

for darkness is as light to you.

Time for solitude to reflect on the practice.

Time for silence, to allow space for God to speak into your life.

**Movement: The Way Home**

Enjoy the time with one another walking home to the place we started.

Again, consider the trees.

Listen closely.

Observe God with you, beside you, all around you, within you.

Practise walking in peace.

### **The Closing Huddle**

Invitation to share. How was the day? What sticks out for you?

Focus on next gathering. In two weeks. The expression of nature, 'in the city'.

Closing with a Breath Prayer or "Jesus Prayer". (ref. Philokalia, Prayer of the Mind, the Noetic prayer and the Prayer of the heart).

- Significance of the name of God and breath.
- "Lord Jesus Christ / Son of God / Have mercy on me."
- "My soul/ finds rest /in God alone."
- "Shepherd / lead me / by still waters."
- "Come / Holy Spirit / Come."



Releasing the time. Being refreshed.

### **Handout**

Frontside:

SOUL CARE (remembering home)

The Tree as a metaphor of Life. Remember our 'nature' foundations and values.

In consideration on how our history shapes who we are today our reflection centers on what is under the soil, our ROOTS.

8. What roots do you in your life? How important are these?
9. Does your past influence who you are today?
10. Do you have any favorite memories?
11. Has your perception of your roots changed over time?
12. Where were you born? Where did you go to school?
13. Who was an influence for strength and character for you in the past?
14. What aspects of your heritage stand out as sources for strong rooting in your life?

Backside:

SPIRITUAL FORMATION (learning practices)

Practicing the Presence of God. A time for solitude and silence, to practice 'simply' being in the presence of God. Face the distractions that come and let them leave you. Focus on God.

Scripture reflection: Psalm 139:1-7 (Slowly read. Be in the presence of God)

‘Where can I go from your Spirit? Where Can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for the darkness is as light to you.’

Listen.

God is with you.

### **Follow Up Notes**

**nature, beyond the streets**

**Date:** February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Time:** 10am to 4pm

**Attendees:** 4

- 10-12 were invited to ‘nature, beyond the streets’ over a two-week period preceding the event.

- The weather on the morning of the event was typical for West Coast Canada, rainy and overcast.
- A few people did not arrive as a result of the weather. A few for other reasons. And, given the time of global pandemic that we continue to navigate through, others chose to not partake for that reason.
- For those who were present, ‘Waiver Forms’ were signed by each participant and filed safely.

### **Description of Individual Participants**

- One participant was developmentally/intellectually disabled. It took him some time to find comfort to open up. He became very keen
- One participant has experienced extreme marginalization and loneliness. Deep trauma has been known by this individual.
- One participant was a volunteer of the Mustard Seed Street Church, interested in the community and finding his place within it.
- One participant was a staff member of the Mustard Seed Street Church, curious about the stories we share and the hope/possibility for healing together in community through a common adventure, experience of nature-closely and learning practices of spiritual formation.

### **Description of Group Dynamic (chemistry)**

The chemistry with the group started slowly and positively. Four different people, with different approaches to social connection. All were strangers to one another. It takes some time to learn about each other.

The walk and stops along the way to the 'Destination' seems to be the uttermost of perfection in the way of space-time context to learn about another person. Especially, leading into a deeper-led conversation that comes about after lunch at the 'Destination'.

### **Schedule (breakdown)**

**Location: MSSC**

**Arrival: 10 am**

The participants arrived and checked in at our coffee window that is situated near to our Chapel doors on the sidewalk outside the Mustard Seed Street Church. At the coffee window, the participants were asked to fill out a waiver form. Each received an itinerary for the day, as well as a guide through our Soul Care exercise and Spiritual Formation practice. While the backpack containing a portion of the lunch was put together, the participants gathered in the Parking Lot area. We allowed 30 minutes (to 1030am) for others to arrive who had mentioned they would be joining us.

**Opening Huddle: 1030am**

We gathered together on the curbside in front of the Chapel doors near the Coffee Window. An introduction game was shared in and a brief outline of the day offered. In view of the 'Tree of Life' exercise that the group will partake in at 'the Destination', a reflection to be mindful of was encouraged for the walk there: the tree as a metaphor of our lives. That is, the whole tree, it's roots and trunk, branches, limbs, leaves and flowers or fruit. How can the life of the tree reflect in the lives, the stories we have lived?

### **Movement: The Walk There**

The Walk There gave us a great opportunity to get to know one another. Not only to talk together, but to learn about what it means to be quiet together. Also, to learn about travelling/journeying together from one place to another. Another aspect of walking together is we become mindful of another, that is to say, where each person is, that we are kept together, cognizant as to whether anyone is falling behind. Walking together, we can become mindful of our pace together, and adjust in ways to 'speed up' or 'slow down' depending on the general pace, movement of the group.

Slowing to observe different things that participants were seeing was a blessing, too. Interlacing our conversations 'getting to know one another' were observations of different beautiful things around of our city and the nature within it. The dynamic shifted in the group along the way as two walking together and talking would become three or four together. There were times that we could find ourselves walking alone (yet, with the group still) or, together, all of us, and walking silently.

### **Stops (along the way)**

We had two stops along the way. When we can get out of the city, in the future of ‘nature, beyond the streets,’ we will normally have two stops as well. One stop for coffee and one stop for sandwiches or subs.

We stopped for coffee, all paid for by budget set aside by the Mustard Seed Street Church for our community. This was a blessing for each person to be able to enjoy a coffee professionally made and to decide what kind of special, hot drink they would like. There was some creativity put into this process. It was a source of fun, playfulness to choose a drink, receive it and inquire on its taste with one another. When the ‘norm’ is the free coffee, every day at the window, this is a pleasant surprise, a treat.

The next stop was at Subway, which took us slightly off our route that was along a single-track straight to the beach. This veering off made one of the participants feel slightly uncomfortable as there is a region of the city that he feels quite unsafe in. There are a number of people who are looking for him, to hurt him. Subway is another stop that draws out some playful excitement with regards to the kinds of sandwiches participants prefer. What one eats and drinks can describe a little more about who they are.

Along the paths of ‘nature, beyond the streets’ it is a part of the journey to learn about one another and to develop a growing interest with regards to the ‘interesting specifics’, the little quirky ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’ each one of us has. It’s a playful, community-building part of the journey together.

### **Destination (Dallas Road Beach): Noon**

We arrived at the beach at around noon after a quick bathroom break. With one of the participants, who has some disability yet, fully able to engage in great conversation, it was observed that some extra supervision was necessary so as to keep ‘an incident’ from occurring with ‘unknowing’ passers-by. We came across one such occasion at the Public Bathrooms and navigated through it well-enough (that is, without an awkward moment escalating into an incident).

The place we found to gather was perfect for us. There was some privacy which, being a clear Sunday afternoon at a Victoria beach, was a blessing. Amongst the driftwood, we found a place to sit and eat our lunch together after a nice prayer. We observed the beauty of nature all around. Truly, despite not being a great distance ‘beyond the streets’ we felt that we had exited the city and entered into nature. The beauty of the ocean before us, the diving seabirds and distant slopes of the Olympics in northern Washington State were inspiring, liberating us and creating a vulnerability in preparation for our discussions and soulful explorations.

### **Soul Care**

There was a discussion on our reflections of trees as we walked to the beach. The distance to the beach was about 4 kms. We then focused on the ‘roots’ of the tree with the intention of drawing some connection to the roots we have in our lives. I had some notes, personal thoughts and questions to lead the conversation if need be. On the handouts given at the start of the day, there was some perspective shared as well as foundations and values that we, as a group, agreed to with regards to respect and honour of each person’s story as it is volunteered.

All participants were open and honest as they put forward the stories of their roots. It was a beautiful moment. Each one found strength in their roots, were blessed to share of where they had come from, their heritage. These conversations will be kept in confidence.

### **Spiritual Formation**

The plan was to stop at the Legislature Buildings, near Victoria's Inner Harbour, to explore a practice of Christian Spiritual Formation. With the handout given at the start of the day, before the opening huddle, was a plan for this part of the day. Practising the Presence of God was on-deck for Spiritual Formation today. Some reference to Brother Lawrence as well as to silence and listening, awareness of God with us, was going to be a part of the teaching and encouragement before a time of solitude and personal connection with God.

For reasons that had to do with group dynamics, this portion of the excursion did not take place. The focus on the way back had to do with finding a place for participant 1 to go to the bathroom. It was urgent. When participant 2 decided to go his own way, the Spiritual Formation practice was shared with him before prayer and he headed on his way. While participant 3 new of the spiritual formation practice clearly, participant 1 left without any guidance with regards to its reason, origin and practice.

### **The Walk Back**

The Walk Back was different than the Walk There. At this point in time, the group has opened up to one another and there is a greater vulnerability, openness to be ourselves uniquely.



One of the participants felt free to connect with everyone on the way back, on the road, in front yards, riding their bikes. One of the participants felt vulnerable enough to leave early in order to connect with his girlfriend, someone who he had been open with us about over the course of the day up to that point. The Walk Back was slightly rushed in order to find a place that was open for one of the participants to go to the bathroom.

### **Dispersion**

**Participant 1:** The Walk Back, the return trip back to where we had started was not easy for participant 1. For most of the way, he had to go to the bathroom. We tried to find a place that was open. Unfortunately, as the focus was set on finding a bathroom for him, out of concern for the possibility of a major accident taking place, we missed our time together to learn a practice of Christian Spiritual Formation. Finally, we found a place that was open. It was a coffee house that he had used on the way to ‘the Destination’ and had left his watch in the bathroom there accidentally. We were about two-thirds of the way back to the Mustard Seed. He went to the bathroom, found his watch and decided that at this point he would leave the group. We prayed together outside the café before we went our different ways.

**Participant 2:** About half-way back to the origin of the event, where we were planning to conclude the day together in a closing huddle, participant 2 decided to split with the group. I was hoping that we could end the day together in a closing huddle, so I encouraged him to stay. He was very tired and wanted to have some time to call his girlfriend. I shared with about the Spiritual Formation practice, which had been missed. We prayed together and he left.

**Participant 3:** One street before the return to our starting point, participant 3 decided to veer off to get back to his car sooner. We considered the day together on the street corner and prayed for all those involved. Participant 3 has a deep ‘faith life’, so he was quite involved in each opportunity to pray throughout the day. We decided that we would touch base early in the week and debrief the day further.

## **Review**

## **Spiritual Formation**

I’m not sure how we could have arranged the day slightly differently in order to not have missed this important part, spiritual formation. Perhaps, if we were outside of the city and there wasn’t an option with regards to the itinerary, it would have been different.

I think that the day ended up being quite long. The Spiritual Formation component, apart from the Soul Care component, was too much. Perhaps, had we remained at the beach for the Spiritual Formation portion, everyone would have remained involved in the entirety of the program. We could have made our way back following a quick bathroom break at the Public Bathrooms by the beach and finished with a Closing Huddle, as planned, at the Mustard Seed.

## **Closing Huddle**

The closing huddle was missed as the group's endpoint for the journey, the adventure, the circle (there and back) of the day. Perhaps, from the opening huddle, the closing huddle could be encouraged as the end point of the day. It would be a blessing, a full circle movement to not only close the day as a team, but at the intended end point of the day as well.

Again, a 'nature, beyond the streets' that travels by vehicle, out of the city, the end-point (closing) huddle can be achieved based on the fact that the group must stay together in the vehicle that it is travelling in from the opening huddle, to the destination point and back to the origin for the closing huddle.

## 1. Pictures



Figure 55. A participant enjoying 'free' time at the beach.



Figure 56. A candle lit for a time of spiritual formation.



Figure 57. Beyond the Streets.

## PROTOTYPE 2: 'nature, in the city'

### Storyboard

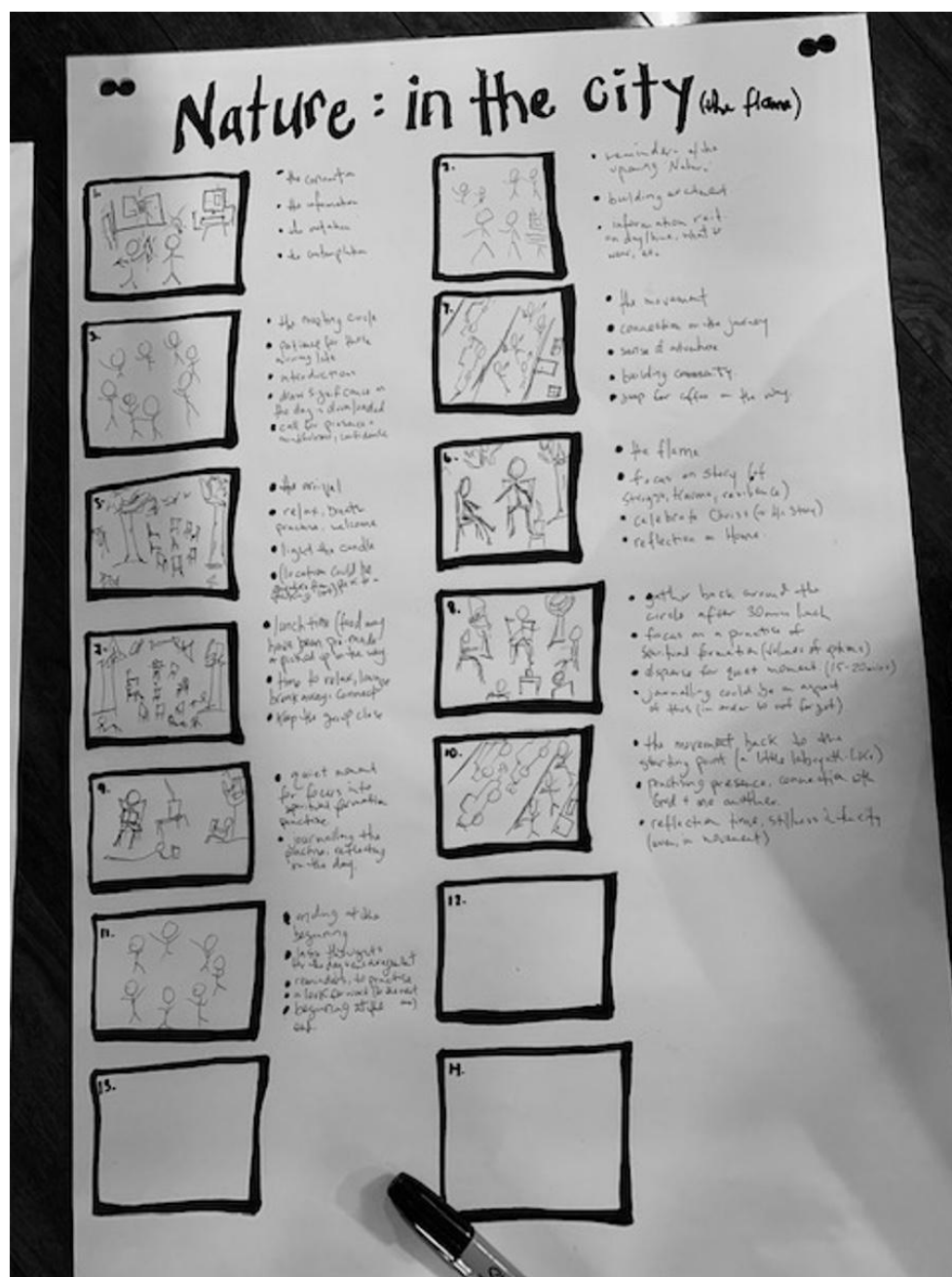


Figure 58. Storyboard, Prototype #2, “nature, in the city.”

### Promotional Material



Figure 59. Reminder Card, Prototype #2, “in the city.”

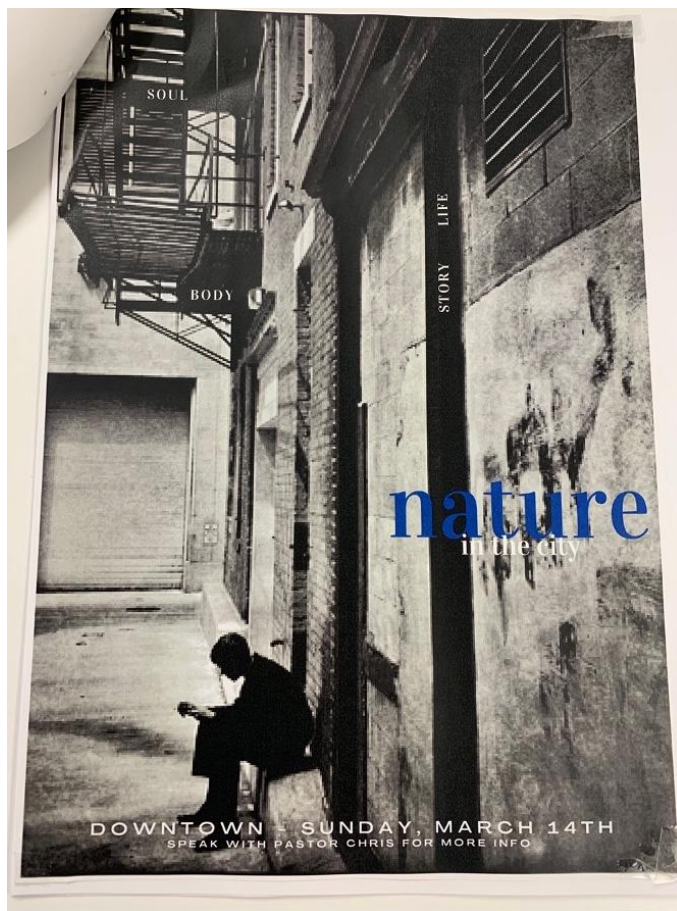




Figure 60. Photo of info poster, “nature, in the city.”

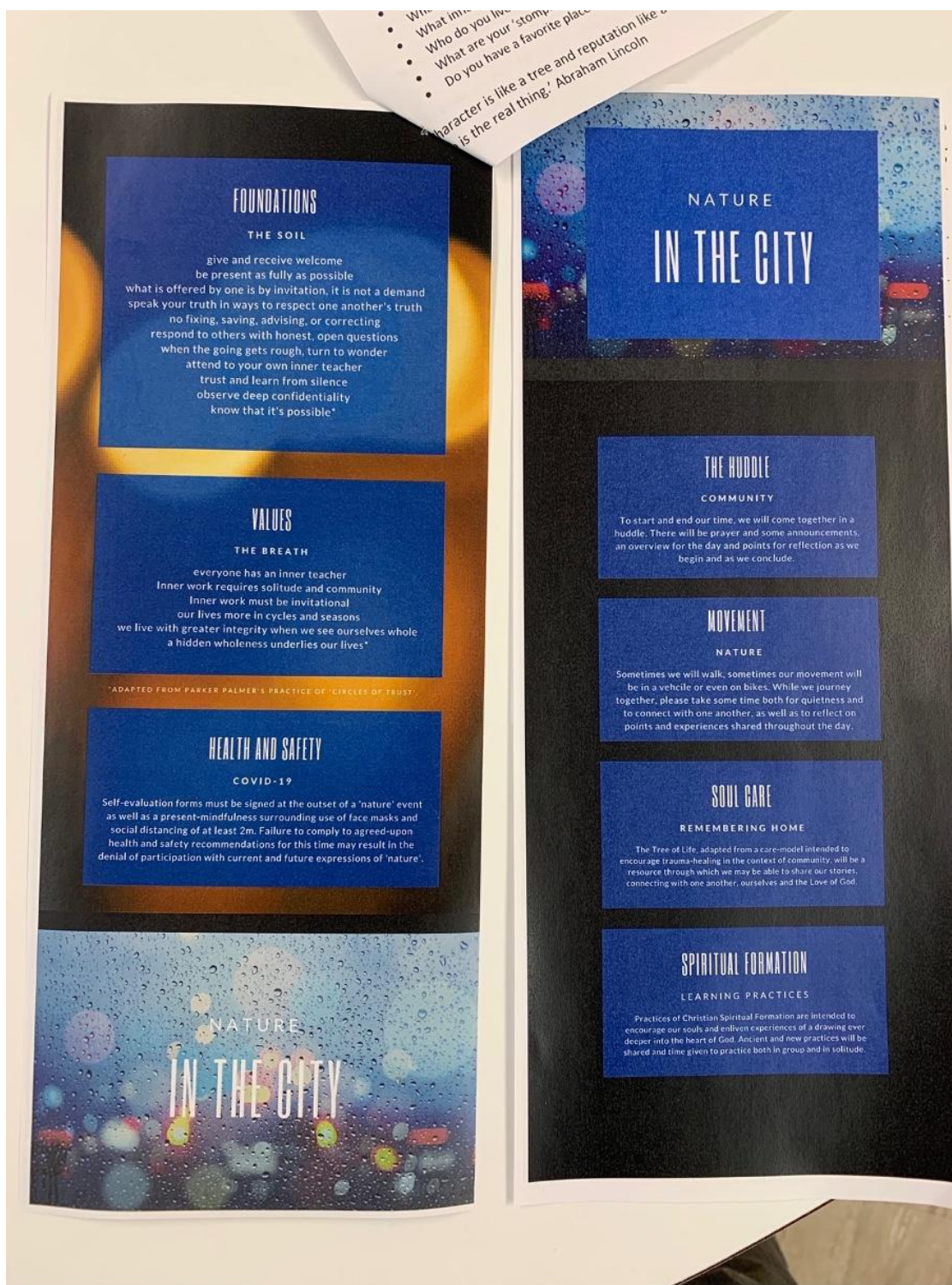


Figure 61. *Left*, frontside of “in the city” handout; *right*, backside of handout.

**Nature: in the city**  
**SOUL, BODY, SPIRIT**

**Information**

**DESTINATION:** DOWNTOWN (Note: a total of 5-7kms will be walked on pavement)  
**DATE:** Sunday, March 14, 2021  
**TIME:** 10am to 4pm

**Itinerary**

10am Meet at the Mustard Seed for opening huddle  
 1030am Leave the Mustard Seed  
 1045am Stop for a Coffee-to-go  
 11am Stop for Subs  
 Noon Arrive at First Stop for Lunch  
 1230pm Soul Care: a 'Tree of Life' conversation  
 130pm Sidewalks: reflection  
 2pm Arrive at Second Stop for Spiritual Formation, teaching and practice  
 3pm The walk home  
 330pm Arrive back at the Mustard Seed for closing Huddle

**ATTIRE:** please dress warm and ready for rain. Footwear should be good for hiking on rough terrain.

**BEYOND THE STREETS: DOWNTOWN (10 max)**

Number	Name	Contact Information
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Note: 2 leaders will host the 'nature: in the city' excursion.



Figure 62. Sign-Up document, kept in reception at MSSC, for “nature, in the city.”

### **Waiver Form**

(Not Available)

### **Manuscript/Overview**

**nature: in the city**

**Starting Point:** The Mustard Seed Street Church

**Date:** Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Timeframe:** 10am to 4pm

### **Journey Points (+ ETA)**

The Mustard Seed Street Church	10am
Discovery Coffee Shop	1030am
Subway Subs	11am
Yates Street Arcade	Noon
The Whale Wall	2pm
The Mustard Seed Street Church	330pm

**Foundations** (from Parker Palmer’s, Centre for Courage and Renewal)

1. Give and receive welcome.
2. Be present as fully as possible.
3. What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.
4. Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.
5. No fixing, saving, advising or correcting.
6. Learn to respond to others, with honest, open questions.
7. When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.
8. Attend to your own inner teacher.
9. Trust and learn from silence.
10. Observe deep confidentiality.
11. Know that it's possible.

**Principles** (from Parker Palmer's, Centre for Courage and Renewal)

1. Everyone has an inner teacher.
2. Inner work requires solitude and community.
3. Inner work must be invitational.
4. Our lives move in cycles like seasons
5. Appreciating paradox enriches our lives and helps us hold greater complexity.
6. We live with greater integrity when we see ourselves whole.
7. A hidden wholeness underlies our lives.

**‘nature: in the city’ key words:**

community – home – story – play – adventure – soul care – nature

**Location: The Mustard Seed Street Church**

Welcome: overview the intention, movement, learning and adventure of the day.

Name Game: share your name and something you enjoy doing, a life-giving activity. Play ‘concentration’.

Circles of Trust: iterate foundations of the circle (see above).

Tree of Life: brief overview. The Tree and focus on the roots and the soil.

**Spiritual Practice:** brief overview. Lectio Divina.

Scripture: From Matthew 13, the Mustard Seed. “God’s kingdom is like an acorn that a farmer plants. It is quite small as seeds go, but in the course of years it grows into a huge oak tree, and eagles build nests in it.” Think about the Acorn and think about the Oak Tree. Like the Iceberg we notice only a portion, that which is about the water. Consider that which is below, the life that there is even in dark places. This is where the seed bursts to life, in the dark.

### **Reflection for the Road:**

- During the walk, focus in on the trees along the road.
- Consider the life of the tree and what can be seen. Consider its origins.
- Reflect, in a quiet moment or in conversation on what the trees have encountered with regards to seasons, its joys and pains of growth, its usefulness, it's fruits and flowers.
- Consider the anchoring of the tree, the strength of its roots that has enabled it to endure through the storms it has encountered.

### **The Walk**

Discovery Coffee on Discovery Street

Subway sandwiches at Douglas and Johnson Street

Enjoy the coffee and the walk together.

Focus on the reflection offered at the opening huddle.

Reminder at the various stop points to carry on with the reflection, considering the trees.

Challenge: learn two new things about someone you're walking with.

(If you feel uncomfortable with this, just enjoy the walk together.)

**Story: Tree of Life** (Tree of Life, Zimbabwe)

Reflection on the Candle: Jesus, may this candle be a light for you to enlighten me. Holy Spirit, may it be a fire for you to burn out of me all pride, selfishness and impurity. Creator God, may it be a flame for you to bring warmth into my heart; warmth towards my family, my neighbors and all whom I meet.

Opening Prayer: Most powerful Holy Spirit, come down upon us and subdue us. From heaven, where the ordinary is made glorious, and glory seems but ordinary, bathe us with the brilliance of Your light like dew. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

The tree can be a metaphor for life.

Reminder on foundation and Principles. Focus on respect and support for one another.

Question: Remember the reflection on the walk to the concrete mountain. 'What does the tree say to me about my life?'

Considering the Roots and then, considering the ground, in which the roots have life. How is the soil in which we are planted? What is the ground like around which the tree of our life grows?

"If a healthy soil is full of death, it is also full of life: worms, fungi, microorganisms of all kinds...given only the health of the soil, nothing that dies is dead for very long." Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 1977.

What, to you, does good soil look like and smell like?

In this circle, participants reflect on how the lives that they are living in shapes who they are today, and how they will choose to tend the soil they're in now and, through into the future.

The recent, 'beyond the streets' reflection was on the roots, where we come from and our family. Does anything come to mind when you think of the roots in your life?

This week, 'in the city', our reflection as we consider the tree as a metaphor for life is set on the ground. Considering our present life and day-to-day activities that we engage in:

- What is the ground like in your life?
- Is it fairly stable or frequently changing?
- What is the consistency of the soil that your life is currently planted in?
- What influences you on a daily basis?
- Who do you live with?
- What are your 'stomping grounds' like and where do you spend a lot of your time?

Do you have a favorite place to be?

Is there anything else that someone would like to share about the soil they are planted in?

### **The Movement: Concrete Mountain to Grassy Waterside**

We will walk from the Yates St. Parcade, top floor to just down the road on the grass by the whale wall. Perhaps, boil up some water for tea, coffee or hot chocolate. Set-up with chairs in a circle and a big candle in the middle.

**Reminders:** Walk slowly. Find time for mindfulness.

Take a moment along the way to reflect on the Tree of Life exercise. Listen closely.

Scripture for reflection along the way. Psalm 46:10, 'Be still and know that I am God.'

Enjoy the time.

**Centering:** Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading)

We will sit together in a circle by the water at the Whale Wall (inner harbour of Victoria).

Devotional papers have been handed out with a spiritual practise on them, direction for practise and questions to consider.

'To enter the Kingdom signifies, as a beginning, to understand things, to be attentive to what the Invisible Presence is saying to you by means of the infinity of signs in which we are

immersed: like a drop in the ocean, like a leaf in the wood, like an ant on a mountain. But, in order to understand, it is necessary to have a child's heart.' (from Carretto's 'Desert in the City')

'Don't be afraid. I know it is difficult to believe, but I assure you that it is more difficult not to believe. Try very hard to have a child's heart and a child's eyes, then everything will be easier for you. Gaze at things, study things; don't be afraid of wasting time strolling by the sea or looking in a microscope at the harmonious structure of the infinitely small. It is precisely in those signs, there in front of you, that your intuition of God and your faith in God are born, and it is not for nothing, not by chance, that they are looking at you.' (from Carretto's 'Desert in the City')

Reflection on the Candle: Jesus, may this candle be a light for you to enlighten me. Holy Spirit, may it be a fire for you to burn out of me all pride, selfishness and impurity. Creator God, may it be a flame for you to bring warmth into my heart; warmth towards my family, my neighbours and all whom I meet.

**Prayer:** Come, Holy Spirit, send us from heaven a ray of your light. Come, father of the poor, come, bestower of gifts, come light of our hearts. You are the perfect consoler, sweet guest of the soul, most gentle refreshment. You are the repose in our toil, coolness in our heat, comfort in our tears. O most blessed light, invade our hearts, for without your strength, there is nothing in man. Wash what is soiled, bathe what is parched, heal what is bleeding. Bend what is rigid, melt what is frozen, straighten what is crooked. Give to your faithful who trust in you alone your holy gifts. In the name of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior of the world, we pray, Amen.



## **Spiritual Practise:** Lectio Divina

What is Lectio Divina or Sacred Reading?

- Lectio Divina is a method of praying the Scriptures.
- The practice of Lectio Divina traces its roots back to the early centuries in the Church.
- Lectio Divina is a slow, rhythmic reading and praying of a Scripture passage.
- You pick a passage and read it. Notice what arises within you as you read it.
- Then you read it again, and then again, noticing what words and phrases grab your heart and noticing the feelings that arise.
- You respond to God about whatever is stirring within as you read and pray with the passage.
- Finally, you rest and let God respond and speak to you.

**Scripture:** The Harvest Story - Matthew 13: 18-23 (The Message)

Study this story of the farmer planting seed. When anyone hears news of the kingdom and doesn't take it in, it just remains on the surface, and so the Evil One comes along and plucks it right out of that person's heart. This is the seed the farmer scatters on the road.

The seed cast in the gravel—this is the person who hears and instantly responds with enthusiasm. But there is no soil of character, and so when the emotions wear off and some difficulty arrives, there is nothing to show for it.

The seed cast in the weeds is the person who hears the kingdom news, but weeds of worry and illusions about getting more and wanting everything under the sun strangle what was heard, and nothing comes of it.

The seed cast on good earth is the person who hears and takes in the News, and then produces a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.

**Read.** Lectio.

Slowly and thoughtfully, read the Scripture passage the first time. What word or phrase captures your attention and grabs your heart? Linger with it whenever this happens.

**Reflect.** Oratio.

Slowly and prayerfully, read the passage again. What is God saying to you in this passage? offering you? asking you? What feelings are arising within you?

**Respond.** Meditatio.

Slowly and prayerfully, read the passage again. Respond to God from your heart. Speak to God of your feelings and insights. Offer these to God.

**Rest. Contemplatio.**

Possibly read the passage another time. Sit quietly in God's presence, asking, "What are you saying to me?" Rest in God's love and listen.

Take some time for solitude to reflect on the practice. 'Be still'.

Allow space for God to speak into your life.

**The Way Home**

Enjoy the time with one another walking home to the place we started.

Again, consider the trees. Recall our Soul Care, our Roots and the ground within which we are rooted.

Listen closely. Observe God with you, beside you, all around you, within you.

Practise walking in peace.

**The Closing Huddle**

Invitation to share. How was the day? What sticks out for you?

Focus on next gathering. In two weeks. The expression of nature, we are going to get our hands dirty. We are putting together a 'Farm Crew' to go to Hope Farm for a day of work and fellowship.

"To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves." - Mahatma Gandhi, Indian activist.

Closing with a Breath Prayer or "Jesus Prayer"

- Significance of the name of God and breath.
- "Lord Jesus Christ / Son of God / Have mercy on me."
- "My soul/ finds rest /in God alone."
- "Shepherd / lead me / by still waters."
- "Come / Holy Spirit / Come."
- "Abba / I belong to you."

Releasing the time. Being refreshed.

## **Handout**

Frontside: **Soul Care** (remembering home)

The tree can be a metaphor for life. The recent, ‘nature, beyond the streets’ reflection was on the roots, where we come from and our family. Does anything come to mind when you think of the roots in your life?

In view of the Roots and then, considering the Ground, in which the roots have life. How is the soil in which we are planted? What is the ground like around which the tree of our life grows? What, to you, does good soil look like and smell like?

This week, ‘in the city’, our reflection as we consider the tree as a metaphor for life is set on the ground. Considering our present life and day-to-day activities that we engage in:

- What is the ground like in your life?
- Is it fairly stable or frequently changing?
- What is the consistency of the soil that your life is currently planted in?
- What influences you on a daily basis?
- Who do you live with?
- What are your ‘stomping grounds’ like and where do you spend a lot of your time?
- Do you have a favorite place to be?

‘Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.’ Abraham Lincoln

Backside: **Spiritual Formation** (learning practices)

### **Lection Divina: Matthew 13**

“Study this story of the farmer planting seed. When anyone hears news of the kingdom and doesn’t take it in, it just remains on the surface, and so the Evil One comes along and plucks it right out of that person’s heart. This is the seed the farmer scatters on the road. The seed cast in the gravel—this is the person who hears and instantly responds with enthusiasm. But there is no soil of character, and so when the emotions wear off and some difficulty arrives, there is nothing to show for it. The seed cast in the weeds is the person who hears the kingdom news, but weeds of worry and illusions about getting more and wanting everything under the sun strangle what was heard, and nothing comes of it. The seed cast on good earth is the person who hears and takes in the News, and then produces a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.”

**Read.** Slowly and thoughtfully, read the Scripture passage the first time. What word or phrase captures your attention and grabs your heart? Linger with it whenever this happens.

**Reflect.** Slowly and prayerfully, read the passage again. What is God saying to you in this passage? offering you? asking you? What feelings are arising within you?

**Respond.** Slowly and prayerfully, read the passage again. Respond to God from your heart. Speak to God of your feelings and insights. Offer these to God.

**Rest.** Possibly read the passage another time. Sit quietly in God’s presence, asking, “What are you saying to me?” Rest in God’s love and listen.

## Follow Up Notes

**nature: in the city**

**Starting Point:** The Mustard Seed Street Church

**Date:** Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Timeframe:** 10am to 4pm

### Journey Points (+ ETA)

The Mustard Seed Street Church	10am
Discovery Coffee Shop	1030am
Subway Subs	11am
Yates Street Parcade	Noon
The Whale Wall	2pm
The Mustard Seed Street Church	330pm

**Foundations** (from Parker Palmer's, Centre for Courage and Renewal)

1. Give and receive welcome.
2. Be present as fully as possible.
3. What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.
4. Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.

5. No fixing, saving, advising or correcting.
6. Learn to respond to others, with honest, open questions.
7. When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.
8. Attend to your own inner teacher.
9. Trust and learn from silence.
10. Observe deep confidentiality.
11. Know that it's possible.

**Principles** (from Parker Palmer's, Centre for Courage and Renewal)

1. Everyone has an inner teacher.
2. Inner work requires solitude and community.
3. Inner work must be invitational.
4. Our lives move in cycles like seasons
5. Appreciating paradox enriches our lives and helps us hold greater complexity.
6. We live with greater integrity when we see ourselves whole.
7. A hidden wholeness underlies our lives.

**'nature: in the city' key words:**

community – home – story – play – adventure – soul care – nature

**The Mustard Seed Street Church (The Huddle Point)**



Welcome: overview the intention, movement, learning and adventure of the day.

Our gathering together started at the Coffee Window. Those interested in joining us for ‘nature, in the city’ met me at the window and received an itinerary for the day as well as a waiver form that needed to be signed before participation. We had picnic/snack bags with drinks all set to go in a ‘community’ backpack, which I would be responsible for.

At 1030am we gathered together outside underneath a corner of our Parking Lot tent area. We were all ready to go, each one of us with a lawn chair.

Participant one – a volunteer and potential leader in the group. He is excited about Mustard Seed ministry and connection with our community.

Participant two – a community member who has helped in the kitchen from time-to-time. He is a happy person who has remained close with the community, meeting daily with friends under the tented area in the parking lot.

Participant three – a community member who is new to the Mustard Seed Street Church. She has been living in a shelter for two years, is very quiet and seems open to the movement and spiritual care offered at the Mustard Seed.

Participant four – a casual staff member at the Mustard Seed and curious about ‘nature’. She will possibly be a future mentor/coach of an iteration of ‘nature’.

Participant five – a volunteer (our librarian) of the Mustard Seed and a wonderful heart for our community. She is slightly disabled and requires the help of a motorized wheelchair for mobility.

Participant six – a staff member of the Mustard Seed and today's leader of 'nature, in the city'.

### **The Huddle**

- We came together in a talking circle near to one of our garbage bins.
- There was some commotion around the bins, as can often be the case, which inhibited the flow of our conversations at times.
- We shared our names with one another and some other things that would describe our each of our characters a little.
- An overview of the day was verbalized, as participants followed on their itinerary. On each itinerary was also a description of the 'soul care' practise as well as the 'spiritual formation practise'.
- We prayed together, discussed the encouragement for the walk and ways to reflect in preparation for our soul care practise. Then we started our walk.

### **The Walk**

Our first stop was Discovery Coffee on Discovery Street. Each person chose a special drink. It was made clear that one of the participants preferred to not have her picture taken. She was happy to be the photographer of the group for the day.

Along the way, everyone had a chance to walk and talk with each other. The group would split from twos to threes, in conversation. I also noticed that the odd time, individual participants were happy to walk alone.

Our second stop was for Subway sandwiches at Douglas and Johnson Street. One of the participants (number four) made it clear that she was not able to eat meat and preferred to go to another fast-food restaurant to purchase a snack for the picnic. She left the group for about twenty minutes, while the rest of the participants ordered sub sandwiches.

While waiting for our orders, we continued in conversation as well as ‘play’. There was some laughing and joking around together in Subway. This ‘laughter’ and ‘play’, I’m learning can help with community-building as well as nurturing vulnerability in the group. Things that I am learning, can nurture vulnerability: the adventure, the movement, the informal conversation, the play and the laughter, all shared in together. The subs were placed in the ‘community’ backpack.

We enjoyed the coffee and the walk together. We were learning new things about each other as well as considering the reflection encouraged for the walk from the opening huddle. At each of the stop points there was a reminder to consider the trees and the importance of being planted in good soil.

### **Location for our Picnic and Soul Care: Yates Street Parkade**

So, the plan for this iteration of ‘nature’ is ‘in the city’. Consideration was given to the idea of metaphorically substituting various features of the inner-city with that of nature. The Yates Street Arcade was referred to as a mountain for us to climb in the inner-city. It is about eight stories tall. Thankfully, there was an elevator for one of our participants who was in a motorized wheelchair. One person joined her in the elevator while the rest summited ‘Mt. Yates Street’ by staircase.

The top of the Yates Street Arcade is open, no roof. There is a wonderful view of the city from the top, as well as of the inner harbour, distant Sooke Hills and the Olympic Mountain Range on the other side of the Juan de Fuca Strait. It was a cold day and while we started to open our lunches, following a prayer together, there was a trickle of rain. We decided to follow the trail down to the next floor to be under cover. Lawn chairs out, we formed a circle and had some great conversations over lunch.

To begin, we pretended we had a candle and discussed the significance of the flame.  
(Normally, we will either be by a fire or will have candles for each participant to light.)

The Reflection on the Candle: Jesus, may this candle be a light for you to enlighten me. Holy Spirit, may it be a fire for you to burn out of me all pride, selfishness and impurity. Creator God, may it be a flame for you to bring warmth into my heart; warmth towards my family, my neighbours and all whom I meet.

Opening Prayer: Most powerful Holy Spirit, come down upon us and subdue us. From heaven, where the ordinary is made glorious, and glory seems but ordinary, bathe us with the brilliance of Your light like dew. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen (from the Celtic Book of Prayer).

Following these reflection and prayer we started with the movement of Soul Care, ‘The Tree of Life’ and the soil in which the tree abides. This was an opportunity for questions, sharing and storytelling. Before we started, we reviewed the Foundations and Values of our community in ‘nature’. With our Foundations and Values, we went around the circle, each person sharing one and describing what they feel the ‘foundation’ or ‘value’ they shared means.

What I found beautiful about this time together is that each person took leadership in their own way, at their own time. I don’t think it could have been felt that one person was leading. We were interactive and leading/following one another through the time. It was so unique, different than anything I had experienced before in a group setting, which can so often be dominated by the presence of a leader-type. To keep this kind of openness and realness and vulnerability, takes some tact and care.

One of our participants had a very soft voice, so we had to pay close attention if she wanted to say something. We had to protect her voice because if some from the group weren’t listening, they could speak over her. The rain falling and wind blowing also made it difficult to hear her speaking. I could see everyone from the group leaning in as she spoke.

Keeping to the time, and noticing that many people were getting cold, we left after about an hour and a half of picnic and conversation. (If interested in the questions and focus for the ‘Soul Care’ portion of the day, an overview can be provided). We descended Yates Street Mountain, this huge concrete structure of cars and cement, and stepped out into the elements with the intention of going to a point overlooking the harbour. An area known as the Whale Wall, for petroglyphs of whales etched onto a large cement hillside (actually a mural on the side of a building, but to carry on with ‘nature, in the city’) in its vicinity.

### **The Decision to Walk Back (and the walk back)**

As we walked down and onto the Yates St. Trail in front of the cement mountain, we realized just how cold we were and how wet it was getting. After a brief bathroom break, we decided to head back to the Mustard Seed, about 1km on cement trails from where we were. We thought it would be better to be under cover, close by to heat, to focus in on the spiritual formation practise for the day, Lectio Divina. It was a good decision, that we made together. Having to brave the elements became a part of the 'survival' or 'adventure' portion of the day. We continued connecting as a community on the walk back.

### **Centering: Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading)**

Arrival home to the Mustard Seed Street Church was a blessing. We pulled out our lawn chairs and set them in a circle underneath our Parking Lot tent. A heater was brought out from the lobby and set in the middle of us for warmth. One of the participants, who is a casual staff member, went inside to boil some water for hot chocolate. We had some time for conversation and preparation to enter into a moment of spiritual formation together.

While the situation, being under cover and by warmth, was mostly good, there were some distractions as our presence opened the door for conversation with those around the street church hoping that we might help them in various ways. Once we all had our hot chocolates, we commenced the practise. Everyone was focused. To begin the time, a prayer from Carlo Carretto's 'Desert in the City'.

We read the text of the ‘good soil’ from Matthew 13. (For an in-depth view of the movement of the practise, see overview of the day). We read it together ‘out loud’ and then, each participant spent some time quietly with the text. On the itinerary, given out at the start of the day, the overview and guideline for the practise was written out. This was good thing not only for the practise at the time, but also in order to carry on the practise on their own, if they so choose, at home.

### **Closing Huddle Time**

The Closing Huddle, we reflected on the journey of the day. The movement, the adventure, the journey, ‘away from’ and ‘back to’ the starting point. All of the participants had something to share, something specific that stood out to them. All of the participants were blessed by the day and not only felt cared for but also felt like they were a part of something, really involved in community.

We ended with a ‘Breath Prayer’ or ‘Jesus Prayer’. I helped the understanding of ‘breath’ and the Jewish mystical understanding of the name of God ‘YHWH’ being on each and every one of our breaths.

Before ‘Releasing the Time’ I shared with the group of the next ‘nature’ outing. They were very excited about the idea of ‘farm crew’.

“To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves.” - Mahatma Gandhi, Indian activist.

## 1. Pictures



Figure 63. Climbing to the top of the parkade for Spiritual Formation and Soul Care.





Figure 64. At the summit of an ‘in the city’ mountain of engineered cement.

PROTOTYPE 3: 'nature, farm crew'

**Storyboard**

(Not Available)

**Promotional Material**



Figure 65. Photo of info poster for 'nature, farm crew.'



Figure 66. *Left*, frontside of 'farm crew' handout; *right*, backside of handout.



## 1. Waiver Form



**nature: farm crew** Waiver Form

**Event Date:** \_\_\_\_\_. **Event Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_. **Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Optional) Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Allergies/Medical:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Note\*** Participants are advised to carry pertinent health and medical information on their persons at all times. Organizers assume no responsibility for health or well-being of participant as a result of the information provided. In case of Emergency we will notify your (relative, friend or neighbor)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Relationship:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assumption of Risk/Conditions:** I recognize there may be some element of risk of accidental injury, property loss or damage throughout the day event of 'nature: beyond the streets.' Also, with regards to lead-up interviews, program involvement and group participation, I understand and will not hold the Mustard Seed Street Church, or staff, or representatives liable given that there may be some psychological risk involved. I understand alcohol and non-prescribed drugs are strictly prohibited and must adhere to the Mustard Seed Street Church Code

of Conduct on any out-trip. I understand that if I am found to have broken items listed in the Mustard Seed Street Church's Code of Conduct, I will be excluded from further participation in 'nature: beyond the streets' and may not be eligible for future involvement, pending review.

I, the undersigned participant, on behalf of myself, my heirs, legatees and assigns, agree to indemnify, and hold harmless the The Mustard Seed Street Church or any of their representatives, employees, or volunteers for my health, safety, and injury or property loss or damage arising out of or resulting from this trip/event.

**Signature of Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Beyond the Streets is a ministry of Hospitality with the Mustard Seed Street Church.* The Purpose of the Hospitality Ministry of the Mustard Seed Street Church is: providing a welcome environment where discipleship is cultivated through maintaining a safe, supportive space; we seek to nurture a community empowered by God which reflects the grace and acceptance Christ demonstrated.

### **COVID-19: Consent for Participation with the Mustard Seed Street Church**

We thank you for wanting to join with us as a participant for this (event/activity) \_\_\_\_\_ through The Mustard Seed Street Church during this unprecedented pandemic. Due to the government guidelines over social gathering sizes, combined with the current research on how the virus is transmitted, we have restricted our services and access to our buildings.

With regards to this event/activity, we ask that social distancing be adhered to, mask wearing when indoors, mask wearing outdoors when in close vicinity with another person, and diligent handwashing (especially before and after eating).

By signing this form you are stating that you understand, agree, and declare that as you participate in this event/activity with the Mustard Seed Street Church during the COVID-19 pandemic that you are and will be solely responsible for your own health and safety during your time of service with us. Your signature on this form indicates that you have the time to educate and inform yourself on the COVID-19 virus and that you agree to hold harmless and indemnify The Mustard Seed Street Church from any and all liability for personal and property damage, injury, illness, death, damages, costs, charges, expenses, and interest, including legal costs and charges on a full indemnity, solicitor-client basis, for any personal or property loss, or damages to your heirs, successors, assigns, or anyone who might otherwise claim through you, arising from your decision to participate in this even/activity with the Mustard Seed Street Church during the COVID-19 pandemic. You release The Mustard Seed Street Church during the COVID-19 pandemic. You release The Mustard Seed Street Church, its board members, employees, agents, and representatives from any and all claims, at law, equity, or under legislations that you, your heirs, successors, assigns, or those who might otherwise claim through you now or in the future might otherwise have been able to advance against The Mustard Seed Street Church.

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Signature

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Date

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Printed Name

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Staff Witness

**Manuscript/Overview****nature: farm crew****Starting Point:** The Mustard Seed Street Church**Date:** Saturday, April 10th, 2021**Timeframe:** 8am to 4pm**Journey Points (+ ETA)**

The Mustard Seed Street Church	8am
Leave the Mustard Seed	830am
Stop in Duncan for a Coffee	9am
Arrive at Hope Farm	10am
Begin Farm Crew chores	1030am
Lunch	Noon
Begin afternoon chores	1pm
Leave Hope Farm	315pm
Arrive back at the Mustard Seed	4pm

**Foundations** (from Parker Palmer's, Centre for Courage and Renewal)

1. Give and receive welcome.
2. Be present as fully as possible.
3. What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.

4. Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.
5. No fixing, saving, advising or correcting.
6. Learn to respond to others, with honest, open questions.
7. When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.
8. Attend to your own inner teacher.
9. Trust and learn from silence.
10. Observe deep confidentiality.
11. Know that it's possible.

**Principles** (from Parker Palmer's, Centre for Courage and Renewal)

1. Everyone has an inner teacher.
2. Inner work requires solitude and community.
3. Inner work must be invitational.
4. Our lives move in cycles like seasons
5. Appreciating paradox enriches our lives and helps us hold greater complexity.
6. We live with greater integrity when we see ourselves whole.
7. A hidden wholeness underlies our lives.

**'nature, farm crew' key words:**

community – home – story – play – adventure – soul care – nature – soil – belonging



**Location: The Mustard Seed Street Church: 8am**

Welcome: overview the intention, movement, learning and adventure of the day.

Introduce yourself as someone else in the group. Pretending we all work on a farm, what is your job duty 'as the other person', describe the job and how much you love it.

Circles of Trust: iterate foundations of the circle (see above).

Tree of Life: reflection on preceding soul care moments. brief overview.

The Tree and focus on the roots and the soil, looking to discover ourselves and stories, in the 'trunk' of the tree during devotions today.

Spiritual Practice: at lunch time we will discuss 'Care of the Earth' as a spiritual practise.

Scripture: to think on as we go. (Perhaps cut up pieces of paper and hand them out for others to say aloud).

"Ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of these does

not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind." (Job 12:7-10)

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." (Psalm 19:1-4; cf. Psalm 97:6)

"Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)

### **Reflection for the Road:**

- Look at the trees. Consider the strength of their trunks to keep them upright.
- Consider the life of the tree and what can be seen. Consider its origins. Its battles and fears.
- Look at the sky. Catch a glimpse of an animal, a bird, and consider our place in the midst of creation.
- Perhaps, find a moment to pray and to ask the Creator to speak into your heart of who you have been made to be in the midst of creation. How can you live into caring for such beauty, the magnificence of His creation, in which we find our lives?

## **The Drive**

Subway sandwiches at the Shell station on the way up.

Coffee at the Garage in Duncan.

Enjoy conversation and reflections on what has been shared.

Focus on the reflection offered at the opening huddle.

Reminder at the various stop points to carry on with the reflection, considering the trees and creation.

Challenge: learn two new things about someone you're driving with or, someone you end up working with through the day.

If you feel uncomfortable with this and would prefer to enjoy the silence, a time to rest or sleep, please do.)

## **The Duncan Stop for Coffee: Duncan Garage**

(Story and Soul Care: The Trunk of the Tree)

Grab a coffee and find a place on the grass near the train tracks. Standing or sitting.

(If possible, have a candle to light.) Reflection on the Candle: Jesus, may this candle be a light for you to enlighten me. Holy Spirit, may it be a fire for you to burn out of me all pride, selfishness and impurity. Creator God, may it be a flame for you to bring warmth into my heart; warmth towards my family, my neighbours and all whom I meet.

Opening Prayer: Most powerful Holy Spirit, come down upon us and subdue us. From heaven, where the ordinary is made glorious, and glory seems but ordinary, bathe us with the brilliance of Your light like dew. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

The tree can be a metaphor for life.

Reminder on foundation and Principles. Focus on respect and support for one another.

Today, we are going to spend time together close to the earth, perhaps with our hands in the soil.

Wendell Berry writes: "If a healthy soil is full of death, it is also full of life: worms, fungi, microorganisms of all kinds ... Given only the health of the soil, nothing that dies is dead for very long." Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 1977.

Have you ever thought of soil as being full of life before?

Barbara Brown Taylor writes: “This land that gives us our food, our water; these trees that clean the air for us to breathe; all these green and growing things that bless our bodies with their beauty – these are not resources. They are fellow creatures, with their own rights and responsibilities before God. They have their own sacred duties to perform, if only we will let them.” Barbara Brown Taylor.

A question that was asked during our last nature outing: What, to you, does good soil look like and smell like?

In this circle, participants reflect on how the lives that they are living in shapes who they are today, and how they perceive their skills and talents, as they have been, are, and perhaps how they believe others view the skills and talents they have to offer.

At a recent ‘nature’ outing called ‘beyond the streets’ the reflection was on the roots, where we come from and our family. Does anything come to mind when you think of the roots in your life?

At our last outing, ‘in the city’, our reflection as we considered the tree as a metaphor for life was set on the ground. Considering our present life, the soil of our living and day-to-day activities that we engage in.

Here are some questions to help our reflection and conversation surrounding our base, the trunk of our lives:

- What skills and talents do you have?
- Can you play an instrument/draw/write?
- Are you helpful/kind?
- How important are your abilities to you? Do you value the same abilities in others?
- Do you find it is easier to think of your faults compared to your skills?
- Are there any skills that other people think you have? (skills you can't see.)

When storms of life arise, it is usually at the trunk that the break happens. When the going gets tough in your life, what are some of your coping skills? What keeps you strong?

Is there anything else that someone would like to share about the trunk of their lives, the base of their lives, the place of their lives that they find greatest strength?

Have you felt the threat of the logger? It is at the trunk of the tree that most trees are cut.

**Arrival: The Plan for the Day and Prayer with the Farm Manager (10am to 1030am).**

The Caretaker of Hope Farm will meet us where it's best to meet, to pray and to talk about the day ahead. As much as it would be great to go for a walk around the farm today, we will be focused on work and fellowship. One day soon, we can come back for a more relaxed time to enjoy the property.

He will have some time from 10am to 1030am to chat with us about:

- His call to the farm.
- An overview of the farm ministry. (brief)
- A glimpse of the various ‘places’ to be mindful of on the property.
- A chores list and delegation of before-lunch work.
- Prayer. (10 mins or so.)

Last directives and sending out.

(Notes for Brent: Hopefully, we can get to it fairly quickly, with any equipment needed fairly accessible. We will be sure to have everyone set in their appropriate work attire for the day.)

### **The Work (before lunch): 1030am to Noon**

Reminders: Walk slowly. Find time for mindfulness. Enjoy the day. Work hard.

Any questions: Please, find Brent. He knows this land so well. Lean on one another. We are full of skills, each one of us, and may be able to help each other along if needed.

Remember: the devotion this morning. We are in the midst of creation here, it is a different air than in the city, take lots of deep breaths.

Scripture for reflection along the way, for focus and drawing near to the Presence of God.  
Psalm 46:10, 'Be still and know that I am God.'

Enjoy the time.

### **Lunch and Spiritual Formation (Care of the Earth)**

We will have our lunches prepared to enjoy.

We will sit together outside in a circle, perhaps on the front lawn by the big house, or where Brent deems best for us to be together outside, safely and at distance.

The hand-out offered in the morning will have attached a little paper to guide through the devotional and spiritual formation practise.

From Carlo Carretto: 'To enter the Kingdom signifies, as a beginning, to understand things, to be attentive to what the Invisible Presence is saying to you by means of the infinity of signs in which we are immersed: like a drop in the ocean, like a leaf in the wood, like an ant on a mountain. But, in order to understand, it is necessary to have a child's heart.' (from Carretto's 'Desert in the City')



Reflection on the Candle: Jesus, may this candle be a light for you to enlighten me. Holy Spirit, may it be a fire for you to burn out of me all pride, selfishness and impurity. Creator God, may it be a flame for you to bring warmth into my heart; warmth towards my family, my neighbours and all whom I meet.

**Prayer:** Come, Holy Spirit, send us from heaven a ray of your light. Come, father of the poor, come, bestower of gifts, come light of our hearts. You are the perfect consoler, sweet guest of the soul, most gentle refreshment. You are the repose in our toil, coolness in our heat, comfort in our tears. O most blessed light, invade our hearts, for without your strength, there is nothing in man. Wash what is soiled, bathe what is parched, heal what is bleeding. Bend what is rigid, melt what is frozen, straighten what is crooked. Give to your faithful who trust in you alone your holy gifts. In the name of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour of the world, we pray, Amen. (from Carretto's 'Desert in the City')

### **Spiritual Practise:** Care of the Earth

Why is the 'Care of the Earth' considered a practise of Spiritual Formation?

In our 'care of the earth' we honor the one who created and creates all things; we honor the Creator by loving, nurturing and stewarding his creation. Could we love God by protecting his creation as well?

What is the Care of the Earth?

‘Caring for the earth is a way of expressing God’s delight in his very good creation. By engaging in loving care of the earth, the environment, the plants and the animals, we honor the gifts and treasures of our Creator.’

Scriptures:

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! (Genesis 1:31, NLT)

For the life of every living thing is in his hand, and the breath of every human being. (Job 12:10, NLT)

For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. (Romans 1:20, NLT)

That’s why I don’t think there’s any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times. The created world itself can hardly wait for what’s coming next. Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in until both creation and all the creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens. (Romans 8:18-21, The Message)

### Reflection Questions:

- Do you think about your positive or negative impact on creation?
- How is God calling us to be mindful of our resources?
- What do you think about environmentalists and developers, animal rights activists and vegetarians?
- Do you feel that you have ever taken God's gift of life for granted?
- How do you think God is calling for you to live as a caretaker of creation?
- In what ways can we focus our attention with regards to our care for life, our own lives and all that God has made?

### Practices of creation care: what are some of these practices?

- Protecting the earth's natural resources in consideration of future generations.
- Considering sacred places in nature and encouraging creation perspective toward them.
- Working against pollution of air, water and land.
- All actions that lead to making the earth more like God's original Garden. Living a way so as to uphold life, not destroy it.
- Using energy supply wisely.
- Not littering. Recycling. Riding a bike or walking, rather than driving a car.

Spiritual Exercises: How is the earth groaning? How are we groaning? What are some practices that will take us into closer connection with God as caretakers of his creation?

- Could we plant a garden somewhere? Or, plant flowers in surprising places around town?
- Going for a walk and considering what characteristics of God are revealed in earthly beauty?
- What could we do with regards to trail maintenance?
- Picking up litter around town?
- Cleaning up a beach?
- Standing in solidarity with those who are advocating for the protection of wild, untouched, original places?

### **The Afternoon Work**

As you head back into the field to work for the afternoon: consider creation care, our conversations and prayers. Find an opportunity to sit quietly in God's presence, asking, "What are you saying to me?" Rest in God's love and listen.

Take some time, in the solitude that you may find in your work, to reflect on the practice of creation care. Rest with Jesus, 'Be still'. Give God quiet space to speak into your life.

### **The Wrap-Up and Closing Prayer with Brent: 3pm to 315pm**

A coming together, still maintaining 'the distance', to close the day well together.

Brent may have a closing word and prayer to offer the group.

Some from the group may have a closing word and prayer to offer Brent and Hope Farm.

### **The Drive Home**

Enjoy the time with one another. Talk about the day. Reflect on the journey. Rest.

Again, consider the trees and all creation. Our conversations and our coming-together throughout the day. Peek into some of the places throughout the day in search of Jesus.

Listen closely. Observe God with you, beside you, all around you, within you.

Practise walking in peace.

### **The Closing Huddle**

Invitation to share. How was the day? What sticks out for you?

Focus on next gathering. Perhaps it will be 'Protest'. In this expression of nature, we are going to help those who are at the frontlines protesting the logging of Original Growth forests.

We will travel to Port Renfrew area and walk through a First-Growth area as well as bring food for those who are protecting forest areas (in particular, Eden Grove, Caycuse Valley and Fairy Creek).

Closing with a Breath Prayer or “Jesus Prayer”

- Significance of the name of God and breath.
- “Lord Jesus Christ / Son of God / Have mercy on me.”
- “My soul/ finds rest /in God alone.”
- “Shepherd / lead me / by still waters.”
- “Come / Holy Spirit / Come.”
- “Abba / I belong to you.”

Releasing the time. Being refreshed.

## **Handout**

Frontside: **Soul Care: The Tree of Life**

Opening Prayer: Most powerful Holy Spirit, come down upon us and subdue us. From heaven, where the ordinary is made glorious, and glory seems but ordinary, bathe us with the brilliance of Your light like dew. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

**The tree can be a metaphor for life.**

Jeremiah 17:7-8 “But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

Today we are going to spend time together close to the earth, perhaps with our hands in the soil. Have you ever thought of soil as being full of life before?

**Reflection Questions:**

- What skills and talents do you have? Can you play an instrument/draw/write?
- Are you helpful/kind? How important are your abilities to you? Do you value the same abilities in others?
- Do you find it is easier to think of your faults compared to your skills?
- Are there any skills that other people think you have? (skills, perhaps, that you can't see.)

**When storms of life arise, it is usually at the trunk that the break happens.**

When the going gets tough in your life, what are some of your coping skills? What keeps you strong? Have you felt the threat of the logger? It is at the trunk of the tree that most trees are cut.

Backside: **Spiritual Formation: care of the earth**

‘To enter the Kingdom signifies, as a beginning, to understand things, to be attentive to what the Invisible Presence is saying to you by means of the infinity of signs in which we are immersed: like a drop in the ocean, like a leaf in the wood, like an ant on a mountain. But, in order to understand, it is necessary to have a child’s heart.’ Carretto (‘Desert in the City’)

What is the ‘care of the earth’? Why is the ‘care of the earth’ a practise of Spiritual Formation?

### **Scriptures for consideration and conversation: (meditation and contemplation)**

For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. (Romans 1:20, NLT)

That’s why I don’t think there’s any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times. The created world itself can hardly wait for what’s coming next. Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in until both creation and all the creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens. (Romans 8:18-21, The Message)

### **Reflection Questions:**

- Do you think about your positive or negative impact on creation?
- How is God calling us to be mindful of our resources?



- Do you feel that you have ever taken God's gift of life for granted?
- How do you think God is calling for you to live as a caretaker of creation?
- In what ways can we focus our attention with regards to our care for life, our own lives and all that God has made?

**What could be some practices of 'creation care' or 'care of the earth'?**

**How could 'care of the earth' be regarded as a spiritual experience?**

(an experience to draw us nearer to the heart of God and one another.) How can we reflect on practices, spiritually (for deeper meaning).

### **Follow Up Notes**

**nature: farm crew**

**Date:** Saturday, April 10th, 2021

**Timeframe:** 8am to 4pm

### **Journey Points (+ ETA)**

The Mustard Seed Street Church	8am
Leave the Mustard Seed	830am
Stop in Duncan for a Coffee	9am

Arrive at Hope Farm	10am
Begin Farm Crew chores	1030am
Lunch	Noon
Begin afternoon chores	1pm
Leave Hope Farm	315pm
Arrive back at the Mustard Seed	4pm

**Foundations** (from Parker Palmer's, Centre for Courage and Renewal)

1. Give and receive welcome.
2. Be present as fully as possible.
3. What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.
4. Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.
5. No fixing, saving, advising or correcting.
6. Learn to respond to others, with honest, open questions.
7. When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.
8. Attend to your own inner teacher.
9. Trust and learn from silence.
10. Observe deep confidentiality.
11. Know that it's possible.

**Principles** (from Parker Palmer's, Centre for Courage and Renewal)

1. Everyone has an inner teacher.
2. Inner work requires solitude and community.
3. Inner work must be invitational.
4. Our lives move in cycles like seasons
5. Appreciating paradox enriches our lives and helps us hold greater complexity.
6. With live with greater integrity when we see ourselves whole.
7. A hidden wholeness underlies our lives.

**‘nature, farm crew’ key words:**

community – home – story – play – adventure – soul care – nature – soil – belonging

**Starting Point: The Mustard Seed Street Church**

There was some hesitation, as in Victoria and On Vancouver Island there has been a fairly sever outbreak of COVID-19 and variants. It is the worst it had ever been.

We decided to pray and converse about the potential risks, options and how we could travel and face the day safely as a group.

A sense of peace was felt in going. There were four of us.

**Participant one:** a volunteer and causal staff member who was at the latest ‘nature outing’ (‘in the city’).

**Participant two:** a quiet individual of the Mustard Seed who is starting to open a bit more.

**Participant three:** an energetic, new volunteer who has been a part of the Mustard Seed community for many years. He is starting to find his place with us.

**Participant four:** one who is caring for the others in the group for the day.

Before we left, we prayed together and discussed the plans for the day. The plan for transportation was to have the passenger in the backseat and furthest from the driver. Masks were mandatory for the duration of the drive. The window behind the driver was to be open. We tried our best with this.

### **On the Road: Leaving the Mustard Seed**

Both cars of participant had reflection points intended to prepare for devotions and spiritual formation, later in the day. The reflections were intended also to prepare our hearts for work at the farm.

Another task for the drive was to learn two new things about one another. The journey on the road, from the Mustard Seed to the farm, is about 45 minutes.

We stopped at Subway for lunch sandwiches and for gas on the way to Duncan. On the other side of Duncan is where the farm is. Gas and sandwiches were paid for by the Mustard Seed. I felt that we were starting to fall slightly behind on the itinerary, at this point.

### **Duncan Garage: mini devotions**

We arrived at our coffee stop just before 10 am. We had the chance to buy hot drinks and sit for a while outside at a table. Currently, eating indoor at restaurants is prohibited. We sat outside quietly together, briefly considered the soul care practise however, the focus became on Hope Farm and a brief introduction of the place and history.

We ‘caught up on time’ slightly by cutting our time for soul care up. The meditation on the tree of life, reflections on ‘the trunk’ of the tree can be revisited at the next nature outing.

### **Rally Point: Arrive at Hope Farm**

When we arrived at Hope Farm, Brent was out in the field in a tractor. We met with him and he discussed the day with us. He gave us a brief overview of the farm and shared with us what our chores for the day were going to be.

Brent introduced the shofar (ram’s horn) when it was time for us to pray together. The theme of the shofar in prayer would carry us from point to point throughout our time at Hope Farm. The shofar creates a sound that has a perfect frequency. A couple people in the group were drawn to tears for its great presence resounding within them.

### **Morning Work: Farm Crew Chores**

Two participants helped to power wash one of the buildings that had become quite dirty after a couple years of no upkeep. Two participants cleared a corner of black berry brambles from a corner of one field.

We were given adequate instructions by the Farm Caretaker and we were given all the tools needed to do our jobs well. Some safety procedures could have been held to more closely. For example, proper ladder use and support.

I encouraged the participants to take a moment, once in a while, to stop and look around. To listen closely and observe the beauty and nature at the farm. To smell the fresh, country air and to listen to the quiet and little sounds of nature.

The day was absolutely beautiful. A couple of us returned with some colour to our faces as it was sunny for some of the day.

### **Lunch Break and Spiritual Formation**

The Practise of Spiritual Formation for today was ‘care of the earth’. While I had an entire study and questions planned, I knew that I was going to have to adjust knowing how much the Farm Manager wanted to be involved. He enjoys teaching and sharing his faith.

I decided to go with the flow and invite him to answer some questions with regards to ‘care of the earth’. I knew that off a few starting questions, questions may arise in the others to ask him. This, shared leadership, I am attuning to especially, when it is expected that one person in particular take the lead.

My leadership, then, becomes a kind of encouragement toward unlearning or deconstruction, without necessarily putting words to it, by way of strategizing ways to invite all those present into a shared-group leadership experience. I have found that once one or two ease into the idea, other quieter individuals (ones more reserved and sensitive- intentional with words and presence) individuals jump in as well.

The Farm Manager had some interesting things to share, encouraging deepening relationship with God. Everyone was riveted. Once again, he closed in prayer with the sounding of the ram's horn. The sound of the ram's horn, air and noise moving through a space where there once was flesh, impressed a beloved frequency upon each person.

He has a charismatic flare and once silence is given for the sound of the horn to come to completion, he laughs out loud, sings in tongues and prays a beautiful prayer for us to understand. Everyone's hearts were encouraged.

One of the participants who was power washing came to lunch very wet and cold. Thankfully, the sun did dry our clothes and warmed us all up to ready for another few hours at work.

### **Afternoon work: Farm Crew chores**

Eagles overhead. The afternoon work was more intense for time and the desire to complete the tasks that were given to us. There was more of a desire for the whole group to work together, so by the end of the workday, not only was a good portion of one of the larger buildings power-washed clean, but also all four of us had a chance to come together to complete the

clearing of blackberry brambles from a corner of the Market Field. The brambles were blocking a fence which was inhibiting the movement of a tractor and plough which could be used in the field to make it ready for seed planting and growth of fresh produce.

In the afternoon, it rained briefly. The clouds were seen to part over us as they moved through the valley. The sun came out and there was a celebration for having completed the work. The Farm Manager's wife came out to see the work that had been done. She gave us the thumbs up! This was the first time in almost 15 years that a Farm Crew connection had been made between the Mustard Seed Street Church in Victoria and the Mustard Seed's Hope Farm in the Cowichan Valley. This could be the beginning of a regular movement from the city to the country with a Farm Crew team.

### **Closing and Prayer**

We closed in prayer together. Brent blew the shofar one more time. We all felt the sound within us. In the sound of the shofar is a story of healing from life, from the name of God on our every breath, from the ancient of days.

After a nice prayer we put our hands in for a cheer, '1-2-3, Farm Crew!!' We didn't actually 'touch hands' in order to be COVID-safe. We all jumped in the cars and the Farm Manager waited around to wave us away. What a beautiful day at the farm of fellowship, learning, nature and work.

### **Journey Home and Closing Huddle**



We stopped at the Garage (a great little coffee spot in the heart of Old Duncan) on the way home for a drink-for-the-road. Again, the road provides a great place for wonderful conversation.

The Participant that I was in the car with has been a community member at the Mustard Seed for many years. He shared with me some of the things in his life (past and present) that he feels he is finding his way through as he finds welcoming home and accepting family at the Mustard Seed. We listened to an episode on Richard Rohr's Podcast 'Another Name for Everything.'

Before dispersing, we gathered once more on the curbside in front of the Mustard Seed for a quick debrief of the day. Here is where we started, journeyed out from, adventured, played, worked, grew and have returned to. Each participant had something positive to share about the day, what spoke to them and how/where they felt the presence of God.

We prayed the Breath Prayer (Jesus Prayer) a few times over with different phrases. Then released the time and went our different ways, until our next time to begin a new adventure together.

## Photos



Figure 67. 'nature, farm crew.' We cleaned up the coop area and fed the chickens!



Figure 68. 'nature, farm crew.' A participant after cleaning up the brambles.



Figure 69. 'nature, farm crew.' The team following a job well done!

## APPENDIX E—SUPPLEMENTAL PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

### **Week One: Beyond the Streets**

(See PROJECT section in Portfolio)

### **Week Two: Beyond the Streets**

Location: Prospectors Trail, BC

Date: Saturday, July 10, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4pm

### **Leading Graphic**

(See PROJECT section in Portfolio)

### **Communication**

#### **Email One**

#### **Content**

Hi there, how are you? The adventure last Saturday was truly a sweet wandering with you 'out there' beyond-the streets. Thankful :) Week One, done! Get ready for Week Two, and feeling better.

Prospector's Trail. A challenging trail about 7kms through beautiful forested hills in the Goldstream area. There will be about 400m of elevation, so at times we will 'go slow', and there will be times to 'stop'.

Going slow and stopping can be essential for endurance, for RFP (relentless forward progression). We will take some time to hydrate, to breathe, to reflect, to soul care and 'nature'.

Thankful to 'journey' with you! See you soon. 8am Saturday at the Seed. 9am we'll be on the road. Please, any questions or concerns or ideas, send them on. It would be great to hear from you!

Remember your breath :)

Chris

PS. we are a group on Facebook. Check for 'nature, journey'. We will share updates here, and pictures, too. If you would not like for your picture to be posted, please let us know soon!

## Graphic

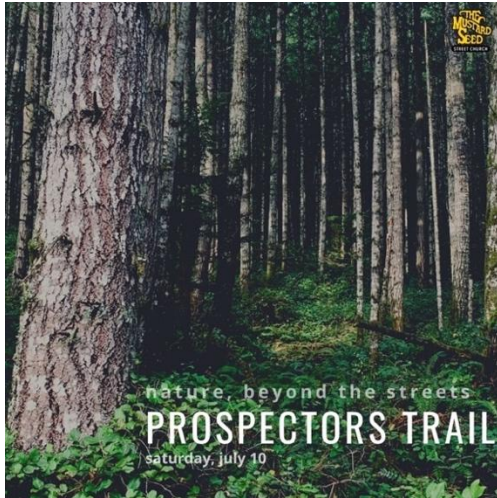


Figure 70. Infographic shared by email. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

## Email Two

### Content

Hi there, hope you've had a great week so far! It's about to get even better. I don't know about you, but I'm looking forward to hearing the 'ubuntu' birds singing out there on the trail again this Saturday!

See you bright and early at the Mustard Seed, 8am for a first coffee. We will rally at around 830am and be out on the road for the trails before 9am.

Our Soul Care time will focus on the ground, the soil surrounding the Tree. We will consider how our stories have been affected by where we are planted, the consistency of the soil and how the roots of our lives are impacted by the ground. What makes good soil, anyways?

A moment of Spiritual Formation will draw us into conversations and experiences as we have practiced the Presence of the Creator in our lives. Brother Lawrence, the 'Saint of Pots and Pans' writes that people 'invent means and methods of coming at God's love, they learn rules and set up devices to remind them of that love, and it seems like a world of trouble to bring oneself into the consciousness of God's presence. Yet it might be so simple.' So, how simple can it be?

Other things to look forward to: lunch on the trestle, quiet moments, beautiful creation, breathing deeply and every step, a little bit closer.

God bless you.

Glad to be journeying with you,

Chris

### **Graphic**

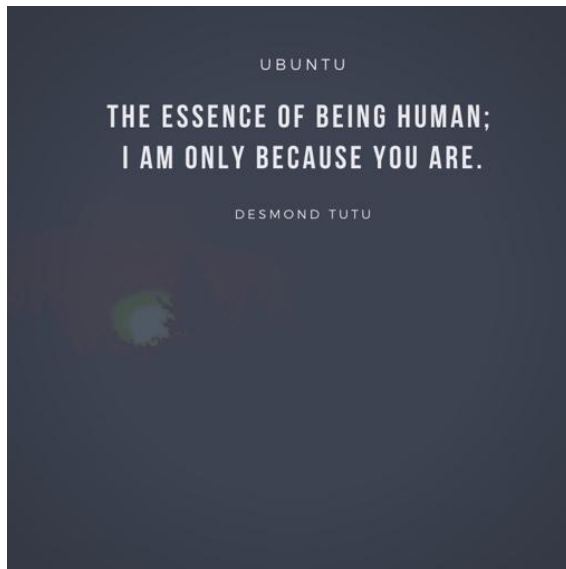


Figure 71. Infographic shared by email. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).



## FB Group: 'nature, journey'

### Graphic

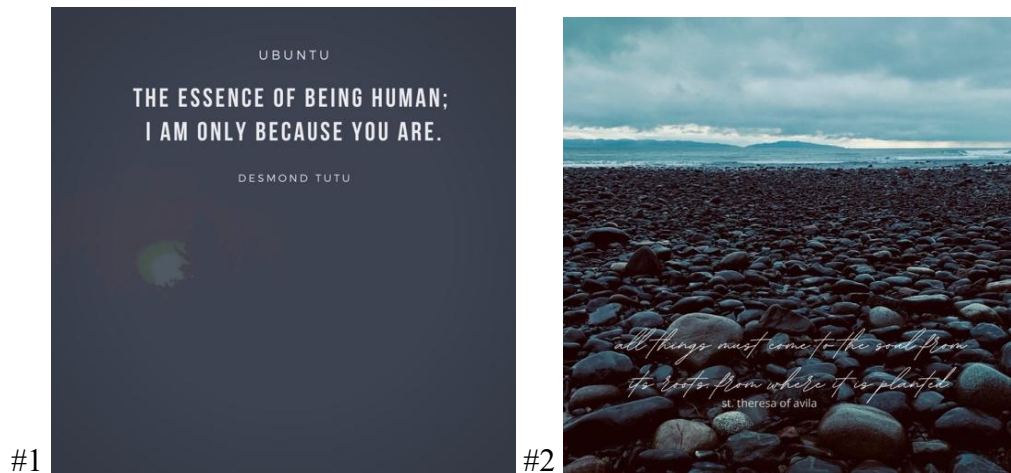


Figure 72. Infographics shared on FB. Photos taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

### Content

This Saturday, level up with 'nature, beyond the streets'. Prospectors Trail is our next outing destination in this summer's series of 'nature, journey', which is leading us into the adventure of a 3-day hike on the Juan de Fuca trail in mid-August.

This week, 7kms with 400m+ elevation. Along the way, there will some time for soul care in community. Close to the end of the hike we will stop, far above Niagara Creek, on the Goldstream trestle for a picnic lunch.

For more information on this hike and a summer full of adventure, send us a note or call us at the Mustard Seed!



#1: We are all one. Ubuntu is a word that originates with the Nguni-Bantu, original People of Africa. One word can mean so much. Imagine our humanity all bound up together and the natural caring-concern, the compassion there-inspiring our connectedness. I am only because we are. I am because you are. As we journey together, 'beyond the streets', we are contemplating this word, ubuntu, and what it could mean to live into such belonging and community.

#2: roots and soil. Prospector's trail was an epic outing on Saturday. Cheers to next steps in the 'journey' RFP. Just sweet, the coming-togetherness of this adventure. Our moment of Soul Care, on the heights of the Arbutus trail, reflected on last week conversation of roots, and focused on the soil of our lives. Following lunch, a brief meditation, in the midst of ancient trees, of Home, the 'Presence of the Creator' in all things, entirely. In stillness and small steps, slow-fully, brilliantly awakening; expand. Cobble Hill is coming up this week, 'nature, next'. Looking forward to a beautiful hike together and a picnic lunch by Shownigan Lake. ubuntu, You.

## Rally Map

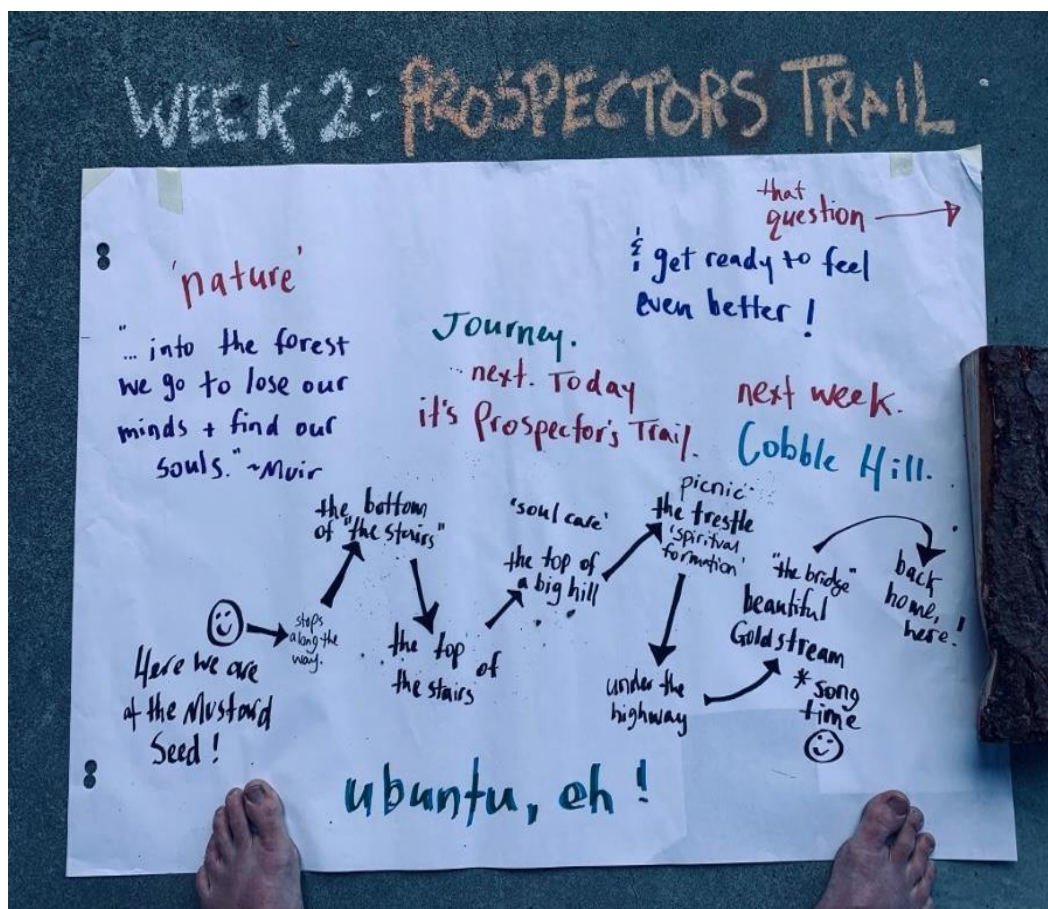


Figure 73. Week Two, Prospectors Trail rally map.

## **Week Two Handouts**

### **Spiritual Formation Handout**

#### **SPIRITUAL FORMATION** (learning practices): Practicing the Presence

Practicing the Presence of God. Could this be a time for solitude and silence, to practice ‘simply’ being in the presence of God. Face the distractions that come and let them leave you.

Focus on Creator, center on stillness. What does it mean for you to Practice the Presence?

Scripture reflection: Psalm 139:1-7 (Slowly read. Be in the presence of God)

‘Where can I go from your Spirit? Where Can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for the darkness is as light to you.’

Listen.

God is with you.

## Soul Care Handout

### **SOUL CARE** (remembering home)

The Tree as a metaphor of Life. As we press on together into mindful conversation and presence, let's remember our 'nature' foundations and values.

Our reflection today will center on the Soil at the base of the Tree; the earth nourishing our Roots which are foundational to our lives.

- Consider how soil is formed. What is the ground like in your life?
- Is the soil of your life fairly stable or frequently changing?
- What affects the integrity of the ground you are rooted in?
- What or who are you influenced by on a daily basis?
- Where do you spend your time? Do you have a favorite place to be?
- Who or what do you allow to influence your heart, body, or mind?

'Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.' Abraham Lincoln

## **Week Two Review**

Distance: 7.3 kms

Elevation: 400 meters

## **Rally Point**

I offered that there would be some focus on nutrition, fitness, and equipment in the weeks to come at our rally points.

We had a couple new people arrive. They had heard about ‘nature, journey’ through the week at the Coffee Window.

There was a man who arrived, who had heard about ‘nature, journey’ from another person who was walking here. Unfortunately, for the sake of safety (knowing this man), I had to let him know that he wouldn’t be able to join us. I let him know that he could help with volunteering through the morning at the Mustard Seed. It was solidified, my decision to not allow him to join the group, when he tried to take a couple books that I had set out.

A participant who had to stop hiking for health reasons, arrived as well. I was slightly concerned that he might be interested in joining the group again this week, given he had to turn back so early on the hike last week. Thankfully, he only came to wish the group well. It was nice to see him.

So, a few complications to navigate through from the start.

This week, we changed our approach to sandwiches. We would take orders for both Sub sandwiches and hot drinks at the table whereat waivers were being signed. We also asked for the Contact List to be updated so that each person could receive email updates throughout the week. As well, we reminded people of the Facebook Group: 'nature, journey'. Hoping that all would 'Join'.

I copied the waivers out, for this trip (as I will for each trip), upstairs while finalizing and printing the handout which includes the Soul Care focus and Spiritual Formation practise for the week.

The big white Sheets of paper were taped to the wall. The story from the week before (on Skirt Mountain) was there, as well as the blank sheet on which the story of this week's journey would be described. Rally Point starts at 830am.

This is becoming a fun time for us. A gathering point to discuss the day before it's time to hop in the cars and drive out to 'stops' on the way to the trailhead. We have a time introduction, so that we know each other, at least a bit (if someone is new) before we head out. Finally, our cheer. In a circle, hands in the middle, we are all connected, and we cheer 'ubuntu'.

### **On the Road**

As we head out to the cars, I designate who is in whose car. I do this for best chemistry in the group as we get to know one another. So far, the chemistry has been good.

Our first stop was for hot drinks. We had them pre-ordered and listed on a piece of paper so that we could fast-track the time. To save a bit of money, we chose to go to Tim Horton's. Following this stop, we went to SUBWAY. It was earlier that we arrived, so we had to wait for

the subs to be made. This was a long wait. I knew that we would have to re-evaluate this portion of the ‘movement’ for the next outing.

While waiting for the subs to be made, participants made the most of the time, stretching by the cars. The most was made of ‘the wait’. Finally, the subs arrived, and we made our way to the trailhead. Again, the meeting point following finding a parking spot, would be the bridge over Goldstream River.

### **The Trail**

Our meeting point on the bridge. Once we were altogether, we walked down the Bridge Trail for final stretches and to reflect on the Spiritual Formation practice of the week before. Next, we met at the map at the trailhead before turning our gaze to the starting point. The outset of the trail, a 7-storey climb to the top of a challenging staircase.

Some were tired and out of breath, after the stairs; these decided to stop for a moment to catch breath before carrying on. I encourage ‘stopping’ for many reasons: if you’re tired, if you’re feeling an injury coming about, to ‘catch breath’, to ‘listen’ to breath, to be present to nature, to experience the Presence, and more.

Going down a hill, on the first part of the trail, one of the participants fell. I think this was a surprise for her. She seemed a little ‘off’ and flustered after the fall. I came alongside her to see how she was doing, as did another participant to pray for her. She was quite concerned for her knee that had just been operated on and was healing still. She decided that it was time for her to head back, to call it quits for the day to care well for her knee. I agreed.

Now, it was important to figure out how to get her back to the vehicles safely and to not leave the group alone for too long. No one else knows the trails in the area.

Thankfully, I knew that there were a couple people at the cars. One participant decided to stay back out of concerns for cliffside hiking (he has a fear of heights). And a driver (my mom) was there waiting for the group to get back to help with driving following the hike.

The participant who was there still (he was trying to operate his ‘drone’ to follow the group and take pictures), once I had contacted him from the trail, offered to come and meet us halfway down toward the parking lot from the road crossing that the group would have to make through a river under the highway (note: these hikes have been designed specifically in order to prepare us for many things that we could face on the 3-day hike in August). I advised the group that I would catch up with them following a walk down the road to connect the participants to head back to the parking lot area together. This worked out quite well.

I ran back to the group after walking one participant back to meet with another along the road. The group had found a nice place to wait by the river. A few people had taken their shoes and socks off to soak their feet. All were quite relaxed.

Before too long, we started on the trail again. We still had about 5kms in front of us, so I know we had to keep going if we were going to make decent time on the route. The next portion of the trail would take us to a ridge area and a new trail system. At the top of the Ridge is where we had a water break and a time for Soul Care.

From that point, we were quite focused to keep to a good pace and rhythm. Only stopping briefly at trail markers to wait for the rest of the group to catch up. On the way down the ridge, at one point, we came across a man who was struggling to carry a jug of water. I offered to help him the rest of the way with it. He shared with us that it was fresh water that he accessed from a



naturally occurring spring just a little way up the hillside. He was on his way to the protests in care of Old Growth forests at Fairy Creek.

At about the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mark of the hike, we stopped for a quick water break at a cave. Most of the group went deep inside the cave. One man decided to spend some extra time in the cave, after everyone else had left, to sing a song and make strange sounds.

Our 'stop' point for lunch was going to be on a train trestle, high above the river. As we made our way there, we noticed that the trestle had been blocked by fences. So, it would not be possible for us to have lunch there. We stopped for a quick water break, up from the trestle, and a team picture. By this point, we were 6kms into the hike and tired.

After a fun team picture, it was time for a long downhill. I went out front and invited those who felt comfortable to enjoy the downhill with me at pace. Two participants joined me, and we met the group at a bridge further down the hill. Unfortunately, one of the participants who started out with us (I didn't know that he was there), hurt his knee on the way down. He has had knee issues in the past. This was so upsetting as both him and his wife/partner are big parts of the group. I ran up to be with him as he limped down the hill.

I will not be running, nor encouraging downhill trail running on our outings again. This was a learning/growth moment for me. Our endurance is dependent on our mobility. Downhill trail running increases risk for injury markedly.

Once we were down the hill, his knee was starting to feel better. It was a steep downhill climb. Through a tunnel, under the highway and back toward the parking lot we stopped at some picnic tables for lunch. Everyone was quite content to enjoy the rest and nutritious Subway sandwich together. Following lunch, we had a moment to consider the practise of Spiritual Formation that was offered. Practicing the Presence.

Before we jumped in cars to finish the day, we gathered by the river for a fun camp song led by one of the participants. He was totally in character and committed to leading the song out. Other hikers, passing by, did not know quite what to make of the situation. It was fun. We gathered in like a team, following the song, for a closing cheer before we jumped in cars to return to the Mustard Seed.

### **Spiritual Formation/Soul Care**

There is a reiteration of our foundations and values, to be sure that these times of group sharing are kept as safe as possible. We call ‘safe space’ or ‘safe harbour’. Foundations and values have been adapted from Parker Palmer’s ‘Circles of Trust’.

Soul Care – our time of Soul Care, at the summit of Arbutus Hill and the outset of the Arbutus Ridge Trail, was open and easy. There was a brief reflection on the Roots of the Tree of Life before we engaged in the topic for the day, the Soil surrounding the Roots at the base of the tree. One of the new participants opened with her life and the journey that she is currently on. She revealed her Roots and described the changing consistency of the soil she is planted in. The conversation ensued between various participants with regards to individual ‘reasons’ for being involved in ‘nature, journey’ and what this experience means to people.

Spiritual Formation – the time of sharing in a practice of Spiritual Formation seemed a little awkward for me. To paint the picture of the situation a little bit, the hike had been completed and we were seated at picnic tables following lunch time. I asked the group to bring

out the little handouts that they had been carrying with them so that we could examine the spiritual practise together. We were surrounded by ancient giants, Original Western Red Cedars. For whatever reason, I spoke for about 5 minutes about the Presence of God, quietening and being present to the Presence. I don't normally feel comfortable speaking, as if preaching, so with great intention I decidedly veer from it. It was a situation that I couldn't veer from. It seemed to me that the group were wanting to listen and not engage. Perhaps, it was new subject matter to contemplate? When I realized what was happening, I had to take a deep breath. Call it a Breath Prayer (reference, last week's practise of Spiritual Formation).

### **Adjustments?**

1. I must remember that there are some people whose health could be put at risk if they decided to try to run on the trail. For any iteration of 'nature' beyond 'ultra' I must be mindful to go at a hiking pace. A slow and fast trail-walking pace.
2. Switching up: Spiritual Formation and Soul Care moments. The current plan has not worked. I am not sure if it would be best to switch them around during the day (i.e. Soul Care offered toward the end of the hike), or to perhaps introduce the Spiritual Formation Practice at the beginning of the hike (during the stretch). Perhaps, it can depend on what the Spiritual Formation practise is?

3. One of the participants decided to stay back as he was quite concerned about some of the ridges we might encounter along the way. He revealed that he has a significant fear of heights. I spoke with him afterwards and we agreed to meet during the week for a light hike of the same trail. (We met mid-week, and though the trail presented some fear-inducing heights for him, he felt very good about overcoming this fear. His confidence on the trail and trust, has shifted.)
4. One of the participants had to turn back for concern for a pre-existing injury and interest toward its healing. She was very upset/disappointed. We had a chance to speak about this afterwards and planned together to go for lighter hike, on lesser elevation with easier inclines/declines through the week. (She was very happy on the easier trail. We spoke about the possibility of introducing another iteration of 'nature' that could be accessible for those who would prefer to not stress (push limits) on harder trails, those who have barriers to mobility and those who are would need an easier introduction to 'nature' than jumping into a goal-oriented 'journey'. The name I have come up with for this iteration is 'nature, preamble'.

## Photos



Figure 74. *Left*, near to Niagara Trestle; *right*, someone who likes to climb trees.



Figure 75. *Left*, eight flights of stairs to start; *right*, team river crossing.

### **Week Three: Beyond the Streets**

Location: Cobble Hill, BC

Date: Saturday, July 17, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

### **Leading Graphic**

(See PROJECT section in Portfolio)

### **Communication**

## **Email One**

### **Content**

Hi there, hope you've had a great week so far! It's about to get even better. I don't know about you, but I'm looking forward to hearing the 'ubuntu' birds singing out there on the trail again this Saturday!

See you bright and early at the Mustard Seed, 8am for a first coffee. We will rally at around 830am and be out on the road for the trails before 9am.

Our Soul Care time will focus on the ground, the soil surrounding the Tree. We will consider how our stories have been affected by where we are planted, the consistency of the soil and how the roots of our lives are impacted by the ground. What makes good soil, anyways?

A moment of Spiritual Formation will draw us into conversations and experiences as we have practiced the Presence of the Creator in our lives. Brother Lawrence, the 'Saint of Pots and Pans' writes that people 'invent means and methods of coming at God's love, they learn rules and set up devices to remind them of that love, and it seems like a world of trouble to bring oneself into the consciousness of God's presence. Yet it might be so simple.' So, how simple can it be?

Other things to look forward to: lunch on the trestle, quiet moments, beautiful creation, breathing deeply and every step, a little bit closer.

God bless you. Glad to be journeying with you,

Chris

### **Graphic**



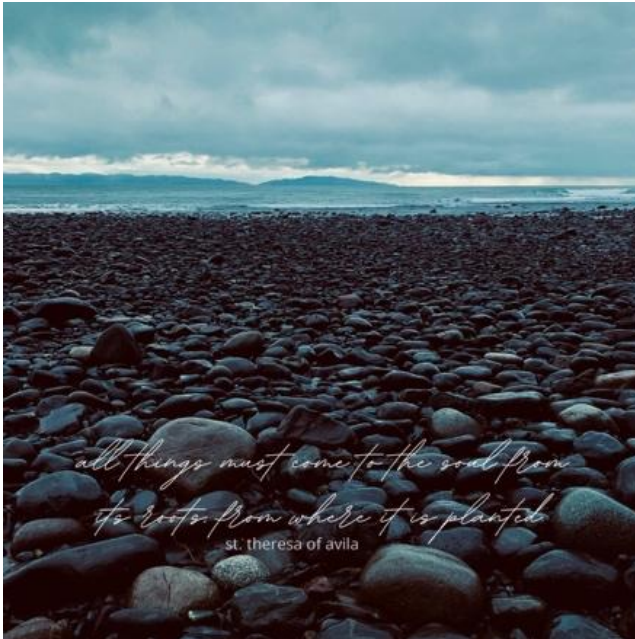


Figure 76. Infographic shared by email. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

## Email Two

### Content

Here we are.

Every day we go, RFP (relentless forward progression). Thankful to walk with you.

Saturday, deep breaths on beautiful trails with you once again. See you 8-830am at the Mustard Seed.

We will have sandwiches ready, as were ordered last week. Please, let us know if you'd like to make any tasty adjustments! A few extra will be made, in case of 'extra' hunger or others join us.

Our Soul Care, this week, will concentrate on the Trunk of the Tree of Life, contemplating our strengths and beliefs. Our Spiritual Formation, the practise of Centring Prayer



as developed by Thomas Merton and Thomas Keating, will draw us into deep inner quiet and focus. The trails of Cobble Hill will feel slightly easier than last week. However, by distance and elevation, Prospectors and Cobble Hill are similar. This is 'nature, next' preparing us for daily distances and elevation gains that we will experience on the Juan de Fuca trail. Be ready for the heat; lots of water, light clothing, sunscreen and a hat. We will have extra water and nutrition, if needed, for your packs.

Get ready for another adventure! Peace with your hearts and rest well. Any questions or concerns, please let me know.

Looking forward to seeing you soon,

Chris

PS. Always ubuntu ☺

### **Graphic**

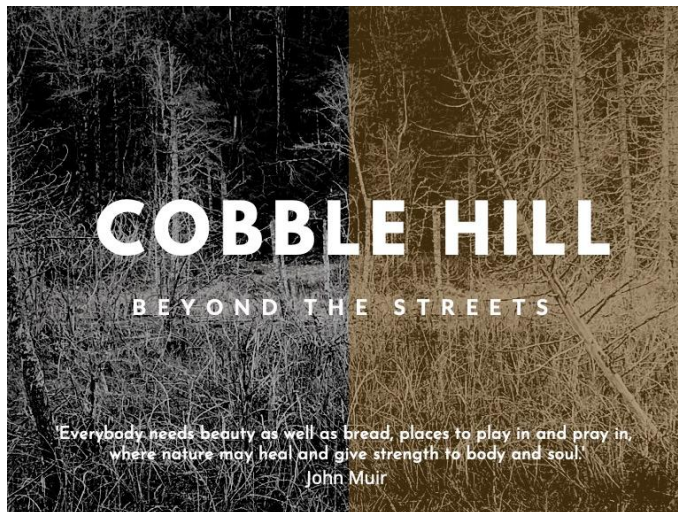


Figure 77. Infographic shared by email. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

**FB Group: 'nature, journey'**

## Graphic

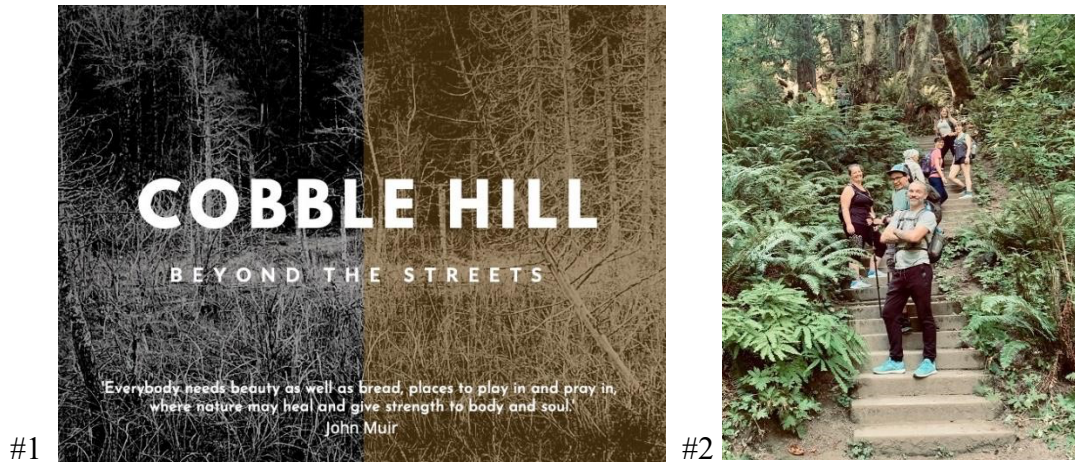


Figure 78. *Left*, Infographic; *right*, team photo shared on FB.

Content #1: One of the participants writes of her starting-out experience with 'nature, journey' two weeks ago: "...some members from the Mustard Seed community got together to hike Skirt Hill, our first hike in a series we are calling "Journey." We formed a mini-community of our own - one of nature-loving, open-hearted, wonder-seeking adventurers - on a journey to reach our goal of hiking the Juan de Fuca trail and share life together along the way. Our motto and cheer became "Ubuntu!" which is an ancient African word that means, "I am because you are." As explorers of this beautiful land, land which is the traditional territory of the Lekwungwen peoples, we are also exploring what this ancient word means and how important it is to recognize our common humanity." So, so cool real.

Content #2: We rally on Saturdays (8am) at the Mustard Seed. This is our third instalment of 'journey', an 8-week adventure in preparation for a 3-day hike on the Juan de Fuca

trail in mid-August. Wonderful things to look forward to this week! For this weekend's 'nature' outing, 'beyond the streets', our destination is a majestic 7km trail, circumnavigating Cobble Hill. Join us for the wild walk, shinrin-yoku (forest bathing), experience the silence, heart-healing, honest sounds, healthy movements and a picnic break at the lake on the way back. Our Soul Care, this week, will concentrate on the Trunk of the Tree of Life, contemplating our strengths and beliefs. Our Spiritual Formation, the practise of Centring Prayer as developed by Thomas Merton and Thomas Keating, will draw us into deep inner quiet and focus.

Hope to see you! Feel free to connect with the Mustard Seed Street Church, for more information on this and other fascinating, community-centred opportunities for involvement and care. Ubuntu!

### **Rally Map**

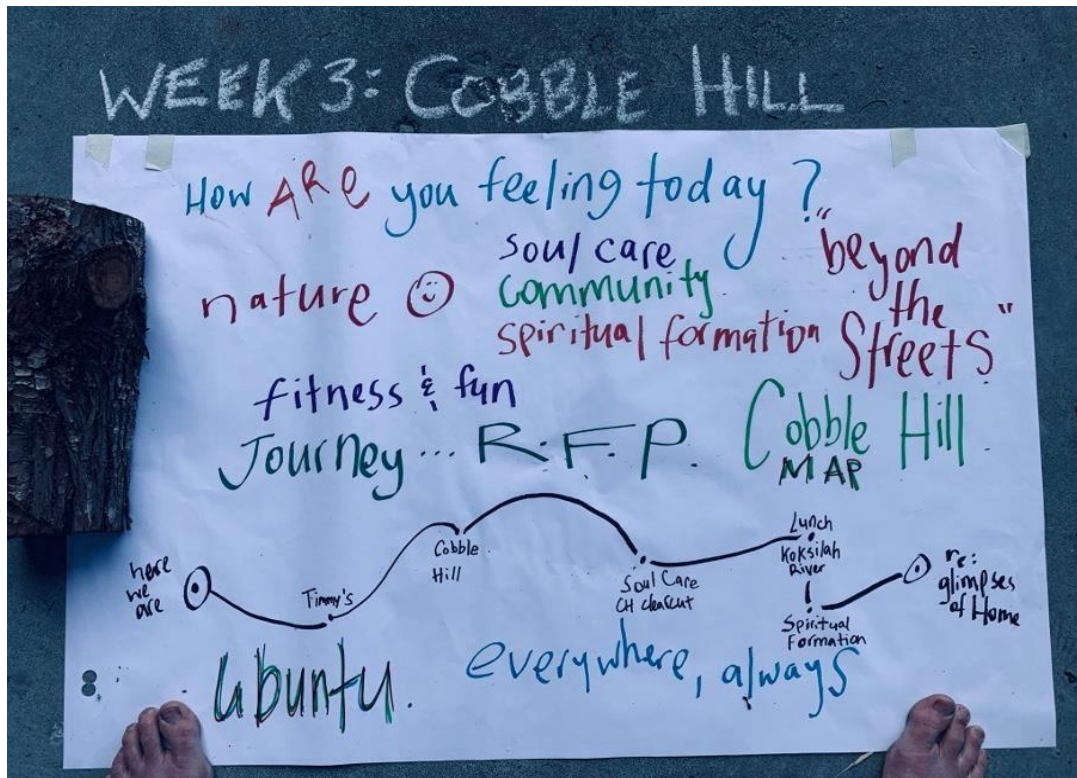


Figure 79. Week Three, Cobble Hill Trail rally map.

### Week Three Handouts

## Spiritual Formation Handout

### SPIRITUAL FORMATION (learning practices): Centering Prayer

Centering prayer is a method designed to facilitate the development of contemplative prayer. During the time of prayer, we consent to God's presence and action within us. At other times our attention moves outward to discover God's presence everywhere. (Thomas Keating)

#### The Guidelines:

1. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within. (For example: Abba, Love, Stillness, Creator, Mercy, Spirit of Christ, Peace, Jesus.)
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.
3. When you become aware of thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

'The climate of this prayer is, then, one of awareness, gratitude and a totally obedient love which seeks nothing but to please God.' Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer*.

**Listen.        God is with you.**

Soul Care Handout

## **SOUL CARE (remembering home)**

The Tree as a metaphor of Life. As we press on together into mindful conversation and presence, let's remember our 'nature' foundations and values. Reflect briefly on our discussions of the Tree of Life so far. Does anything stand out to you, or did we miss anything important in our conversations?

Our reflection today will center on the Trunk of the Tree.

- What is significant to you about the trunk of a tree?
- Reflect on your strengths. What are your talents?
- Why it is at the trunk of the tree that trees break in the wind?
- What are your beliefs? How do you lean on your beliefs through storms of your life?
- Do you focus more on your strengths or your weakness? Why is that?
- In what ways do you think others perceive your strengths to be?

'Trees do not preach learning and precepts. They preach, undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life.' Herman Hesse

## **Week Three Review**

Distance: 7 km

Elevation: 300 meters

### **Rally Point**

At our Rally Point this morning were a few new participants. A man I had spoken with a few days earlier, who had promised that ‘he was not sure if he would be able to join’, showed up with two of his friends. All three, nice guys, were made aware of the difficulty of the hike, yet were curious to continue with us.

There was one, other, new participant. He was a friend of a man who has been journeying with the group from the beginning. Observing that the man was not in the greatest shape, that he was shaking (a sign of withdrawal from alcohol), I had to inquire as to his readiness (without discrimination) to be with us for the trip today. He assured me that he was ready.

A question that was asked ‘out to the circle’ during our group introductions was ‘what is your favorite memory’. There were some interesting answers to this, answers that became subject for conversation between us throughout the day.

We tried something new for this week. Instead of buying sub sandwiches, or ordering the sandwiches ahead of time, we made the sandwiches to order (thinking that this would save time and money). We had all the orders in by Friday morning, and a leader/participant as well as an intern worker at the Mustard Seed, endeavored to make the sandwiches.

Saturday morning, at the Rally Point, the sandwiches were ready for all past participants who were joining. Thankfully, for those joining with us for the first time on this day, we had some extra sandwiches made. A couple of them did not know what to do with their sandwiches, so they ate them right away (as they were obviously quite hungry). We filled their lunches out with more food. Nutrition is becoming more vital on these longer hikes.

Nutrition, fitness, hydration, and equipment are becoming more of a focus for our conversation at these Rally Points in preparation for the Juan de Fuca Trail hike.

### **On the Road**

Travel time was increased this week. We stopped quickly at Tim Horton's for hot drinks for the road and we were quickly on our way. There was one more stop, that we had to attend to, on the way to the trail, for one of the participants who has a specific diet. The travel time was about an hour to the trailhead.

We stopped on the way to Cobble Hill, at a viewpoint on the Malahat. We took a group picture with the area that we would be hiking the following week in the background. Just a week earlier, at this viewpoint, a Totem Pole was burned. Statues have been falling all over North America because of the immense destruction colonialism unleashed on First Peoples. Following the decapitation of a statue in the Inner Harbour of Victoria, someone retaliated by burning this Totem. This is a very sensitive time on Turtle Island. Things are changing; new conversations of historic truth are coming to life and the People are waking up.

The stop point at the view was good so that we could all muster in one place before making our way off the highway toward the trailhead in Cobble Hill.



## Trail

We finally arrived at the trail, and I knew that we had a good hike ahead of us. Slowly, but surely, we gathered ourselves and all the gear we needed (being sure of hydration and snacks for the trails).

Our gathering point was at the map board for Cobble Hill. It seems that the group is noticing an affinity that I have for maps. Perhaps, at some point I will work with this ('the map'), bring some deeper reasoning to my care and curiosity for maps.

Within the first 200 meters of the hike, the elevation increase was substantial. Before the trail levelled off, everyone was breathing deeply. As some made their way to the front, others were slower. All waited together at next 'map spots' on the hike, for the group to be one before we would carry on to the next map.

The berries are ripening, so this is becoming a part of our conversation and our nutrition along the way. Not only that, but berries are being thrown at one another. I love the playfulness that is starting to take shape as we get to know one another a little more.

It was another hot day. We are amid a very hot and dry spell on Vancouver Island. In some of the clearings, along the trail, the heat was intense. Sunscreen and hats are also encouraged each week as we hike, in preparation for the 47km 'journey' of the Juan de Fuca trail. It is great to see different people, with confidence, take the lead on the trail.

As we neared the clear-cut area, I had a chance to speak with the participant who was obviously struggling with alcohol withdrawal. It was interesting to hear some of his story. I understand that he is in a lot of pain. As are most of us who are involved in this group. He presented as very shaky at this point of the trail; we were about halfway along.

At the clear-cut, we stopped for a time of Soul Care. Some people were very tired and reclined fully beside the trail. Some found a sawed stump to sit on, while others remained standing and looking around. The focus, on the Tree of Life, was the Trunk area. Significant, in this moment, was that it was at the trunk area of many of the trees, some of them ancient and original, that were sawn and taken away.

There was some emotion shared in this moment, as we were in a natural location that had experienced significant trauma recently. We had a good break, about 20 minutes for our Soul Care discussion.

As we carried on through the clear-cut, the discussion continued as to how this kind of destruction of the natural environment could be allowed on such a large-scale and how we could come together to stop it. There were questions as to how local leaders could allow for this to happen with the boundaries of a park. The word ‘ubuntu’ expanded in meaning to not only between ‘hominids’ but between all creation, ‘I am only because you are’.

As we neared the last kilometers of the hike, some of the newer participants were beginning to feel very tired. One of them shouted from the back of the group, wondering how long it would be until we arrived back at the parking lot. Everyone finished the hike well.

At the parking lot we decided to go to a nearby river to have lunch and cool down. This would be where our day together would close out and we would have a brief reminder with regards to a new practice of spiritual formation and the ongoing possibility of implementing spiritual practices into our individual daily routines.

### **Spiritual Formation/Soul Care**

Soul Care had to do with ‘context’ today. The location for soul care was planned to be set in the middle of a clear-cut. By the time we arrived at the clear-cut, we were about 2/3 of the way through the hike. We were tired.

Soul Care usually opens with a reiteration of the ‘Foundations’ and ‘Values’ as adapted to ‘nature, journey’ from Parker Palmer’s model for ‘Circles of Trust’.

We stopped and sat together for about 20 minutes. Some of the participants shared their thoughts on the ‘Trunk’ of the Tree of Life. Many were sitting on the stumps of trees (some Old Growth) that had recently been cut. The conversation was very honest. The contemplation, the movement of the ‘Inner Teacher’ in this movement, most likely much more impactful than our outward corporate conversation.

As we moved on from the location of Soul Care, we became aware of the forest around us and areas that may be ‘next cut blocks’ for the settler-colonialists to capitalize on. Things really do need to change.

Spiritual Formation occurred in our closing huddle. I asked the group to look at the handout I had given at our stop for Soul Care. On the other side of the handout was a template, a pathway for Centring Prayer. This, I encouraged each person to give time to throughout the week. The handouts that I offered are about the right size to fit in the boxes at the bottom of each ‘outing’ page in the overview booklet that was handed out at the orientation.

I emphasized that keeping the handouts posted on a fridge or at eye view somewhere ‘at home’ could be a helpful reminder throughout the week to ‘keep to’ spiritual formation practices or for reflection on our soul care movement, the Tree of Life.

## **Closing**

Our closing space was the river for lunch. A beautiful, pristine space, through a grove of Old Growth trees, on the Koksilah River just up from the bridge and Park area.

We had our lunches with us, and each person found some space to sit and enjoy the break, some sunshine and cool river. Some decided to sit on their own. Others decided to sit in the river; while others still, found being in a group as comfortable. The river was so refreshing.

A walk around, through the river with shoes off, was the experience that some seemed to appreciate in this moment. Everyone was thankful for this space as our location for lunch and to break after our hike. There were some, new participants who are currently experiencing homelessness (having to rely on shelters), who found this as a great opportunity to bathe (with shorts on) in the fresh river. Gratefulness resounded.

We had our closing cheer where the cars were parked just off the logging road by the trail to the river. Our cheer was led by Kayla (as Billy is away taking care of his hurt knee). The cheer was new and fun. All hands were in the middle, then Kayla drew us in with the cheer, ‘1 ubuntu, 2-ubuntu, 3-ubuntu, UUUUUBBBUUUUNNNTTTTUUUU’ ☺

We will adjust, once again, on our sandwiches. Next week, we will buy sandwiches. Making them was far too time consuming.

Hoping for a 10-passenger van to come our way soon. We need some help with our transportation situation.

## Photos



Figure 80. *Left*, Cobble Hill Trail; *right*, viewpoint of Finlayson Arm and Caleb Pike.



Figure 81. *Left*, clear cut conversations; *right*, the last leg of a good hike.

## **Week Four: Beyond the Streets**

Location: The Ridge Trail, BC

Date: Saturday, July 24, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

### **Leading Graphic**

(See PROJECT section in Portfolio)

### **Communication**

#### **Email One**

#### **Content**

Here we go! Relentless and focused; you're crushing it! Well done. Tomorrow morning we are meeting for our fourth 'nature' outing: The Ridge Trail: from Caleb Pike to Jocelyn Hill

An 'out and back' hike with beautiful spots to rest, points to refuel and enjoy spectacular views of Finlayson Arm, Empress Mountain, Mount Finlayson and the Olympic Range lining the horizon just beyond Langford hills. ~10kms with +400m elevation.

Roots, rocks and dustiness. Dress for challenging hiking and hot weather. Don't forget water and some extra nutrition. Our bodies will need extra feeling for this hike.

Soul Care this week will focus on the Branches of the Tree, our hopes and goals. Spiritual Formation will lead us into an ancient practise, streaming from the lives of 1st and 2nd century desert fathers and mothers, called Lectio Divina (or, Sacred Reading). Nature, soon; tomorrow at 8am! See you at the Mustard Seed. Rest well :)

Please, be in touch if you have any thoughts, concerns, questions or awesome ideas!  
ubuntu.

## Graphic

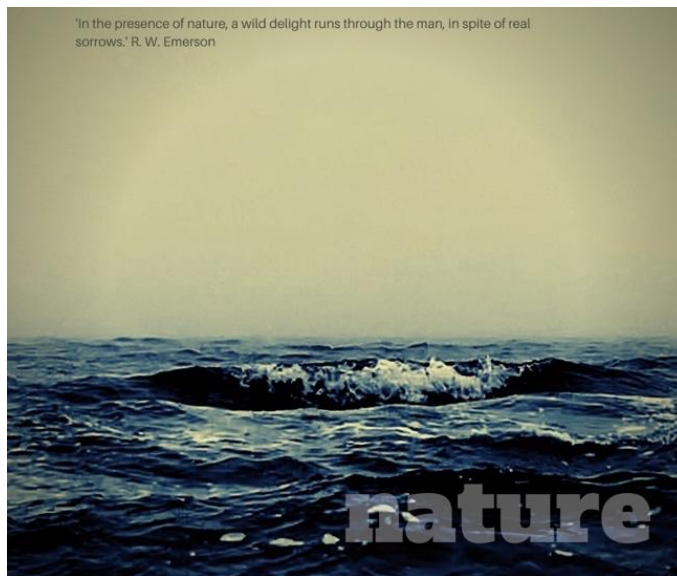


Figure 82. Infographic shared by email. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

## Email Two

### Content

nature, thankful.

It has been a blessing to walk with you, learn with you, go slowly with you, breathe with you, listen closely with you, bear down with you and RFP with you over the last few weeks.

Cobble Hill was a blessing. While we were not all together (some of you were super-missed), there were a few who were new to the journey who joined us.

Thankful for our time of soul care in the clearcut and hopeful that you've had a chance (or, will at some point have a chance) this week, to experience centring prayer.

Looking forward to Saturday and 'nature, next' with you. The Ridge Trail. This will be epic; an adventure of endurance. We will stop for beautiful views, spiritual formation and lunch; and, we will RFP!

ubuntu :) you are a blessing and a sweet-awesome life to our journey-together. Peace with your hearts. Big-big care, Chris.

## Graphic

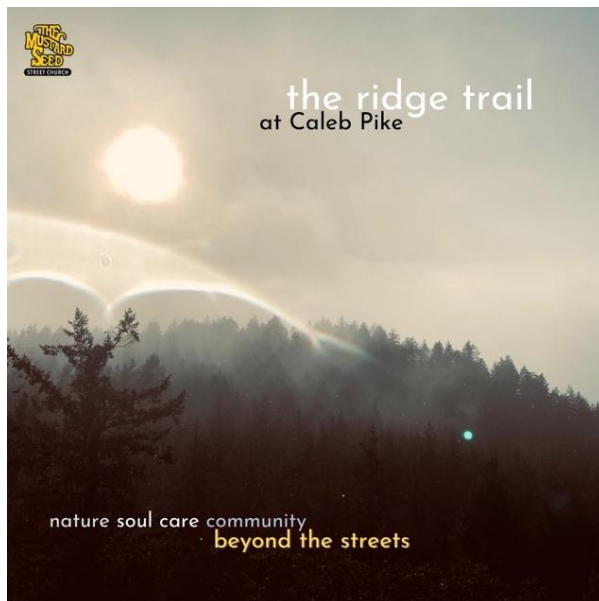


Figure 83. Infographic shared by email. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).



## FB Group: 'nature, journey'

### Graphic



Figure 84. Infographics (*left* and *right*) shared on FB.

Content #1: 'nature, beyond the streets' last week was a beauty of an adventure together for a 7km hike around cobble hill and lunch on the koksilah river. 'nature, next' is this saturday, July 24th it's our first 10km with elevation along the ridge trail overlooking finlayson arm. lunch and spiritual formation on the summit of Jocelyn hill before we loop back to Caleb pike. remember, here's to the 'journey' RFP. ubuntu

Content #2: Gearing up for a bigger day on the trail tomorrow. What an adventure this has been! From her experience with 'nature, journey' so far, (a participant) offers these thoughts:

"We've hiked Skirt Ridge, Prospectors Trail, and Cobble Hill, and as each hike gets harder, our bodies grow stronger and we learn what we are made of. Surrounded by creation, our

hearts grow too, opening up like wild rose buds to the beauty in us and all around us, experiencing Christ as all and in all. Nature is healing, and so is being in healthy community. Each step we take together, we get closer to our goal. Each conversation we have, we grow closer to each other. Like tree branches, we reach out and experience “ubuntu:” I am because you are.” The movement of 'nature' is drawing us deeper into our hearts, Hope and community; belonging is with us and healing, in the midst of such Life and care, seems natural. Faith continues: "We are studying the “Tree of Life,” a community approach to healing from trauma. First we studied the roots, where we’ve come from; then the soil, the environment we are in; and recently the trunk, our source of strength and vulnerability. We cannot choose where we’ve come from, or change the past, but we can plant ourselves in good soil, learn resilience, and embrace both our strength and our vulnerability, ever-growing like the trees." Onto next steps, together and thankful.

## Rally Map

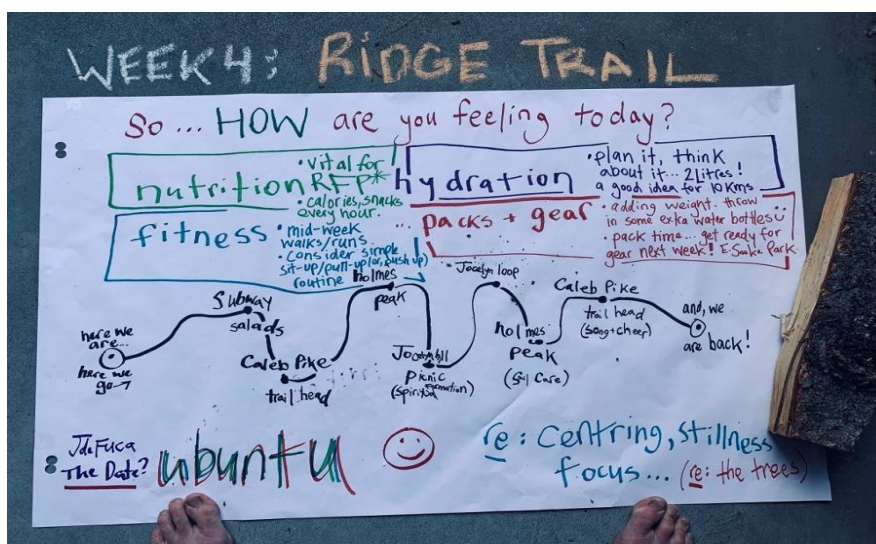


Figure 85. Week Four, Ridge Trail rally map. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

### **Week Four Handouts**

#### Spiritual Formation Handout

#### **SPIRITUAL FORMATION** (learning practices): Lectio Divina

‘The words *flee*, *be silent* and *pray* summarize the spirituality of the desert. They indicate the three ways of preventing the world from shaping us in its image and are thus the three ways to life in the Spirit.’ (Nouwen) ‘*Lectio Divina* invites us into God’s presence to listen for his particular, loving word to me...to listen to the word as it is read aloud, or you read the text aloud for yourself.’ (Spiritual Disciplines Handbook)

**The four movements of Lectio Divina** (Sacred Reading): begin with silence.

1. **Lectio** (read) – the slow and gradual reading of the scriptural passage, perhaps several times, each time with a slightly different focus.
2. **Meditatio** (reflect) – when the passage is read, do not try to quickly assign meaning to it, but as you ponder, wait for the action of the Holy Spirit to illuminate your mind.
3. **Oratio** (respond) – prayer can be understood as dialogue with the Creator, as loving conversation with the Spirit who has invited us into an embrace.
4. **Contemplatio** (rest) – contemplative prayer is silence, or silent love, in which the Spirit of adoption enables us to share in the prayer of Jesus.

‘God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer.’ St. Teresa

**Listen.**

**God is with you.**

Soul Care Handout

### **SOUL CARE** (remembering home)

The Tree as a metaphor of Life. As we press on together into mindful conversation and presence, let’s remember our ‘nature’ foundations and values. Reflect briefly on our discussions of the Tree of Life so far. Does anything stand out to you, or did we miss anything important in our conversations? Our reflection today will center on the Branches of the Tree.

- When you were a young child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
- If you could have three wishes-come-true, what would they be?
- Share one or two goals/aspirations that you have in your life, today?
- Do you believe that these goals/aspirations are achievable? Why/why not?
- What would need to happen in/surrounding for you to be able to achieve these goals?
- Are there any hopes or wishes that you have for other people in your life?

‘Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.’ Albert Einstein

‘For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.’ Hebrews 3:4

## **Week Four Review**

Distance: 11kms

Elevation: >500 meters

## **Rally Point**

This day started out well with a stop in at Tim Horton's on Douglas Street. It seemed like the easiest flow yet for sandwiches. I called in the order at about 630am and picked the order up on my way-in at 730am. The team at Tim Horton's was very happy to serve us.

Thankful for my mom, who has offered to help with driving each week. She is such a blessing. One of the participants has been available to help with driving too; her, with her MODO membership! So awesome.

We are missing some key members of the group as they nurse injuries that were acquired prior to the outset of the nature 'outings.' Two participants, unfortunately, have knee injuries.

Our conversation is focusing on equipment preparation for the 3-day hike, as well as a centering on best nutrition and hydration for endurance. There are many questions. WE are trying to figure out the best dates for the trip, dates that suit each of the participants and their work commitments.

## **On the Road**

We stopped on the way to the Ridge Trail (Caleb Pike, about a 20-minute drive from the Mustard Seed). A couple of the participants needed a salad for the trip (they have different specific diets), so we stopped at Subway, while at the same time, some of the participants received a nice, hot drink from a nearby coffee shop.

From this point, we drove together to the trailhead at Caleb Pike. There seems to be a growing excitement as we near our hikes in the wilderness, naturing together! When we park at the parking lots, each person is beginning to develop their own routines. Gathering gear together, checking hydration, stretching, tying shoes up perfectly, just chit-chatting.

We are beginning to feel quite ‘at-home’ with one another. Thankful for the experience.

## **Trail**

The trailhead is a special place. There’s always a map for us at the trailhead; a place for us to dream and dread the trip together. Usually, there are questions like, ‘are you serious, we are actually going to do that?’ Sometimes, I can see some concern in their eyes before we head out. Another thing I notice, which is so essential for these trips, is trust. I think the group is starting to understand that a ‘little more’ is possible on top of what they first thought was possible. Every week, we are playing out a little further ‘what is possible’.

Ubuntu has been our focus. Remaining together on the trail. Waiting up for each other. Stopping when we need to. Listening closely to what our own needs are and to the needs of others. This importance of ‘ubuntu’ is increasing as we spend more time on the trail, and endurance becomes more of a necessity.

Our first section was from the trailhead at Caleb to the top of Holmes Peak. A beautiful viewpoint and a good place to stop for water. On the way there, I had a chance to call Billy to see how he was doing. Two of the original participants have not been present at our Saturday outings due to injuries. One participant, has mentioned that her partner (another participant has been feeling down lately. It was great to speak with him on the phone; he was thankful for the call and felt cared for. As a group, before we carried on from Holmes Peak, we decided to pray for Billy.

From Holmes Peak, our next stop would be Jocelyn Hill's lookout. The hike was challenging, technical, with a lot of ups and downs along the Ridge Trail. This hilliness is like many of the trail segments found on the Juan de Fuca trail. To add to the challenge of the day, it was hot.

Along the way, I had a conversation with one of the participants who felt like she was falling behind, holding the group up, and not at the 'same level' as the rest of the group. We spoke about 'knowing ourselves' and RFP (Relentless Forward Progression) and finding her own pace. It is in the rush that we tend to make mistakes. I promised her that she will never be left alone on the trail. Stopping is a good lesson for the whole group. Going slowly is a good lesson for the whole group. These movements, non-movement movements, are allowed always and encouraged. This is a promoting a 'good listening' to our bodies. Not only this, but our corporate 'ubuntu' is encouraged. She felt much better to carry on from this point.

An older participant is doing very well on the trail. She is often at the front of the group leading the pace. She may be challenging herself, to maintain pace with younger people in the group. She is a wonderful part of our group. While I don't know her exact age, I presume she is in her mid-70s.

We stopped for some fun pictures at the Jocelyn Hill Viewpoint before heading toward the summit. At the summit we stopped for lunch and spiritual formation. It was decided to find a different place for lunch as the summit was too sun-exposed. Someone else chose ‘the spot’, in a shadier location. Our lunch stops are more than a picnic and place to ‘catch our breath’. Our lunch stops are places for community, for lightness and being together.

We returned to the trail knowing that we now had to make the trip back along the trail we had just journeyed on. We were hot and tired. First was a downhill, then a steep uphill, looping back to the Ridge Trail. The plan was to stop at Holmes Peak for Soul Care on the way back to the Parking Lot.

Our last stop before concluding the hike was quick. Still, it is a blessing to stop, to come together, before carrying on with the trail. These are wonderful moments of breathcatching, stillness, listening, rallying together. On Holmes Peak we spoke, and shared story, about the branches of the Tree of Life; this was our Soul Care focus for the day.

From Holmes Peak, it was all downhill. By the end of the trek, we had journeyed more than 11kms distance and 500meters elevation in just over 4 hours. Well done!

### **Spiritual Formation/Soul Care**

We adjusted the order on this outing, focusing on Spiritual Formation before Soul Care. We have only been able to briefly reflect on sacred practices, the majority of the care and time of focused conversation has been given to the Tree of Life.



Spiritual Formation: Just after lunch, just over the peak of Jocelyn Hill in a little shaded area by Arbutus Trees, we started our time of Spiritual Formation. The ancient, sacred practise we focused on today was Lectio Divina.

We shared the re-reading and re-re-reading of the passage. The Storm was the passage, the storm that Jesus had authority over. There was an opportunity for each person to share something that stood out for them in the story. I think the movement of Lectio Divina was a revelation for each person.

Soul Care: On Holmes Peak, preceding the last stretch of the hike, I encouraged each of the participants to look at the handouts that were passed around at lunch time. On one of the sides of the handout was our focus for Soul Care and leading questions to help into the consideration of the ‘branches’ of the Tree of Life, the tree being the lives/stories we are in.

We did not spend a lot of time focusing on each question. Only a few people were inspired to share. I encouraged the participants to keep in review of the different aspects of the Tree of Life, as we have spoken about them. These help us toward self-actualization and life beyond the trauma, informed by the trauma, that we have endured.

## **Closing**

When we arrived back in the Parking Lot, the ‘ubuntu’ birds welcomed us (sometimes along the trail, Ubuntu birds can be heard making their characteristic noises. Once everyone had hydrated and found their breath, we met on a little green area by picnic tables for a stretch down, announcements, closing camp song and team cheer.

We were not synchronized in our stretch down. Everyone had their own idea for stretching. When things began to look and sound not quite right, I jumped in to give a little bit of direction, at least from the feet to the waist stretching. Announcements centred on the possibility of a date change for the trip. Some of the participants have full-time during-the-week jobs and they can't afford to miss many days. We also continued the conversation of gear/equipment. There is some concern about weight of the packs (for those who may not be able to carry too many pounds) and about the availability of essential equipment for those who may be in need. We have a lot of extra gear, so I assured all the participants that we will all have what is needed for the 3-day hike.

The closing camp song was led by an excited participant with Christian camping experience. She has some experience with Christian Camps in the past; she brought out a great repeat after-me song. So much fun! Then, our cheer was led by another participant. She is excited to be the one to call us in, hands in the middle, and shout out our team cheer.

### **Adjustments?**

- A few of the participants need some experience with hydration packs.  
     Also, packing their 'day bags' seem to be an issue for some of them. This is made resoundingly clear at lunch time, when they open their bags to sandwich stuff leaking everywhere.
- The pace needs to increase slightly.

- Again, we did not have sufficient time for the second ‘meeting’ time. It would be a good idea to focus on a set span of time for each of our gatherings (i.e., 20 minutes).

**Photos**

Figure 86. *Left*, Jocelyn Peak Jump; *right*, finding time and space.



Figure 87. *Left*, Liberty, note the air-born cell phone; *right*, Peak approach.

**Week Five: Scavenger Hunt**

Location: Mt. Tolmie, BC and Thetis Lake, BC

Date: Saturday, July 31, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

**Leading Graphic**

(See PROJECT section in Portfolio)

**Communication****Email One****Content**

Surprise, scavengers! It's a mid-Summer nature's Dream time.

Once in a summer time, when the magic of light is just-so, leprechauns appear in flares and flashes, running through the forests in the Thetis Lake area. No one knows exactly the reason, but they've been spotted with their flowing beards flying and big bellies embracing pots of gold, dashing about through the trees and on the trails.

Sometimes, as they scurry about between the trees they bump into one another or trip on rocks. As you can imagine, when this happens, gold spills out of their pots.

We are coming up to this special day! As it turns out, the Mustard Seed is known by the leprechauns; they are big fans :) so, they keep us in the loop as to when the day is approaching and afterwards, where their gold has been fumbled up and fallen on the trails.

The map somehow-magically appears in colour and chalk somewhere-surprising. This Friday, we will be enlightened by the location of the chalk map. Once it has been found and verified, its whereabouts will be shared with you.

For those who partake, there will be prizes! From each of the locations, where gold has tumbled out of pots, there will be bronze loonies, and golden-silver toonies. You will need to look closely! The amount you find will determine your 'place' and 'prize'. Please, keep your gold, take a picture of it all together, before consuming it. This, so that the total amount can be confirmed.

If you stick to the map, it's likely that you'll walk ~10kms. The elevation is minimal. This will be a bit of a 'tapering' week before the stretching continues by distance, elevation and weight. Any questions, ideas or concerns?

Please, let me know. More to come, as the leprechauns-run! Friday.

Chris

## Graphic



Figure 88. Infographic shared by email. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

## Email Two

### Content

It has happened, in the early hours of first lights this morning! The leprechauns flared into being, running through the forests of Thetis Lake Park. Bounding, laughing and bumping into each other sending their gold flying from their precious treasure pots that they hold so nearly and dearly to them.

The evidence that it has happened, is that they have left the map for us to find their fallen gold pieces. Hoping to learn of the whereabouts of the map, I arrived early to the Mustard Seed to see if something-of-a-clue had been left for us. Not a clue, only a whisper from between two mattresses that were in front of the Chapel. I couldn't see the person, and I was told to not come

near. Then, only the whisper of an old raspy voice, 'the map of our fallen gold is at the view of the city'.

At that, only one place came to mind. A place I have known and appreciated for years. A place I have often retreated to for prayer, for trails, quietness and training. Mt. Tolmie.

I went right there, and sure enough the map was at the viewpoint opposite to the city. It was on the concrete structure overlooking the Georgia Strait, Gulf Islands and distant Coastal Mountain range.

I can only share portions of the map. The direction of the leprechauns is that those who crave their gold, must see the map with their own eyes.

A reminder, you each may only take ONE PIECE from the locations where you find the gold. If you are among the first to a location, be sure to take ONE of the pieces which have more worth.

The pieces will be marked according to location. Once you believe you have visited all the locations where the Leprechaun's Treasure has fallen, please take a picture or keep note of the amount of the pieces you've found and let me know at your earliest convenience.

This information will determine those who've won the (great) prizes!

This scavenger hunt, for the lost gold of the leprechaun's mid-summer run, will end at sunset on Saturday, July 31st. Enjoy the adventure! RFP on the walk.

**Notes:**



- This week's outing is optional (as all outings are). However, it will keep us together oncourse (heart and fitness-wise) with next week's challenge-increase 'nature' outing, East Sooke Park.
- If you are still accessing the Overview Booklet that was shared at Orientation, the next few weeks will be slightly adjusted. East Sooke Park (August 7th), Timbermen Trail (August 14th) and Mt. Work (Tuesday evening, August 17th).
- Transportation: please let me know if you have some concern as to how to get from A to B. Perhaps, we can find a ride for you. Also, BC Transit has a stop very close to this week's trails.
- If you have your phones with you, try to download 'Strava' or 'All Trails' to keep a gauge on time, distance walked and elevation gained.
- For a solid 10km hike, my suggestion is to keep a good pace, to walk all trails on the map and perhaps, before a cool down swim, do one more big loop!
- Along your walk, find moments for stillness, to Practise the Presence, to pray and consider the closeness of the Creator (with you, in you, all around you).
- Listen closely, deeply, centring on the sounds of creation, birds and wind and the rhythm of breath; find some berries (think about the seeing, the picking, the taste).
- Yes, there's gold to find and a fun game-to-win this week. However, we all win-together with another sweet 'nature' adventure, memories and the beautiful, gains to-be-treasure of fitness and spiritual formation.

With care and ubuntu :)

Chris

## Graphic



Figure 89. Sunrise Map. Infographic shared by email.

## Email Three

### Content

Hope you've had a great week! That you're feeling good and that you're getting ready to feel even better.

Guess what, there is gold out there! I had to do some recon, just to see if it's real. And, it is :) I guess some nice leprechaun came by to gather the gold into bags for us. I just couldn't help but to mark some of the locations with 'ubuntu' (I hope I don't get into trouble for that).

Along the map trails dropped from 'on high' for us, I found 12 different 'golden' locations. I hope you can enjoy this adventure, as well as a good 'nature' outing with some quiet time for healing, reflection, listening, prayer and presence. Maybe a jump in the water, too?

I think it's ok to give an idea as to 'what to look for' tomorrow on the trail (see below). Don't forget the climb up Seymour Hill! These are great trails.

Enjoy the day :) RFP

Chris

**Graphic**



Figure 90. Gold markers. Infographic shared by email.

### FB Group: 'nature, journey'

### Graphic

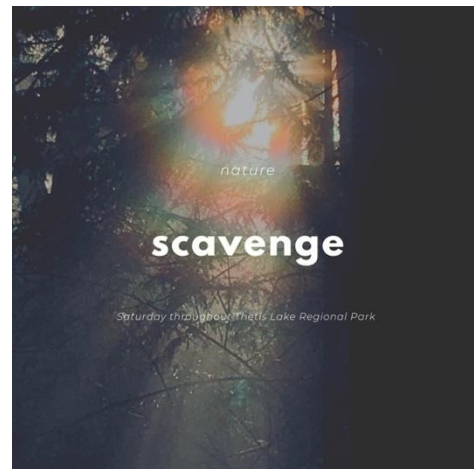


Figure 91. Infographics (*left* and *right*) shared on FB.

Content #1: nature. In this adventure, 'journey', we are learning about what is possible. Perhaps, it is a little more than what we thought possible. Here's a gathering of profound recollections of one of the participant's journeys, so far:

'On Saturday we ventured on our fourth and most difficult hike on this nature journey. An 11.5 km, 500 metre elevation trek along Caleb Pike and Jocelyn Ridge that took us three hours to complete. Slowly but surely our bodies are being conditioned to do the Juan de Fuca Trail, and the wounds on our souls are being healed, together. For me, at the back and struggling to keep up, it was my mind and heart that needed conditioning. Learning to believe in myself, to trust the process, to stop comparing my personal journey to others, was harder than any incline. "The mountain you need to conquer is within you," Another participant, a member of the group, reminded me.

During our soul care connection we discussed the branches on our reflection of the Tree of Life, which are likened to our dreams and goals. The branches reach out, touching others and being touched, growing toward the sky. As I struggled with the mountain within me, I was reminded how important it is to reach out. I am so thankful that others reached out to me instead. I was reminded that being vulnerable breaks down barriers between us and draws us closer, wrapping branches of love and support around each other, saying, "You are not alone." ubuntu

Content #2: The Leprechauns have been out running through trees and on trails, coming to life in flares of the mid-summer sun. Bouncing into one another, their gold is sent flying from their belly-snuggled pots of treasure.

The Leprechaun's map, containing the location of their dropped gold, has fallen from the sky and landed on the top of Mt. Tolmie, at the viewpoint of the gulf islands and distant Coastals.

Sunrise to sunset on Saturday, the gold may be found. Then, just as magically, it's gone. There are prizes! So keep track of what's found. (For more information, please send Chris a message.)

Join into this unfolding, mid-Summer story. Find the map; find the treasure! Have fun

## **Rally Map**

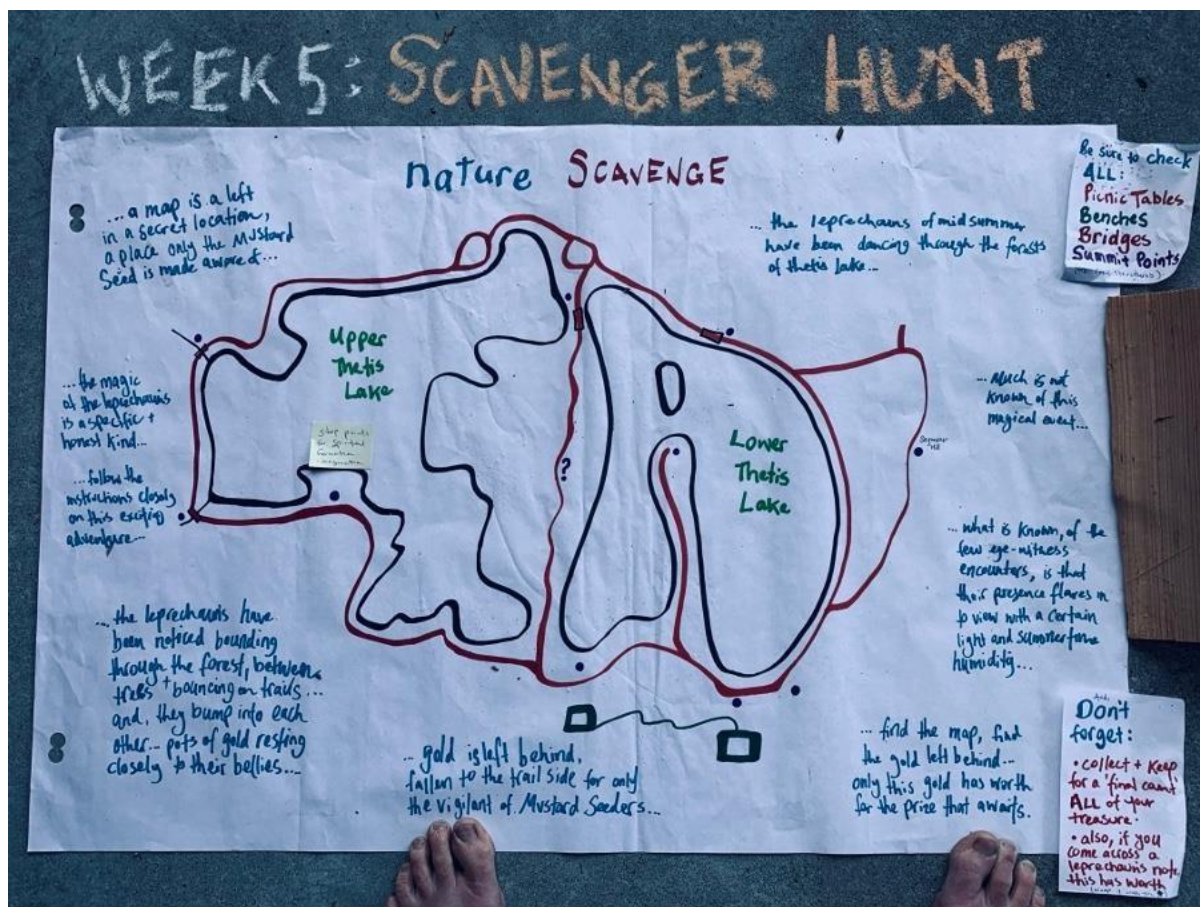


Figure 92. Week Five, Scavenger Hunt rally map.

## Week Five Handouts





Figure 93. *Left*, 12 bags for 12 stations; *right*, Spiritual Care messages in each bag.



Figure 94. *Left*, a new message in each bag; *right*, reminders, where to look.

## Week Five Review



Distance: 7kms

Elevation: ~200 meters

### **Lead-Up**

This activity required a lot of extra work. Unfortunately, only a few people took part in it. At the previous ‘nature’ outing, I was informed that this week was a ‘break week’ according to the schedule. Without checking the schedule, I trusted the source who informed me of what I had written in the overview document that I had sent (or, printed) out for the group at the outset of ‘the journey’.

Once I had committed to the Scavenger Hunt, regardless of the schedule said, I knew how my attention would adjust and center over the next week. So, I poured in the best that I could. Ultimately, I realized I needed a bit of a break. What I didn’t know from the outset, was that I would be putting more work in to planning the event, being not present, than I would be being present.

Weekly emails for the group were increased this week. Hoping for involvement from the group, in my absence, I felt would take a greater amount of connection digitally/virtually. Emails were sent out to share the fun story of ‘the leprechaun run’, to increase engagement and attract interest.

On Facebook, the central social media platform that was used to inform participants and promote events, stories were shared creatively/thoughtfully. Invitation to partake in the Scavenger Hunt was offered via numerous emails and Facebook posts throughout the week. I

practiced sharing the story by word-of-mouth, as I bumped into participants, and others, over the course of the week.

The story was developed and mastered during the week. Some people, perhaps unbeknownst to them, added to the story. This is encouraged certain playfulness and creative imagination with the group. Perhaps, this was a good break to the physical and focused preparations that we had been taking, week-in and week-out, up to this point.

Later in the week, I started to create the maps for the Scavenger Hunt. Loonie and Toonie Chocolates were used as Leprechaun's gold. Also, as their gold bobbed out of their pots, little snacks of nutrition popped out of their pockets. The chocolate and fun snack candy, along with good notes to encourage hearts, were placed in ZipLock bags. By Friday morning, these were ready to be placed at certain places along the trails, places that had been marked-out by maps that were given to the Participants.

Two maps were made available to the Participants. One was drawn out on the top of Mt. Tolmie (a local popular lookout space in the city), while the other was drawn out on a large piece of paper for Participants and taped to the wall in the Chapel Area at the Mustard Seed Street Church.

### **The Story of the Scavenger Hunt**

Early morning, very early, I drove across town for the sunrise on Mt. Tolmie. It was a part of the story, that the Leprechauns would leave a map of their treasure, somewhere in Victoria at sunrise, the day before the treasure would appear. In sidewalk chalk, I drew out the map 'that had fallen from on-high' so that I could inform participants of its whereabouts.

There were a few people out for an early morning walk to the Mt. Tolmie summit that were curious about what I was doing. I was thankful for the chance to be there; at the same time, I could have a quiet start to the day. There was silence, quiet being and connection with God.

Following the chalking of this map, I went to the Mustard Seed for devotions, team connection/organization. I drew out, on a large piece of paper, the map that ‘I had come across’ on top of the hill, for participants who may have stopped by the MSeed that day. Both maps detailed the location of the leprechauns gold along the trail, that would become visible the next morning. (The reason for ‘us’ knowing the details of the Leprechauns gold (via maps and such) is that the Leprechauns are ancient supporters of the Mustard Seed.)

In the late morning, I sent out an email informing all the participants as to the whereabouts of the gold and the prizes for those who would find the most gold. Again, this week was all about story, playfulness, creativity, fun, and imagination. The hope was that many of the participants would partake so that fitness and community could be kept, as well as some opportunity for Sou Care and connection via the special messages that would be found in each of the bags.

After the day was done at work, I knew that as normal my day wasn’t done. Driving out to the trails, it was time to stash the treasure. I packed all the ZipLock bags into my hydration pack with all the tape and markers that I would need out there. It was a quick run. I decided to take pictures of each location that I dropped the treasures off at for an email that I would send out to the participants in the morning, assuring them that indeed ‘the leprechaun’s treasure’ is real.

I was tired and ready for a good rest at the end of this day. Unfortunately, by the end of the day, I was already receiving word from Participants that they would be taking a ‘break day’

to rest, that it was appreciated the care that I put into the Scavenger Hunt and that they hoped others would take part in it. I started to realize that this was becoming more of a practise of work, care, imagination, and creativity on my part, than it would be for others to be blessed by. I tried very hard not to become discouraged in my heart for the extra work that I knew I had put in over the course of the week.

Early in the morning, I was sure to send out one more email to the group of participants of 'nature, journey'. The email included pictures of the stashed treasure, encouragement 'into the story', reminders of the prizes and of the positive goodness of taking some time in nature going for a nice-brisk hike.

Again, I heard back from a couple of Participants who affirmed the email, but who clarified either their disinterest (confusion) in the 'day' or what it was designed to be, and their plan to break from any activity on this day.

I woke up early to go for a run around the lake to retrieve and bags or markers that were left behind. All the bags and markers were still in place. Most of the chocolates were still in the bags, which made it obvious to me that very few of the participants of 'nature, journey' took part in this event.

For the work that I had put in, it did not feel comfortable that so few people had chosen to take part. I had to decide on the reason for their not being involved, this for my own wellbeing and contentment on the day. I had to be happy for the 'neat thing' that had been created over the week. The 'scavenger hunt for the leprechaun's lost gold' is an activity that can be replicated/repeated in summers-to-come. Also, another learning/grow point is that the participants involved in this summer's 'nature, journey' need the presence of leaders to lead them into activities such as this. These are not participants who will self-inspire or find reason

within themselves to take part, unless the leader is present. This is an interesting thought for me as there are participants who are not interested in the ‘control’ of a leader and so, are normally quite ready to challenge leadership. A wild mix to learn from, contemplate and find caring/present/mindful pathway through.

For those who participated (of whom there was only one from the group) I provided the option of two different prizes. The prizes were promised to be from Mountain Equipment Co-Op, and so they were: a headlamp and a lightweight fork/knife set).

(The presentation of these prizes, or the option of these prizes, occurred at one of our rally points later in the ‘journey’.)

### **Adjustments?**

- Open this event up to more people through social media.
- It was mentioned to me that Park Rangers had an issue with the bags being set in certain places. To one of the participants, it was asked/recommended that we be in touch with ‘Parks’ next time we’d like to have an event like this.

### **Photos**

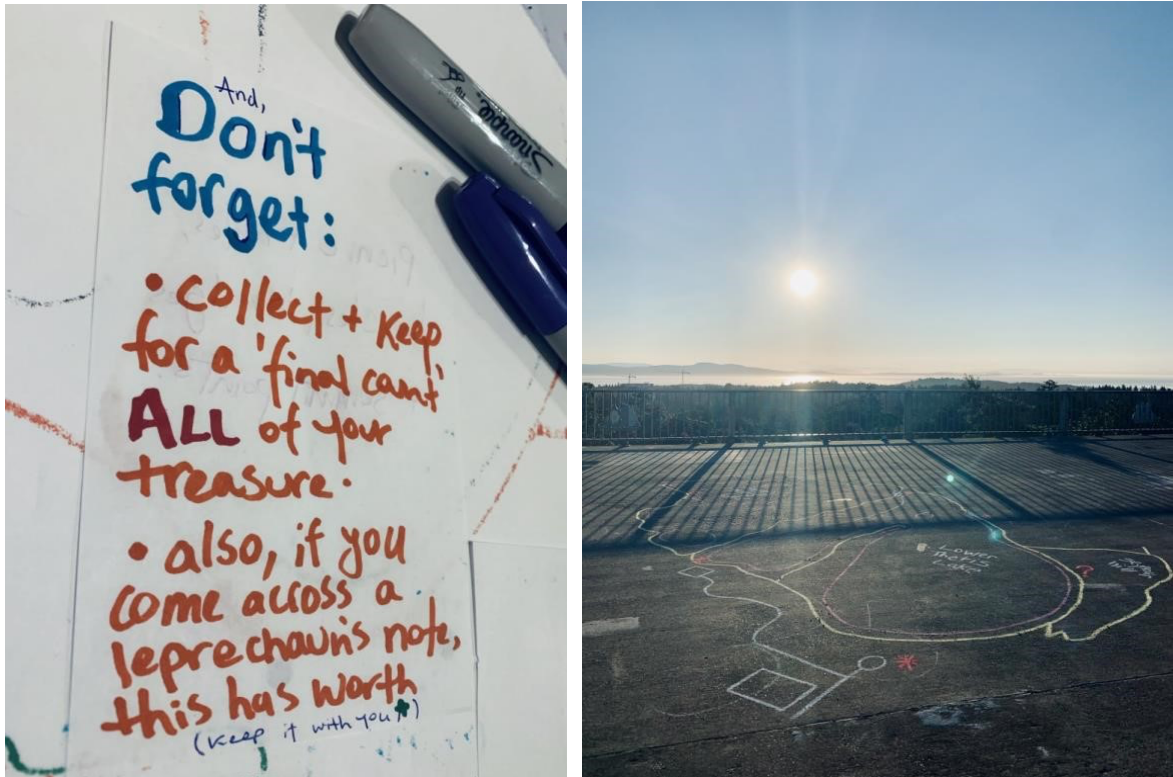


Figure 95. *Left*, Reminders; *right*, Leprechaun's Map at dawn, Mt. Tolmie.



Figure 96. *Left*, one of the participants with gold; *right*, gold at Thetis Lake!

### Week Six: Beyond the Streets

Location: East Sooke Park, BC

Date: Saturday, August 7, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

### **Leading Graphic**

(See PROJECT section in Portfolio)

### **Communication**

#### **Email One**

#### **Content**

Ubuntu! Hoping everyone is well. If you've had a chance to get out on a trail in the last week, that's great. If you've taken a break to give your body a chance rest and heal up, that is epic! Knowing our bodies, hearing what they are saying to us, is so important for endurance.

Looking forward to seeing you soon! Saturday is East Sooke Park. Find some time for quiet, this week. Listen...

'The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then, a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the

Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper' (1 Kings 19:11-12, Tree of Life).

Gentle peace is with you, quite nearby, even within you, always.

Chris

### Graphic

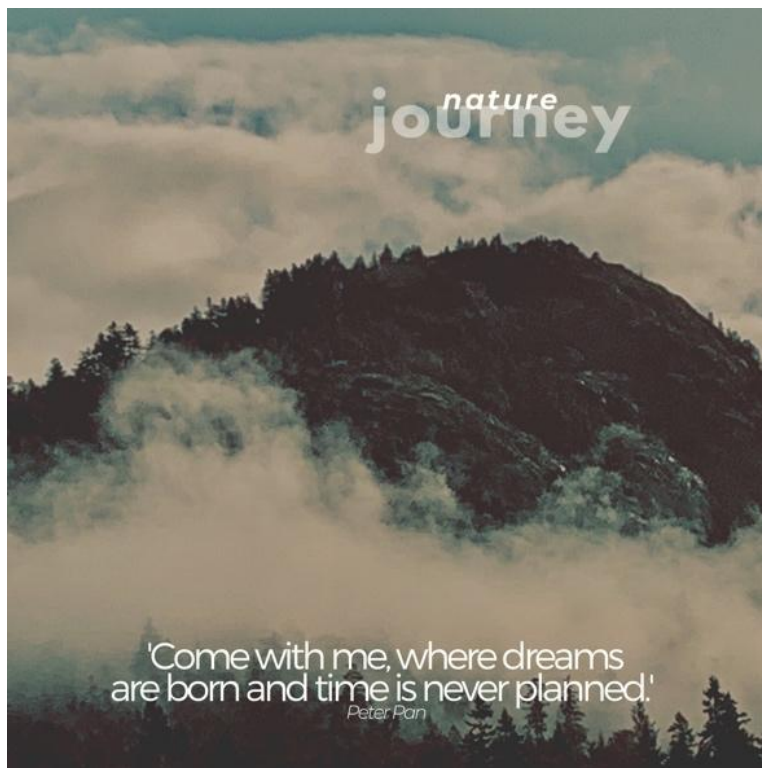


Figure 97. Infographic shared by email. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

### Email Two



## **Content**

It is time to head out to the coast! This Saturday, a day on the Coast Trail of East Sooke Park, will give us a good idea of the terrain we will encounter on the Juan de Fuca Trail.

Please, bring your day packs to carry your water and nutrition for the trail. This week, the hike will be about 12 kms on challenging coastal rock with an elevation gain of >400 meters.

We will have two fully packed back packs to share around during the trek. We will stop along the way for Soul Care (focusing on the 'leaves' of the Tree of Life) and Spiritual Formation (the practice of silence and solitude).

Near to halfway, Cabin Point, we will stop for lunch (SUBS and lunch bags will be provided). Upon return to our starting point, Aylard Farm, we will have some time to rest and practice setting up the tents.

Any questions, concerns or sweet ideas, please let me know!

Get ready for feeling awesome on this day! It will be great to see everyone :) stillness, presence, community, healing await us as we come together and venture out into the wilderness.

8am at the Mustard Seed on Saturday morning. At our Rally-Point we will discuss the itinerary for the upcoming trip to the Juan de Fuca trail and some of the important logistics for best individual and corporate preparation/organization. Adventures ahead, exciting!

Here's to nature, 'UBUNTU!' Peace with your hearts,

Chris

## **Graphic**



Figure 98. Infographic shared by email.

**FB Group: 'nature, journey'**

## Graphic

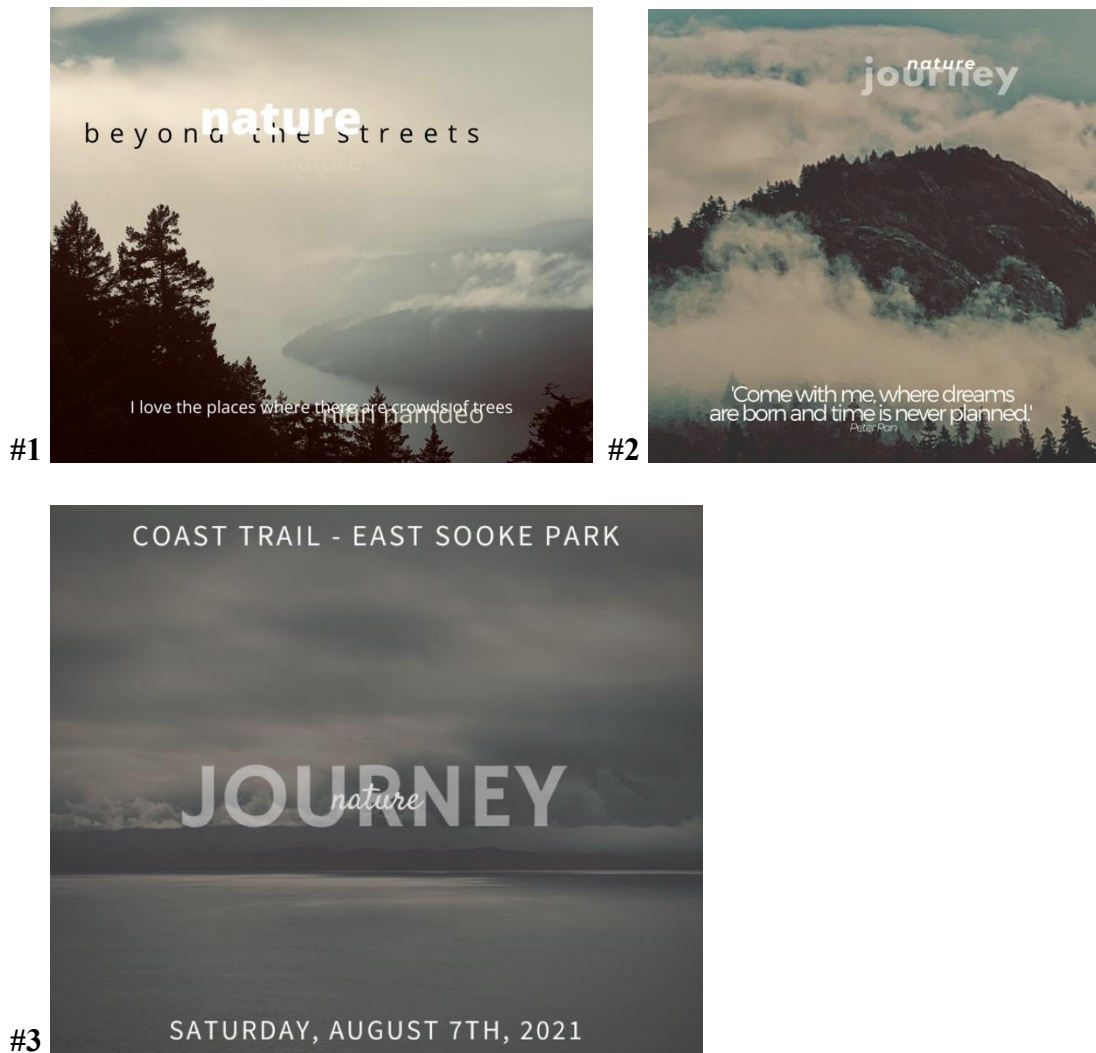


Figure 99. Infographics (*top left, right, bottom*) shared on FB.

Content #1: There's healing there. Quietness and glimpses of Home. The experience of rest, as a way of living, if we so choose. Integrity and Home, there's more to it; only, if you can imagine? (Matthew 11:28)

'May the stars carry your sadness away, may the flowers fill your heart with beauty, may hope forever wipe away your tears, and above all, may silence make you strong.' Chief Dan George

Content #2: The gold of the leprechauns is gone until next year, when once again they will appear in flashes of the mid-summer sun, running through the forest with their pots of gold. So, the gold is gone for this year, but so many treasures remain!

One tasty beauty, ripening everywhere, the Salal berry (spp. *Gaultheria shallon*), rich in Vitamin C, and has a much higher antioxidant content than most of the other forest berries. I have learned that they are good for hair and jam spread, skin health and pie filler. Treasures everywhere.

Content #3: Here we go! Heading out to the Coast this week. Extending the distance and increasing the technical difficulty in preparation for the adventure of a 3-day trip of the Juan de Fuca trail. We will have full packs as begin preparation for hike with weight/gear.

Our focus of Spiritual Formation is the practise of silence and solitude. Soul Care healing and story-telling will be inspired by the 'leaves' of the Tree of Life. What an adventure! Beautiful nature care.

# Rally Map

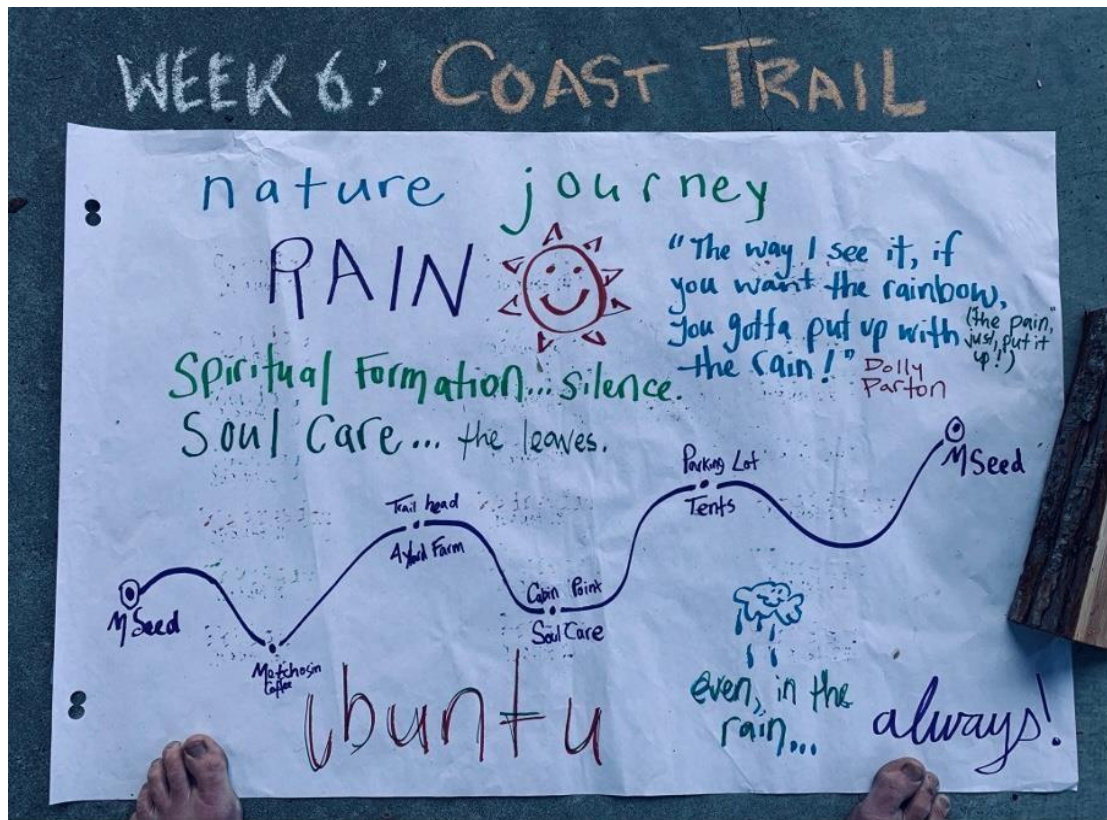


Figure 100. Week Six, Coast Trail rally map. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

## Week Six Handouts

# Spiritual Formation Handout

### **SPIRITUAL FORMATION** (learning practices): Silence and Solitude

‘Silence is God’s first language; everything else is a poor translation. In order to hear that language, we must learn to be still and to rest in God.’ Thomas Keating. ‘All of humanity’s problems stem from man’s inability to sit quietly in a room alone’ Blaise Pascal.

## Movements and Reflections of Silence of Solitude

- In solitude and silence, you're learning to stop doing, stop producing, stop pleasing people, stop entertaining yourself, stop obsessing — stop doing anything except to simply be your naked self before God and be found by him.
- The Spirit speaks to us when our heart is still and silent before the Lord — not when we're rushing about and doing our own thing in our own way.
- The purpose of solitude is not to be alone but to experience the absence of human activity so that we can more fully experience the presence of God.
- Our lives tend to be filled with people and events, making it unlikely we'll accidentally stumble into silence and solitude. Being alone, quietly with God requires planning.

‘My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him.’ Psalm 62:5 (wait for the gentle whisper). **Listen.** **God is with you.**

## Soul Care Handout

### SOUL CARE (remembering home)

The Tree as a metaphor of Life. As we press on together into mindful conversation and presence, let's remember our 'nature' foundations and values. Reflect briefly on our discussions of the Tree of Life so far. Does anything stand out to you, or did we miss anything important in our conversations?

#### **Our reflection today will center on the Leaves of the Tree.**

- Who plays an important role in your life?
- What type of influence have they had? If they've helped, how?
- Do you feel that you have played an important role in their lives?
- How do you feel your important relationships could change in the future?
- Are there any important people in your life who've passed away? Leaves blown down by the wind?

'Nature will bear the closest inspection. She invites us to lay our eye level with her smallest leaf and take an insect view of its plain.' Henry David Thoreau

'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!' 2 Cor. 5:17

## **Week Six Review**

Distance: 10.5 kms

Elevation: ~500 meters

### **Rally Point**

I am starting to find a rhythm to emails and social media promotion of ‘nature, journey’ and ‘nature, beyond the streets’. Tuesdays and Thursdays seem to be the days. These creative pieces take some time to put together.

On social media, I create a title page through medium ‘Canva’ and then, provide a description of the post. Then, I will use this material to inform an email sent on the same day to all the participants of ‘nature, journey’.

On Tuesdays, I look back to the preceding Saturday adventure, considering the Spiritual Formation and movement of Soul Care, while hinting at the next adventure. I use this material to build an approach to the email I will send to the participants who have been involved throughout the ‘journey’ to that point. Some of the participants are injured, and can’t participate, some have decided to stop their involvement (for whatever reason). Nevertheless, I do try to keep each participant informed who has shown an interest in the movement over the weeks.

On Thursdays of each week, this same approach will be taken with a centring on the upcoming ‘nature’ outing and the Spiritual Formation and Soul Care movements to prepare for, as well as any information that is pertinent to the hike itself (i.e., mindfulness toward the weather



and ware, or equipment/gear reminders, or preparations for discussion at the Rally Point surrounding the upcoming 3-day hike on the Juan de Fuca trail.

Another wonderful addition to the story of many weeks in the ‘journey’ so far is that a participant has been eager to write and share of her ‘journey’ experience. It has been a pleasure to share of the impact of ‘nature’ with her throughout the ‘journey’. It seems that she has been learning, experienced stretching and growth in ways that is an encouragement in her life and others around her.

A better rhythm is being found for our lunch sandwiches. One of the participants has agreed to pick up lunch food for those in the group who have special diets (receipts to be kept and reimbursements offered). Tim Horton’s has been the spot for our sandwiches. First thing Saturday morning, I wake up and call Tim Horton’s with a sandwich order. Those who join with us on the trips, upon arrival at the Mustard Seed, can choose the sandwich they will like for lunch time. Then, we have drinks, snacks and energy bars that can be packed for the hike, too.

At the rally point, it was great to see Dillon! I had seen him throughout the week at the Mustard Seed. He has been getting into some trouble on the street and was showing some signs of desperation for being injured still when I saw him. So, I encouraged to join with us at the Rally Point. He seemed hesitant so I was happy to see that him there. He was motivated to be there and to be a blessing to the team despite his upset at not being able to join in.

This week, the hike on the Coast Trail in East Sooke Park, would be our first with close to accurate weight on our backs. Two full backpacks were prepared for the group. We would share the weight, each one of us carrying the backpack for a certain portion of the trail. The trail was very technical in parts, while other parts offered increased challenge for the difficulty of ‘elevation increase’. I was paying close attention to see how the Participants were each affected

by the increase in weight. From the observations I made, I could tell how the extra would have to be distributed on the 3-day hike.

At our Rally Point, as with each of the weeks we have had a ‘beyond the streets’ outing together, I created a map and unveiled the story of the day. We always close our Rally Time with a cheer led by one of the participants (Kayla). This is always a life-giving moment for her. Often, she will share a camp song that she remembers from when she was growing up as well. She has mentioned that remembering these things is like remembering who she is.

### **On the Road**

There was our first day being able to drive everyone, together in one vehicle. Two months prior to ‘nature, summer’ (‘nature, journey’) beginning, I was in touch with some of those at the Mustard Seed who could help with some of the specifics that could make the ‘journey’ a little easier. I offered the plan/overview with the hope that ‘liabilities’ could be assessed (with lawyers) and the hope that ‘waiver’ forms could be formulated accurately/appropriately (with all factors in mind, especially COVID-19).

There had been no movements regarding transportation and ‘liability’ from that point, at the one-month mark before the program started, nor at the two-week mark preceding. Unfortunately, even at two weeks following our ‘program start’ there had been no movement. By that time, I had completed waiver forms, of course, and would be diligent with these (hoping they would be sufficient) for the duration of the ‘journey’. Unfortunately, all the other avenues I followed up with for ‘transportation-hope’ led to dead ends. Finally, there was a movement with the Mustard Seed, and a 10-passenger vehicle that was ‘sitting useless’ at Hope Farm, was

brought for inspection and maintenance. It would be a month until it was ready for use. And here we are at the first day. The group of participants was very excited. Also, those who had been drivers were thankful for the break. I was sure to offer thanks-in-ways to each of the drivers who had given time and vehicle for the program to this point.

On the way, we stopped once. At a gas station, along with having to ‘fill up’, I invited anyone who wanted a coffee, needed extra nutrition, or had to fill hydration tanks to please do what they needed to do. Then, we were on our way.

## **Trail**

At the Parking Lot, before the trail head, we were sure to prepare the backpacks and invited the first ‘carriers’ to be fitted. For some, a good fitting backpack can make-or-break a ‘nature’ outing. One of the participants, an upbeat young man who is a student-intern with the Mustard Seed over the summer months, has found place for himself in the group as a ‘camping connoisseur’. I developed a deep sense of gratitude for this participant as he stepped into such a caring role for the other participants. I would not have been able to give the same kind of attention to the equipment, fitting, follow-up as he did; and this attention deepened a sense of safety for those who were participating in the ‘journey’.

Once we were ready, we met at the map for a final look at our route for the day. I mentioned that there may be some alterations to ‘the plan’ based on comfortability and endurance. We had one ‘new participant’, so despite the assurance of fitness and knowing the level-of-difficulty of this hike, I knew that the group would need to be ready to cut the hike short, or to re-route the plan in some way.

Nevertheless, into the forest and by the ocean, over the roots and rocks, by the cliffs and over the bluffs we went.

The first section of the trail was easy. Mostly straight away and manageable without much thought. Along the way, we had the chance to catch up with each other, to practise breathing, and reconnect to nature. I think it can be felt, even after a week away, the impact that some time in nature can have on our bodies, minds, and hearts. Not only this but being together in nature gives opportunity for healthy connection and to talk about the experience, to point out the beauty around, to remember the wonder within us, all around us, even the neighbour/friend we are walking with.

Eventually, the Coast Trail becomes challenging as cliffs, and drops, and climbs are presented that require much thought and the conscientious consideration of each step. There will be some spills, bails, and falls. The key is in the learning, determination to get back up. I think it is in the fall, being present to it, understanding of it, relentless through it, that the heart is prepared for the resiliency that the next fall will require for its overcoming.

Our halfway point was a cabin that marks about the midway point of the Coast Trail. Built many decades ago, this cabin (at Cabin Point) has been used for ‘stuck’ fisherman in the past. We stopped here for a longer break, for lunch, connection by story through Soul Care, and preparation for sharing a practise of Spiritual Formation.

Sometimes it’s not easy to get the group going after an extended break. At these times, I’m thankful for some of the important words we’ve been reiterating. One of them being, ‘RFP’ an acronym for ‘Relentless Forward Progression’.

There was one spot on the trail, an upward climb and then a traverse along a cliff side that I could tell that one of the participants was having a tough time with the heights. Quickly, I

ran up to be beside him, to relieve him of the pack he was carrying and to help him to focus and walk to safety. This was a special moment of ‘ubuntu’ for the group to witness.

From Cabin Point we headed inland and uphill. Our trail continued up and down hills, some challenging terrain to navigate. The group began to split up a bit as, toward the end of the hike, several participants were beginning to feel tired, and muscles/joints were starting to ache. I became concerned for two participants whose rhythm was slowing, and whose pain was beginning to be felt by the rest of the group. Thankfully, we arrived at our last section with enough steam in our group to make it back to the van together. While the hike had to be adjusted slightly (veering away from a climb up Babbington Hill on the inland trail), I think for some an edge point was pushed a bit further; together, each of us are finding the opportunity to learn of what is possible, beyond that which we once thought was not. Belief in ourselves, one another is growing, even as we begin to grow and experience life in a deeper way through our developing belief in the One who is with us, in us, and all around us.

### **Spiritual Formation/Soul Care**

Our focus for Spiritual Formation was ‘silence and solitude’. Basically, the reading and keeping of this portion of the handout is much more important than any verbal teaching that can be offered. The practises of Spiritual Formation are offered to encourage some reflection and contemplation of a deeper, more connected living/awareness/consciousness.

During our time at Cabin Point, as well as at key points along the trail, we all experienced moments of silence and solitude. With these, along with the handout, the understanding of the practise and the reason to embrace these formative practices, only expanded.

Our Soul Care time of reflection, contemplation and storytelling focused on the leaves of the tree. Individuals in our lives, perhaps, even situations, that stand out as being energizing. Also, what became a c part of the conversation was the significance of the leaves, those individuals, who once held high position with us, but have since fallen. These leaves can nourish the soil surrounding our roots. Everything has purpose, even those whose memory remains with painful sentiments; those whose place in our lives has ceased to be, yet their influence, negative as it was, is used for good.

We sat together in the cabin at Cabin Point to discuss the Soul Care theme of the Tree of Life for this week. We are getting so comfortable with one another, vulnerable and opening with stories, of celebration and struggle, in our lives. A few people shared, then found a place in the cabin for the group to sign our names. The inside of the cabin is that kind of a space with graffiti everywhere. I hope to hike back there in years to come with other groups to see the names from this sweet first expression of ‘nature’.

## **Closing**

When we arrived back at the van. Some of the participants were far more tired than others. It was our most difficult hike to date, no doubt. We took a picture of the group together outside of the van. Before we left the parking lot, one of the participants led the group in a fun camp song. This drew some attention from others in the parking lot. I can only imagine the awkward spectacle that it must have been. It didn’t matter to us. We were very present to one another and having fun together in the moment. Of course, at the end of the song we gathered in closely, hands in the middle, and cheered ‘1-ubuntu, 2-ubuntu, 3-ubuntu, uuuuubuntu!’

What a great day! Wonderful memories, challenges surmounted, and goals accomplished.

### **Adjustments?**

I think the timing of the day was off a bit. Unfortunately, I am often without significant support on the floor at the Mustard Seed. So, there was a need for support at the meal that night, so I felt the pressure on me to rush at times to be back in time for the Saturday Dinner doors to open. On days like this, a difficult technical trail hike with extra weight to be mindful of, more time for rest and the special pieces of Soul Care and Spiritual Formation could be beneficial for the group's overall endurance and morale.

## Photos



Figure 101. *Left*, Coast Trail; *right*, Quick break and group photo at the Petroglyphs.



Figure 102. *Left*, first time out in the Van; *right*, homestretch (Aylard Farm).



**Week Seven: Beyond the Streets**

Location: Timberman Trail, BC

Date: Saturday, August 14, 2021

Time: 8 am to 4 pm

**Leading Graphic**

(See PROJECT section in Portfolio)

**Communication****Email One****Content**

The Coast Trail was a technical challenge. Every (RFP) step, a little closer to the goal.

The Coast Trail, in East Sooke Park, was a big step!

There are some who jump right in to hike the Juan de Fuca Trail, without any training or preparation. It is a challenging trail, and for some, jumping right in is not the best decision.

Every week of 'nature, journey' we are taking little steps to prepare our hearts, minds, and bodies to endure a multi-day hike. Every week, with care and intention for our individual and team endurance, increasing the technical difficulty distance or elevation.

We are getting closer to the day. Ubuntu :) This week, please begin to gather the gear you have, that you are planning to bring along, together. On Saturday, at our Rally Point before our hike, we will go through the gear on tables. So, please be prepared to bring your gear on Saturday morning!

Please, know that if you feel like you are missing anything, DON'T WORRY because we have a good amount of extra gear to choose from. Key pieces to have with you this Saturday are: a backpack, sleeping bag and mattress. If you have a tent, that's great, BRING IT along! Each person will be carrying their own tent.

The Juan de Fuca Trail is a long, challenging, beautiful 3-day accomplishment of wonderful goodness! We will be in this together. Each day, start-to-finish together; enjoying the journey, listening closely, being present.

Very thankful to be on this adventure with you! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to write me a quick note.

## Graphic

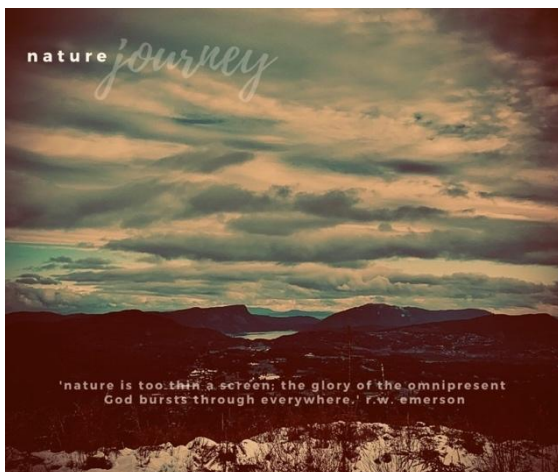


Figure 103. Infographic shared by email.

## **Email Two**

### **Content**

Timberman's Trail! Beautiful journey :)

This is our last long hike together before the Juan de Fuca Trail. Every hike, leading up, has been set and designed to prepare us in community, fitness, spiritual formation and practical readiness for a 3-Day adventure on this rugged southwest coast, island trail.

Tomorrow, please remember any gear that you are planning to bring with you (minus extra clothing). It is a good idea that we take some time to consider the gear we bring. Weight is important. We will be wearing our packs on the trail tomorrow.

Timberman's Trail presents a beautiful trip on a well-worn trail from the base of Mount Work, McKenzie Bight to the summit of Jocelyn Hill (we have accessed this hill from the opposite direction, along the Ridge Trail overlooking Finlayson Arm). We will gain >400m elevation over the 12 km, out-and-back walk.

We will have a few stop points once again this week. Our Soul Care conversations and story sharing will focus on the Fruit of the Tree of Life; our Spiritual Formation will center on quietness and solitude, together in community. Something new, to prepare us for dinner time 'out there', we will have a stove with us to cook a couple dried meals-to-share. (No worries, we will have our trusty sandwiches with us too, to fill the gap).

Looking forward to seeing you tomorrow morning! 8am at the Mustard Seed Street Church. 'In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in

weird ways, and they're still beautiful' Alice Walker So may it be with us, such perspective!

Ubuntu. Chris

### Graphic



Figure 104. Infographic shared by email. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

## FB Group: 'nature, journey'

### Graphic

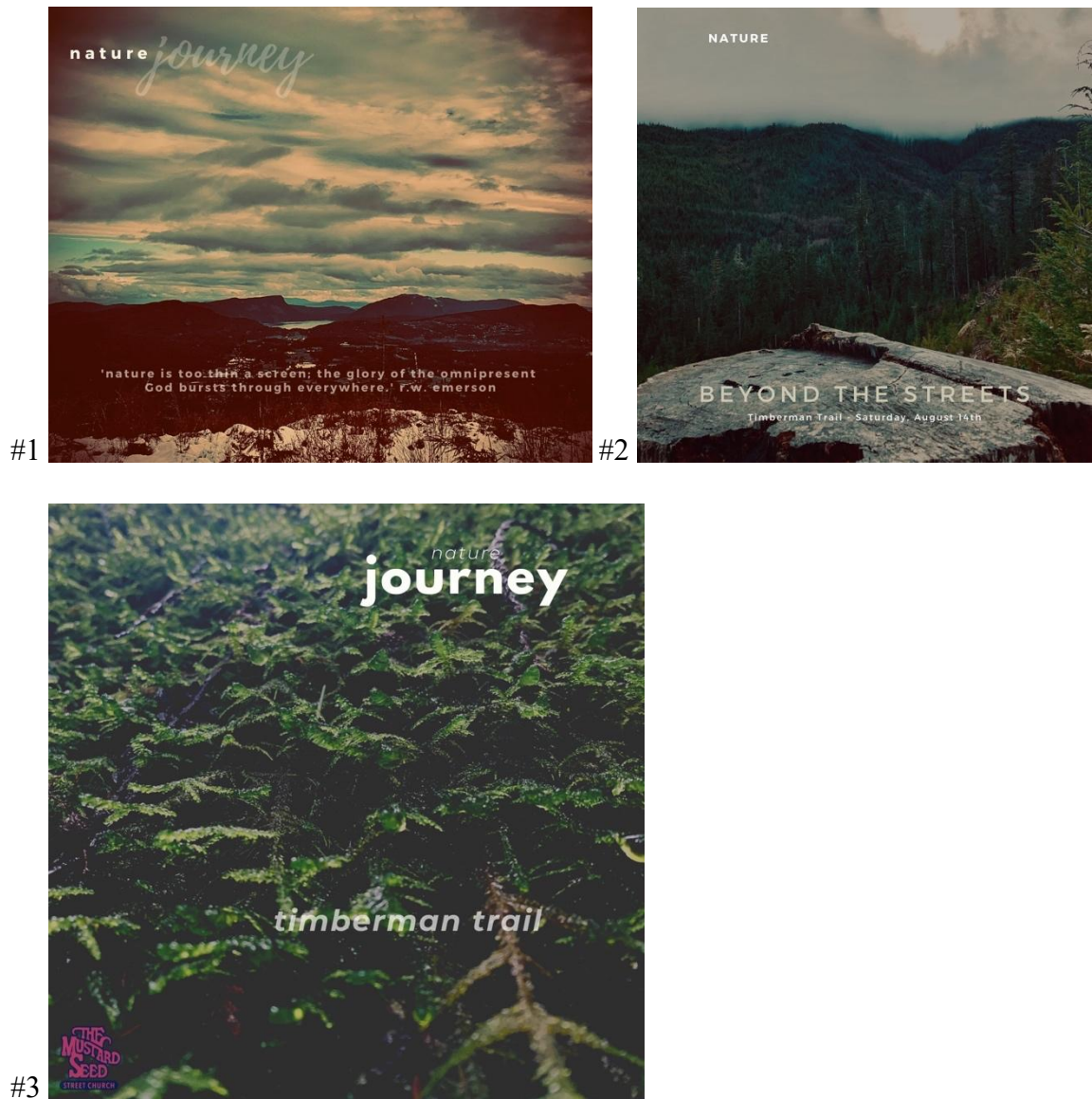


Figure 105. Infographics (*top left, right, bottom*) shared on FB.

Content #1: (Published August 10, 2021) In the quietness of nature, away from the city, listening closely, there's much to be learned of peace and Presence. Being still, hearing the birds, feeling the wind, inhale of breath, whisper of the Creator.

Here, remembrance of Home. Perhaps, even the heart can be heard as the beat of an ancient drum.

Content #2: 'It's the pausing and the stopping, perhaps going backward and losing some time, not being able to do everything we're supposed to do, that serves the soul. That's the enchantment that feeds the soul.' Thomas Moore

Content #3: (Published August 13, 2021) We are at the homestretch of preparation. One week from today, we will be heading out on our adventure, the journey, the Juan de Fuca trail.

Every week our learning is developing; our trust and belief in ourselves, one another, our Creator increasing. A participant's journey has been one of deep growth and profound connection. Here is a brief reflection of her experience into 'nature', last weekend:

"On our recent hike on the Coast Trail in East Sooke Park we shared two fully packed backpacks in preparation for the Juan de Fuca Trail, now just eight days away. The terrain was the most technical we've done so far, and gave our souls a taste of the beautiful coastal views we can look forward to, while the packs gave our bodies a taste for the extra weight we'll be carrying. We are getting stronger, our hearts beating more and more in tune with each other and the earth, a steady, united, healing rhythm."

On our journey, we have been learning to listen closely, to 'still' ourselves, to be present. Our care is fine-tuning; that is, a deeper sensitivity toward 'us' together is strengthening our resilience and integrity. This in concert, with the Spirit of Life all around, within, with us (everywhere).

The participant continues: "During soul care we studied the leaves on the Tree of Life: the significant people in our lives, past and present. I could think of many, but my perspective was clouded by the few who had disappointed and hurt me. Chris's words helped change my perspective:

"All the leaves will fall but when they do, they nourish the soil." Yes, even the ones who had hurt me had nourished the soil, and made me stronger because of it. Suddenly I could see all the people who have loved and supported me, far outnumbering the others. As I struggled under the weight of the pack, the people right in front of and behind me on this journey, caring for me and sharing the weight, were evidence of the precious leaves God has brought into my life. This is ubuntu. I am because you are."

## **Rally Map**

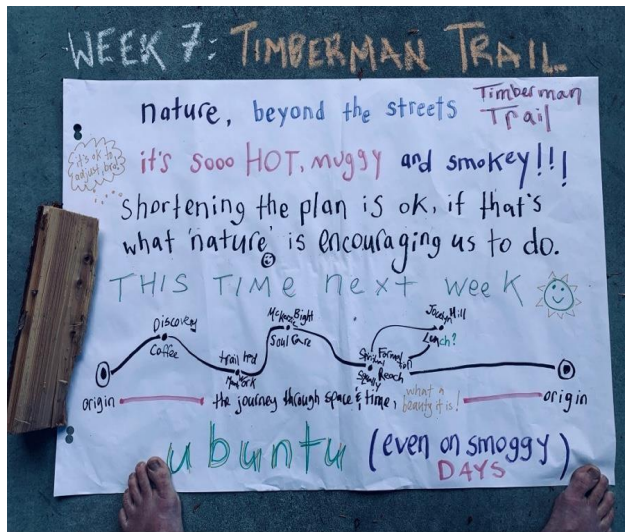


Figure 106. Week Seven, Timberman Trail rally map.

## Week Seven Handouts

### Spiritual Formation Handout

#### **SPIRITUAL FORMATION** (learning practices): Simplicity and Slowing

‘A life without a lonely place, that is, a life without a quiet center, easily becomes destructive. When we cling to the results of our actions as our only way of self-identification, then we become possessive and defensive and tend to look at our fellow human beings more as enemies to be kept at a distance than as friends with whom we share the gifts of life.’ Henri Nouwen

‘Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new. And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—and that it may take a very long



time. And so, I think it is with you; your ideas mature gradually—let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste. Don't try to force them on, as though you could be today what time (that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will) will make of you tomorrow. Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.' Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

'...aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, just as we directed you— 12 so you may behave properly toward outsiders and not have need of anything.' 1 Thess. 4:11-12.           **Listen.       God is with you.**

Soul Care Handout

### **SOUL CARE** (remembering home)

The Tree as a metaphor of Life. As we press on together into mindful conversation and presence, let's remember our 'nature' foundations and values. Reflect briefly on our discussions of the Tree of Life so far. Does anything stand out to you, or did we miss anything important in our conversations? **Our reflection today will center on the Fruit of the Tree of Life.**

- Who plays an important role in your life and what gifts have they offered you?
- Have these people provided you with a shoulder to cry on, supported you through challenges (etc.)?

- What have your parents taught you? Have they ever given you a gift-to-remember?
- What have these gifts meant to you? What have you given in return?
- Have you ever received a gift that challenged your self-worth? (something more than you felt worthy of)
- Do you feel like you can never give enough? Or, that more is expected of you than you must give?

‘There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship.’ Thomas Aquinas

‘Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.’ Albert Camus

‘Now our whole activity is devoted to God, and our whole life since we are bent on progress in divine things.’ Origen

### **Week Seven Review**

Distance: >6 kms

Elevation: ~350 meters

### **Rally Point**

This morning, the group ‘journeying’ to the Juan de Fuca came together. Despite the absence of a few others who seem to be on the cusp of coming, I had a feeling that this was the

group. Over the days preceding, I had connected with the participants individually. This seems to be happening more-and-more during the week, individual check-ins. There seems to be rising concerns, the closer we come to the Juan de Fuca Trail, with regards to injuries and equipment. One of the participants injured his ankle while we were out trail running on Wednesday evening. Another seems to have ongoing knee issues.

I had a chance to go for coffee with a participant who has not been with the group since Week 2. I was informed that he had been struggling, lacking inspiration, and depressed. We had a nice time together. I picked him up a coffee and met him at a beach early in the morning (before work). We shared a bit, encouraged one another, and prayed together. Later in the day he sent me a note of thanks, and that he found work doing something he enjoyed that day (a job opened for him with a company that he was motivated to work with).

Early in the morning, I called an order in to Tim Horton's; I picked up the sandwiches on the way in. Normally, I arrive early to prepare the space, print the handouts, prepare the waivers, etc. This morning, I was in even earlier so that I could have all the extra gear open and for the group to have a look at. A few of the participants do not have the essential practical things needed for a camping trip.

One of the participants, upon arrival, mentioned that her partner was not going to be able to join us today. This confused me to begin with. Her partner, who I had run with earlier in the week, seemed to be just fine to end our run with pace. To questions I had for him about the twisted ankle that he had sustained while running, he said that he was entirely fine. I inquired further and the participant said that her partner had taken the next day, following our run, off from work because his ankle was hurting (?). I felt that it was necessary to voice my concern

with this participant regarding their readiness for the hike on the Juan de Fuca trail. At this, she was compelled to call Jeremy and encourage him to join the group for the hike today.

Once he arrived, I took some time with them (alone) to assess the injury. I made it quite clear with them about the difficulty of the Juan de Fuca Trail and that it is essential that each participant begin the trail healthy and strong, prepared to complete what the group had set out to achieve together. I was super caring with this approach. They assured me that they are fine for the hike that day, and that they would be fine to complete the hike on the following weekend. I asked that if there is any concern that they might not be able to attend their next day of work following the hike, to please rest, to take the day for healing.

A participant who is not physically able to carry on the ‘journey’ with us, dropped by again to encourage the group. He stuck around for the cheer and waved the team off from the curbside. I hope for protection and healing in his life.

A former participant was led to purchase the majority of what the team would require in the form of lightweight meal nutrition. What a blessing this was for ‘nature, journey’. This participant purchased over \$200 of packaged dehydrated meals. Our eldest participant, has significant dietary restrictions. She requires an all-gluten free diet. She was so pleased to see that all her meals were taken care of.

### **On the Road**

Today we were driving to another coastline of the lower island area. All the trails, their maps, were included in the overview booklet given to each of the participants at the orientation meeting. This has been a movement of exploration and discovery for many of the participants of

the beauty of the lower island and local trails that give access to beautiful wilderness locations. For those who do not have a car, all the trails can be reached by the bus transit system.

We all had full backpacks for this excursion, a bit of extra weight for this final ‘nature’ outing before our final destination-trip, three days on the Juan de Fuca Trail; for those who were experiencing some injury/fatigue, lesser weight in their packs. We packed two tents to practise setting up at our stop point. One dehydrated meal was packed to practise cooking together.

### **Trail**

It should be mentioned that the plan for this trip was 12kms and over 500 meters elevation. This had to be adjusted for those who were feeling discomfort and fatigue at about 2/3 distance to our halfway point. As a team (ref. ubuntu, exhibiting deep care for those who were struggling in the group) we decided to cut-the-day slightly shorter. This was a good decision, though a tough call because there are members of the group who would be quite happy to extend the trips and increase the pace. As I noticed the commitment on the part of those who are interested in more challenging trips, to ‘let go’ for the whole group to feel comfortable on the ‘journey’, I imagined what more difficult trips could look like for those who would like to set goals that they take them closer to ‘their edge’ and beyond.

Once we were all ready with our packs, nutrition, and hydration all set, we met at the map before entering through the gates of the trailhead to the beautiful wild. At these beginning points, these ‘entering in’ points, I encourage mindfulness toward breath and presence. Sometimes, starting slowly and attuning to movement and muscles is encouraged as well.

Peace, in the movement. Being ok with finding pace, rhythm between heartbeat and breathing, and listening closely. There's much that the 'journey' on the trail in 'nature' can teach us.

Our first section was a steep downhill to the ocean at McKenzie Bight. About halfway down, a few of the participants were expressing hope for a break. (I am sure it has been included elsewhere in these entries, each one of these hiking excursions has been planned/set with intention to prepare us for what we could possibly face on any part of the Juan de Fuca Trail; all planning with the goal-in-mind.

At the ocean, we paused for a moment. Thankfully, one of the participants found opportunity to check in with each person on their packs. It was planned to have a certified Guide join us for these final 'journey' preparations; this did not materialize as the 'Guide' lost his way and missed this opportunity. He has been dynamite in sharing some of his expertise, coming alongside the other participants to offer help, and in so doing becoming a source of safety-encouragement.

The next leg of the trip was upwards toward a waterfall viewpoint. This was a very challenging uphill push for some of the participants. RFP – right ☺

Our next stop point was a few kms short of where I was hoping we would be for lunch (Jocelyn Hill). We stopped instead at a beautiful viewpoint called Squally Reach. I could tell that people were tired and wanting this to be our 'turn-back' point. Pushing forward from here would have created unneeded discomfort. It was at Squally Reach that it was made clear to me that we will have to adjust the plan for the Juan de Fuca Trail. It would have to be cut in half. Days on the Trail that were planned for 14-16km hikes would need to be changed significantly. I did not share this with the team at this point, it was a weight for me to carry and to contemplate.

Up to our stop point we had been considering our movements of Spiritual Formation along the trail. At Squally Reach we stopped for lunch. We boiled one of our dehydrated meals (Tristen was excited to show-off his 'Jet-Boil'), we chased grasshoppers (I proved it was possible to catch one), we set up the tents, and took some time to catch our 'breath presence'. Before leaving, we had our moment of Soul Care and prayer. I think a few of the participants may have felt like they were letting the group down in their desire to cut the hike short. Our moral was high, and together, as turning back was made clear as the best decision for our bodies to be able to 'taper' and prepare for a longer 3-day hike with more weight the following weekend.

The hike back was much easier, as the majority was downhill. Instead of taking the trail back down to McKenzie Bight, we cut through (took a shortcut) to the trailhead along the ridge line (above the waterfall, at the base of Mt. Work). Our oldest participant was on an incredible pace and walking far ahead of the group. We had to be sure, as we passed other hikers, that we were on her trail as opposed to 'the' trail. Thankfully, we caught up with her back at the parking lot. She had to go to the washroom. Slowly-but-surely, the rest of the group made their way back to the parking lot and trailhead. It was obvious that some of the participants were very tired, and by the limps that were quite accentuated, ready to give muscles and joints a bit of a breather.

### **Spiritual Formation/Soul Care**

Our conversation and practice of Spiritual Formation, as was offered on the handout, was simplicity and slowing. Over the course of our weeks of preparation 'beyond the streets' on

Saturdays, we often find moments to simply stop and listen. There's a quietness that we 'wait on' at these sometimes awkward/surprising stop points. These quiet times can become a game: waiting quietly to see who will be the one to break into the silence.

Our Spiritual Formation focus, and practise started with silence along the trail, today. In the silence, how the forest and nature come to life. In silence, how we can come to life. We stopped a few times to reflect on the handout, to read portions of it, to contemplate lightly and offer insights. Again, I encouraged that these handouts be kept somewhere as a reminder of the deeper connection to life, our being, and 'nature' all around.

Soul Care stories, reflection and sharing centered on the Fruit of the Tree of our Lives. Participants shared of those things and people, situations, and times, that stand out as being profoundly formative. We had a brief time of silence and prayer together. Before leaving we took one of our 'jumping' pictures together. So many memories.

One thing that I have noticed is that the group has not shown a distaste or disinterest toward times of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care. I have been sensitive toward this as, at times, I feel like it has been 'a bit extra' or 'a bit too much' on top of the physical strain these hikes can have. I'm thankful that the participants have been receptive, even interested/curious, in each of our times of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care moments 'beyond the streets'. (I need to work on not holding to presumption and being overly sensitive. A lot of time and care for the group and participants was invested into the handouts given each week.)

## **Closing**



At our closing we geared down, unpacked our tents, and watered-up. I checked in with each person as to how they were feeling, in consideration of any persistent aches and looming fatigue. Our hike back from Squally Reach was not difficult.

Of course, we found an opportunity to sing a Camp Song together. One of the participants had a great song to share this week before calling us all in for a final cheer for the day.

On the way back to the Mustard Seed there were discussions about the route for the Juan de Fuca Trail, potential adjustments to the hike. (In quiet moments on the hike back, I considered what our route could look like). We also had a chance to talk about equipment, food, and things that are still needed for the upcoming 3-day adventure.

Back at the Mustard Seed, a few of the participants spent some time with their packs, signing out equipment, and being sure of comfortability. A participant stayed behind to help some from the group along with their packs. There was a sign-out list so that all the equipment could be accounted for.

### **Adjustments?**

- Being clear with the Participants on the importance of rest for injuries.  
 Allowing for my confusion regarding injuries to not play a part in the conversation. To listen closely, and to allow Participants to express in their way with regards to injury or keenness for involvement.
- There can be ‘a history’ to each participant’s desire, or waning desire, to be involved in each activity. For example, I remember there were times

when I was in high school that I didn't want to go to PE class, and the only way that I could skip it was to prove that I was injured or not feeling well.

- A tapering week is needed after weeks of preparation and before a big hike.

## Photos



Figure 107. *Left*, trail running; *right*, a morning drink at Discovery Coffee.



Figure 108. *Left*, Timberman Trailhead; *right*, our ‘UBUNTU’ air time.

### **Week 7: Taper**

Location: Mt. Work, BC

Date: Tuesday, August 17th

Time: 4 pm to 8 pm

### **Leading Graphic**

(See PROJECT section in Portfolio)

### **Communication**

**Email One****Content**

Winding down to gear up! Get ready to feel even better :) a beautiful 'final' evening of preparation together on Mt. Work.

Tuesday (tomorrow) evening, please arrive at the Mustard Seed as close to 5pm as possible. It would be great if we could be at Mt. Work by 6pm for an easy 2.5km fellowship climb to the summit. No packs needed for this hike, other than perhaps a handheld water bottle.

This is an optional outing! So, please listen closely to your body. Consider whether or not this evening should be kept quiet in order for resting muscles for the Juan de Fuca trail this weekend.

If you plan to rest this evening, at some point this week I would encourage a light walk of 12kms. A bit of a warm-up, or a keeping-warm, if you will.

Please, bring your headlamps if you're planning to join in this evening. Oh, and to close the night out, nothing less than a sweet treat at the Dairy Queen. (Hope that's cool?)

More to come on Wednesday evening with regards to the plans for this weekend. Any questions about gear, or trail and weather concerns, please 'ask away'.

Almost there! Ubuntu. Chris

**Graphic**



Figure 109. Infographic shared by email. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

### FB Group: 'nature, journey'

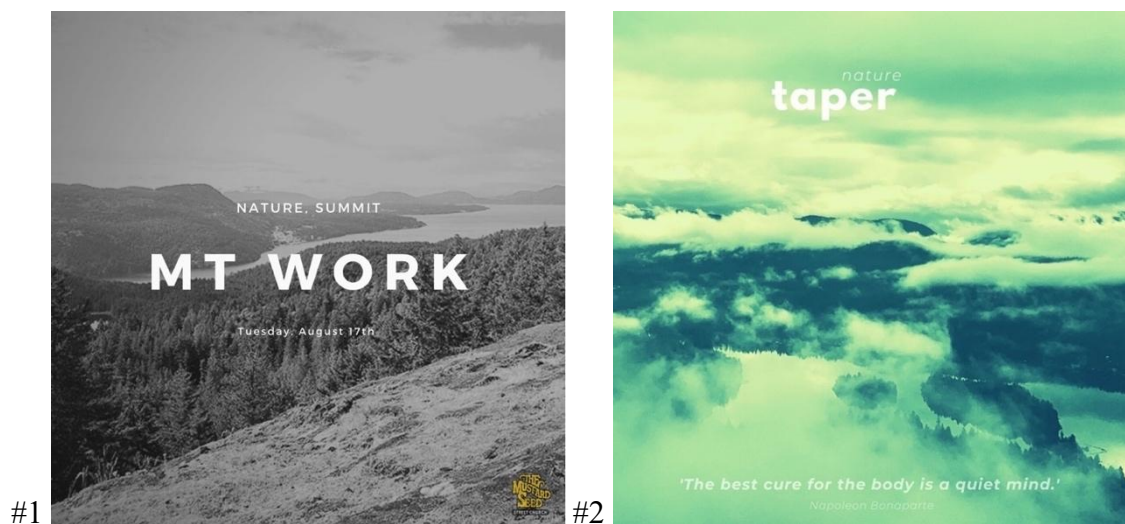


Figure 110. Infographics (*left and right*) shared on FB.

Content #1: A wind down evening! Summit fellowship. Nature to sunset, these are rest days leading up to our journey, this weekend. Remember, when it seems impossible, insurmountable, that there is One who knows all things are possible, who whispers gently for us to take heart. (This kind of Love and Care has overcome the world.)

Peace resounds from such courage. And, for the journey of this day Yeshua establishes, 'Peace, be with you.' Ubuntu.

Content #2: (Published August 5, 2021) Everyday can be an adventure especially, with hearts and minds attuned to the presence with us, within us and all around us. In this movement, by such 'nature', senses enliven with care toward all that is living, our shared community, and integrity together. One of the participants writes on our most recent 'nature' outing:

'Our last Saturday hike before the Juan de Fuca Trail was along the Timberman Trail in Gowlland Tod Provincial Park, wearing packs nearly full with essential gear. With a slightly smoggy-but-still-beautiful view of the Saanich Arm, we stopped to rest at Squally Reach, ate lunch, boiled water on a backpacking stove and tested a dehydrated meal, caught grasshoppers, and had an informal tent set-up and take-down competition, while one of our group had a nap. All essential wilderness preparation.

We discussed the fruit on the Tree of Life: our gifts that we can offer others, and that others offer us. I was reminded how trauma had caused me to forget my gifts, how trauma steals identity. Through my healing journey God had begun to whisper who I was again, not just restoring but renewing, a new creation. I had to go back to childhood to remember that I was

naturally kind, loving, patient, happy-go-lucky, a friend to all. On this “nature, journey,” in group healing, we are becoming children again, sharing our gifts freely, abundantly, with open hearts to receive like we did as children. In nature we are sharing our love and wonder of God’s creation, seeing through the eyes of a child, through our natural eyes, the eyes of love.'

Love makes a difference, it changes things. Winnie the Pooh once said, 'some people care too much. I think it's called love.' Faith describes such connection as 'family', relating 'this is community and comfort. This is family. It is safe to nap. It is safe to share. It is safe to receive. It is safe to be a child again.'

It sure can get playful and creative-like-that 'out there. Especially, when jumping after grasshoppers. ubuntu!

### **Week Seven (Taper) Review**

Distance: 5kms

Elevation: ~250 meters

### **Rally Point**

This was an optimal hike. A true taper in preparation for the 3-day hike in a few days. There were only four of us on the hike. Two participants did not join us, to rest injuries and the third participant, I don’t think the hike was on her radar to begin with.

## **On the Road**

We met at the Mustard Seed and drove in the 10-passenger vehicle to the trailhead of Mount Work on Munn Road. This was another opportunity to share with the group of another great trail location. When we arrived at the trailhead, one of the participants was slightly concerned because she had forgotten her Asthma puffer.

We were ready for the trail quickly upon arrival. The point was to keep it the walking light, so we had only enough hydration and nutrition for a quick 4km, there and back, with about 300 meters elevation gain.

## **Trail**

The first segment of the trail from Munn Road to the Mount Work summit are easy flats, with simple ups and downs in the trail. Once the uphill begins, there's no shifting from an upward pace. Short easy strides in most parts with some technical manoeuvres required the odd time. Towards the clearing, about 200 meters from the summit, one of the participants needed to break. She was out of breath and slightly concerned for having left her puffer at home. Another participant stepped in to help her with breathing, as he has been practicing various breathing exercises (i.e., the Wimhof method). Eventually, she felt fine, especially after a demonstration of Parkour-on-the-rocks by the other two participants (myself included).



We arrived at the summit and carried on to a viewpoint, another 200 meters on, to stop, hydrate, eat a snack and experience the beauty and stillness of the sunset. Before we started on our way back down the hill to the Parking Lot (a much easier/quicker hike), we shared in a devotion, contemplative reflection, and prayer.

We stopped on the way down for a fun-picture time at another viewpoint. The rest of the way was non-stop; we all felt very comfortable with the downhill.

### **Spiritual Formation and Care**

In preparation for the evening, knowing that this was an optional hike and that fewer participants would be involved, I thought to adjust the Spiritual Formation plan from the Saturday expression to a group devotional. Sacred Space has a Daily Devotional that is broken up into parts. I thought that this could work well in sharing the various pieces with a group. I cut the devotional up into parts and carried the pieces of paper to the summit viewpoint. After we had been there for ‘just a bit’ enjoying the silence and the beauty of creation all around, I shared the pieces of paper around with the others.

One-by-one we read what was on our pieces of paper. Following each reading we practised silence together; stillness to listen closely to the inner teacher. It seemed that each one of us was touched by the Spirit of God in this time. We closed this time together in prayer. There was a special, reverent quietness that stands out for me in this time.

### **Closing**

We decided to stop by Dairy Queen in Millstream on our way back to the Mustard Seed. This was a great close to the evening. I think everyone was hungry for dinner-type food at this point. Ice cream was good enough for me <sup>2</sup>

### **Adjustments?**

- Dinner was missed because of the time that we had planned to meet. While we had nutrition enough for the trail and a short hike, a heftier dinner/meal could have been shared at the viewpoint we stopped at on the other side of the summit.
- This was a good-optional tapering hike; however, the whole group was unable to attend. I think it might be a good idea to consider how we might seek to include the whole group in future expressions of 'nature' when tapering for a hike or a climb is the plan (i.e., not optional).

### **Photos**



Figure 111. *Top*, near Mount Work summit; *bottom*, a break to breath.

## Week Eight: Journey

Location: The Juan de Fuca Trail, BC

Date: Saturday, August 20, 2021 to Monday, August 23, 2021

## **Leading Graphic**

(See PROJECT section in Portfolio)

## **Communication**

### **Email One**

#### **Content**

What a summer! So many beautiful trails together. Wonderful adventures, each one :) now, it's time for the Juan de Fuca. (Two more sleeps, then two out on the trail.)

Nature. Quietness. Community. Ubuntu! Tomorrow, please meet at the Mustard Seed Street Church with your backpacks ready-to-go. We may need to make a few last-minute adjustments. See you tomorrow (Friday), 5-530pm. We will have packed the van and gathered for a little prayer and cheer by 6am.

The van will be packed with our bags ready for the trail. Saturday morning, so that you do not have to park your car on the street for a couple days, I will pick each of you up between 5-6am. (So, I will need your addresses.)

Of course, we will stop for a hot drink on the way. We will have a quick breakfast at Botanical Beach at about 830am before carrying on to our stop point for the day, Payzant Creek.

Rest well and see you soon!

Chris

### Graphic

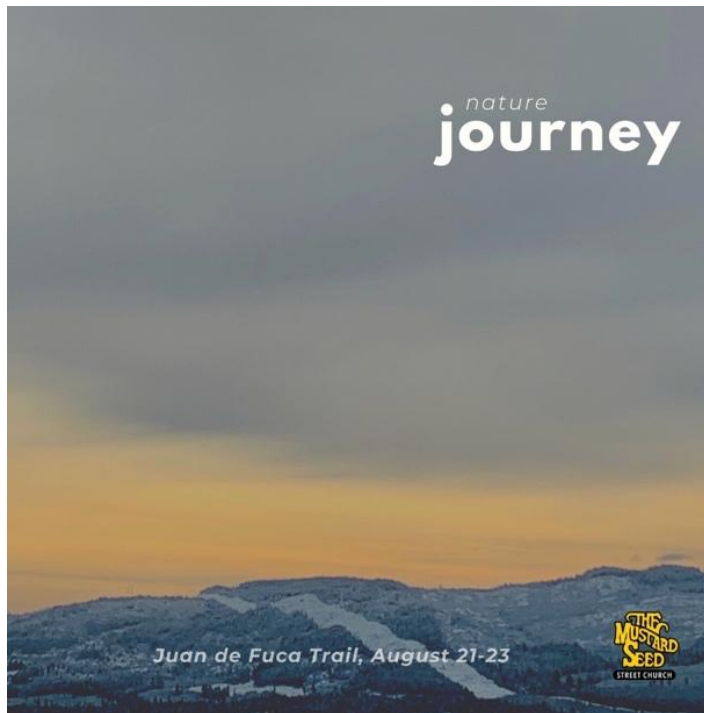


Figure 112. Infographic shared by email. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

**FB Group: 'nature, journey'**

## Graphic

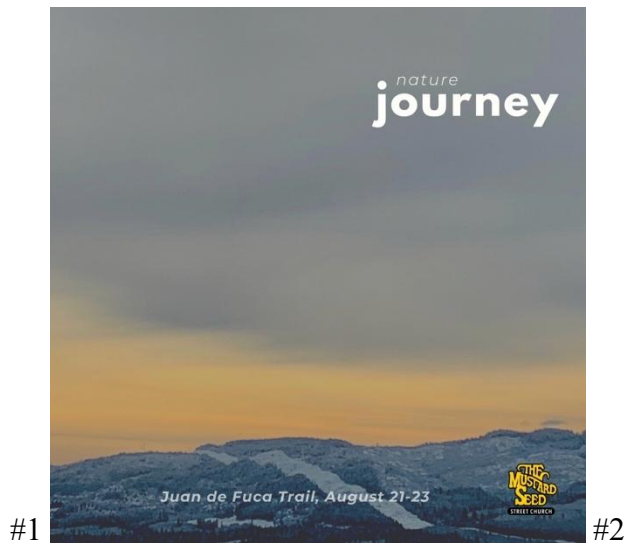


Figure 113. Infographics (*left and right*) shared on FB.

Content #1: We are nearing our goal of a 3-day hike on the Juan de Fuca trail. There is hope we are never alone. The Creator gives resilience, so 'do not yield to fear, for I am always near. Never turn your gaze from me, for I am your faithful God I will infuse you with my strength and help you in every situation.' (Isaiah, circa 8th century BC).

Take heart, surrendered RFP. Peace of Christ.

Content #2: journey, complete

The Juan de Fuca Trail, August 2021. From Victoria to Botanical, bears to salal berries, waterfalls to cliff jumps, soul care to nature-ch, Botanical to Payzant, roots to rocks, stories to songs, light times to laughter, Payzant to Little Kuitchie, solitude to simplicity, A drops to B drops, Little Kuitchie to Sombrio, quiet streams to crashing waves, fears to cheers, start to finish, thank you for the adventure!

Onward to 'nature, next' and always... ubuntu.

## Rally Map

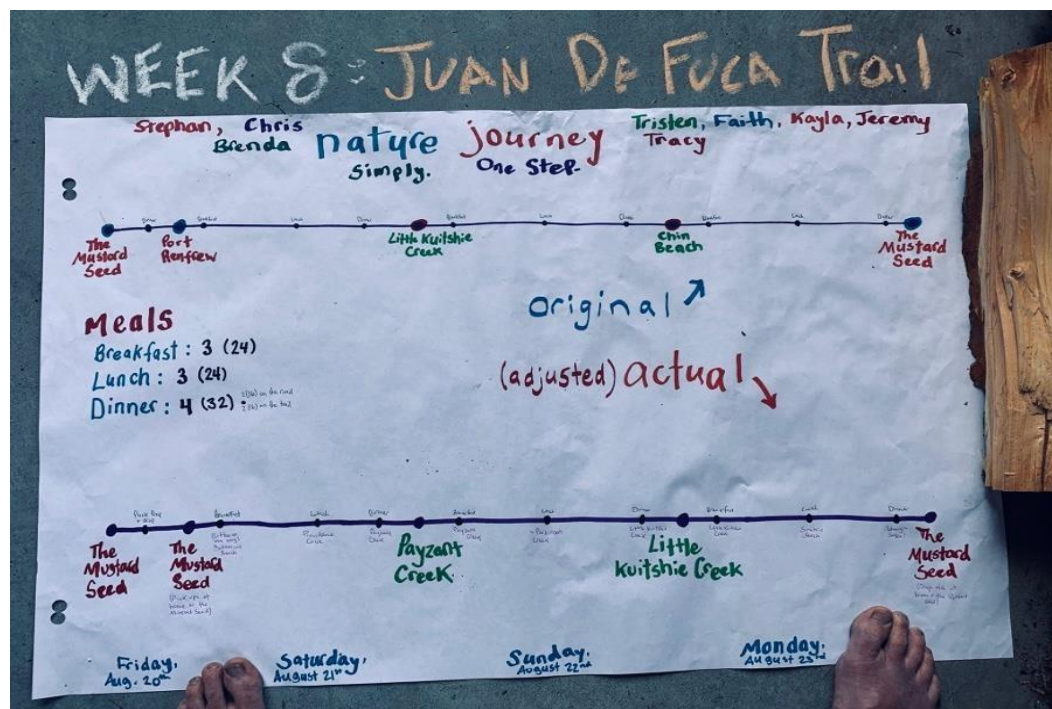


Figure 114. Week Eight, Juan de Fuca Trail rally map.

## **Week Eight Handouts**

### Spiritual Formation Handouts

#### **Day One**

#### **SPIRITUAL FORMATION** (learning practices): Journaling

Journaling is a tool for reflecting God's presence, guidance and nurture in daily comings and goings. Journals can be kept regularly or during times of transition. The desire within the spiritual practise of journaling can be an alert to my life the writing and reflection of God's presence and activity in, and around, and through me. 'What we plant in the soil of contemplation, we shall reap in the harvest of action.' Meister Eckhart

#### Movements and Reflections of Journaling

- Considering the Tree of Life. Reflecting on the 'exodus' story of your life in story form. How Creator is Present.



- Remembering prayers, prayer requests, and answers to prayers. Keeping a library of special quotes or encouraging words that have been spoken over you.
- This is an action of slowing down, of mindfulness, practicing the Presence of God, the Ignatian practise ~ Examen.
- Journaling can leave a lasting impression, a legacy. Creates a path and portrays an awareness of phases and stages throughout your personal pilgrimage.

‘I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.’ Psalm 16:7 (wait for the gentle whisper. consolation. the peace of Presence.)

**Listen.**

**God is with you.**

## **Day Two**

### **SPIRITUAL FORMATION** (learning practices): Simplicity

‘True simplicity implies love and trust—it does not expect to be derided and rejected, any more than it expects to be admired and praised’ Thomas Merton. ‘All of humanity’s problems stem from man’s inability to sit quietly in a room alone’ Blaise Pascal.

#### Movements and Reflections of Simplicity

- To uncomplicate, untether, and detangle my life to be able to focus on what really matters.

- Simplicity cultivates the great art of letting go. It aims at loosening inordinate attachment to owning and having.
- Simplicity brings freedom and with-it generosity. Are there things that I could let go of, to feel liberated?
- This is living an uncluttered life. Consider: what is adding complexity and confusion to my life?
- This practise of spiritual formation leads to becoming more clearer, distilled as a person. What does that mean?
- How can I stake my identity in the love of the Creator, not in other things or possessions?

‘Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.’

Matthew 6:19-21 (wait for the gentle whisper)

**Listen.**

**God is with you.**

### **Day Three**

#### **SPIRITUAL FORMATION** (learning practices): Solitude

‘Solitary trees, if they grow at all, grow strong,’ Winston Churchill. ‘Without great solitude, no serious work is possible,’ Pablo Picasso. ‘True solitude is found in the wild places, where one is without human obligation. One’s inner voices become audible... In consequence,

one responds more clearly to other lives,' Wendell Berry. 'Solitude is the place of purification and transformation, the place of the great struggle and the great encounter,' Henri Nouwen.

Movements and Reflections of Solitude: In solitude you're learning to stop doing, stop producing, stop pleasing people, stop entertaining yourself, stop obsessing — stop doing anything except to simply be your naked self before God and be found by him.

- Solitude is giving God time and space that is not in competition with social contact, noise, or stimulation.
- The Spirit speaks to us when our heart is still and silent before the Lord – not when we're rushing about and doing our own thing in our own way.  
Does the context of solitude present you with an open space?
- Ultimately, the purpose of solitude is not to be alone but to experience the absence of human activity so that we can more fully experience the presence of God. Do you feel comfortable with this?
- Solitude gives opportunity for liberation from constantly living our lives in reference to other people.

'Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.' Mark 1:35 (wait for the gentle whisper)

**Listen.**

**God is with you.**

Soul Care Handouts

**Day One**

**SOUL CARE** (remembering home): The Tree vivid and in colour, part one.

The Tree as a metaphor of Life. We have had a chance to reflect on the different aspects of the Tree of Life and share some of our stories. Now, we can paint them, and on our last day together, perhaps share our paintings and describe the stories of our Trees of Life. Enjoy this ☺ be mindful and present; even, creative, and gentle in consideration of your Tree. Draw out, using words and your wonderful creativity, your trees as you reflect on the story of your life so far.

**Begin with the ROOTS, here are some guiding questions to help with remembrance and reflection:** What roots do you in your life? How important are these? Does your past influence who you are today? Do you have any favorite memories? Who was an influence for strength and character for you in the past? What aspects of your heritage stand out as sources for strong rooting in your life?

**Next with the SOIL, here are some guiding questions to help with remembrance and reflection:** Consider how soil is formed. What is the ground like in your life? Is the soil of your life stable or frequently changing? What affects the integrity of the ground you are rooted in? What or who are you influenced by daily? Where do you spend your time? Do you have a favorite place to be? Who or what do you allow to influence your heart, body, or mind?

**And, the TRUNK of the tree. Also, some guiding questions to further help with creative reflection:** Reflect on your strengths. What are your talents? Who plays an important role in your life? What are your beliefs? How do you lean on your beliefs through storms of your life? Do you focus more on your strengths or your weakness? Why is that? In what ways do you think others perceive your strengths to be?

‘Trees do not preach learning and precepts. They preach, undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life.’ Herman Hesse

## **Day Two**

**SOUL CARE** (remembering home): The Tree vivid and in colour, part two.

The Tree as a metaphor of Life. We have had a chance to reflect on the different aspects of the Tree of Life and share some of our stories. Now, we can paint them, and on our last day together, perhaps share our paintings and describe the stories of our Trees of Life. Enjoy this ☺ be mindful and present; even, creative, and gentle in consideration of your Tree. Draw out, using words and your wonderful creativity, your trees as you reflect on the story of your life so far.

**Begin with the BRANCHES. Here are guiding questions to help with remembrance and reflection:** When you were a young child, what did you want to be when you grew up? If you could have three wishes-come-true, what would they be? Share one or two goals/aspirations that you have in your life, today? Do you believe that these goals/aspirations are achievable? Why/why not? What would need to happen in/surrounding for you to be able to achieve these goals?

**Next with the LEAVES, here are some guiding questions to help with remembrance and reflection:** Who plays an important role in your life? What type of influence have they had? If they’ve helped, how? Do you feel that you have played an important role in their lives? How

do you feel your important relationships could change in the future? Are there any important people in your life who've passed away? Leaves blown down by the wind?

**Finally, the FRUIT of the tree. Also, some guiding questions to further help with creative reflection:** Who plays an important role in your life and what gifts have they offered you? Have these people provided you with a shoulder to cry on, supported you through challenges (etc.)? • What have your parents taught you? Have they ever given you a gift-to-remember? What have these gifts meant to you? What have you given in return? Have you ever received a gift that challenged your self-worth? (something more than you felt worthy of). Do you feel like you can never give enough? Or, that more is expected of you than you must give?

‘Nature will bear the closest inspection. She invites us to lay our eye level with her smallest leaf and take an insect view of its plain,’ Henry David Thoreau. ‘Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!’ 2 Cor. 5:17.

### **Day Three**

No Handout. The focus was on drawing, colouring our trees of life for presentation to the group (optional) at the end of the trail (Sombrio Beach).

### **Week Eight Review**

Distance: ~20 kms

Elevation Gain: ~400 meters

### **Friday Evening (Rally Point)**

We gathered at the Mustard Seed, starting at 5pm, for our Backpack Pack Party. We were very focused during this time to be sure that we had everything we needed all set in our bags. Some bags were full of the extras that the Team would need, some with only the essentials that an individual could need out there on the trail.

Over the course of the hour that we spent packing and preparing, it became clear that our focus would be set on equipment, not so much on rallying. We did, however, find some time to come together and to cheer.

Briefly, I spoke with two of the participants who had shown some discomfort on recent hikes. (Truly, it was out of consideration for them that the hike on the Juan de Fuca was shortened significantly). These participants thought that it could be ok for them to drive to the trailhead, join us from there, and if they started to feel uncomfortable, they could return to their car. I made it clear with them that their idea is not an option for this group. We started this journey together, and if need be, will we end this journey together if one from the group becomes injured on the trail. In this, our integrity as a team, our integrity with 'ubuntu'.

For these two participants, I also wanted to be sure that they were starting the trail with the intention to complete the hike; it had to be made clear that we were all starting with the goal in mind, together. If they were not confident about their health and ability to complete the trail from the outset, then I asked that they wait until our next 'journey'. I wanted to be sure, for the sake of every participant, that these two participants did not only feel healthy enough to complete the trail, but also that they were feeling so healthy they were already looking forward to telling

people/friends ‘at work’ the day after we return. First, they thanked me for shortening the hike, then they assured me of their health and ability.

Before everyone left to go home for a good night’s rest, all the packs were set in the van. At our closing cheer I was sure to remind each person to send me their home addresses so that I could pick them up first thing in the morning. Before I left for the evening, I still had about two hours of computer work to complete to gather material and care in handouts for our times of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care on the trail. Also, some planning was given to Sunday’s nature-ch. I didn’t get home until after 11pm. By the time I was in bed, I would only have about 4 hours to sleep before waking up for pick-ups. This would mean a wake-up time of about 415am. I know that just a little ‘good’ sleep can be enough, and much more than a lot of ‘bad’ sleep.

### **Saturday, August 21, 2021**

#### **Wake Up**

One extra alarm was set for this morning. 415am. I was thankful for a few hours of deep sleep entering into this day. I knew the van was all set, locked up, all the packs ready for the trail, and beyond that, at the forefront of my mind was transportation Monday, following our hike. I had to touch base with our extra driver who would follow us out, as he had not responded to texts sent out to him Friday.

Each of the participants knew that I would be by their respective ‘home bases’ to pick them up so that they wouldn’t have to leave their vehicles-unattended at the Mustard Seed over



the weekend. First, across town, I picked up two participants at their respective homes. Then, into town, I picked up a participant and her partner. Finally, at the Mustard Seed, I picked up another participant (who left her bike in the locked office upstairs) and one more participant. All were picked up by about 545am. Thankfully, by this time, the other driver (our Operations Manager at the Mustard Seed) had been in touch with me.

### **On the Road**

Once we were all set and cozy in the 10-passenger, we made our way out to Sooke (a little village on the coast, west of Victoria. On our way into Sooke, we made a stop at Tim Horton's for anyone who might want a hot drink or snack for the drive to Botanical Beach. The other driver was waiting for us in the parking lot of McDonalds, just across town. Once we had connected, he followed me up the coast to Sombrio Beach, he parked his car there and hopped into the driver's seat of the 10-passenger (after he would drop us off at Botanical Beach, he would return to Sombrio to leave the 10-passenger there for us, the endpoint of our hike, for transportation back on Monday). The Sombrio Beach parking lot was overflowing with vehicles. (I remember Sombrio Beach in the mid-90s when a small community of squatters lived there. Now, it is a hub for tourists and surfers. Unfortunately, the integrity of such an originally beautiful place has been compromised). The other driver was thankful to have the chance to drive with me in the passenger seat back up the Sombrio Beach logging road and for the last hour to the trailhead at Botanical Beach.

### **At the Trailhead**

It was exciting to arrive at the Trailhead. I could sense that some of the participants were nervous. We got all our gear ready; I was the last of the group to be all-set to go. There were a few extra things that I had to be sure to have in line before heading out. I had some things to talk with the driver about (i.e., gas and keys), a trail pass had to be purchased for each participant, and a few extra things had to be packed last second.

The driver prayed for us, as we gathered at the trailhead. Then, he took our picture. A ‘keeper’, our first ‘nature’ multi-day hike. Finally, we were ready for our first steps onto the trail. There was no looking back. Next stop would be for breakfast on Botanical Beach, a beautiful location for our first stop together. It was about 930am when we started on the trail.

### **On the Trail**

Great spirits on the way to Botanical Beach. Backpacks were being adjusted for comfort; all were happy with the trail to the first stop point. At the same time as there were high spirits, I think that people were already tired. I know that I was feeling depleted. After the very early morning, the drive up, and all the preparations, at the stop point I needed a bit of a break for quietness and solitude. Along with breakfast, oatmeal, and coffee, I handed out the first movement of Spiritual Formation (journaling). Over the course of the last few days, I had put together Zip-Lock bags for each participant. In the bags were two pieces of art paper, pencil crayons and felt markers (included by another participant), and a writing pen. These tools/media

were added to packs with the planning to encourage the participants into our movements of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care throughout the ‘journey’.

We took our time at Botanical Beach. It was so beautiful. Everyone was relaxed and already starting to explore around. I’m sure we would have been quite happy and full of things to do if we chose to stay there, at that beach, for three days. The seaweed and forts, tidal pools and crashing waves; wonder everywhere. However, we had to keep going. After a good bite to eat (oatmeal) and a hot drink, we were back on the trail.

It was not a challenging hike to Payzant Creek. I think that some of the participants were starting to feel the weight of their back packs by the time we were nearing our stop point/camping spot for the day. There was a lot of slow hiking, which is ok, given our destinations points had shifted. I don’t think the full trail could have been possible.

### **Spiritual Formation/Soul Care**

Spiritual Formation discussion occurred through the morning hours, following the offering of the handout. I think the handout, thankfully, was quite self-explanatory. I was not ready to offer more than a piece of paper with some direction on it this morning (just too tired). There was encouragement for the participants to use one of the pieces of paper for Journaling, while out on the trail. The other piece would be used for Soul Care, the drawing of each participant’s respective, Tree of Life (and, description).

Soul Care handouts were given at around dinner time. We reflected on trails we had walked together over the two months together and where we were as we discussed the different aspects of the tree. For this first day of Soul Care, the focus would be on the roots, soil, and trunk

of the Tree. There were leading questions to reflect on, however the point of the practise of Soul Care over the next few days would be to draw/colour/describe our Trees. I think that this exercise rounded/closed out our Soul Care progression well.

### **Payzant Creek**

Payzant Creek was great. We were of the first campers to this ‘camp spot’, so we had the choice of where we’d like to set up. There was no stress with this, thankfully. We all agreed on a camping place, dropped the packs, and began set-up.

Prior to this hiking trip I had a discussion with a few people to understand what our approach can be to an unmarried couple who would prefer to tent together. Thankful for a united approach, and acceptance of this. I know that our agreement, without discussion, allowed for this to feel so natural for them, and not awkward (which can unfortunately be the approach for ‘religious’ folk in situations such as this).

Our camp spot was inland from the rocky coastline and waves. We were blessed to be situated near to a trail that leads to the beach. Our eldest participant was the first one to get to sleep. The rest of us weren’t far behind. A few of the participants found opportunity to explore the beach areas in the evening. Clouds on the horizon kept the sunset from blowing our minds. There was good conversation around the jet-boil. Before crashing, I went for a walk down the trail to brush my teeth. It was pitch black, so of course I had my headlamp. As I was brushing, I heard some movement to my left and upwards. Looking over quickly, there was a little bear in a tree looking down at me from up in a dead old tree. I knew that this meant ‘mommy bear’ was

nearby. With a little rush, and not so much ‘wuwei’ in my step, I hustled back. Bedtime for this guy.

At the end of the day, I was thankful that everyone was happy and comfortable. What a blessing it was, to be out there with everyone! We had to make a few tent adjustments based on equipment, warmth, and the threat of rain. I committed to sharing a tent with one of the participants to ‘free-up’ a tent for one of the others. This was a challenge for me, a movement of vulnerability, yet I was open to it for the sake of comfortability for everyone (the next night, we would all be back to our own tents as the weather was much better).

Note: at some point during the first evening, I mentioned to a couple of the participants that this would be my last week at the Mustard Seed for a while. Only a day before we left, there was a discussion with my doctor about being ‘fit to work’. An outside supporter seemed to really want for the letter to be set for ‘on that day’. If that had happened, the trip would have been compromised. Not only that, but I needed the next week to be able to try to line up good support for the team. Anyways, it meant a lot to be there. I was thankful.

## **Sunday, August 22nd**

### **Wake Up**

Wake up was a much slower movement than I was hoping for. The itinerary determined an early wake-up for devotions and breakfast of about 6-7am. The group was not up together until about 9am. It was a lengthy and relaxed break of camp and rally time. It wasn’t until about 1030am that we were finally packed, full of energy and ready for the trail. I knew that a part of

the plan for me on this trip, for this group and for the trip to be the best it could possibly be, was to let go of the plans. I had to trust the rhythm of the team and believe that we would find our way, with good timing to the next camp spot.

A few of the participants woke up earlier to spend some time on the coast by the ocean before getting things together and having a bite to eat. This became a personal, quiet time for some. Others woke up slowly. When one of the participant's woke up and started to get ready, she found that a tensor bandage would be a better plan for her leg, for the day. Her knee was experiencing some discomfort toward the end of the day, the day before. I asked one of the participants who was designated as our First Aid lead, given her certification in standard first aid. (I am also certified, standard and wilderness first aid). This was a way that she thought she could help the group during the time on the trail. The tensor bandage was offered, even a prayer for the other participants knee to go with the help.

Along the first meters of the trail, just after the bridge over Payzant Creek, we stopped for a brief devotional that would be led by one of the participants. It was an easy moment of reflection and prayer, while we stood at the trailhead for the days hike, which would begin at Payzant Creek, lead us passed Parkinson Creek, and to Little Kuitchie Creek. It was a beautiful moment of silence, and quiet reflection. I think that some of the participants would have preferred to take the morning even slower, however when you are on the trail headed from A to B, there is only so much relaxing in one spot in between that is possible.

## **On the Trail**

While I was concerned with the health of one of the participants from the outset, I was not sure the degree to which she was in pain. Looking back, I noticed that she was limping, not insignificantly. I was very concerned at this point, knowing that we were about 3-4 kms from an 'out-point' eastward, and 6-7 kms westward. I had a chance to speak with the individual and a couple of the participants took on most of the weight that she was carrying. She was very thankful and said that having less weight to worry about was helpful. At each brief stop point, I would check-in to see how she was feeling at that we would assess at the 'out-point' (Parkinson Creek), if we needed to call in some help. It was evident, at least it seemed to me, by her limp, that we would have to call in some help.

On the way to Parkinson Creek, I spoke with another Participant who was a help with regards to gear and safety. Together, we considered the possibility of having to call in some help to care for the Participant who was experiencing an injury. Together, we measured out the options, both for the participant and for the group. I think that this participant appreciated the opportunity to think in on the situation with me. It was life giving for him that I chose him to be involved in a discussion that would impact the group one way or another. We had a plan to assess the participant's injury at the Parkinson Creek trailhead.

It was not slow-going for the group, from the beach to the Parkinson Creek trailhead. It seemed like everyone was going at a good pace, and all were in good spirits. At every stop point, everyone checks in on each other. This is the attitude of 'ubuntu'. Nearing Parkinson Creek trailhead, I was concerned that this would be our last stop together. Nevertheless, I was prepared to engage with the group, keeping spirits high with the attitude of our integrity and closeness as a group, given the possibility that we may have to call in some help. The participant who had

portrayed an obvious injury met us with a skip in her step, and the assurance that she is fit and capable to complete the course we had set out to.

Before we set out for the next leg of the trip, after we had a chance to snack and re-hydrate, I made sure to check-in with the injured participant to be sure that she was ready for what was ahead, and that the next 'out-point' or trailhead with road access, would be the parking lot where the van was parked. She assured me that she was capable, if we kept the weight that she was struggling with. We bumped into a Parks Ranger, before heading down the trail toward the beach from Parkinson Creek, who made it clear that we were about to enter the most difficult part of the Juan de Fuca Trail.

At our next stop/break point, I handed out the little piece of paper that contained information of our 'Spiritual Formation' Practise and 'Soul Care' focus for the day. We had some fun along the trail, on this segment between Parkinson Creek and Little Kuitchie Creek. Many of the participants were enjoying the ripe salol berries along the path. I was thankful to see the participant who was injured, going slowly on the path. Sometimes, very slowly. We all slowed nicely for a much-needed lunch break in the shade by a beautiful stream. Our sharing of food and concern for one another's good nutrition, was increasingly evident. I was becoming less and less 'the lead' of the trip, as we each found our 'together roles'. Lunch by the creek was a quiet space. This is where a little 'spiritual formation and soul care' handout was offered. Soon, we were on our way again, the last segment of hiking for the day before arriving at our camp spot.

### **Little Kuitchie Creek**



The hike, on this day, wasn't quite as hard as we thought it was going to be. This was not the 'most difficult area' of the trail. One of the participant's was still having a tough time with the hiking. She was sure to go slower down the hills to keep her knees from feeling extra strain.

When we arrived at Little Kuitchie Creek, we each found our tent spots, some started to set up while others were keen to get out to the beach area and go for a swim. Some needed some space, while others were looking forward to some downtime and fun-time together. While a few went for a swim in the surf around the rocks on the shore, others found some time for quietness, sitting on rocks, enjoying the view, being restored.

Before dinner, we not only set-up all our areas, achieving some bearing on the area (a beautiful camping area with many tent locations to choose from), we had a chance to come together on the wonderful rock outcropping at the mouth of Kuitchie Creek for a Sunday spiritual connection toward one another and the Creator of all. It was just sunny enough to keep us warm. The sound in the mini amphitheatre-like space we found that faced the shoreline was perfect, allowing for us to hear one another and the wonder of nature's orchestra all around.

At dinner time, I recall a bit of a skit taking place between two participants. So much laughter! After dinner, there was quiet time before bed. Some went for walks to the beach while others carried on with their Soul Care project (Tree of Life drawings). Soon, there was silence, only darkness and sleep. Perhaps, on the back of some minds was that the thought of a bear in the area. Another hiker informed us of a bear when we first arrived at the campsite. Thankfully, for each of the campsites we spent the night at

### **Spiritual Formation/Soul Care/nature-ch**

There was plenty of time throughout the day to reflect (individually and openly) on the Spiritual Formation and Soul Care subjects for the day. At about 4pm, we walked the beach together to find a place for a community time we have called ‘nature-ch’. We found a natural mini amphitheatre-like place in and amongst the shore’s rocky outcroppings. One of the participant’s recorded a playlist and copied some song sheets for us to sing together. Then, we had a time of open sharing. We also, had a time of corporate quietness and listening, allowing space for nature to testify to our hearts and minds. Then, we prayed; closing, of course, with our epic cheer of ‘ubuntu’.

### **Monday, August 23rd**

#### **Wake Up**

We woke up slowly, once again. For this group, the easiness to the trip, keeping the rush from A to B to a minimum, added to our peace and movement along the trail. This group was not one to wake up early with a focus on distance for the day. Still, the journey was a challenge for each one of us in different ways. After warm drinks and breakfast, we were ready to get going. A cheer with some high-fives, and we were back on the trail.

#### **On the Trail**

It was an easy 5 kms to West Sombrio Beach from Little Kuitchie Creek. We stopped as soon as we hit the coast, for a quick break before heading on down the beach for a final stop. For

some, the shoes and socks came off for a light stroll through the water at the tideline. A beautiful sunny day, some ventured further down the beach to shower in waterfall that was streaming off a cliff onto the rocky shore. Everyone was feeling very happy, relaxed. After not too long, we decided to make our way down the last stretch of beach. At one spot we had to make the decision to take an inland trail for the incoming tide. This entailed some rough trekking, elevation gain and manoeuvring over challenging terrain. We were ready for this and took ‘the extra bit’ in stride.

### **Spiritual Formation/Soul Care**

Our final stop point was at the trailhead near the Campground on West Sombrio Beach. We filled water to boil here, had a final meal (it was lunch time), took a great Team picture on a fallen log at surf’s edge, and focused into the quietness, one last moment for spiritual formation and soul care.

### **Sombrio Beach/Tree of Life Presentations**

We sat together, working on our Tree of Life drawings, preparing them for presentation. Everyone was focused, taking care with their stories. Then, it was time to come together. Each person shared something, even just a ‘little’ something about their Tree of Life. For 8 weeks, the Tree had been a focus of our conversation. It was so nice to see each person’s Tree and to hear of what it means to them. Following the presentations, we packed up, hit the trail, crossed the Sombrio River bridge, and made our way back to the parking lot.

## **On the Road**

It was a blessing to get back to the vehicle. Thankfully, it was there for us! Journey, Botanic Beach to Sombrio Beach, the western half of the Juan de Fuca Trail completed. It wasn't long before we were all packed up, and on the road for home.

In Sooke, we stopped for dinner at Subway. This would be our last Subway stop, and last meal, together. So, we had to jump! Someone outside the store took the picture, and timed it perfectly, while we jumped (imperfectly) in the air.

## **Closing**

It was later Monday evening, when we arrived back in Victoria. Two participants were dropped off at the Mustard Seed. One had a bike there, our most elderly participant (she would be biking back to where she lived, in a tent). One-by-one I dropped each of person off where they live. For each person, we prayed together. Then, there was just one left in the van, the driver. It would still be a while until he would be home to rest a little. This tired driver, so thankful the journey and the wonderful people that he shared such a beautiful adventure with.

## **Adjustments?**

Not a thing, because for what it was, it was perfect. Thankful.

**Photos: Day One**



Figure 115. *Left*, backpacks packed and ready; *right*, trailhead at Botanical Beach.



Figure 116. *Left*, beach explorations; *right*, breakfast on Botanical Beach.





Figure 117. *Left*, walking by tidepools; *middle*, packed up; *right*, mindfully.



Figure 118. *Left*, first night, Payzant Creek; *right*, pit stop close to camp spot.





Figure 119. *Left*, rainforest tent site; *right*, cooking gear, dinner time.



Figure 120. *Left*, dinner Preparation; *right*, sanctuary, near Payzant Creek.

**Photos: Day Two**



Figure 121. *Left*, always helping along the way; *right*, morning pack-up.

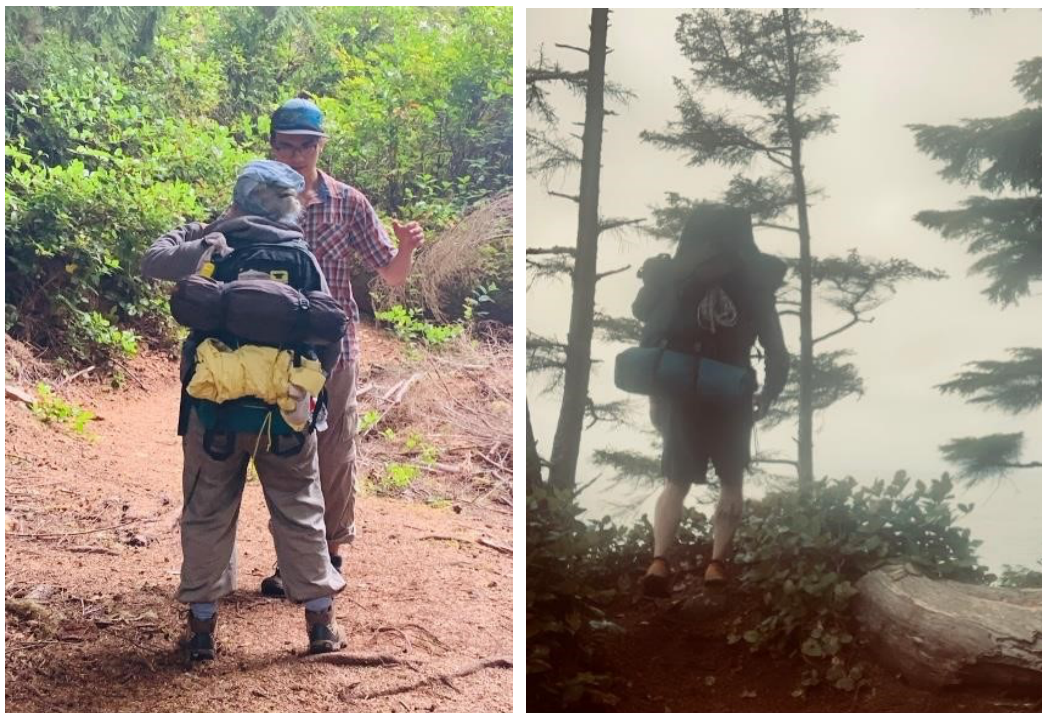


Figure 122. *Left*, trail dance lessons; *right*, nature, sacred space.



Figure 123. *Left*, essential, water purification; *right*, coffee, essential.





Figure 124. Left, lunch; middle, Little Kuitshie Creek; right, night two setup.



Figure 125. *Left*, the location of our first nature-ch service; *right*, skit time.

### Photos: Day Three



Figure 126. *Left*, onward to Sombrio Beach; *right*, varied, and challenging terrain.



Figure 127. *Left*, nature, beauty at every turn; *right*, Sombrio Beach destination.

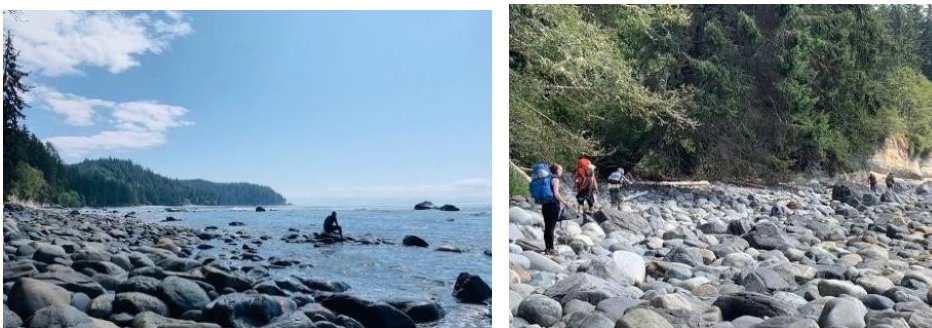


Figure 128. *Left*, a beautiful sit spot for prayer; *right*, boulder hopping.



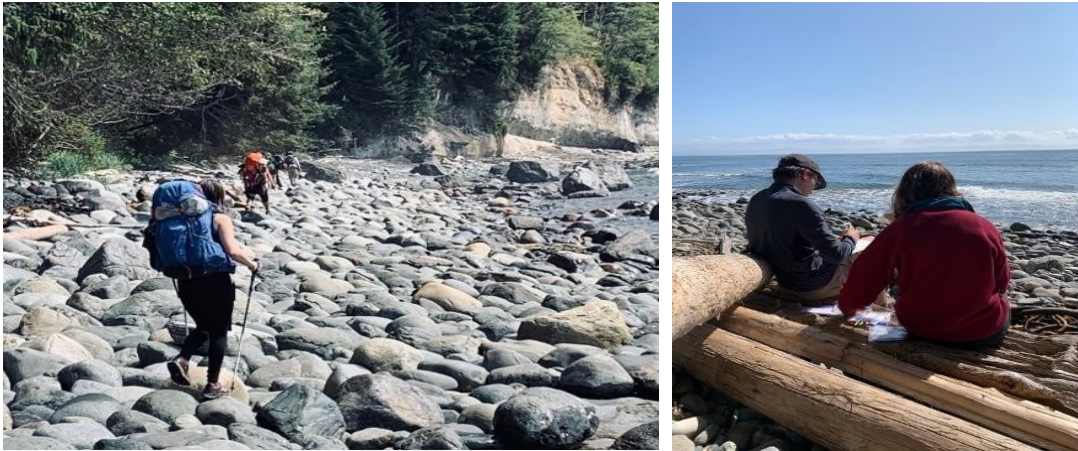


Figure 129. *Left*, boulder crossing and bluffs; *right*, Soul Care art therapy.



Figure 130. *Left*, group photo; *right*, Tree of Life drawing.



Figure 131. Left, tired after a good hike; right, sub-jumping celebration.

## Weekly Waiver Form Template



**nature: beyond the streets/journey**

Waiver Form

**Event Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Event Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Optional) **Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Allergies/Medical:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*Note\* Participants are advised to carry pertinent health and medical information on their persons at all times. Organizers assume no responsibility for health or well-being of participant as a result of the information provided.

In case of Emergency we will notify your (relative, friend or neighbor)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Relationship:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assumption of Risk/Conditions:** I recognize there may be some element of risk of accidental injury, property loss or damage throughout the day event of 'nature: beyond the streets.' Also, with regards to lead-up interviews, program involvement and group participation, I understand and will not hold the Mustard Seed Street Church, or staff, or representatives liable given that there may be some psychological risk involved. I understand alcohol and non-

prescribed drugs are strictly prohibited and must adhere to the Mustard Seed Street Church Code of Conduct on any out-trip. I understand that if I am found to have broken items listed in the Mustard Seed Street Church's Code of Conduct, I will be excluded from further participation in 'nature: beyond the streets' and may not be eligible for future involvement, pending review. I, the undersigned participant, on behalf of myself, my heirs, legatees and assigns, agree to indemnify, and hold harmless the The Mustard Seed Street Church or any of their representatives, employees, or volunteers for my health, safety, and injury or property loss or damage arising out of or resulting from this trip/event.

**Signature of Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Beyond the Streets is a ministry of Hospitality with the Mustard Seed Street Church. The Purpose of the Hospitality Ministry of the Mustard Seed Street Church is: providing a welcome environment where discipleship is cultivated through maintaining a safe, supportive space; we seek to nurture a community empowered by God which reflects the grace and acceptance Christ demonstrated.*

COVID-19 Self-evaluation Form

### **COVID-19: Consent for Participation with the Mustard Seed Street Church**

We thank you for wanting to join with us as a participant for this (event/activity) \_\_\_\_\_ through The Mustard Seed Street Church during this unprecedented pandemic. Due to the government guidelines over social gathering sizes, combined with the

current research on how the virus is transmitted, we have restricted our services and access to our buildings.

With regards to this event/activity, we ask that social distancing be adhered to, mask wearing when indoors, mask wearing outdoors when in close vicinity with another person, and diligent handwashing (especially before and after eating).

By signing this form you are stating that you understand, agree, and declare that as you participate in this event/activity with the Mustard Seed Street Church during the COVID-19 pandemic that you are and will be solely responsible for your own health and safety during your time of service with us. Your signature on this form indicates that you have the time to educate and inform yourself on the COVID-19 virus and that you agree to hold harmless and indemnify The Mustard Seed Street Church from any and all liability for personal and property damage, injury, illness, death, damages, costs, charges, expenses, and interest, including legal costs and charges on a full indemnity, solicitor-client basis, for any personal or property loss, or damages to your heirs, successors, assigns, or anyone who might otherwise claim through you, arising from your decision to participate in this even/activity with the Mustard Seed Street Church during the COVID-19 pandemic. You release The Mustard Seed Street Church during the COVID-19 pandemic. You release The Mustard Seed Street Church, its board members, employees, agents, and representatives from any and all claims, at law, equity, or under legislations that you, your heirs, successors, assigns, or those who might otherwise claim through you now or in the future might otherwise have been able to advance against The Mustard Seed Street Church.



Photo sharing permission on group emails and social media. Please, check box if you agree.

---

Signature

---

Date

---

Printed Name

---

Staff Witness

## nature, journey 2021: trail maps

The following maps were included in the ‘summer, journey’ orientation booklets received by each of the participants.

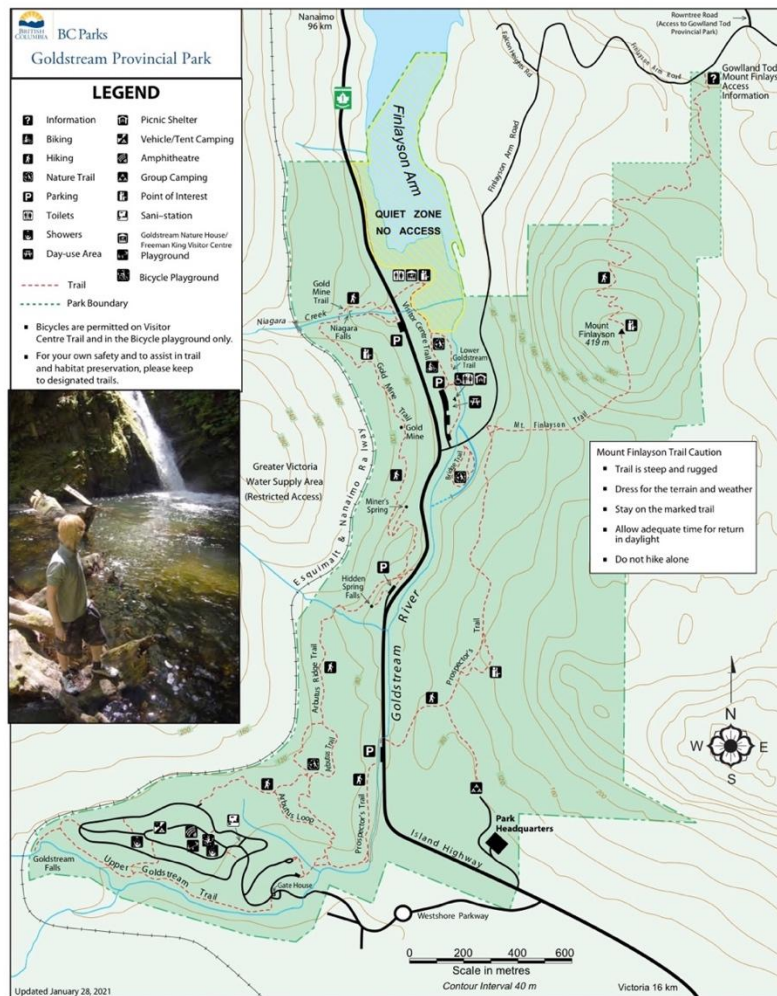


Figure 132. Map for outings one and two.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>105</sup> "Goldstream Provincial Park," BC Parks, accessed February 12, 2022, <https://bcparks.ca/explore/parkpgs/goldstream/goldstream-map.pdf?v=1607555398340>



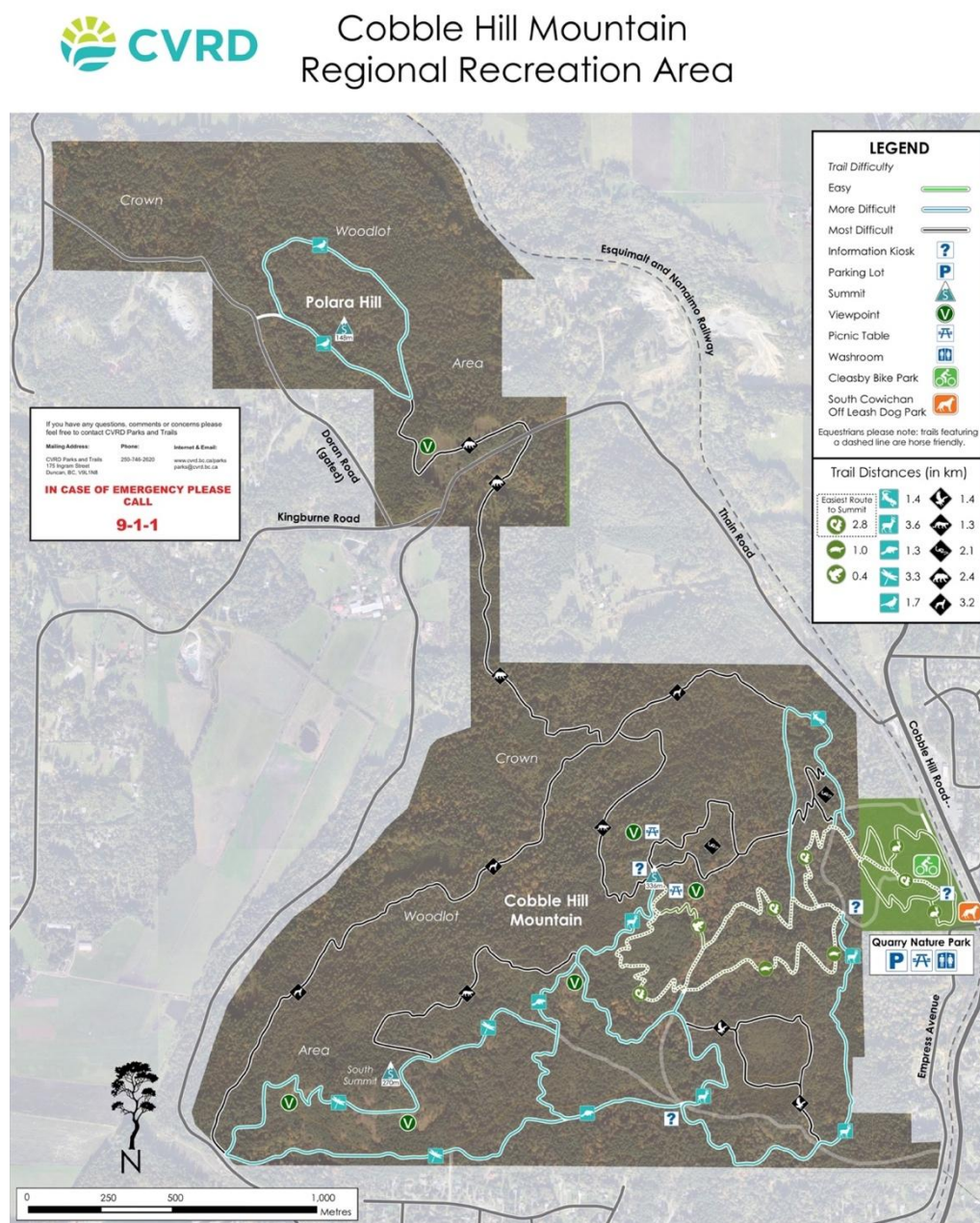


Figure 133. Map for outing three.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>106</sup> “Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Park,” BC Parks, accessed February 12, 2022, <https://www.covrd.ca/DocumentCenter/View/77187/CHM-Trail-Map-map2016>

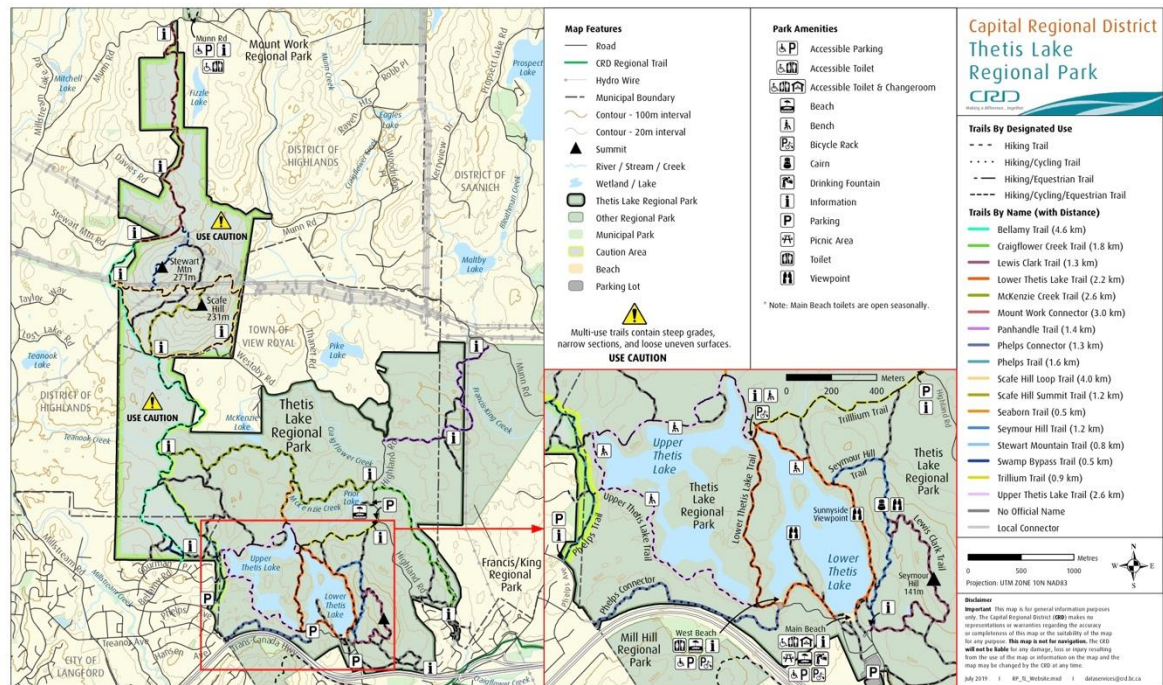


Figure 134. Map for scavenger hunt, week 5.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>107</sup> “Thetis Lake Regional Park,” Capital Regional District, accessed February 12, 2022, <https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/crd-document-library/maps/parks-trails/thetis-lake-regional-park.pdf>

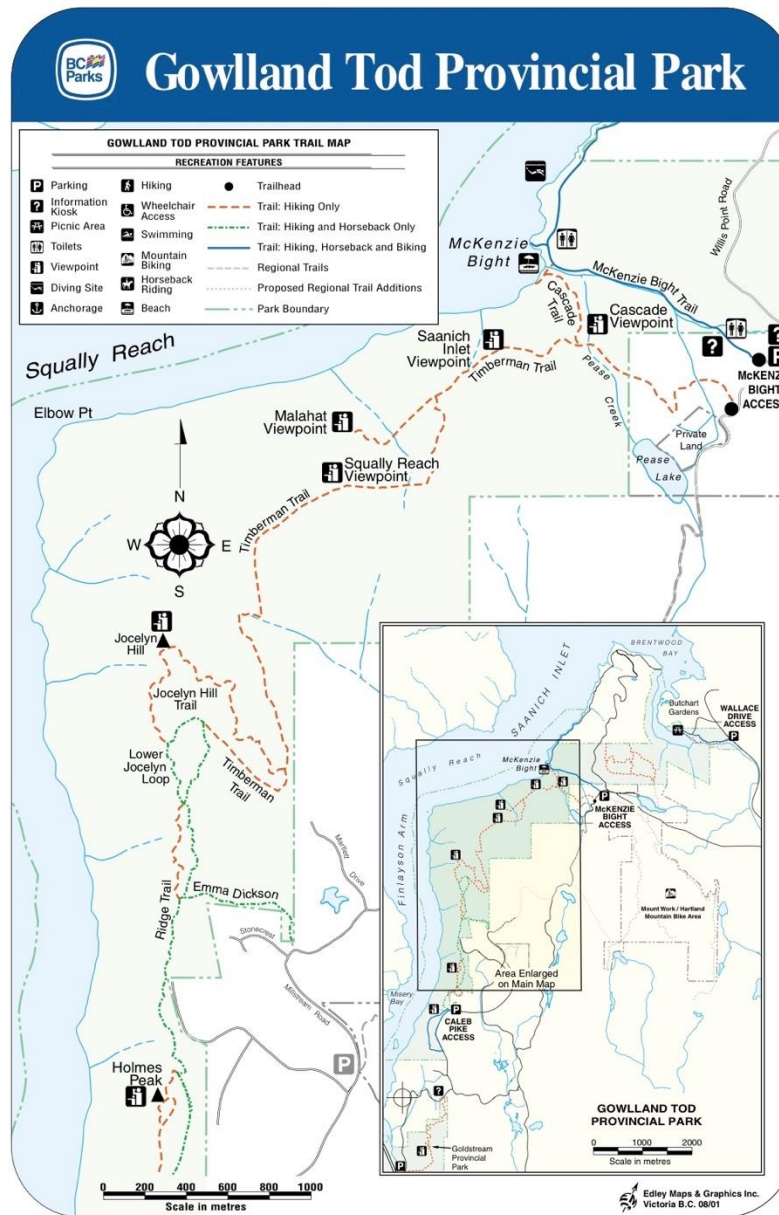


Figure 135. Map for outings four and seven.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>108</sup> "Gowlland Tod Provincial Park," BC Parks, accessed February 12, 2022, [https://bcparks.ca/explore/parkpgs/gowlland\\_tod/trail\\_map\\_middle.pdf](https://bcparks.ca/explore/parkpgs/gowlland_tod/trail_map_middle.pdf)



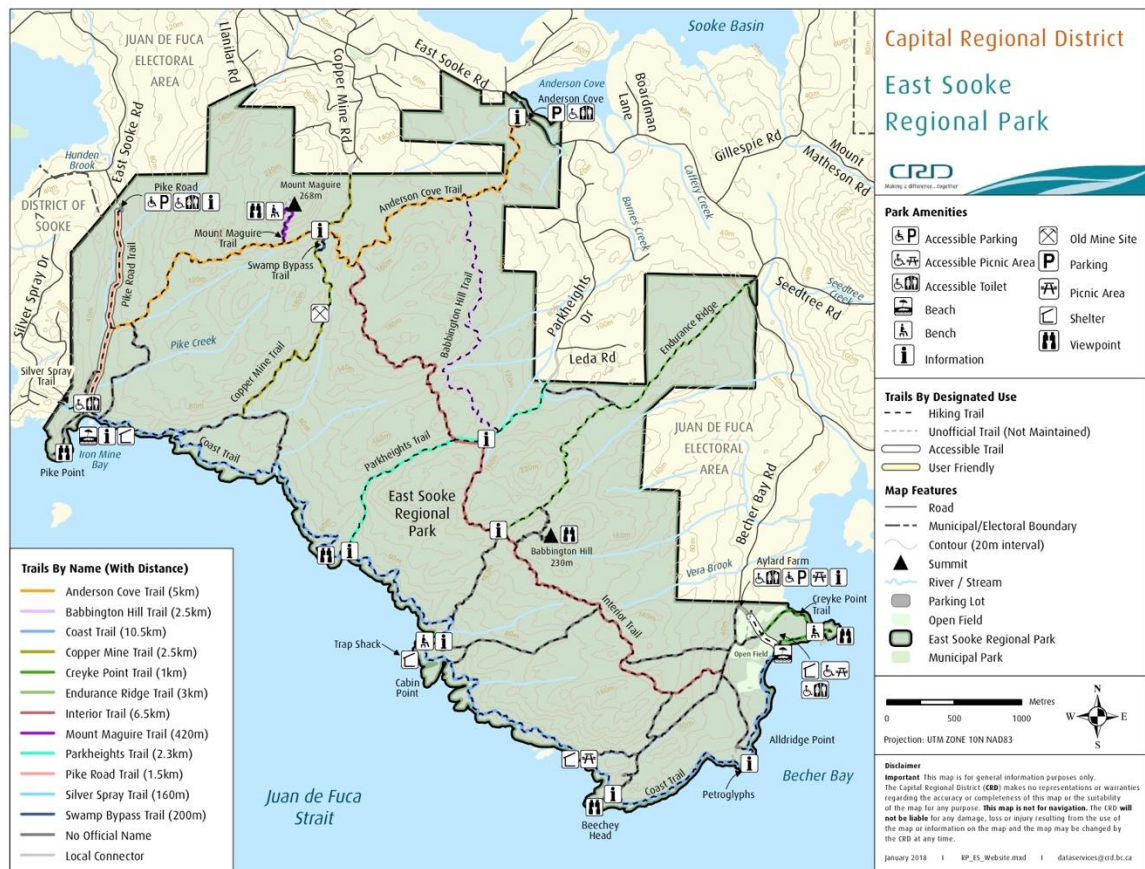


Figure 136. Map used for outing six.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>109</sup> “East Sooke Regional Park,” Capital Regional District, accessed February 12, 2022, [https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/crd-document-library/maps/parks-trails/rp\\_es\\_website2018.pdf?sfvrsn=a2b68fc9\\_13](https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/crd-document-library/maps/parks-trails/rp_es_website2018.pdf?sfvrsn=a2b68fc9_13)

<sup>110</sup> “Mount Work Regional Park,” Capital Regional District, accessed February 12, 2022, <https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/crd-document-library/maps/parks-trails/mount-work-regional-park.pdf>

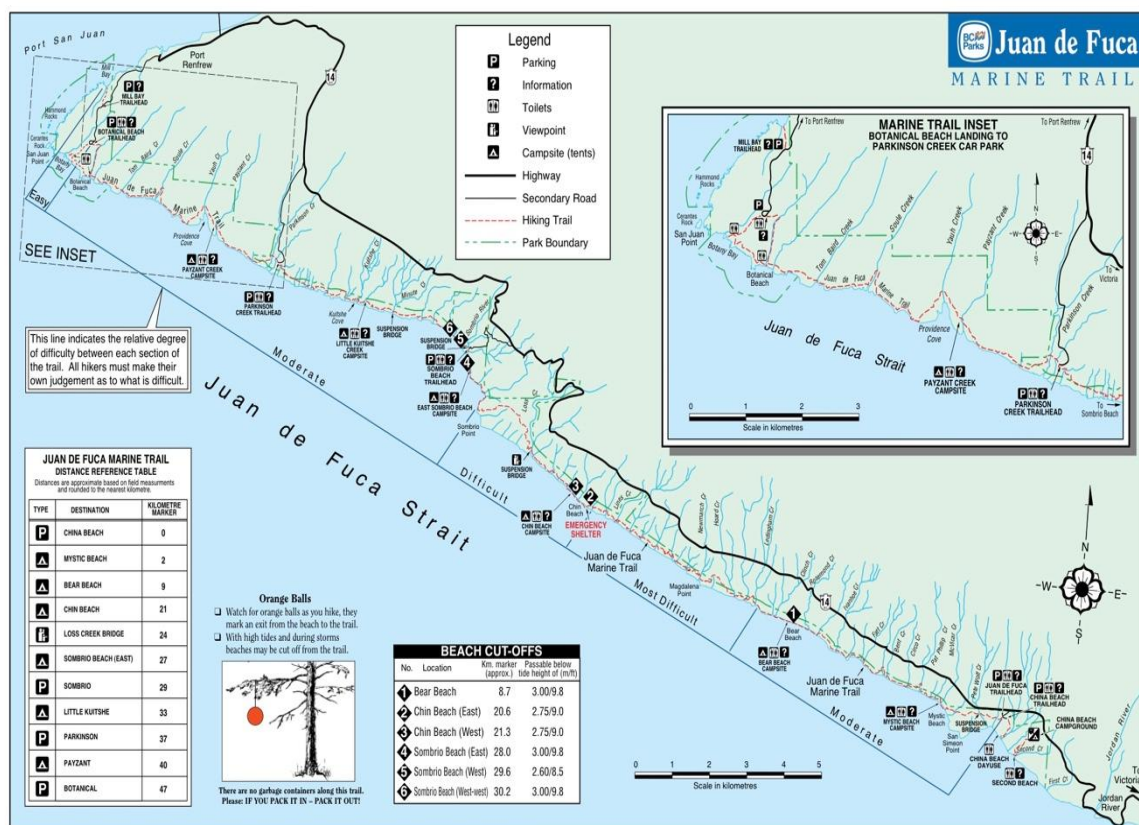









Figure 138. Map used for three-day hike, week eight.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>111</sup> “Juan de Fuca Marine Trail,” BC Parks, accessed February 12, 2022, [https://bcparks.ca/explore/parkpgs/juan\\_de\\_fuca/jdf\\_map.pdf](https://bcparks.ca/explore/parkpgs/juan_de_fuca/jdf_map.pdf)



### Narrative Therapy Tree of Life Project

This project is about identifying all the different aspects of your identity; including your past, future goals, strengths and support system. For each section, draw part of your tree and write notes around it. There is a tree outline and some examples on the back of this worksheet.

<b>ROOTS</b> 	<b>Where you come from and your family:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What roots do you have in your life? How important are these?</li> <li>• Does your past influence who you are today?</li> <li>• Do you have any favourite memories?</li> <li>• Has your perception of your roots changed over time?</li> <li>• Where were you born? Where did you go to school?</li> </ul>
<b>GROUND</b> 	<b>Your present life and day-to-day activities you engage in:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the ground like in your life? Is it fairly stable or frequently changing? (could represent with flat or bumpy ground)</li> <li>• What influences you on a daily basis?</li> <li>• Who do you live with? Where do you go to school/work?</li> <li>• Do you have a favourite place that you visit?</li> </ul>
<b>TRUNK</b> 	<b>Your skills and abilities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What talents and coping skills do you have?</li> <li>• Can you play an instrument/draw/write? Are you helpful/kind?</li> <li>• How important are these abilities to you? Do you value them in others?</li> <li>• Do you find it easier to think of your faults compared to your skills?</li> <li>• Are there any skills other people think you have?</li> </ul>
<b>BRANCHES</b> 	<b>Your hopes and goals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you could have three wishes, what would they be?</li> <li>• Do you hope for health, happiness, success, money, family <i>etc</i>?</li> <li>• Do you aspire to be a nursery nurse, actor, vet, <i>etc</i>?</li> <li>• How achievable do you feel your aspirations are?</li> <li>• What would need to happen for you to achieve these?</li> <li>• Do you have hopes and wishes for other people in your life?</li> </ul>
<b>LEAVES</b> 	<b>Important people in your life:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who plays an important role in your life?</li> <li>• What type of influence have they had? If they've helped, how?</li> <li>• Do you feel that you have played an important role in their lives?</li> <li>• How might your relationship change in the future?</li> <li>• Are there who have passed away - leaves in the wind?</li> </ul>
<b>FRUIT</b> 	<b>Gifts from important people:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have these people provided you with a shoulder to cry on/support/compliments?</li> <li>• What have your parents taught you?</li> <li>• Have they ever given you a material gift which meant a lot to you?</li> <li>• How have these gifts helped you?</li> <li>• What have you given them in return?</li> </ul>
<b>STORMS</b> 	<b>Challenges:</b> <p>Include everything from family conflict, mental health problems, lack of resources, loss of important people in your life, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What storms have you experienced in the past?</li> <li>• How did you manage with these?</li> <li>• What storms do you think there might be in the future?</li> </ul>

The Tree of Life Project was created by [Ncube](#) (REPSSI) & [Denborough](#) (Dulwich Centre Foundation)

Figure 139. Tree of Life, information for Soul Care.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>112</sup> "Narrative Therapy Tree of Life Project," Firefly: Light in the Dark (Mental Health Awareness and Resources), accessed February 12, 2022, <https://firefly255.wordpress.com/2016/05/20/narrative-therapy-project-tree-of-life/>

### **Itinerary for the Juan de Fuca Trail (Slowly. Quietly. Care-fully. Present.)**

#### **Friday, August 20<sup>th</sup>**

Gathering, together	MSeed SC	5pm
Final gear check and Van pack	MSeed SC	530pm
Rally Point, Prayer and Cheer	MSeed SC	6pm

#### **Saturday, August 21<sup>st</sup>**

Home Pick-ups	Victoria	5am
Tim Hortons (coffee and snacks)	Sooke	630am
Driver's Car	Mystic Beach	730am
Trailhead Drop (moment of thanks)	Botanical Beach	9am
Breakfast and Trail Blessing	Botanical Beach	10am
Break and Spiritual Formation	Providence Cove	2pm
Stop Point	Payzant Creek	4pm
Camp Set-Up and Site Exploration	Payzant Creek	5pm
Dinner and Soul Care (silence)	Payzant Creek	7pm
Mug-Up	Payzant Creek	9pm
Taps	Payzant Creek	10pm

#### **Sunday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Wake Up and Coffee	Payzant Creek	5am
Sunrise Devos	Payzant Creek	530am



Take down the Camp	Payzant Creek	6am
Breakfast	Payzant Creek	7am
On the Trail	Payzant Creek	730am
Lunch Break and 'nature-ch'	Beach Trailhead	11am
Stop Point	Little Kuitshie Creek	5pm
Camp Set-Up	Little Kuitshie Creek	6pm
Dinner and Soul Care	Little Kuitshie Creek	7pm
Mug-Up	Kuitshie Cove	9pm
Taps	Kuitshie Cove	10pm

### **Monday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Wake Up and Coffee	Little Kuitshie Creek	5am
Sunrise Devos	Little Kuitshie Creek	530am
Take Down the Camp	Little Kuitshie Creek	6am
Breakfast	Little Kuitshie Creek	7am
On the Trail	Little Kuitshie Creek	730am
Lunch Break and Spiritual Formation	Sombrio Beach (west)	Noon
Stop Point	Sombrio Beach (east)	2pm
Trailhead, Parking Lot and Pack-Up	Sombrio Beach	4pm
Dinner Together	Sooke	530pm
Home Drops	Victoria	7pm
Deep Breath	MSeed SC	8pm

**Follow-Up Questionnaire Template**

nature, journey

Summer 2021

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. What prompted you to sign up for ‘nature?’
2. Were you aware of any hopes or expectations as you entered the program?
3. What sticks out for you the most regarding your time with ‘nature, journey?’
4. Did you feel at home (supported/encouraged) with the ‘nature’ community that was formed? Why or why not?
5. How did you find the Spiritual Formation practises?
6. Did you enjoy the conversations surrounding Soul Care and the Tree of Life? Why or why not?
7. Were there any specific restorative or personally transformative (i.e., breakthrough, revelational) experiences that you would like to share regarding your time with ‘nature, journey?’

[Note: two participant responses of the participants are included here as examples. Upon request, the responses of three more participants can be made available.]

### **Follow-up Questionnaire Responses**

#### **Participant 1**

1. I love nature.
2. To get STRONG-er. To be a blessing to others.
3. That we were capable, including me.
4. Yes, so much. Maybe because our leader was supportive and encouraging and set the example and the atmosphere for support and encouragement to flourish, like contagion.
5. I found I loved them and hungered for more.
6. Yes. I found it very accessible for anyone at any stage of faith and healing.
7. I think I've shared them in my reflections. That I was stronger than I knew, more capable, braver. I felt belonging when I hadn't in the past, like I had innate worth and value, like the kid I used to believe in. Gave me faith in myself.

## Participant 2

1. I was waiting in line at the food bank when a really kind looking woman approached me and asked me if I needed anything. She told me her name was Faith. I told her I was looking for some hiking shoes. She said she would look for some and asked me if I liked to hike. I told her me and my boyfriend loved it, and that we had done Landslide lake when we first arrived in Victoria. So she told me a hiking group was starting up. She brought me inside to meet Chris who had such a gentle and warm energy and because of both of these people, I was sold.
2. To assist in my recovery. And to look and listen to see what I could discover about myself spiritually. And to better bond with my partner and maintain better endurance. To become further connected with nature.
3. Singing our camp songs and dancing like children. Our Ubuntu chant. All cramming into a mine to discover the scriptures inside. Seeing the horrible clear cutting on our hike and morning for the massacred forest. Writing our names on the cabin wall. Sharing the weight of our packs to help each other survive. Bear stories at sunset.
4. Yes very at home. And I think of them all frequently. And it's because we were able to be ourselves. Unapologetically set our own boundaries and exist as a group while maintaining our spiritually identities and self worth.

5. Difficult to accept easily into practise because I was recently out of a 10 year addiction to alcohol that was very spiritually stifling. My spiritual journey has just begun and will take lots of practice. Singing the Jesus songs and prayer circles helped. Music makes me feel more connected to my spirituality. The prayer circles made me feel unity. I will never forget, SILENCIO SI VOUS PLAIT .
6. Yea so profound. It was a perfect metaphor to our interconnectedness. Alcoholism is a very isolating and lonely disease. The tree of life changed my outlook about myself as I relate to nature and my peers.
7. During a late night prayer circle, Tristen looked me dead in the eyes and said that God is not finished with me. He has so much in store for me. That really stuck with me.

I also discovered how strong I really am mentally and physically. To ensure, withstand and overcome the physical pain of injury in my leg was a mental triumph. I felt resilient and capable.

## APPENDIX F—SUPPLEMENTAL PROJECT LAUNCH PLAN DOCUMENTATION

**nature, expanding**

**Focus:** Spiritual Formation and Soul Care

**Graphic:** ‘nature’ FB page



Figure 140. ‘nature, summer’ (2021).

**Content:** This 😊 happy, nature. a time for community and a coming-togetherness!

saturday mornings we meet at the Mustard Seed. we call these, beyond-the-streets. call to learn more. real things are happening! (phone number not included)

**nature, expanding**

**Focus:** healing and belonging

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page

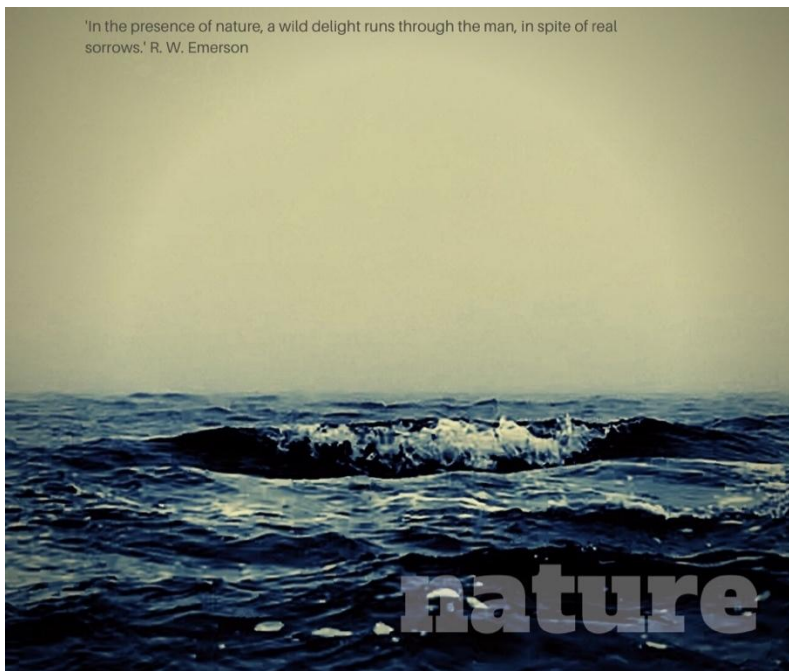


Figure 141. 'nature, beyond the streets.' An invitation.

**Content:** 'nature, beyond the streets': the healing impact, as one experiences the care of creation, of time amongst trees, by lakes, on summit trails, oceanside cliffs, is 'nature'. Our focus is helped as we consider 'soul care' in group story-telling and ancient practices of spiritual formations. Such Life to consider, contemplate, to be thankful for in the Presence of Love all around.

**nature, expanding**

**Focus:** spiritual formation (a reminder)

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page



Figure 142. Reminder of Presence.

**Content:** Walking with the Creator, abiding in Love, is anything not possible?



## nature, expanding

**Focus:** connection and belonging

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page



Figure 143. Love nature. Photo by Chris Pollock (2022).

**Content:** 'Away, away, from men and towns, to the wild wood and the downs; to the silent wilderness, where the soul need not repress its music,' Percy Bysshe Shelley. 'You wander from room to room hunting for the diamond necklace that is already around your neck!' Rumi.

## nature, expanding

**Focus:** healing and hope

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page



Figure 144. 'nature, beyond the streets.' Photo by Chris Pollock (2021).

**Content:** There's healing there. Quietness and glimpses of Home 😊 The experience of rest, as a way of living, if we so choose. Integrity and Home, there's more to it; only, if you can imagine? (Matthew 11:28)'May the stars carry your sadness away, may the flowers fill your heart

with beauty, may hope forever wipe away your tears, and above all, may silence make you strong.' Chief Dan George

### **nature, journey**

**Focus:** education, environmental/historical awareness, invitation

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page

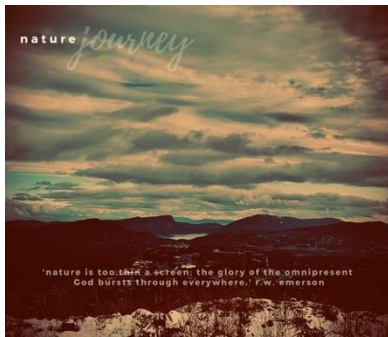


Figure 145. 'nature, journey.' Photo by Chris Pollock (2021).

**Content:** The European settler has so much to open up, to learn from of those who are native to Turtle Island; much-much to learn of Life and living well (with integrity) on this land. In the Western tradition there is a recognised hierarchy of beings, with, of course, the human being on top - the pinnacle of evolution, the darling of Creation - and the plants at the bottom. But in Native ways of knowing, human people are often referred to as "the younger brothers of Creation." We say that humans have the least experience with how to live and this the most to learn - we must look to our teachers among the other species for guidance. Their wisdom is apparent in the way that they live. They teach us by example. They've been on the earth far longer than we have been, and have had time to figure things out. They live both above and

below ground, joining Skyworld to the earth. Plants know how to make food and medicine from light and water, and then they give it away.' This is an excerpt from Robin Wall Kimmerer's, 'Braiding Sweetgrass' (9-10).

**nature, expanding**

**Focus:** connection, re: next iterations of 'nature

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page

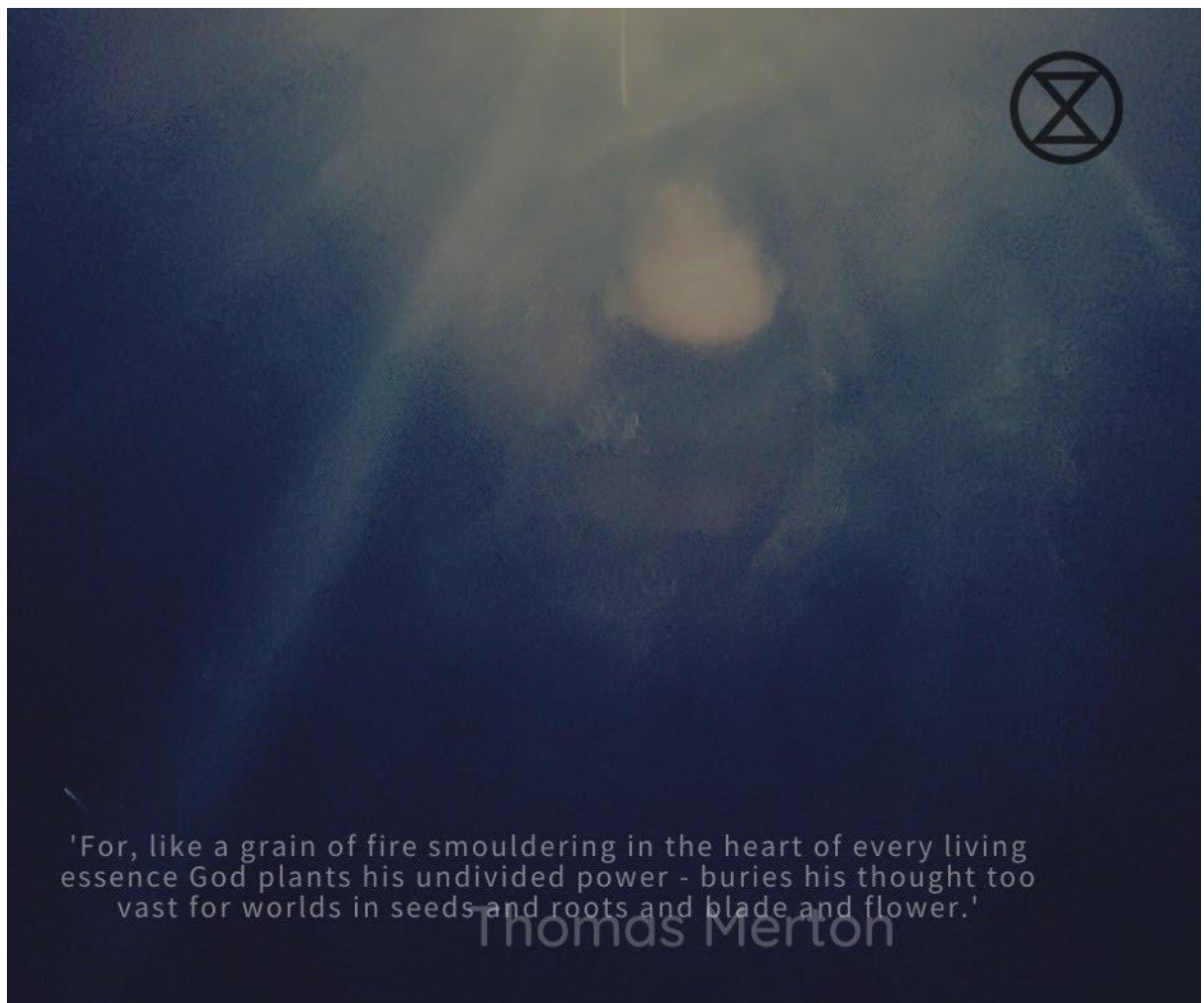


Figure 146. 'nature, next.' Looking forward to 2022.

**Content:** 'nature, new' coming soon ☺

**nature, expanding**

**Focus:** spiritual formation

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB group



Figure 147. 'nature' new meaning for 2022.



**Content:** The next iteration of 'nature' is coming up in 2022. The focus of our bodies will be toward wonderful goals together, and our soulful being toward presence. 'Absence sharpens love. Presence strengthens it.' B. Franklin

### **Nature, expanding**

**Focus:** spiritual formation and connection

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page

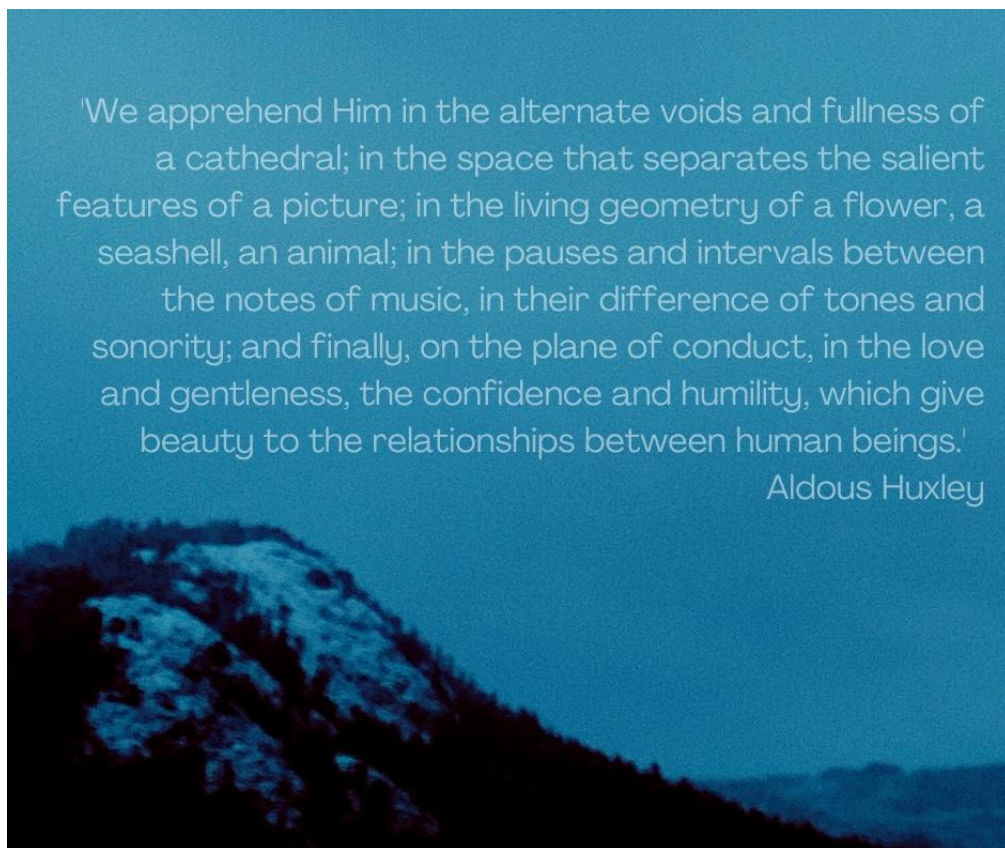


Figure 148. 'nature, context.' Quotation of Aldous Huxley.

**Content:** 'We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive.' Chief Dan George.

**nature, expanding**

**Focus:** nurturing perspective. invitation

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page

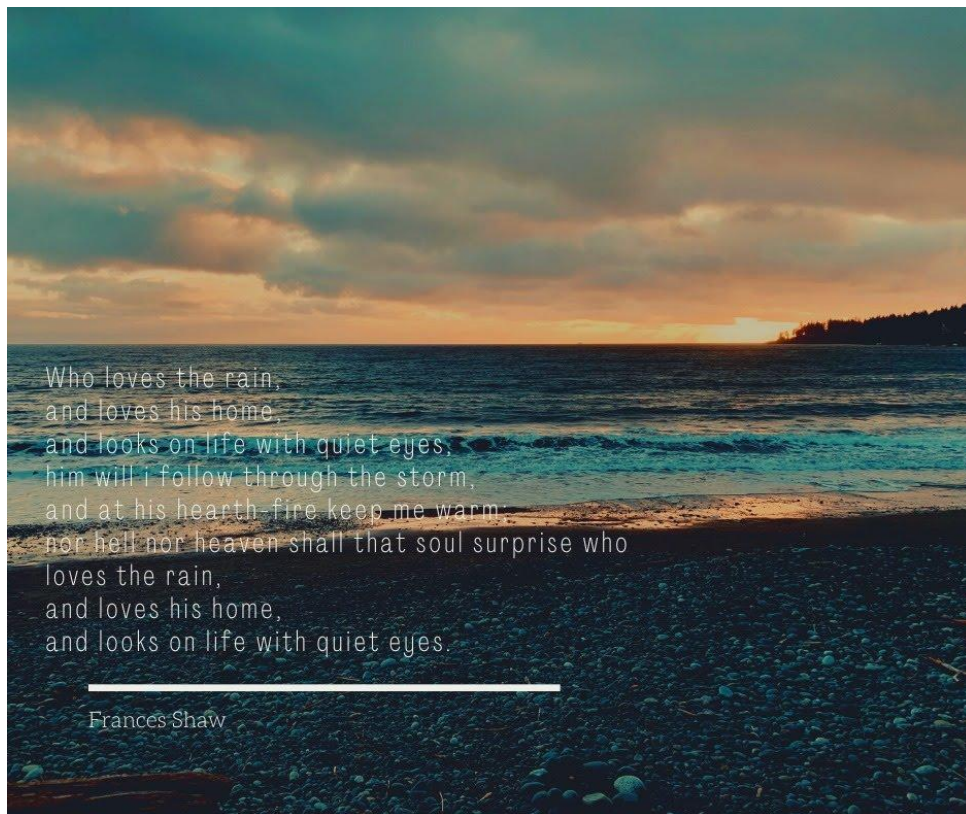


Figure 149. 'nature, perspective.' Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

**Content:**

Quiet. (be still)

Listen.

God is with you. (closely)

**nature, journey**

**Focus:** nurture belonging, our group cheer

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page

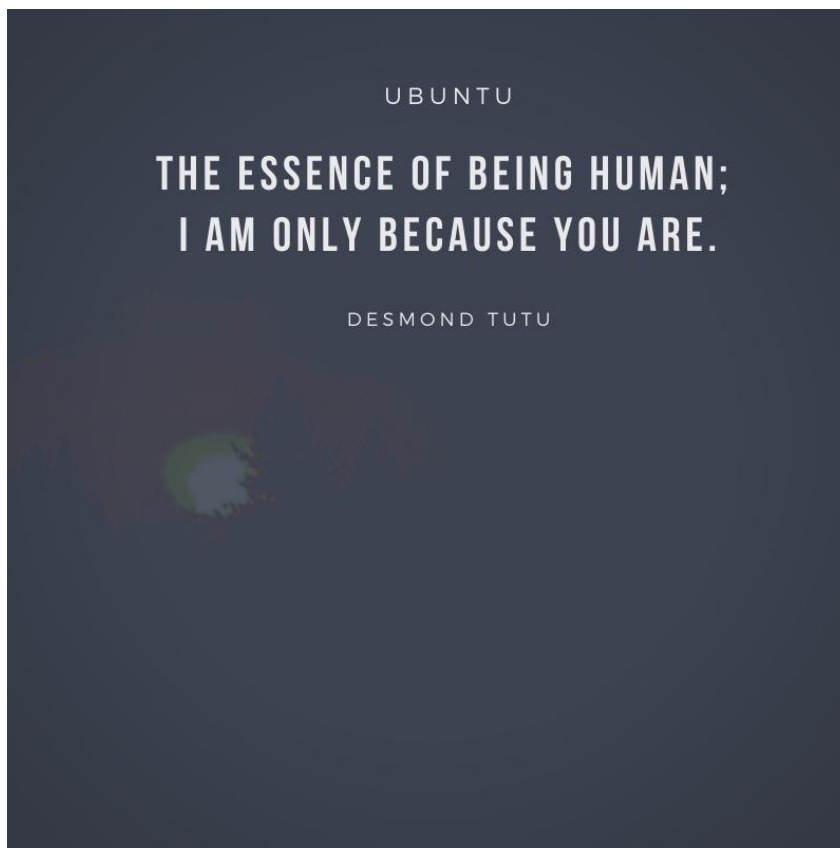




Figure 150. Ubuntu, 'nature, journey.'

**Content:** On the trails of 'nature, journey' this word, ubuntu, is creating a stir of interest toward to possibility of a life closer together. For the healing and wholeness of each person. For the healing and wholeness of all humanity and all creation.

**nature, expanding**

**Focus:** oneness, creation care, belonging

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page

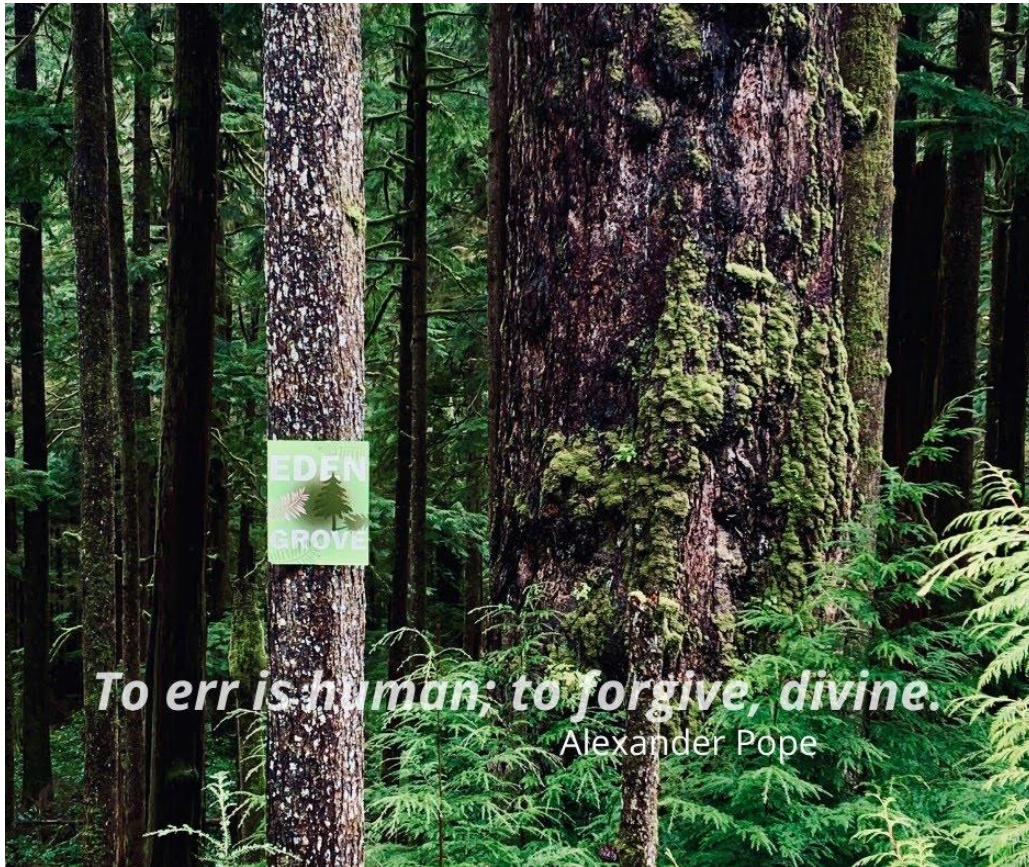


Figure 151. 'nature, expanding.' Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

**Content:** Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.' Paulo Freire

**nature, expanding**

**Focus:** peace, stillness, presence (spiritual formation)

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page



Figure 152. 'nature' spiritual formation. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021)

**Content:** 'Sometimes the little things in life are worth more than enough.' Angie Weiland-Crosby.

**nature, journey 2022**

**Focus:** nature, adventure, soul care, spiritual formation, belonging

**Graphic:** nature' FB page, 'nature, journey' FB group page, and group email.

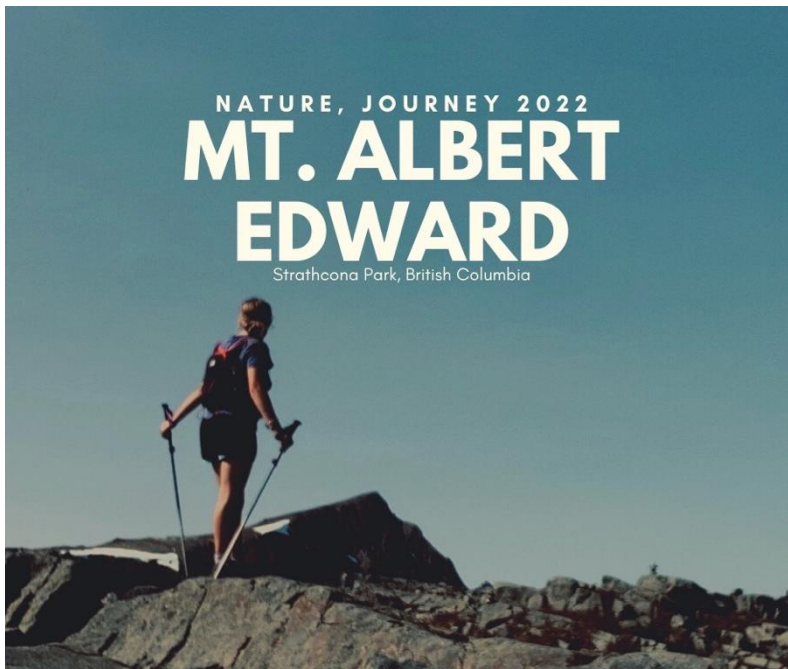


Figure 153. 'nature, journey' 2022. Mt. Albert-Edward.

**Content:** nature, journey. Summer 2022 ☀️ our theme this year is 'the mountain'. the experience of life together, nurturing belonging and healing in nature, through spiritual formation and deep soul care, continues. following a 7-week journey of preparation (starting, june 4), we will embark on a 3-day summit adventure of one of vancouver island's highest peaks, mt. albert edward (July 23-25). 'This changing of focus in the eye, moving the eye itself when looking at things that do not move, deepens one's sense of outer reality. Then static things may be caught in the very act of becoming.' Nan Shepherd. Ubuntu!

**Itinerary:** nature, journey 2022

**Focus:** nature, adventure, soul care, spiritual formation, belonging



**Graphic:** ‘nature’ FB page, ‘nature, journey’ FB group page, and group email.

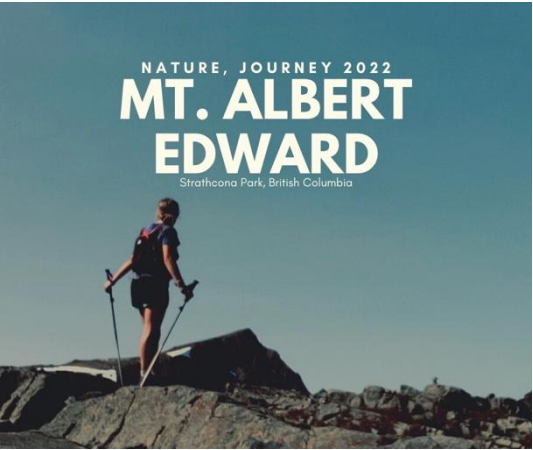


Figure 154. ‘nature, journey’ itinerary. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2020).

<b>Orientation</b>	June 1, Wednesday  Evening Beach BBQ (overview and booklet)
<b>Week One</b>	June 4, Saturday  Mount Doug Infinity Hike (7kms)
<b>Week Two</b>	June 11, Saturday  Endurance Ridge Trail to Cabin Point (11 kms)
<b>Week Three</b>	June 18, Saturday  Mount Tzouhalem to the Cross Profile Hike (11 kms)
<b>Week Four</b>	June 25, Saturday  Mount Work (Munn Rd to McKenzie Bight) Profile Hike (12 kms)
<b>Week Five</b>	July 2, Saturday  Maple Mountain, the challenging way (15 kms)
<b>Week Six</b>	July 9, Saturday

	Mount Arrowsmith (early start)
<b>Week Seven</b>	July 16, Saturday (Taper)
	Koksilah River Trail (7 kms)
	July 12, Tuesday (Taper)
	Thetis Lake lightly (5 kms)
	July 22, Friday evening
	Equipment Gear-Up
<b>Week Eight</b>	July 23-25, Saturday-Monday
	Hike in Strathcona Park, summit of Mount Albert Edward. (40 kms)

**nature, protest**

**Focus:** awakened, conscious, care of creation

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page

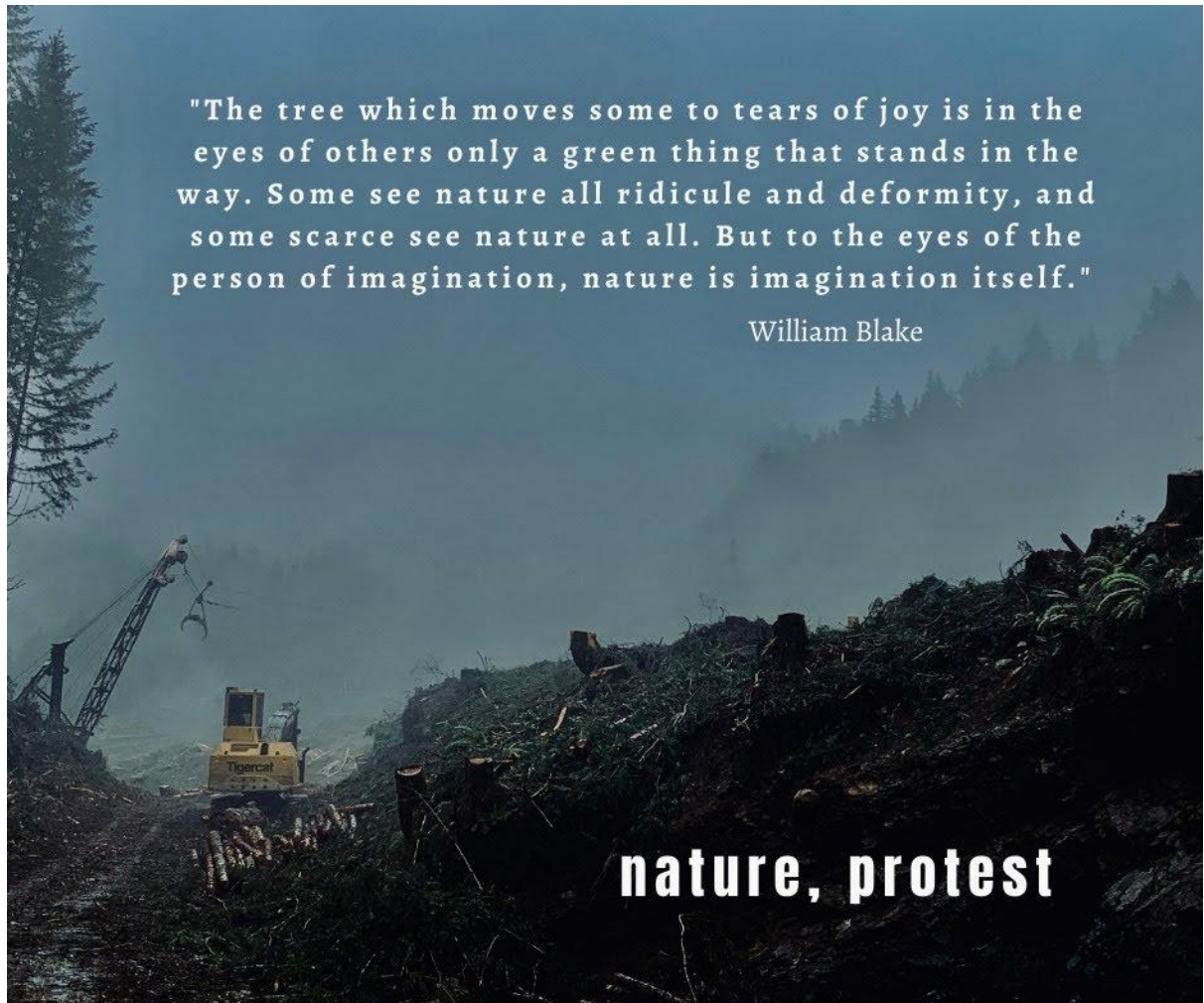


Figure 155. 'nature, protest.' William Blake quote.

**Content:** none

**nature, protest**

**Focus:** creation care, activism, peaceful resistance

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page



Figure 156. 'Worth More Standing.' Fairy Creek Blockade, 2021.

**Content:** Why? Because, this is a sacred place and will draw more people in the long-term, creating opportunities in the Port Renfrew area, than in the short-term for loggers, etc. (I can't even imagine how much 'Teal-Jones' and other big-bidders as well as the government pocket in a quick clear-cut of such majestic and sacred areas as these. Not to mention the side-table political agendas at play.)

**nature, protest**



**Focus:** awareness, creation care, understanding

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page

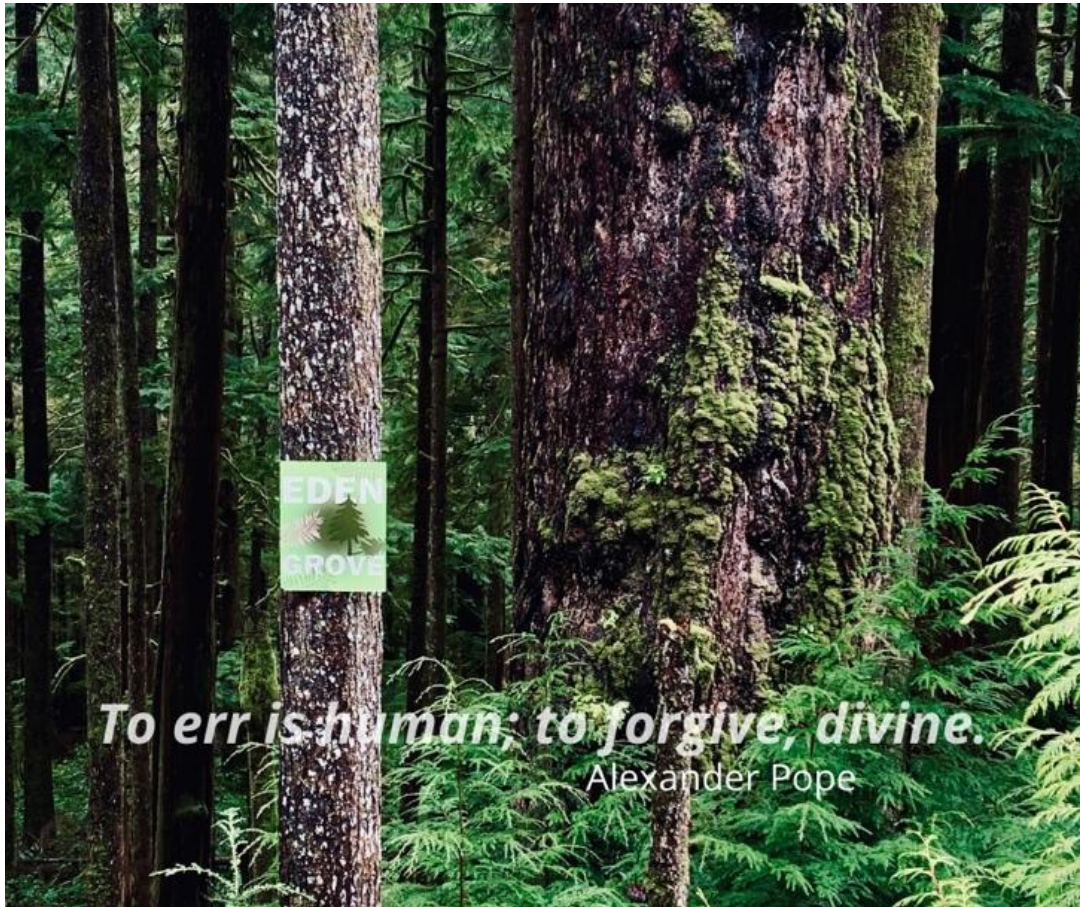


Figure 157. The forgiveness of nature. Photo by Chris Pollock (2021).

**Content:** Eden Grove. A trail crew was 'on the work' creating a way through such a beautiful area. Then, I noticed orange flagging tape and 'Falling' written on some of the 'brilliant' orange pieces of tape. Audacious. When original creation is commodified. How can we awaken to what is happening and find a better way?

**nature, protest**

**Focus:** perspective, creation care, empathy

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page



Figure 158. A clear cut near Ada'itsx (Fairy Creek).

**Content:** Nothing special. So far away. This is what it will look like at the end of the day. Does it matter? It's so far away.

**nature, protest**

**Focus:** information, awareness, activism

**Graphic:** ‘nature’ FB page



Figure 159. Map of forested areas of Vancouver Island.<sup>113</sup>

**Content:** Zoom in. See. Learn. Discern.

**nature, protest**

<sup>113</sup> “State of Vancouver Island’s Coastal Temperate Rainforest,” Sierra Club BC, accessed February 12, 2022, [https://www.dropbox.com/s/q5euhk1qba1vpn6/SCBC\\_VI\\_Rainforest\\_2018.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/q5euhk1qba1vpn6/SCBC_VI_Rainforest_2018.pdf?dl=0)



**Focus:** awareness, activism, resistance

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page



Figure 160. 'nature, protest.' Photo taken near 'Old Doug' (2021).

**Content:** clear-cut to clear-cut. The view of the land is like this throughout the interior of the island. Patchy with trees of all different ages, many patches mature enough now for harvesting again. There is a place. The headwaters of Fairy Creek. The last remaining valley of untouched, original growth forest and trees. There are no logging roads blasted through, there are no patches. Why not leave this place be as it is, as it was created? Just one last place close by.

**nature, protest**

**Focus:** mindfulness and creation care

**Graphic:** Fairy Creek watershed (photo not included)

**Content:** Pray for Fairy Creek. Today is an important day. From an article of the Narwhal: 'This little valley — one of the last unlogged watersheds on the Island — has become the epicentre in the kind of fight to save B.C.'s temperate rainforests that hasn't been seen in a quarter century.' 'For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.' Romans 1:20 (NLT) An excerpt from the National Observer: 'Pacheedaht First Nation elder Bill Jones, one of defendants named in the injunction application, says the Fairy Creek valley falls within the nation's traditional territory and contains bathing pools with spiritual significance that are endangered by clearcutting'. "This land that gives us our food, our water; these trees that clean the air for us to breathe; all these green and growing things that bless our bodies with their beauty – these are not resources. They are fellow creatures, with their own rights and responsibilities before God. They have their own sacred duties to perform, if only we will let them." Barbara Brown Taylor.

**nature, protest**

**Focus:** creation care, Eden Grove (an at-risk ecosystem)

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page



Figure 161. 'nature, protest,' Eden Grove. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2021).

**Content:** nature, keeper

less stuff, more soul. less hustle, more ease.

less chaos, more calm.

less mass consumption, more unique creation.

less complexity, more clarity. less judgment, more forgiveness.

less bravado, more truth. less resistance, more resilience.

less control, more surrender.

less head, more heart.

**nature, protest**

**Focus:** protest, education, invitation

**Graphic:** Fairy Creek watershed (photo not included)

**Content:** I am saddened by the story, the words, the threats, and acts of violence made toward those who are simply protecting their land and original forest areas on the southwest coast of Vancouver Island. I am saddened for the state of those unleashing such unkindness, and I am saddened for those who were recipients of such a darkness. My prayers are for the Pacheedaht people and those standing alongside them on the frontlines protecting ancient sacred spaces and what-little remains of our Old-Growth forests on our island and throughout British Columbia. This stance has been long-enduring for hope, acknowledgment, and change. My prayers are also for those lost in this corrupt system, for hard-working individuals and their families made reliant on the exploitative practices of colonialism that the Canadian and Provincial governments and their businesses continue to express. For our shared environment, entire humanity, and whole dignity, embrace this opportunity to change course. Please, for those who can make a difference (enlightening a better idea than the continuation of arrogant colonialism, and for all experiencing the oppression on all sides of the struggle), please be courageous. Now is the time.

**nature, protest**

**Focus:** awareness, awakening, and connection

**Graphic:** 'nature' FB page



Figure 162. Encouraging mindfulness. Photo taken by Chris Pollock (2022)

**Content:** none

**nature, preamble**



**Focus:** lighter movement, all-inclusive, spiritual formation, community

**Graphic:** ‘nature’ FB page, group and group email

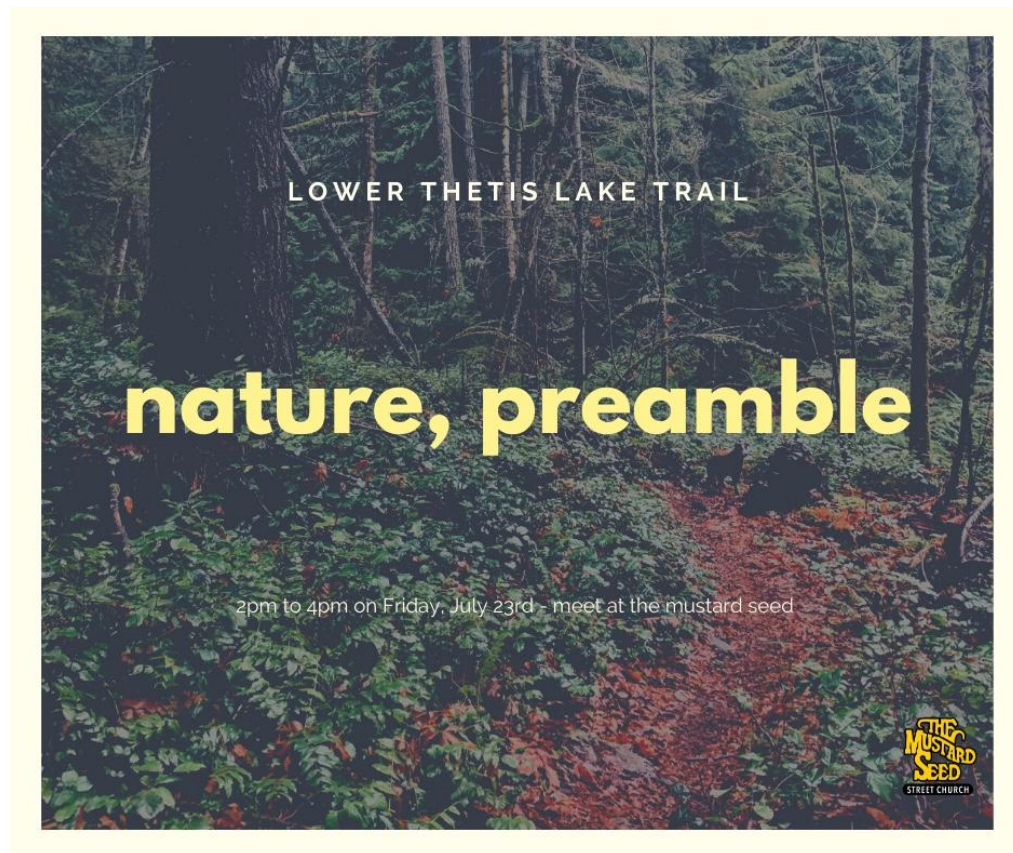


Figure 163. ‘nature, preamble.’ An all-inclusive movement.

**Description:** ‘nature preamble’ is an introductory program to walking and hiking trails in community. It is a slower, lighter version of ‘nature, journey’. It consists of ‘nature’ elements such as: nurturing belonging in community, taught practices of spiritual formation, conversations of soul care, increasing environmental awareness, and developing outdoor education.

### **nature, preamble continued**

**Content:** 'nature' FB page - Peace in the preamble. Steps on trails. Quiet and stillness. Calm, breathing and connection. Friday, 2pm at the Mustard Seed.

**Content:** 'nature' FB group - This is a nice walk in the woods. Wherever the trail leads, shinrin-yoku (forest-bathing), and breathing; the experience of healing (soul care) and belonging (community). These things can happen in 'nature', an easing and restfulness that nurtures healing and belonging. 2pm on Friday, we will make our way to Thetis Lake for a nice, easy walk around the Lower Lake. Like a 'preamble', a starting point and conversation for 'nature, next' with 'beyond the streets' and 'journey'.

## nature-ch

**Focus:** community, soul care, nature

**Graphic:** ‘nature’ FB group and group email (upcoming)



Figure 164. ‘nature-ch’ (2022).

**Description:** ‘nature-ch’ will be a gathering in the wild. The day is open, the time is open, the location is open. The day/time/location will be publicized on FB as well as through email. The day and time may coincide with seasonal changes and significant dates on the calendar. The location of ‘nature-ch’ will be shared by GPS (longitude and latitude), environmental markers, trail and park. The content of the gathering will include: community singing, a couple prepared insights on a topic, personal/communal spiritual and practical application, open sharing, practices of spiritual formation, announcements/invitations, calls to action, small-group prayer, and conversations of soul care. Optimally, we will be in a location where we can build a fire. Wherever we come together, those who come will be encouraged to bring food to share. Potential start date: Spring Equinox (March 20) or Summer Solstice (June 21) 2022.

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