

the heartbeat of god

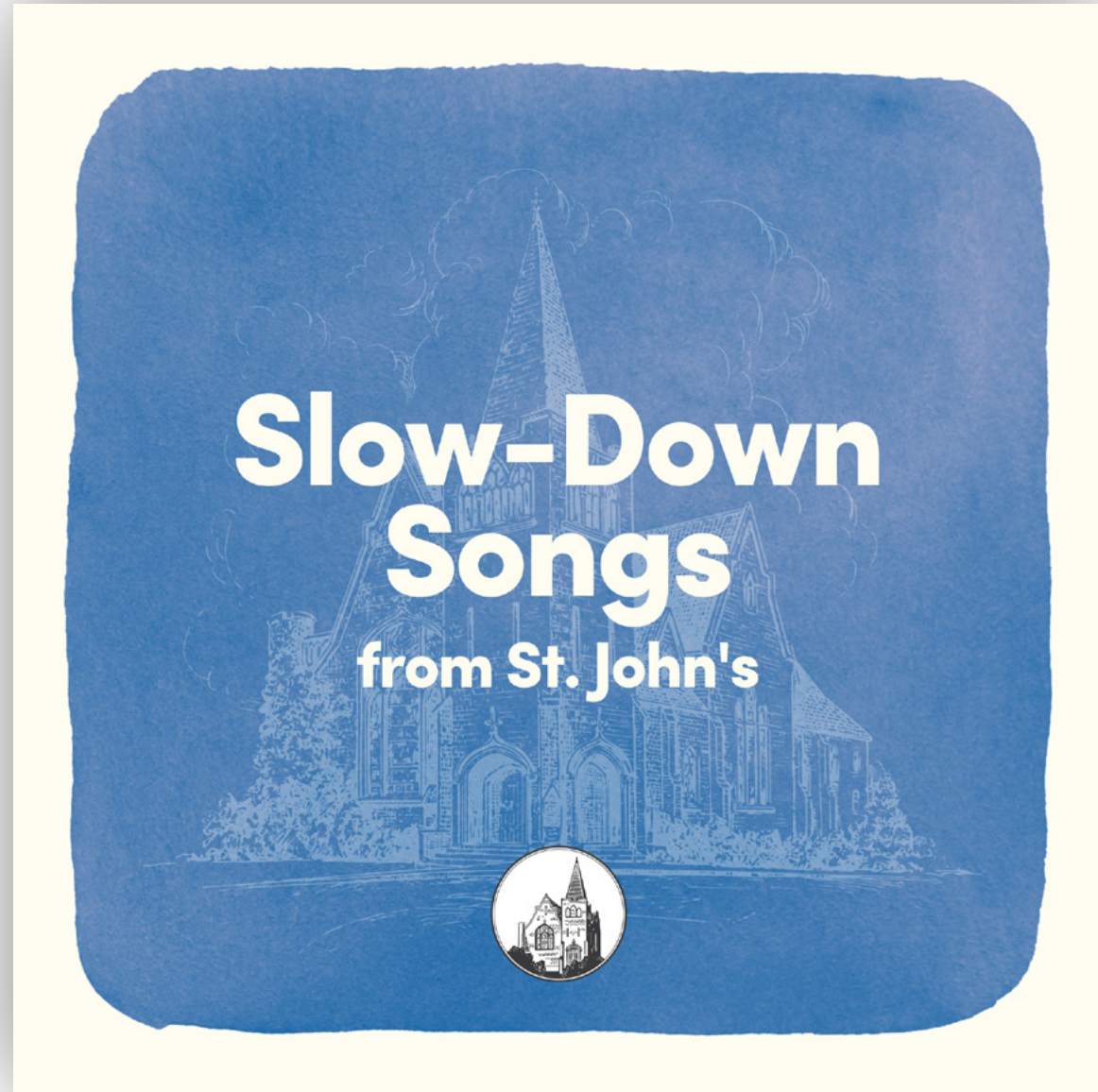
Our 2023 Lenten Journey

get into god's rhythm.

The Lent season is a time to reset and rejoin God
in the rhythm of life.

This booklet is filled with readings, reflections, and responses
that will help move your life in new directions
as we journey towards Christ's resurrection together.

Each week, you'll find a spiritual practice or activity
that we hope will settle and center your spirit
so you can bring more goodness
into your life and the lives of your family and friends.



let's listen together.

This Lent season, press play and slow life down with this playlist curated by our St. John's community. It's filled with a wide range of music that our folks have found calms them down and gives them peace.

Listen on Spotify

Scan this Spotify Code or search for "Slow-Down Songs from St. John's"



Listen on Apple Music

Scan this QR Code or search for "Slow-Down Songs from St. John's"



week 1

move slowly

FASTING FROM BUSYNESS

practice.

Walk the new Lake Street Labyrinth at the St. John's building, or take a slow, intentional walk without the distractions of cell phones or music.

- 1) Begin by noticing what you carry today: joy, pain, peace, stress.
- 2) Slowly walk forward, and with each step & breath, release what keeps you from being present.
- 3) As you walk, bring your attention to what you see, the sounds of each step, and the sensation of moving.
- 4) End your walk by naming something you're grateful for.

Jesus returned from the Jordan River full of the Holy Spirit, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. There he was tempted for forty days by the devil.

After finishing every temptation, the devil departed from him until the next opportunity.

Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news about him spread throughout the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

EXCERPTS FROM LUKE 4 (CEB)

reflect.

Where is God leading you next in life?
What is pulling your time and attention in other directions?
How can you pause to find new energy?

pray.

God of the Journey,
There is nothing you've made that you don't call good.
In our broken bodies exhausted by life, from the inside out, God, make us new.

week 2

eat mindfully

FASTING FROM CONSUMPTION

*He ate nothing during those days
and afterward Jesus was starving.*

*The devil said to him, "Since you are God's Son,
command this stone to become a loaf of bread."*

Jesus replied, "It's written, People won't live only by bread."

EXCERPTS FROM LUKE 4 (CEB)

practice.

Join us for a potluck on Sunday, March 5
after our worship service.

Turn your meals into a time of reflection
and slowing down by bringing some of the rituals
below into your dining routine.

- 1) Sit at a dining table rather than a couch or desk.
- 2) Say a blessing or prayer before your meal.
- 3) Imagine and consider the farms, animals, & hands
where your food comes from.
- 4) Take smaller bites.
- 5) Close your eyes to savor the taste.

reflect.

What was the best meal
you've ever had?

Recall a moment when you've been
desperate for food.

Imagine what it would be like
to get by with less than usual.

pray.

God of the Journey,
There is nothing you've made
that you don't call good.
In our ravenous greed
that feeds only our own egos,
from the inside out, God,
make us new.

week 3

find silence

FASTING FROM NOISE

*Early in the morning, well before sunrise,
Jesus rose and went to a deserted place
where he could be alone in prayer.*

*He remained outside in deserted places,
but people came to him from everywhere.*

EXCERPTS FROM MARK 1 (CEB)

practice.

Join us for Centering Prayer at Downtime Meditation
on Wednesday, March 15 at 7pm.

Or practice Centering Prayer at home
with this technique.

- 1) Select a word that symbolizes your desire to spend time with God (e.g. God, Jesus, Love, Hope, Peace, etc.)
- 2) Find a space where you can sit upright. Close your eyes and breathe in deeply through your nose.
- 3) Silently say your sacred word to yourself. When your mind wanders, gently repeat the word again.
- 4) After 15-20 minutes, conclude your time with a deep breath. Then, stretch and open your eyes.

reflect.

When is the last time you experienced pure silence?

How does silence make you feel?

Recall a moment when silence or a daydream led you to a new insight.

pray.

God of the Journey,
There is nothing you've made
that you don't call good.
In our loud lives
suffocated by noise,
from the inside out, God,
make us new.

week 4

seek beauty

FASTING FROM MONOTONY

practice.

Join us on Sunday, March 19
for a special hike through Golden Gate Park
led by our very own tourguide John Shrable!

We'll tour through:

- The AIDS Memorial Redwood Grove
- Shakespeare Garden
- Monarch Grove
- Stow Lake
- Conservatory of Flowers

To sign-up or if you have questions,
email Sam at sam@stjohnssf.org

*Let my whole being bless the Lord! Lord my God, how fantastic you are!
You are clothed in glory and grandeur!
You wear light like a robe; you open the skies like a curtain.
You build your lofty house on the waters;
you make the clouds your chariot, going around on the wings of the wind.
You make the winds your messengers; you make fire and flame your ministers.
You established the earth on its foundations so that it will never ever fall.
Lord, you have done so many things! You made them all so wisely!
The earth is full of your creations!
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I'm still alive.*

EXCERPTS FROM PSALM 104 (CEB)

reflect.

What is the most beautiful thing
you've ever seen?

Recall a moment you saw beauty
in an unexpected or difficult place.

How does beauty make you feel?

pray.

God of the Journey,
There is nothing you've made
that you don't call good.
In our frantic lives
that can't see the beauty around us,
from the inside out, God,
make us new.

week 5

offer gratitude

FASTING FROM ANXIETY

"Therefore, I say to you, don't worry about your life, what you'll eat or what you'll drink, or about your body, what you'll wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds in the sky. They don't sow seed or harvest grain or gather crops into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they are? Who among you by worrying can add a single moment to your life?"

Therefore, don't worry and say, 'What are we going to eat?' or 'What are we going to drink?' or 'What are we going to wear?' Gentiles long for all these things. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. Instead, desire first and foremost God's kingdom and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Therefore, stop worrying about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

EXCERPTS FROM MATTHEW 6 (CEB)

reflect.

What are you grateful for today?

Recall a moment someone said they were grateful for you.

How does expressing gratitude make you feel?

pray.

God of the Journey,
There is nothing that can ever
keep us from you.
Not sin. Not shame.
Not even death.
Through your unfailing love, God,
make us new.

practice.

End your day with the Examen Prayer, a Jesuit prayer from the 16th century.

- 1) Invite God to be with you and inspire your prayer time.
- 2) Review your day: the things you did, the people you met.
- 3) Offer gratitude for the blessings of the day. Thank God for the moments when you felt goodness and the moments you gave goodness to another.
- 4) Pray for the challenges and shortcomings of the day.
- 5) Look toward the day to come and ask for God's help in whatever may lie ahead.

