



Shaped by the Story

The Return from Exile and the Virtue of Hope

August 3, 2025

*Hope has two beautiful daughters: their names are Anger and Courage.
Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are.*
Augustin of Hippo

The [person] of hope... lives in the belief that God is good, even when life is bad.
Thomas Merton

The Hope of Heaven

"As Above, So Below"

*As above, so below, on the earth as in the heavens,
Till your Kingdom comes in love, so below, as above.
As in Christ, so in me. Born beloved of the Father,
Called to selfless sacrifice. So, in me as in Christ.*

*Far beyond the struggles of each moment,
There is hope for those who believe.
Hope that lifts our spirits up to heaven,
Hope that helps our hearts to perceive.*

Seeking Hope (with Sung Response)

Psalm 33:20-22, 42:5, 130:5, 130:7, 142:5, 31:24

*Our souls wait for the LORD; He is our help and our shield.
In Him our hearts rejoice.
Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.*

*Wait for the LORD, whose day is near.
Wait for the LORD, be strong, take heart.*

*Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise God,
my salvation and my God.*

*Wait for the LORD, whose day is near.
Wait for the LORD, be strong, take heart.*

*I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in His word I hope.*

*With the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with Him is great power to redeem.*

*Wait for the LORD, whose day is near.
Wait for the LORD, be strong, take heart.*

*You are my refuge and my portion
in the land of the living.*

*Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
all you who hope in the Lord.*

Wait for the LORD, whose day is near.

Wait for the LORD, be strong, take heart.

The Call to Hope

based on Jeremiah 29:10–12 and Lamentations 3:21–25

This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

***The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end.***

*They are new every morning;
great is Your faithfulness.*

***"The LORD is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore I will hope in Him."***

*The LORD is good to those who wait for Him,
to the soul that seeks Him.*

***It is good that one should hope and wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.***

Thus says the LORD:

*"When seventy years are completed for Babylon,
I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise
and bring you back to this place."*

***"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD,
"plans for your well-being and not for harm,
to give you a future with hope."***

*Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me,
and I will hear you.*

***You will seek Me and find Me,
when you search for Me with all your heart.***

*Let us wait upon the LORD,
for His mercies never fail,
and His promises are sure.*

***We walk in exile,
but not without hope.***

***We wait in silence,
but not without promise.***

***We are held by the God
who brings us home.***

Resting in God

Psalm 131

***My heart is not raised up too high,
My eyes don't search beyond the sky.
I do not seek what can't be known,
Nor fret myself over mysteries.***

***But I have calmed and soothed my soul,
Like a child at rest in its mother's arms;
Like this child sleeping by my side,
My soul, in God, knows peace and calm.***

*All you who love and trust your God,
In this God shall you put your hope;
For there you'll find unfailing love,
From this time forth, and forever more.*

Meditation

Guided Prayer

Song of Response

"Be at Peace My Child"

*Be at peace my child, I am closer than you know.
Be at peace my child, I am here.
Be at peace my child, for I never will forsake you.
Let fears and longings cease,
Be at peace.*

Centering in God

During these minutes of silence, simply rest in God's abiding and loving presence in this moment. You are in God and God is in you. Just be and relax. Center your attention in your heart and imagine your breath flowing in and out from your heart area. If it helps you to center, use a sacred prayer word such as Abba, Spirit, Jesus, Beloved, Light, or Love.

The Source of Hope

"The Lord is my Song"

*The LORD is my song, the LORD is my praise:
All my hope comes from God.
The LORD is my song, the LORD is my praise:
God, the wellspring of life.*

Receiving Holy Communion

The Hope of Heaven

"As Above, So Below"

*Far beyond the struggles of each moment,
There is hope for those who believe.
Hope that lifts our spirits up to heaven,
Hope that helps our hearts to perceive.*

*As above, so below, on the earth as in the heavens,
Till your Kingdom comes in love, so below, as above.
As in Christ, so in me. Born beloved of the Father,
Called to selfless sacrifice. So, in me as in Christ.*

Receiving a Good Word



Our Staff

Haley Brown – Associate Director of The Anchor House

Courtney Garrison – Ministry Assistant

Christian Ibanez – AV Production

Peter Johns – Associate Director of Contemplative Worship

Zachary Montasser – Violinist

Nick Cavazos – AV Production

Rev. Rachel Sciretti – Associate Pastor

Rev. Dr. Michael Sciretti, Jr. – Pastor of The Center

Today's Music

'As Above, So Below' – Peter Johns, *'Wait for the Lord'* – Jacques Berthier,
'Psalm 131' – Maggie Dawn, *'Be At Peace My Child'* – Peter Johns, *'The Lord Is My Song'* – Jacques Berthier

For information about The Center for Christian Spirituality and upcoming events, visit:
www.TheCenterFCS.org.

Please register your presence in the notebooks in the foyer.

Creative Space

Saturday, August 9 | The Anchor House | 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Creative Space is a nurturing, encouraging gathering of people who come together to create art and spend time in personal reflection. You will get an opportunity to explore spirituality through creative expression, as well as to be creative in a setting that is intentionally designed to enhance the spiritual. Materials are provided and everyone is welcome. No reservation is required.

Community Gathering and Potluck

Sunday, August 17 | The Anchor House | Immediately following worship

Join us for a community gathering and potluck in The Anchor House for a time of fellowship. Bring a favorite sweet or savory dish to share.

SoulCollage: Open Studio

Sunday, August 17 | The Anchor House | 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Price Varies

This is a three hour immersion in card making. Come and dwell in a creative space and allow your imagination to lead you as you come to know yourself in new and deeper ways! (An introduction is offered for newcomers). Please register by Friday, August 15.



Surprise of Living: Praying with the Saints and Mystics

Begins Saturday, August 23 | The Anchor House | 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | \$40

Abraham Joshua Heschel once called prayer "our humble answer to the inconceivable surprise of living". In this class led by Dylan Cumberland, we will use the lives of saints and mystics from the past to explore the prayer practices they are most associated with. Join us for this four week class as we discuss Visio Divina, Lectio Divina, Imaginative Prayer, and Ora et Labora (work as prayer). Each class will have optional free time to explore the practices at The Anchor House till Noon.



Save the Date October 3 – 5: Hope in Focus with Steve Pavey

Steve Pavey is a photographer, a contemplative, a storyteller, a cultural organizer – all of which come together in the vocation of cultivating a way to see, in order to bear witness to the world both as it is, and as it could be. Join us for a weekend to focus on hope – the hope we must live into of re-connection with ourselves, with each other, and the more-than-human world around us.

Friday, October 3rd – "A Long Loving Look at the Real": Artist's Talk and Visio Divina Practice 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 4th - "The Gate of Heaven is Everywhere": Guided Retreat with Photography 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 5th – Special Worship Service and Q&A with Artist 8:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Holding One Another in the Light

As our commitment to one another deepens, we want to be able to pray for one another – bearing burdens and joining in celebrations. Here is how to participate:

1. Make a request for prayer or thanksgiving using the QR link or go to thecenterfcs.org
2. Opt in to receive the weekly prayer list by emailing Rachel at rscoretti@chapelwood.org.
3. Then spend time holding one another in the Light.



Giving to The Center

We invite you to financially give to The Center in response to what you have received today or throughout our contemplative offerings. Using the QR code will take you to a page where you can make a one-time offering or recurring gift. Thank you for your contribution and investment.

