

Opening Prayers

God of All.

Creator of everything.

From that which is invisible to the naked eye, to the vastness of the galaxies.

Your beauty shines through in the twinkling of the stars.

Your attention to detail in the delicate wings of a butterfly.

Your tender fragility and femininity in the soft spring blossoms.

Your sense of fun in the call of the guinea fowl early in the morning.

You are perfect giving, and perfect receiving.

Perfect meekness, and perfect power.

Perfectly hidden, and perfectly revealed.

You know perfectly when to act, and when to be still.

You are perfectly within us, and perfectly outside of us- in the joys and celebrations of this world, even more so in its pain and struggles.

You are perfect Love.

And you love us with all our many imperfections. Show us how to love, oh God.

Forgive us when we have not looked for you in the sinful, tragic, painful places around us.

For denying your love when we have looked past outsiders.

For our acts of violence towards others when we have excluded them.

For slamming shut your door of healing on so many.

For avoiding the untouchable, and the untouched.

For deciding who are your beloved, and who are not.

God of All, forgive us.

Lord, we hear your invitation to the sacred space of Oneness- One with you, One with your creation, and right now, especially One with our neighbour.

And we answer yes.

Break down the stuff in us that stops us from being one with those we don't like or agree with.

Help us to trust in the truth of our Oneness in you.

Lead us into the waters of your suffering love, a journey we know will bring pain, as it did for you.

Help us to let go of ourselves completely, knowing that when we have emptied ourselves, you will perfectly restore us.

And when it feels like it has become too painful for us to care, when we are numb in despair and helplessness, when we have no words, but only tears, we lean into you as you share the heartache of a gutted world.

Give us your strength in our fragility, weakness, brokenness and failures.

Give us your strength to not avoid the struggle of loving others, to not try and sidestep the anguish of what it means to live as One.

As we walk in your garden of grace and see the promise of new life and hope in the green buds and pink blossoms, we too want to grow. But we know for growth to be true and meaningful, there is usually pain. May we not shy away from this pain, but rather embrace it. Because it is an exquisite pain- the more we touch it, the more it is soothed. Soothed by the healing balm that is Jesus.

Lord, you are our Being.

You are the deepest flow of life.

You are the air we breathe. Our small minds cannot understand this mystery.

And so, we just breathe it in.

As we breathe out, may we breathe shalom, love, forgiveness, truth, mercy.

May we know that we, and every other person in this world, are held by the eternal embrace of the God of All.