

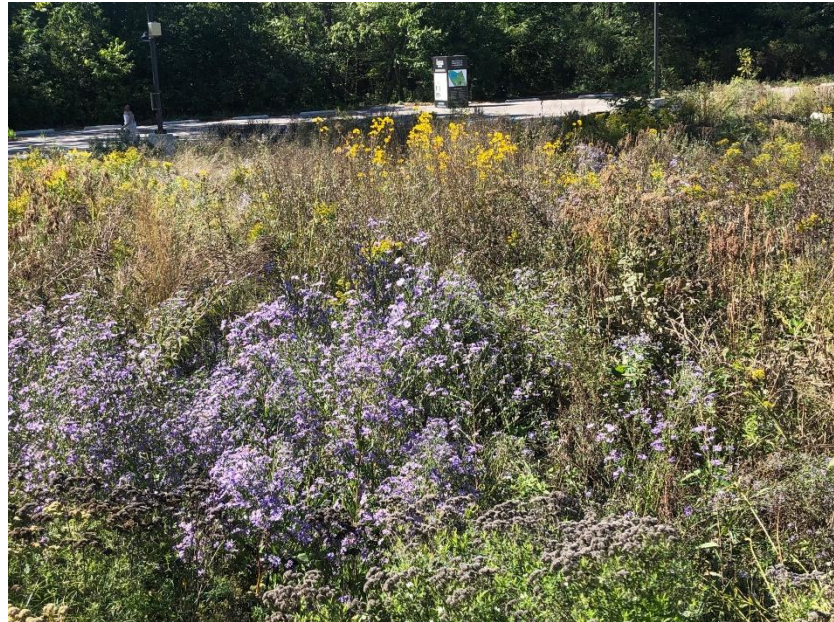
Living Water Guided Meditation and Prayer Walk

This meditation and prayer walk was created by the St. Thomas Aquinas Creation Care Ministry as a way to celebrate the 2026 Season of Creation theme “Living Water”. The walk was held on October 3, 2026 at the Virginia Fairbanks Art and Nature Park in Indianapolis, much of which is in a flood plain for the White River. Although the walk does refer to specific art installations (which are pictured in this guide), the meditations and prayers can also be used by themselves. You are invited to use this guide either virtually or (ideally) in a natural area with flowing water. It can be used for individual meditations or with a group.

Station 1

Theme: Gratitude

Location: Rain Garden



The Season of Creation is celebrated each year from September 1 to October 4. The theme for the 2026 Season of Creation, “Living Water”, is taken from Ezekiel 47:9, 12. In this passage, the prophet Ezekiel has a vision of water flowing from a new temple in a desert. The water, which begins as a trickle and becomes a deep river, transforms the dry, barren desert into a fertile delta. This living water brings healing, but in order to receive new life, we too must step into the water and become part of God’s river of life.

This rain garden is an example of how the flow of rain water can be gathered and naturally filtered, keeping the pollution that washes down from parking lots from entering the White River. It also sustains native plants which in turn, support local pollinators.

Like the raindrops that are gathered here to refresh and restore the dry ground, we gather here as part of God’s living water. We give thanks for the gift of water that nourishes the Earth, sustains every living creature, and refreshes our spirits. May we open our hearts to the joy found in God’s abundant, life-giving creation and renew our commitment to care for this precious gift.

Let us offer this Litany of Praise for the gift of water.

Litany of Praise

For the mountain streams and waterfalls:

We praise you for your gift of water

For the deep oceans and all the life within them:

We praise you for your gift of water

For the lakes and rivers that provide us with drinking water:

We praise you for your gift of water

For rain that brings life giving water:

We praise you for your gift of water

For the quiet pools and gentle streams that inspire us:

We praise you for your gift of water

(All) Sustaining God, create in us such a sense of wonder and delight in this and all your gifts that we might receive them with gratitude, care for them with love, and generously share them with all your creatures, to the honor and glory of your name. Amen.

Station 2

Theme: Change and Growth

Location: The White River



Take a few moments to watch the river flowing. Think about where the river came from and where it might be going. Rivers never really stay the same - they rise and fall, are sometimes placid and slow, sometimes racing along. They change what is around them - tumbling the rocks and making them smooth, wearing away rough edges on the banks, and sometimes carving new paths. They support life.

How are our lives like a river? Where have we come from and where are we going? How have we changed? How have we changed what is around us?

Imagine that you are a drop of water in this river. At this moment in time, you may know what has come before, but you don't know where you are going or what impact you have made or will make on the world around you. Perhaps you feel like you are only one little drop, too little to make a difference. But remember that you are part of God's living water and have your own part to play. May we be receptive to growth and the unpredictable journeys of life, like the meandering river that always finds its way to the ocean. And when you feel like your actions are too small to count, remember this prayer.

The Prayer of Oscar Romero

(This prayer was written by then-Fr. Ken Untener and often attributed to the story of Archbishop Oscar Romero.)

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view.

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,

It is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete,

Which is another way of saying that

The Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that should be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted,

Knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything,

And there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,

A step along the way,

An opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,

But that is the difference

Between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders,

Ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future that is not our own.

Station 3

Theme: Transformation

Location: "Oracle of Intimation" by Heather Hart (Yellow House)



Water is a force for change in our world. Ezekiel's vision is that of a new Eden, with living water transforming the dry land, bringing about change, making the polluted waters clean and the dead sea fresh and alive.

Water is transformative and is itself transformed through the water cycle. Did you know that water is the only substance on earth that naturally exists as a gas, liquid and solid? Water can be in the form of a gentle rain, snow blanketing the ground, glaciers that are hundreds of thousands of years old, a babbling brook. But sometimes, water comes in the form of downpours that come more often and last longer than they used to. It comes as meltwater from glaciers that, instead of nourishing communities, comes as a raging flood that destroys. It comes as a rising river that threatens the communities on its banks.

This yellow house looks like it has been flooded. The artist was reminded of the floods in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina and of people who needed to be rescued from rooftops. Imagine this house with water all around it. In fact, because this area is in the flood plain for the White River, this house was flooded during the recent Indianapolis floods.

We remember and silently pray for those who were impacted by the recent floods here in Indianapolis, the floods in Nepal, and for all those who suffer as a result of our broken relationship with Creation. We ask that the minds and hearts of local and global leaders be transformed so they will know humility and have courage in order to deal with the climate crisis that has contributed to flooding.

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul talks about transformation. He says, “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”

Let us pray together this Prayer of Transformation

Holy Spirit, renew my mind and transform the way I think and act. Help me recognize and resist the patterns of the world that keep me from living fully for you. Teach me to use my gifts in humility and love as part of the body of Christ. Let my life be marked by your wisdom, not my own limited perspective. Let me be transformed, that I may work to help bring about your kingdom. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Station 4

Theme: Relationship

Location: A quiet place in nature



In Laudato Si’, Pope Francis speaks about relationship - our relationship with God, with each other, and with Creation. He says that these three fundamental relationships are closely intertwined but are now broken.

For many of us, our relationship with Creation is a distant one. Most of us don’t grow our own food or spend much time outdoors. Even when we are outside, how much do we really notice? How often do we think about how Creation sustains us?

Now is your opportunity to take a few minutes to go off by yourself and really pay attention to something you observe in nature. Silently contemplate your relationship with God, with Creation, and with others. In the words of the poet Wendell Berry, I invite you to ...

Sit and be still
until in the time
of no rain you hear
beneath the dry wind's
commotion in the trees
the sound of flowing
water among the rocks,
a stream unheard before,
and you are where
breathing is prayer.

(From Sabbaths 2001 by Wendell Berry)

Let us pray together this Responsive Lord's Prayer and as we do, think again about our relationships with God, each other, and with Creation.

Responsive Lord's Prayer

(from Creation Justice Ministries Season of Creation 2026 Worship toolkit)

Leader: Our Father in heaven

People: You are also at home in the air, soil, forests and oceans

Leader: Hallowed be your name

People: By the care we take of your Creation

Leader: Your kingdom come

People: All that you see is good

Leader: Your will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven

People: Your will to till and care

Leader: Give us this day our daily bread

People: That all may have enough to live life in fullness

Leader: Forgive us our trespasses

People: Our greed, our exploitation, our lack of concern for other species and for future generations

Leader: As we forgive those who trespass against us

People: By reconciliation with justice and peace.

Leader: Lead us not into temptation

People: The temptation to equate dominion with exploitation

Leader: And deliver us from evil

People: The evil of destroying your gift of creation

Leader: For yours is the kingdom

People: Yours, Lord, not ours

Leader: The power and the glory

People: In the cross and resurrection

Leader: For ever and ever

People: You are the beginning and you are the end. Amen.

Station 5

Theme: Connection

Location: Stratum Pier -

Platform overlooking the lake



This lake fills a former quarry that was mined for gravel to make the nearby interstate highways. The White River can't be seen from here, but it wraps around the lake. There is a narrow strip of land that separates the river from the lake. When the river is high, as it was recently, water flows into the lake. That connection between the river and the lake helps to diminish flooding downstream.

As you look at the lake, think about how water connects us:

Water connects us to all life. It flows through all living things, moving in a continuous cycle across the globe.

Water connects us across time. The water you drink today was also there at the time of Christ, there while dinosaurs roamed the Earth and even before there was life on Earth.

Water connects us to our neighbors. Our communities rely on food and goods that are often shipped across the oceans.

Water connects us spiritually. The cleansing waters of baptism bring us to new life in Christ and unite us in one spiritual family.

We all need pure, clean water. But much of the world's water is contaminated by human and animal waste, fertilizers, pesticides, toxic byproducts from manufacturing, and plastics. Pollution and contamination travel without regard to borders. The World Health Organization estimates that 1 in 4 people globally do not have access to safe drinking water.

Ezekiel's vision of God's life-giving river flowing from the temple reminds us of the deep interconnectedness of all life and calls us to recognize the damage done to our Earth while embracing our shared responsibility for its care.

Discussion questions

- What are some concrete ways that we are connected to creation? To our local and global neighbors?
- How are those connections broken? How might they be strengthened?

(After the discussion, recite or listen to the song at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-S9XghDGlc&t=17s>)

Living Waters

(A Columban hymn for the Season of Creation, 2026)

From the sacred heart of the mountains
Down and spread through the streams
Then life springs out , Praising You loud

*God our Creator, Spirit moving
Living waters, Love overflows*

Your children, O Lord, are longing for You
Reaching out from the deep
We plead to You, Our hearts thirst for You

*God our Creator, Spirit moving
Living waters, Love overflows*

Give us ears to hear the cry of the earth
And the cry of your peoples
Lord, strengthen our faith as we work in your grace

*God our Creator, Spirit moving
Living waters, Love overflows*

Living waters, Love overflowing
Let us hear the cry of the earth

Station 6

Theme: Abundance and Scarcity

**Location: “This is NOT a Refuge”
by Anila Quayyum Agha**



Water is a precious resource. We who are blessed with easy access to plentiful, clean water take it for granted. We give little thought to how much water we use in our daily activities. Others do not have that luxury.

Water scarcity is an increasingly urgent problem. Climate change is affecting precipitation patterns, glaciers are melting, and increasing temperatures are drying up lakes and reservoirs. At the same time, consumption is increasing due to resource-intensive industries, leaking infrastructure, and inefficient practices.

Changing weather patterns, floods, droughts and long-term water scarcity often force people to leave their homes and seek refuge somewhere else. Today there are already conflicts over dwindling water resources that are likely to get worse. In the future, rising sea levels will inundate coastal communities and contaminate fresh water. What will happen to the refugees?

This art installation is titled "This is NOT a refuge". What appears to be a refuge actually offers little protection. What does offer protection? How can we be a place of refuge for those in need?

Prayer for Refugees, by Bradon Muilenberg

Oh God our refuge, be with all who flee war, violence, and oppression. Help us be brave enough to step out of our comfort zone and be with them too. Give us grace to stand alongside them without being swayed by a world that can be full of xenophobia, racism, hatred, hostility and fear.

Let us see our neighbors as real neighbors. Allow us to see it as a great privilege if, like the Good Samaritan, we have any opportunity to offer help, to bind up the wounds of violence and to provide a safe place for someone to stay and heal. Help us to love our exiled neighbors as ourselves.

Give us courage to stand against violence in all its forms; and alongside widows, orphans and strangers. Even if all the governments of this world turn against them, let us, your Church, be those who never turn our backs on them. Amen

Station 7

Theme: Repentance and Renewal

Location: "Park of the Laments"

by Alfredo Jaar



We are grateful for the precious gift of water. All life depends on water. It connects us to our neighbors and connects us spiritually through Baptism. It can transform the dry land into a fertile garden. But this precious gift has been wasted, taken for granted, and polluted. Many of our brothers and sisters do not have clean water to drink. Some are forced to leave their homes because of droughts and floods caused by a changing climate.

We are entering into the Park of the Laments. What is a lament? It is a cry of grief and sorrow. We cry out to the Lord, and ask for forgiveness. While in the tunnel, we pray ...

Penitential Rite

For the times we have wasted water;

Lord, forgive us.

For the times we have thoughtlessly polluted your life giving water;

Lord, forgive us.

For the times when we have taken for granted the abundance of water;

Lord, forgive us.

For the times when we failed to realize how our over-consumption of natural resources affects the poor and vulnerable populations in the world;

Lord, forgive us.

For the times when we closed our eyes to the sufferings of our brothers and sisters;

Lord, forgive us.

For the times when we let our fear and despair lead us to apathy;

Lord, forgive us.

For the times when we lacked the courage to speak out against injustice;

Lord, forgive us.

And as we rise from the tunnel into the park, we pray ...



God and Lord, Giver of Life, give us the waters of new life.

In the deserts of our lives, in the wilderness within:

Give us the waters of new life.

To give us hope when our lives run dry, to give us strength when our world seems barren:

Give us the waters of new life.

To let peace flow like a river and love spring forth like a fountain:

Give us the waters of new life.

To make justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a living stream:

Give us the waters of new life.

To give us - and our world - a second chance and a new beginning:

God, give us the waters of new life.

Creator God, your gift of water brings life and freshness to the earth; it washes away our sins and brings us eternal life. You made the water of baptism holy by Christ's baptism in the Jordan: by it you give us a new birth and renew us in holiness. Lord, in your mercy give us living water, always springing up as a fountain of salvation. Grant this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Take a few moments to reflect on or discuss what you have heard today. What will you take away from this meditation and prayer walk?

The rocks in the tunnel represent our burdens, our fears, our despair. As you return through the tunnel, leave your fears behind and step into the water of God's love. Be part of the River of Transformation for the world, the healing and renewal of Creation.

Closing prayer:

Living Water prayer (from Season of Creation Celebration Guide)

Holy God, whose Spirit hovered over the waters at the beginning, we gather as part of your community of all creation, thirsty for your grace. We give thanks for the gift of water, the veins of our common home, that sustains the cedar and the whale, the pasture and the city. We are grateful for the local waters that nourish our homelands and our fellow creatures. We give thanks that in your well-watered garden, every drop is a sacred testament to your love.

Yet, we confess that we have treated this gift as a mere commodity. We have choked the seas with our waste and watched the warming tides rise in judgment. We lament the cracked earth of the drought-stricken and the salty tears of the climate refugee. Melt our frozen hearts, O God, and let the waters of repentance flow.

Lord of all Life, you promised that wherever the river flows, everything shall live. Stir in us a calling to care for the waters — to protect the watershed, defend the rights of water, and honor the dignity of the thirsty. May your Word be a spring within us, gushing forth for the healing of the nations.

May God our Father who brought water from the rock sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord who is Living Water refresh us for the work of restoration. And may the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen.