

Revisiting Our Word for the Year 2023 Part 2

God with Us: Becoming a People Aware of His Presence

Thesis: We are a people who are becoming aware of his presence, God with us.

Text: Matthew 1:22-23; 28:18-20; Genesis 28:16-17; Psalm 63:1-8; Genesis 3:8; Leviticus 27:12-12; Revelation 21:3

Introduction:

I am captured by the vision the Lord has given us at Calvary:

1. **Establish people in intimacy with God.**
 - a. Outcome: awareness of God.
2. **Express true Christian community.**
 - a. Outcome: authenticity; open and honest with God and others.
3. **Extend the kingdom of God in the earth.**
 - a. Outcome: alignment and action with the ways of Jesus.

As you look back over your life, I hope that you are making progress in your **awareness** of God with you, in your ability to be **authentic**—being open and honest with others, and in your capacity to **align** with and get in **action** around the ways of Jesus.

A time for reflection:

We are in the seventh month of the year, so half of the year has passed. **It is time to revisit our word for the year** for 2023 which I believe the Lord gave to us as a congregation.

- **God with us: becoming a people aware of his presence.**
- Group identity: We are a people who are becoming aware of his presence, God with us.

I wonder how each of us is doing in our capacity to recognize that God is with us.

And, I wonder if we are growing in our capacity individually and corporately to become aware of God's presence with us.

We are not looking for perfection. We are looking for progress.

Here are two questions to ask yourself:

1. Am I more aware of God's presence with me now, compared to the past year?
2. Am I more aware of God's presence with us corporately, compared to last year?

Presence-based living is about **connecting afresh with God**.

1. We want to become aware of the God who is here with us **individually**.
2. We want to become aware of the God who is here with us **corporately**.
3. Becoming a people who are aware of God's presence with us is especially critical in our **prophetic context**.
 - a. According to God's word, things are going to get worse and worse, better and better, faster and faster (Isaiah 60:1-3).
 - i. So, things are going to get darker and darker.
 - ii. And, because of God's presence with us, we can arise and shine even in the darkness.
 - b. As darkness increases, we must increase in our capacity to connect with our Living God, who is the light of the world (John 8:12). Jesus wants us to be agents of light (Matthew 5:13-16).
4. **Think about it:**
 - a. Do we have lives that thrive in the midst of all that is happening and shaking out in this world?
 - b. Do we live in such a way that our lives shine with the light of Jesus for others to experience?
 - c. Do we experience the presence of God in our own lives individually and corporately in such a way that we are contagious?

God with us (Immanuel, Matthew 1:22-23).

The story of Christmas is God with us. *This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. 20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23*

"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us" (Matthew 1:18-23).

1. One the central themes of the Biblical Story, from Genesis to Revelation, is **God with us**-- **God abiding and dwelling with his people** (Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 24:7, 32:38; Ezekiel 37:23, 27; Matthew 1:22-23; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Hebrews 8:10; Revelation 21:3).
 - a. *I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. 12 I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people (Leviticus 26:11-12).*
 - b. *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God" (Revelation 21:3).*
2. **In the Garden**, God walked with man and woman (Genesis 3:8).
 - a. *...the Lord God was walking in the Garden in the cool of the day... (Genesis 3:8).*
3. In the wilderness, **the Tabernacle** was a place of encounter with the Living God as God dwelt with his people who left Egypt for the promised land (Exodus 25:8-9).
 - a. *Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. 9 Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you (Exodus 25:8-9).*
4. **Jesus came and tabernacled** (dwelt) with us (John 1:14 MSG).
 - a. *The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood (John 1:14 MSG).*
 - b. *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14 NIV).*
 - c. In the incarnation of Jesus, God took on flesh; Spirit and matter come together in Jesus.
5. **Now, God abides in every follower of Jesus as our individual bodies become the temple of the Holy Spirit** (1 Corinthians 6:19).
 - a. *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).*
 - b. Now, God takes up residence in each of us. We do not become God; rather, we become individuals who are meant to *be filled up to the full measure of all the fullness of God* (Ephesians 3:19; 4:13).
6. **Now, God is building us together corporately to become his dwelling in the earth** (Ephesians 2:19-22).

- a. *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit (Ephesians 2:19–22).*
- b. *... you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house... (1 Peter 2:5).*
 - i. God comes to make his home in us corporately.

God has revealed himself to us and made known to us his desire to live with us, to walk with us, and to abide in us.

However, there is a problem. We leak of this revelation. We often live unaware of God's presence with us. We can grow complacent or take for granted this reality that God is with us, that he wants us to live out of the revelation and experience of his nearness and presence with us, in us, and through us.

Sometimes we live unaware in our individual lives (Genesis 28:16).

1. *Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. 11 When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. 12 He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you" (Genesis 28:10–15).*
2. *When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." 17 He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven" (Genesis 28:16-17).*
3. We are not different from Jacob.
 - a. The testimony of Jacob was this: "The Lord was in this place, and I didn't know it."

- b. **God is active and his glory is all around us and with us.** *And they [seraphs] were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isaiah 6:3).*
 - c. And, there are special places of encounter, or portals, like in Genesis 28 at Bethel.
 - d. Yet, we are unaware.
4. The good news is that we as individuals can **cultivate spiritual practices** that help us to become aware of the God who is with us.

Sometimes we become complacent, dulled, or inattentive to the presence of the Lord as a congregation.

1. **The story of Jack Hayford and the Church on the Way.**
 - a. One day God manifested his presence at Church on the Way. Jack was alone one Saturday in the church sanctuary checking on the thermostat, and he saw the silvery mist of the Lord's presence in the sanctuary.
 - b. **As a church committed to the presence of the Lord, Jack Hayford said that they as congregation at times failed to appreciate the presence of the Lord. They faced the danger of taking the Lord's presence for granted or for not stewarding the Lord's presence.**
 - c. **Jack writes:** ... we learned that God's glory must be entertained—that is, honored so as not to be lost. To "entertain" God's glory is to welcome His workings in our hearts and homes, our churches and congregations, just as we would a beloved guest. My own church has learned the danger of becoming "accustomed" to His grace. Glory is the portion of those who glorify Him, and true worship springs only from hearts that are being constantly renewed in a childlike first love.
 - d. Neglect, sophistication, even well-intended but dulling habit, will diminish glory to whatever degree the will of the flesh or the pride of the human heart persists in its own way. Samson is a disturbing photograph of this possibility.
 - e. Following his carnal indulgence and surrender to Delilah's connivings, we find him shorn of his hair. The glory he offered God through obedience was gone, and the glory his obedience had invited upon his life, resulting in excelling strength and ability, was gone with it. It's a sad episode.
 - f. And [Delilah] said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. Judges 16:20 (author's emphasis)
 - g. God's gift of unique blessing upon Samson was "entertained" by his continuing in his vow to walk in God's ways. The tragedy is double, not

only that he lost God's presence, but worse—that he didn't even recognize it was gone until he was crippled at the hands of his enemy!

- h. Over the years the Holy Spirit has reproved me and our congregation. Any style of worship can become habitual, ritualized, and tinny instead of fresh, wholehearted and vibrant. It is an incredible fact: Our hearts can become as hardened to the presence of God as they can against it. A church can be deceived, thinking its growth verifies the congregation's righteousness. An individual, similarly, can be deluded by the notion that his or her prosperity is God's seal of approval. A magnificent home may seem to attest to glorious achievement.
- i. This is all a delusion. Well-managed churches, businesses, careers, and dwellings can be built with or without God. But without God the day inevitably comes when, like Samson, we say, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free," and nothing happens. And in these words we hear the echo of thousands who have "learned all the moves" to achieve apparent success, but who have discovered that glory does not reside in our systems or structures, but in our simplicity of dependence on God. (Jack Hayford, *Glory on Your House* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1994), 24–25.)

2. Calvary, we face this same danger.

- a. God is in this place. Calvary is a place of encounter with the Lord. It is a portal place, where God is active. It is a porch, a place where we step into the presence of the Lord. It is not because of who we are but because of the goodness of God and who God is.
- b. It is easy for us to take for granted what we have here and to neglect so great a salvation, becoming dull and unaware of the God who is with us corporately.
- c. We can fail to acknowledge the gift that we have, the gift of God's presence and activity among us.
- d. We can fail to appreciate that God is here.
- e. We can just show up to church and go through the motions without engaging our affections and desire.
- f. Or, we can fail to pursue God's presence intentionally, just having a "ho hum" or "take it or leave it" attitude or "been there, done that" attitude.
- g. The good news is that we corporately can cultivate spiritual practices that help us to become aware of the God who is with us.

Stories of God with us corporately.

1. The story of the church in Acts 2:42-47.

- a. The good news is that we as a church can learn how to steward and cultivate the presence of the Lord, like they did in Acts 2:42-47.
- b. *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47).*
- c. **Intentional actions:** *they devoted themselves...*
 - i. To putting into practice the teaching and equipping of the leadership (apostles).
 - ii. To fellowshiping with one another; genuine community (koinonia).
 - iii. To doing life together (breaking of bread); not just as isolated individuals. In our busy culture, we have to make time intentionally to get together with others.
 - iv. To praying together.

2. The story of Sadjah Echols.

- a. Cheryl Moses shared with us in January about Sadjah's story of encounter here at Calvary.
- b. Sadjah walked in to the Prayer Room and stopped. She started weeping. "Can you feel that? The Lord is here."
- c. It is an example of encounter and awareness.

3. The story of Michael Sullivant encountering the Angel of Calvary.

- a. During one of his visits to Calvary, Michael Sullivant entered that back door to this Prayer Room. Then, he became aware of the Angel of the Lord in this place, who had an assignment. The fear of the Lord came on Michael and he knelt. The angel told Michael that God is in this place and that his angelic assignment was to watch over what is being done here for God's purposes. Michael was aware that he was responsible to share with us what God purposed, not just what he wanted to share.
- b. John Paul Jackson and other prophetic people have had significant encounters with God here. John Paul Jackson told us one time that he had an encounter here that he had never had in another church before.

4. Share personal story of growing in my personal capacity to be aware:

- a. Over the past 40 years, I have been growing in my capacity to pay attention to the Lord and his presence with me and with us.
 - b. I am grateful for the tools we have discovered and the skills we have developed that have helped me and many other grow in our capacity to know God. Those tools and skills have come from Pastor Steve, from our worship leaders, and from people outside of Calvary whom God has used to equip and train us.
5. **Share personal corporate story:** learning to pay attention to the Lord's presence in corporate meetings and prayer meetings.
- a. I come with an anticipation, an expectation, and a holy desire to connect with God.
 - b. I come to meet with God and to let him have his way in me and in us.
 - c. So, this place is a place of encounter for me because of God's choice and because of my intentional response and pursuit.

How do we become aware of God's presence with us individually and corporately?

I believe it is through practicing the spiritual disciplines of Jesus relationally, intimately, and intently.

1. **Relationally:** engaging in a relationship with God, not just doing a ritual; to engage a person, not just doing an activity to mark off our checklist.
2. **Intimately:** pursuing intimacy with God.
3. **Intently:** with sufficient intensity and intentionality; effort; rhythm; practice.

There are spiritual practices we can use in our lives individually and corporately that help grow our capacity for awareness.

We need an **intentional rhythm of spiritual practices** to help us in this journey of joy-full intimacy.

1. Daily
2. Weekly
3. Occasional

Our spiritual practices include individual and corporate activities.

And, our spiritual activities need to work in the dailyness of life. It is not possible for some people to get up at 4:00 or 5:00am to do their spiritual practices. A mother of young children will find it difficult to find an hour for contemplation. Find ways to practice the disciplines during the course of your day and week.

Questions to ponder:

1. What are some spiritual practices that you can engage relationally, intimately, and intentionally in the course of your life? Remember to include individual and corporate practices.
2. What spiritual practice is life giving to you right now?
3. What spiritual practices that the Lord has asked you to do are challenging you?

An example of the joy of the disciplines from the life of David (Psalm 63:1-8)

O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. 3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. 4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. 5 My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. 6 On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. 7 Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. 8 My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me (Psalm 63:1-8).

1. **David engaged in spiritual practices relationally.**
 - a. Psalm 63:1a O God you are my God....
 - b. Personal: my God.
 - c. Relational: focusing on God, not just getting a spiritual practice finished.
2. **David engaged in spiritual practices intimately.**
 - a. Psalm 63:1b I seek you....
 - b. David sought intimate relationship with God, his God, the Living God.
3. **David engaged in spiritual practices intentionally.**
 - a. Psalm 63:1b earnestly I seek you....
 - b. David put in effort and intention to pursuing a relationship with his God.
 - c. There was sufficient intensity, intentionality, effort, rhythm, and practice in his life.

What are some spiritual practices we see in Psalm 63:1-8? (This list is not exhaustive of all the practices in which David engaged. But these are mentioned in this short passage.)

1. **Practicing the presence of God** (individual awareness).
 - a. Psalm 63:1c *my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.*

- b. David was aware of his desperate thirst for God in his inner man (thirst or desire).
 - c. David was aware of his body longing for God (longing; ache).
 - d. Take time throughout the day to be still and quiet for a minute or two to become aware of the God who is with you.
 - e. We have done a spiritual practice at Calvary called the **Sixtyfor60**. Get a timer or watch and set it to go off every hour. When the timer goes off, turn your heart, your affection, and your ear to God who is with you. Acknowledge the Lord's presence with you.
 - f. [The Sacrament of the Present Moment](#), Jean-Pierre de Caussade.
2. **Corporate worship** (corporate awareness).
- a. *Psalm 63:2 I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.*
 - b. **David was aware of God in the corporate gatherings** (*I have seen you in the sanctuary*).
 - c. **David paid attention to the power of God in their midst** (*I have beheld your power*).
 - i. **What are some displays of God's power in our corporate worship services and gatherings?**
 1. Healing
 2. Conviction
 3. Communication from God or revelation from God
 4. Freedom
 5. Breakthrough
 6. New strength
 7. Fresh courage
 8. Energy
 9. Salvation
 10. Master Strategist: you can see his fingerprints in what God is doing or see him moving to make things clear to you over time.
 11. Hope
 12. Peace that passes understanding
 13. Encounters of love
 14. Deliverance
 15. Encouragement
 16. Etc.
 - ii. **Questions:**
 1. Are you **paying attention** to what God is saying and doing?
 2. Are you **blessing** what God is saying and doing in our midst?

- d. **David encountered the beauty of God in the corporate gathering** (*I have beheld your glory*).
- i. God makes himself known in our midst.
 - ii. Are we paying attention?
 - iii. **Questions:**
 1. Can you see the beauty or glory of the Lord in our midst?
 2. Can you hear or perceive the encounters with the beauty of the Lord in the songs, music, testimonies, word, or ministry?
 - iv. **Moses** said he wanted to see the glory or beauty of the Lord.
 1. *Exodus 33:12 Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' 13 If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people." 14 The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." 15 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. 16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?" 17 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name." 18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." 19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion... (Exodus 33:12-19).*
 2. *Exodus 34:4 So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. 5 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. 6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love*

to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation” (Exodus 34:4–7).

v. **God caused his glory to manifest to Moses as:**

1. His goodness (Exodus 33:19). God is good.
2. His name (character) (Exodus 33:19). God is whole and full of integrity in his nature.
3. His mercy (Exodus 33:19).
4. The compassionate God (Exodus 34:6). Jesus was full of compassion; that is what moved him to heal and touch people.
5. The gracious God (Exodus 34:6). God is full of grace (John 1:14).
6. Slow to anger (Exodus 34:6). Praise God is patient and doesn't have a short fuse.
7. Abounding in love (Exodus 34:6). God is love and exudes love in everything he says and does.
8. Abounding in faithfulness (Exodus 34:6). God gives his word and keeps his word.
9. Maintaining love to a thousand generations (Exodus 34:7). God pours out his blessing of his loving presence to a thousand generations.
10. Forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin (Exodus 34:7). God chooses to cancel and forget the debt we owe because of our evil choices, willful disobedience, and places we fall short of his glory through the cross of Christ.
11. Fulfills justice. God is just and deals with evil, and yet puts limits on that punishment.
 - a. *Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation” (Exodus 34:7).*
 - b. Compare that to blessing a thousand generations of those who love him.

vi. **Questions:**

1. **What have you seen of the manifest beauty or glory of the Lord in our corporate gatherings?**
2. **Are you aware of God's presence among us corporately?**

3. **Personal worship.**

- a. *Psalm 63:4a I will praise you as long as I live....*
- b. *Psalm 63:4b and in your name I will lift up my hands.*
- c. *Psalm 63:5b with singing lips my mouth will praise you.*
- d. May our lives burn with affection, adoration, and worship for God. And may our lips declare it with word and song.

4. **Reflection.**

- a. *Psalm 63:6a On my bed I **remember** you....*
- b. It is good to take time through the day to reflect on what the Lord is saying and doing in you, through you, and around you.
- c. It is also good to engage in the practice of [Examen](#).

5. **Meditation.**

- a. *Psalm 63:6b I think of you through the watches of the night.*
- b. We know that David meditated on God and the Word of God.
- c. Take time to meditate on God's word and to think about what the Lord is saying to you. Take time to think about God.

6. **Intercession.**

- a. *Psalm 63:6b through the watches of the night.*
- b. David was a watchman or intercessor; he was at his post blessing what the Lord was doing and saying "no" to the plans of the enemy. That is his testimony through the Scriptures.
- c. Intercession is practiced both individually and corporately.
- d. Intercession is about reminding God of what he has said (Isaiah 62:6-7 NASB).
- e. Intercession involves standing in the gap and building up the wall (Ezekiel 22:30).
- f. Intercession is about getting in the gap between the way things are and the way God wants them to be (Matthew 6:10).

7. **And, we know that through is life David engaged in other spiritual practices like:**

- a. Giving: generosity.
- b. Obedience: which is an act of worship.
- c. Spiritual warfare: like when he played his harp for King Saul and it brought peace to his tormented life.
- d. Petition: the Psalms are full of the cries and petitions of David.
- e. Walking in the light: David was a man who sought to repent of his sins and to walk authentically with God and others. (See Psalm 51 for example.)

8. **Here is a list of some other spiritual disciplines in which you can engage on a daily, weekly, or occasional basis.** (Note: This list is a sampling and is not exhaustive.)

- a. **Individual:**

- i. Prayer: listening to and talking with God.
 - ii. Sabbath: rest, recreation, refreshing, reflection; feeding your soul; sabbath as a way of life, not just a day.
 - iii. Fasting.
 - iv. Tithing.
 - v. Giving.
 - vi. Contemplation or passive prayer.
 - vii. Prayerwalking.
 - viii. Journaling.
 - ix. Spending time in God's word through reading Scripture devotionally or listening to Scripture if you are an auditory learner.
- b. Corporate:**
- i. Engaging in authentic community (small groups); walking in the light with others, getting prayer, and praying for others.
 - ii. Serving others and meeting needs.
 - iii. Partnering with Jesus on his mission together with others through Missional Communities.
 - iv. Discerning the voice of the Spirit through dialogue with others.
 - v. Praying for others on Ministry Teams.
 - vi. Participating in corporate intercession: *my house shall be a house of prayer for all nations (Mark 11:17)*.
 - vii. Reading Scripture publicly.
- c. Resources regarding the spiritual disciplines:**
- i. [*The Making of an Ordinary Saint: My Journey from Frustration to Joy with the Spiritual Disciplines*](#), Nathan Foster.
 - ii. [*The Celebration of Discipline*](#), Richard Foster.
 - iii. [*The Spirit of the Disciplines*](#), Dallas Willard.
 - iv. [*The Sacrament of the Present Moment*](#), Jean-Pierre de Caussade with an intro by Richard Foster.
 - v. [*The Other Half of Church: Christian Community, Brain Science, and Overcoming Spiritual Stagnation*](#), Jim Wilder, Michel Hendricks
 - vi. [*Thinking with God: Weaving God's Thoughts into Human Identities and Relationships*](#), Jim Wilder, paper from June 2020.
 - vii. [*Thinking Biblically About The Life Model*](#), Michael Sullivant.

Prayers for this year:

1. With the Lord helping us, we will live with an awareness of God's presence with us (Matthew 28:18-20).
2. With the Lord helping us, may we grow as a people who are becoming aware of his presence, of God with us, individually and corporately.
 - a. Our lives really are meant to be the dwelling place of God among people (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:21-22).
3. With the Lord helping us, we will live as agents of God's presence through us into this world by our acts of serving, volunteering, loving, giving, reaching, blessing, praying, etc. (Matthew 5:13-16; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21).

