

Pathways Monthly Prayer Readings

May 2026



Gloria Jean Watkins, better known by her pen name **bell hooks** was an American author, theorist, educator, and social critic She adopted her maternal great-grandmother's name as her pen name and put the name in lowercase letters to convey that what is most important is to focus upon her works, not her personal qualities. Exposed to Buddhism as a young adult, hooks incorporated it into her Christian upbringing and this combined Christian-Buddhist thought influenced her identity, activism, and writing for the remainder of her life. She died in 2021 at the age of 69.

Tuesday, May 5
Contemplative Sit

*If I were really asked to define myself,
I wouldn't start with race;
I wouldn't start with blackness;
I wouldn't start with gender;
I wouldn't start with feminism.
I would start with stripping down
to what fundamentally informs my life,
which is that I'm a seeker on the path.
I think of feminism,
and I think of anti-racist struggles as part of it.
But where I stand spiritually is, steadfastly, on a path about love.*

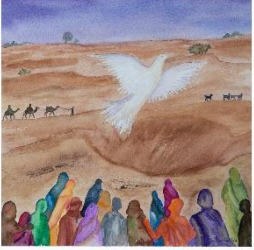

Wednesday, May 6
Lectio Divina

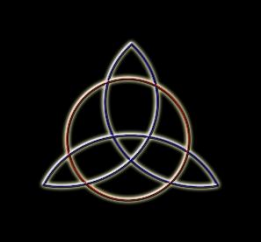
Paul said to the Athenians,
“God is the One who gives everyone life, breath – everything.
From one person God created all of humankind
to inhabit the entire earth,
and set the time for each nation to exist
and the exact place where each nation should dwell.
God did this so that human beings would seek,
reach out for, and perhaps find the One
who is not really far from any of us –
the One in whom we live and move and have our being.”
Acts 17:25b – 28a (Inclusive Bible)



Thursday, May 7
Centering Prayer

God holds our souls in life
and will not allow our feet to slip.
Psalm 66:8 (St. Helena Psalter)

<p>Tuesday, May 12 Contemplative Sit</p>	<p><i>A generous heart is always open, always ready to receive our going and coming. In the midst of such love we need never fear abandonment. This is the most precious gift true love offers – the experience of knowing we always belong.</i> <u>All About Love: New Visions</u></p>	
<p>Wednesday, May 13 Lectio Divina</p>	<p>So when they had come together, the apostles asked Jesus, "Is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:6-8 (NRSV)</p>	
<p>Thursday, May 14 Centering Prayer</p>	<p>Sing to God, O nations of the earth; sing praises to the Holy One, Who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens, who sends forth a voice, a mighty voice. Psalm 68:33-34 (St. Helena Psalter)</p>	
<p>Tuesday, May 19 Contemplative Sit</p>	<p><i>When we drop fear, we can draw nearer to people, we can draw nearer to the earth, we can draw nearer to all the heavenly creatures that surround us.</i></p>	
<p>Wednesday, May 20 Lectio Divina</p>	<p>When the day of Pentecost arrived, they all met in one room. Suddenly they heard what sounded like a violent, rushing wind from heaven; the noise filled the entire house in which they were sitting. Something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each one. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as she enabled them. Acts 2:1-4 (Inclusive Bible)</p>	
<p>Thursday, May 21 Centering Prayer</p>	<p>O Holy One, how manifold are your works; in wisdom you have made them all;</p>	

	the earth is full of your creatures. Psalm 104:25 (St. Helena Psalter)	
Tuesday, May 26	<p>Contrary to what we may have been taught to think, unnecessary and unchosen suffering wounds us but need not scar us for life. It does mark us. What we allow the mark of our suffering to become is in our own hands.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>All About Love: New Visions</u></p>	
Wednesday, May 27	<p>Finally, brothers and sisters, good-bye. Put things in order, respond to my encouragement, be in harmony with each other, and live in peace— and the God of love and peace will be with you. Say hello to each other with a holy kiss. All of God’s people say hello to you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">II Corinthians 13:11-13 (CEB)</p>	
Thursday, May 28 Centering Prayer	<p>O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 8:1 (NRSV)</p>	

“For me, forgiveness and compassion are always linked: how do we hold people accountable for wrongdoing and yet at the same time remain in touch with their humanity enough to believe in their capacity to be transformed?”

“Being oppressed means the absence of choices”

“I want there to be a place in the world where people can engage in one another’s differences in a way that is redemptive, full of hope and possibility. Not this “In order to love you, I must make you something else”. That’s what domination is all about, that in order to be close to you, I must possess you, remake and recast you.”

Reel to Real: Race, Sex, and Class at the Movies

“The first act of violence that patriarchy demands of males is not violence toward women. Instead patriarchy demands of all males that they engage in acts of psychic self-mutilation, that they kill off the emotional parts of themselves. If an individual is not successful in emotionally crippling himself, he can count on patriarchal men to enact rituals of power that will assault his self-esteem.”

“Emotional neglect lays the groundwork for the emotional numbing that helps boys feel better about being cut off. Eruptions of rage in boys are most often deemed normal, explained by the age-old justification for adolescent patriarchal misbehavior, “Boys will be boys.” Patriarchy both creates the rage in boys and then contains it for later use, making it a resource to exploit later on as boys become men. As a national product, this rage can be garnered to further imperialism, hatred and oppression of women and men globally. This rage is needed if boys are to become men willing to travel around the world to fight wars without ever demanding that other ways of solving conflict can be found.”

“Dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, revelling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community.”

Teaching Community

“To create loving men, we must love males. Caring about men because of what they do for us is not the same as loving males for simply being. When we love maleness, we extend our love whether males are performing or not. Performance is different from simply being. In patriarchal culture males are not allowed simply to be who they are and to glory in their unique identity. Their value is always determined by what they do. In an anti-patriarchal culture males do not have to prove their value and worth. They know from birth that simply being gives them value, the right to be cherished and loved.”

The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love