

Breathe

... **BECAUSE I AM**

In this season of uncertainty, one thing is certain. Jesus is alive and the only answer for our time. His death and resurrection prove he was who he said he was and that everything he said was true. Through the power of his Spirit, Jesus is with us. He is our help and our hope. Whatever concerns we may have or circumstances we may find ourselves in, Jesus invites us to come to him, breathe, and embrace his words: I AM.

As we enter into this week of prayer, each day focuses on one of Jesus's I AM statements with reflection questions to draw us closer to Jesus and listen to what he may be saying to us about who he is, who we are, and how he is inviting us to respond to his nudging.

A guided breath prayer and an image for visio divina are included to provide sacred space for us to be still with Jesus around each day's I AM prayer.

May you meet Jesus in a special way this week.

ABOUT BREATH PRAYERS

Nothing is more refreshing than a deep breath to refresh and calm the body, mind, and spirit. When prayer is added to this practice, we create a holy moment where we can become aware of how close God is to us.

Followers of Christ have been saying breath prayers for centuries. These prayers turn our hearts and minds toward God, allowing him to restore our souls in a moment of meditation or petition.

To practice breath prayer, breathe in as you whisper the first part of a phrase or verse (or silently say it in your head), then breathe out as you whisper the rest of the phrase or verse.

For Example:

SPEAK, LORD (*inhale*) ... your servant is listening (*exhale*).

JESUS SON OF GOD (*inhale*) ... have mercy on me (*exhale*).

I AM ANXIOUS (*inhale*) ... but my trust is in you (*exhale*).

ABOUT VISIO DIVINA

Visio divina, or “sacred seeing,” is another prayer practice that has been around for centuries. It involves allowing our hearts, minds, and imaginations to prayerfully enter into an image to see what God may stir or wish to say to us.

The steps for this practice are simply:

- Open your heart and mind, and ask God to guide your experience.
- Take a first look at the image.
 - Notice what you notice, what stirs within you.
- Take a second look and look more deeply.
 - What do you notice about your reactions? What draws you? What repels you? What intrigues you? What emotions are stirred?
- Reflect on or journal what has surfaced for you before God.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you consider what God may be saying to you.
 - Is there an invitation or something you wish to say to God?
- Thank God for your time together.

Bio | **Tammy Long is co-lead pastor of South Bay Community Church in Fremont, California.**

She is an ordained minister with the Evangelical Covenant Church, a trained spiritual director, and a writer. She has a master’s degree in education from Cal State East Bay and a master’s degree in Christian formation from North Park Theological Seminary.



Tammy is passionate about seeing people connect with God and grow deeper in love with the Trinity, both individually and in community. Whether through preaching, teaching, spiritual direction, facilitating a small group, or leading a retreat, Tammy finds her deepest joy in walking alongside others as they draw closer to the heart of God to experience spiritual transformation.

She enjoys reading, movies, traveling, yoga, being in nature, and spending time with her husband, adult children, and grandchildren.



BREATH PRAYER

Jesus, the way,
truth, and life

May I be your
witness today.

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE PRAYER

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." JOHN 14:6, NRSV

The disciples are facing Jesus's imminent departure. Jesus tries to prepare and comfort them, but they are filled with questions: Why are you leaving us? Aren't we supposed to be following you? How do we know the way? Jesus explains where he is going and that he will return when everything is ready (John 14:1-3), but they are confused and afraid.

Confusion, loss of meaning, uncertainty, and fear of what looms ahead has plagued humans throughout history, and Jesus offers us the same response he gave the disciples: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." Jesus addresses the deepest questions of the universe: Is there a God? How can we know him? Do we live forever? And how can we truly live with God, one another, and ourselves in peace, harmony, and love?

The answer? Jesus is the way to God, he guides us in the truth of God, and he offers us abundant and eternal life with God.

And yet, the world resists. The world scoffs at the idea that there is only one way to God. The world seeks to define abundant life by its own terms. But Jesus's death and resurrection verified everything he ever said. His disciples eventually understood, and followers of Jesus have been his witnesses ever since.

As the world searches for meaning, purpose, and peace, **Jesus's invitation remains the same: Follow me.** I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

For Reflection

- Do you believe Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life? Have you put your trust in him? (You can today!)
- Who in your sphere needs to know the truth about Jesus?

Contemplate the image and reflect.

- _____ **CENTER** your body and mind to be with Jesus.
- _____ **VISUALIZE** someone(s) in need of the truth about Jesus.
- _____ **SLOWLY INHALE**, "Jesus, the way, truth, and life."
- _____ **SLOWLY EXHALE**, "May I be your witness today."
- _____ **REPEAT** the breath prayer until you feel Jesus's peace.
- _____ **LOOK AND LISTEN** for ways to share the truth about Jesus today.