



Faith in Action 2020

The Universe is Calling

by Eric Butterworth

Small Group Workbook

Spiritual Life Center

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Are You Ready to Answer the Call from the Universe?

What is prayer?

Most of us, particularly those who have been part of a religious tradition of one kind or another, have an answer to that question. But deep down, does anyone know what prayer is, or how to make prayer effective?

Mystic and co-founder of Unity, Charles Fillmore, claimed that prayer is the greatest transforming technology known to humankind. Fillmore's statement suggests that effective prayer is more a science than an art, although an artistic element is definitely involved.

Eric Butterworth, the author of this year's Faith In Action text *The Universe is Calling*, expands on Fillmore's premise that prayer is a technology. Butterworth presents the "science of prayer" complete with formulas and principles that assures our prayers are answered. His science of prayer transcends denominational or religious tradition. He clarifies that the tenets of prayer can be used by anyone regardless of whether or not they believe in something called God.

The Universe is calling each of us to align with the principles for effective prayer to experience life and see a world that we truly want, love, and deserve.

I invite you to join us on this adventure, and let's answer the call of the Universe.

Peace and Blessings,



Rev. James Trapp
Senior Minister of Worship

Study Group Shared Agreements

Purpose: The purpose of shared agreements is to create a safe and healthy environment for the group. It is important that the group reviews these guidelines and that there is consensus before beginning any spiritual group.

Confidentiality: Everything shared by group members is confidential. What is said here, stays here.

Compassion: Group members come from a place of unconditional compassionate acceptance of one another as human beings. Judgmental comments, and even unspoken thoughts, threaten the group process.

Truth and Integrity: Group members are encouraged and supported by the group to honestly and authentically be who they are. Speaking the truth involves risk and can only occur safely in a compassionate environment.

Respect: Group members show respect for each other and the group by avoiding interrupting others, arriving on time, and allowing everyone time to share their thoughts and ideas with the group. We practice sacred listening and refrain from giving advice or trying to fix or solve others' problems.

“Listen to others with inward stillness, without opinion, assent or dissent, without criticism; hearing through the words into the soul of the other.”

Rudolph Steiner

Sharing Time: Group members demonstrate respect by avoiding interrupting others, arriving on time, and allowing everyone time to share their thoughts and ideas with the group.

Participation: Group members agree to participate in discussion and group activities; however, each person has the right to ask to sit out or to modify his or her participation.

Conflict: Whenever people come together and speak truthfully the potential for hurt feelings, misunderstanding and conflict exists. If such a situation arises, group members agree to address it within the group process or one-on-one with the facilitator. Unresolved conflict is toxic to the whole group and not just to the parties involved.

I accept these shared agreements as the foundation for a successful study group.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

STUDY GROUP PRAYERS

Suggested Opening: The Co-Creator's Prayer

Loving Presence, with grateful hearts we join together as co-creators and friends. We come together to support each other as we learn, share, and explore how to live life more intentionally. We open our minds to receive your wisdom. We open our hearts to express your love. We open our souls to radiate your light.

May each of us hear what we are meant to hear and speak as you direct us. Now may each of us speak your intention or prayer for this gathering.

(Intention or short prayer from each who wishes to speak them.)

We now enter into sacred agreement with each other to honor our intentions as we support each other in our spiritual growth. We listen to others with inward stillness, without opinion, assent or dissent, without criticism; hearing through the words into the soul of the other.

Thank you, God, for your loving presence with us and within us; may all we say and do be in harmony with you. Thank you, God!

Suggested Closing Prayer

Thank you, God, for your loving presence that has guided and directed us in this session. We honor each person in this group and trust in the process of each other's unique spiritual journey. We hold in sacred trust the personal matters we have shared in this gathering.

We go forward in positive expectancy of ever-increasing good as we remain ever mindful of Your presence, power and love within us.

We thank you, God. Amen.

2020 Faith in Action
The Universe is Calling by Eric Butterworth
 Weekly Themes & Affirmations

Week	Theme & Chapters	Color	Affirmation
Week 1 October 4 thru 10	Prayer – Science or Miracle? Intro, Prologue Chapters 1 & 2 Pages 1 - 31	Red	I AM a dynamic, individual expression of the universe. I AM open to the activity of God within.
Week 2 October 11 thru 17	A Journey in Consciousness Chapters 3 & 4 Pages 33 - 44	Orange	I AM Grace in motion. The activity of God’s love sustains me in all ways, at all times.
Week 3 October 18 thru 24	Let God be God in You Chapters 5 & 6 Pages 47 - 74	Yellow	I AM aware. I AM awake to my God potential. I rest in the consciousness of wholeness.
Week 4 October 25 thru 31	The Secret of the Silence Chapters 7 & 8 Pages 75 - 104	Green	I AM centered at the still-point within. I am still. I listen. I AM that I AM.
Week 5 November 1 thru 7	And So it Is Chapters 9 & 10 Pages 105 - 128	Blue	I AM the one who names my experience of life. My words have power. I say Amen to the good in my life.
Week 6 November 8 thru 14	Realizing the Christ Within Chapters 11 & 12 Pages 129 -149	Indigo	I AM a great listener. I hear the universe calling. I AM an instrument of truth and love.
Week 7 November 15 thru 21	Giving Birth to Limitless Life Chapters 13 & 14 Pages 151 - 175	Violet	I AM a dynamic, individual expression of God. I say Amen to my good. I pray and I move my feet!

Faith in Action Weekly Colors

SLC uses Chakra colors each week as we journey toward greater awareness and aliveness.

Chakras, as an ancient spiritual system, show the path of integration of mind, body, and spirit leading to enlightenment.

The SLC community joins together during this seven-week period and wears the color of the week on Sundays to show their commitment to the journey.

On the next page, you will find the weekly affirmations ready for color printing for you to cut out and post at your desk, refrigerator, mirror or anywhere else so that it can remind you of the current stage of this book study journey we are all taking together.

Blessings!

WEEKLY AFFIRMATION CARDS:

Your next page can be printed out in color (on cardstock if you like) as a means to create affirmation cards for each week of the Faith in Action program.

Print this page of FIA Affirmations in color, cut out weekly, and enjoy:

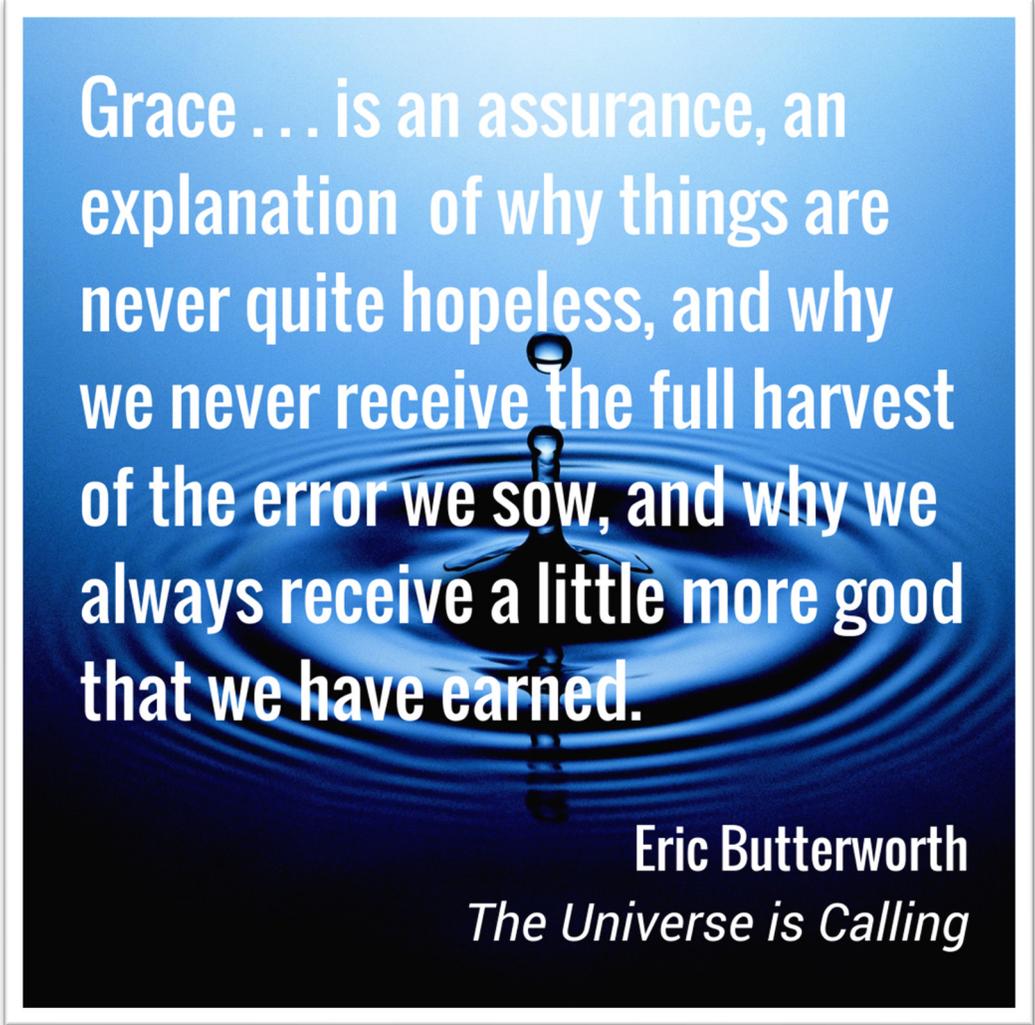
Week One	Faith in Action 2020	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I AM a dynamic, individual expression of the universe. I AM open to the activity of God within.
Week Two	Faith in Action 2020	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I AM Grace in motion. The activity of God's love sustains me in all ways, at all times.
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Week Six	Faith in Action 2020	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I AM a great listener. I hear the universe calling. I AM an instrument of truth and love.
Week Seven	Faith in Action 2020	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I AM a dynamic, individual expression of God. I say Amen to my good. I pray and I move my feet!

For Week One:

Please read: *Pages 1-31*

*Introduction, Prologue,
Chapters 1 & 2*

Faith in Action Fall 2020
The Universe is Calling
By Eric Butterworth



Grace . . . is an assurance, an explanation of why things are never quite hopeless, and why we never receive the full harvest of the error we sow, and why we always receive a little more good than we have earned.

Eric Butterworth
The Universe is Calling

Faith in Action Song

I AM That I AM

By Paula Mandella

I AM listening to the call of the universe

Beckoning me to make my way home

I AM opening to infinite divinity

Ever within me, I AM not alone

As the pull of the sun urges the blossom to come forth

I AM that I AM

As the ocean in a wave unceasing breaks upon the shore

I AM that I AM

As the archer bends the bow and gently lets the arrow go

I AM that I AM

As the beacon shining out from inside the lighthouse glows

I AM that I AM

~

As the spring of living waters deep in the well renews

I AM that I AM

As the symphony in one chord draws everything in tune

I AM that I AM

As the weather vane points in the direction of the wind

I AM that I AM

As a deeper dimension that expresses from within

I AM that I AM

~

As the stirring of a chrysalis dreams of breaking free

I AM that I AM

As the silence in the thunder reminds me to release

I AM that I AM

As the sweet relenting emptiness fills me to the brim

I AM that I AM

As the ultimate ending from which we all begin

I AM that I AM

Week One: Prayer – Science or Miracle?

Introduction, Prologue, Chapters 1 & 2 Pages 1-31

“So prayer is not something we do to God, or a ceremony we perform for God. It is an experience of our own God-potential.”

Introduction & Prologue

1. In the Introduction, Butterworth takes the time to define many of the words he uses in the book.
 - a. Why is this important?

 - b. How might these “new” definitions change the way you think about prayer?

Chapter 1: A Short History of Prayer

While we tend to think that religion began with a complete awareness or consciousness of God, Butterworth points out that there has been a progressive evolution of culture and awareness.

1. Take a few minutes to explore ways in which religion has both helped and hindered our spiritual evolution.

2. Discuss how the “specialization” of prayer, the handing it over to one person, might lead to dis-empowerment and preventing us from discovering ourselves as individual expressions of God.

3. In what ways do humans symbolize their sense of the Transcendent? How do you do this in your personal life?

4. If prayer is not something that we DO to God, what is it?

Chapter 2: The Miracle Trap

“Since we are dealing with prayer as a science, it is important to confront the matter of miracles early in the book. For many persons, prayer is confused with the effort to work miracles. But there are no miracles in science. And there are no miracles in God.”

1. Butterworth says that miracles are not possible and that we tend to read magic into the events in the Bible. What was your *initial* reaction to the idea that miracles don't exist?
2. What is the difference between miracles, magic, and what Jesus simply called “works”?
3. When have you fallen into what Butterworth calls the “magic trap” where you just sat and waited for some outside force to come along and make everything ok again?
 - a. How did that work out for you?
4. If a “miracle” is simply something that was outside your personal awareness or experience, then perhaps the miracle isn't so much that the solution came, as it is that you were *able* to awaken to it and accept it. With this in mind, think about some personal experiences that you have named Miracle.
 - a. Did it violate natural law or was it the fulfillment of divine law?

Weekly Prayer Practice:

- Practice Listening.
- This week consider your current prayer practice. Are you praying *to* God or *from* a higher consciousness? Remember: God can do more for you than can be done through you.
- Start a prayer journal in which you simply capture the experience of what it feels like to pray *from* rather than *to*.

Notes:

Week Two: A Journey into Consciousness

Chapters 3 & 4 Pages 33-44

Chapter 3: What About Karma?

“The word karma is used widely through much of the literature in the “New Thought” field. Thus, most students have unthinkingly made it a part of their spiritual vocabulary. I think that we need to take a good, long look at the word, and possibly rethink the advisability of identifying with it in our personal practice of the truth.”

1. Here in the West, *karma* has been reduced to the simple idea of “payback” but in Hinduism, there are three basic laws. Discuss these three laws. How do they compare to what we teach in New Thought?
 - a. The law of identification
 - b. The law of karma
 - c. The law of reincarnation
2. What happens to your idea of karma when you begin to think of it as the law of correspondences instead of “payback”?
3. Butterworth says that “Every condition in your present life is the result of your consciousness” and “. . . hard as it sometimes is to accept, that are *no* experiences unrelated to consciousness.” Our circumstances are the “outformation” of what is going on within us.”

- a. What outformation are you seeing right now that you feel is rightfully attributed to your consciousness.
 - b. What outformation are you seeing right now that you feel is NOT rightfully attributed to your consciousness.
4. If everything is consciousness, how can you reconcile that only parts of your consciousness have an effect in the other world? Is that even possible?
 5. In the Hindu concept of Karma and reincarnation, we are tied to a relentlessly moving wheel by accumulated effects of our lives. In the New Thought (and others) teaching, we believe that the effects can be dissolved by knowing the Truth. Explain how knowing that we are punished not *for* our sins, but *by* them helps us know the Truth.

Chapter 4: Concerning Grace

“You are not simply a subject of God, with God making notations of sin and error, or of good, in his big black book. You are the activity of God in expression, beloved with an everlasting love.”

1. How does Grace explain the inadequacy in the Eastern idea of a karmic, endless cycle of cause and effect?
 - a. What is the missing link in the teaching of the East? (page 42)
 - b. Why is it so important that we realize that we are not alone?
2. Butterworth says that we have a choice; we can choose to stay in the horizontal experience of life or introduce vertical flow into our consciousness.
 - a. What is the difference between horizontal energy and vertical flow?

- b. Explore some ways that we can move to vertical flow.
-
3. To quote Butterworth, Grace “. . . is an assurance, an explanation of why things are never quite hopeless, and why we never receive the full harvest of the error we sow, and why we always receive a little more good than we earn.”
 - a. In what ways is this definition of grace different from your own?

 - b. Did your definition change after reading this chapter? Explain.

Prayer Practice:

- Practice Listening.
- This week take a deeper look at how things are never quite as bad as we might think and always better than we expect.
- Make a list of the of the not-so-bads and better-thans that you have experienced.

Week Three: Let God be God in You

Chapters 5 & 6 Pages 47 - 74

Chapter 5: The Cosmic Counterpart

“Prayer is always answered, but the answer, like the results of a scientific experiment, will depend not on what you are hoping to achieve but on the laws governing the elements you have put together.”

1. Explore the different forms of prayer. Which one(s) do you relate to the most?
 - a) Prayer of sacrifice

 - b) Prayer of praise

 - c) Prayer of supplication

 - d) Prayers of repetition

 - e) Prayers of invocation
 - a. Do you find any of them to be effective? Why or why not?

 - b. How has your prayer technique changed over your lifetime?

2. What does Butterworth mean by the term “Cosmic Counterpart”?

4. What is the difference between Denial and Affirmation?
 - a. Explain the metaphysical meaning of denial.
 - b. Why should denial come before affirmation?
5. How does knowing that you are not your body, that you *have* a body help you relax?

Prayer Practice:

- Practice Listening.
- Play a little bit this week.
 - Try out some of the types of prayer listed in Chapter 5.
 - Then use the three-step method from Chapter 6.
 - Note your experience in your prayer journal –
 - How do you feel when you use the different methods?

Week Four: The Secret of the Silence

Chapters 7 & 8

Pages 75 -104

Chapter 7: The Way of the Silence

“However, if we can just get the perspective of the presence, then God is not someone to pray to, but a depth of awareness and energy to pray from.”

1. Describe Butterworth’s differentiation between prayer and meditation.
2. How does the Silence, which puts the emphasis on a state of consciousness instead of a mental exercise, lead to the realization of oneness with the ever-present divine flow?
3. The key to scientific prayer is to shift from praying about a condition “out there” to becoming imbued with transcendent energy. What is your personal experience of praying from within vs. praying to the outside?
4. It is common for us to be told to sit in silence in the same place and at the same time every day. Sometimes we are too busy or some of us are simply not built to do this. What does Butterworth say about keeping a meditation “schedule”?
5. It is suggested that we not go into silence expecting to have a conscious experience because the silence is not an end in itself.
 - a. How important are the words we use when we project divine energy?

- b. What words can you use to help you let go so you can enter the divine flow?

Chapter 8: Affirmation and Treatment

“God is life, and life is whole. Life can only seek to express and perfect life. So if you pray for life, life can only say “Yes!”

1. Why doesn't God answer prayer?
2. If we think God has said “no” what do we need to change?
3. Many people do not realize that the Lord's Prayer is an affirmation. Describe how seeing this prayer in a different light changes your perception of prayer in general.
4. Affirmation is how we realize our oneness with the transcendent energy because it changes the way we think about a situation.
 - a. When you go into silence, what are you changing—the outer world or your own consciousness?
 - b. Treatment is conditioning flow of life-affirming words. It is affirmation in action. This must mean that every thought we think and every word we say is an affirmation, a prayer. Discuss.

Prayer Practice:

- Practice Listening.
- Practice writing denials and affirmations.
 - Think of something that is bothering you.
 - In your meditation journal make two columns. In the first column write down all the things that bug you, reasons for why-not, etc.
 - In the second column write how you think things should or could be. Allow your intuition to guide you as you write positive ideas about the situation.
 - Read the list over and sit with it.
 - How did your relationship with the situation change?

Remember: Denial clears your consciousness to make room for affirmative thinking. Denial is not pretending something doesn't exist or doesn't bother you. We are denying that the thing has power over us. The exercise on page 96 teaches you how to write both denials and affirmations. See Chapter 8 for full details.

Week Five: And So It Is

Chapters 9 & 10 Pages 105 -128

Chapter 9: The Great Amen

“Traditionally, prayer has been a time of pouring out all one’s troubles, counting them over, one by one, in the delusion and voiced hope that God would have mercy. But God cannot have mercy on you, for there is no “un-mercy” in God.”

1. What does it mean to have Amen stick in your throat?

2. When God “caused” Adam to name every living thing, God wasn’t looking for names for the creatures. What does this passage about naming really mean?

3. *Amen* means it is done, it is finished. This means that every time we say *Amen*, we are saying Yes! It is done, it is complete!
 - a. What are the consequences of randomly saying Amen?

 - b. What are the benefits of closing your prayer with an Amen rather than saying, “I prayed, I hope it works”?

Chapter 10: How to Pray for Others

“Now, you may be thinking, “Okay, this emphasis on oneness in prayer is good. I am not to pray to God for help, but to know my oneness, and to pray from that consciousness. But how do I pray for others? Can I change their life by changing my thoughts?” Perhaps you should ask yourself, “Why do I want to change another person?”

1. Take a moment to discover your own motivation when you pray for another person and consider:
 - a. Whether you are trying to change the person to meet your criteria of “good”.
 - b. Whether you are praying for the person to meet their needs or your own needs.

2. Think about your actual experience of prayer for someone else.
 - a. When have you prayed for someone else to change?

 - b. When you have simply prayed for their highest good? Or simply sent them love.

 - c. How did your personal experience change when you stopped trying to change the person?

3. On page 122, Butterworth recounts the story of his son’s accident. Butterworth realized that he was actually hurting his son with his own emotional distress.
 - a. What did he do to calm himself and what were the results?

- b. Explore some techniques you can use to rise above your own emotions about another's situation.
4. How often should you pray for another person?
5. How can you tell if you are praying in an ego-centered way?
 - a. What should you do if you find yourself taking responsibility for their healing/resolution of the situation at hand?
6. Explain why there is no such thing as an "absent" treatment"?

Prayer Practice:

- Practice listening.
- Try to become aware of what you are saying Amen to. What are you agreeing to in your life?
- Develop a prayer for another person using scientific prayer:
 - Let go of what you want for them.
 - Go within, become quiet, tune into the transcendent.
 - Project divine energy to the person.
 - Say Amen!

Week Six: Realizing the Christ Within

Chapters 11 & 12 Pages 129 -149

Chapter 11: A Word About Jesus

“Christ is the principle of divine sonship, it is “what is expected of every one of us.” The Christ of you is that divine potential of you, and the universe calls you to work diligently to release your “imprisoned splendor.” This is what life is all about.”

1. If you grew up in another Christian denomination, describe your “relationship” with Jesus. If you grew up in another religion or no religion, what did you think of Jesus?
2. Explain the very important distinction between Jesus and the Christ.
3. Describe how Jesus comes into our study of prayer. `

Chapter 12: Worship and the Power of Group Prayer

“And yet...there is something very special about a group, large or small. If the members of the group come with a common bond of interest, from that bonding emerges a group “soul.”

1. What does Butterworth mean when he says he sees a difference between formal religion and the “devoutness of the faithful”?
2. Describe some of the ways traditional Christianity has made a very simple thing very complicated.
3. Since God is within you in his entirety, why do you even need a church or a spiritual group?

- a. What is so special about a group, small or large?
 - b. Explain “the power of the swarm.”
4. Explore and discuss the group process Butterworth offers. (pg. 146)

Prayer Practice:

- Practice Listening.
- If you belong to a group, bring Butterworth’s suggestions to the group; try them out.
- If you cannot get together as a group, agree to pray for 10 minutes at the same time on the same day. Is this a different experience from when you pray “alone”?
- Write about your experience in your prayer journal.

Week Seven: Giving Birth to Limitless Life

Chapters 13 & 14, Pages 151 -175

Chapter 13: Prayer Practice for Human Needs

“Prayer is not something you do to God or say to God, or a performance you put on for God. It is, in silence, finding that point in you where God is Being being you.”

1. If as, Butterworth stresses, prayer is not about God, who or what is it about?
2. When we talk or think about God, we automatically invoke separation, how can practicing the presence help to dissolve this tendency?
3. What is Butterworth’s definition of *sin*?
4. Explain the difference between asking God for something and claiming what is rightfully yours.
 - a. How comfortable are you in “claiming your rightful inheritance”?
5. Discuss the suggested prayer techniques for prosperity, making decisions, business or activity.
 - a. Which one appeals to you the most?
 - b. Which one makes you the most uncomfortable?
 - c. How would you write your own prayer for your specific circumstance?
6. Describe “The Formula” for prayer as described on page 161.

Chapter 14: After Prayer, What?

“You see, when you close your eyes, you are opening the inner eye of transcendence, that you may see from the highest point of view. The challenge is to keep this inner eye open beyond prayer...and that takes discipline. The need is not to set things right, but to see them rightly.”

1. Once you have prayed and declared a triumphant Amen!, what are your next steps?
2. How do you go about believing that your prayer activity will bring results?
3. We say timing is everything, but we usually blame the timing on God. Explain why this is backwards thinking.
4. Explain the difference between Facts and Truth.
5. When your mind wanders, how do you remind yourself to return to higher consciousness?

Prayer Practice

- Practice Listening.
- Practice “The Formula”.
- Write about your experience in your prayer journal.

As Faith in Action comes to a close:

Consider making a gentle commitment to continue your prayer practice and prayer journal. It need not be a duty, rather it is a gift to yourself.

Thank you for joining us this year, we will see you next October!