

# **Embodied Grace — Synod Assembly Workshop**

## **Opening**

Good morning. Thank you for being here. (Self – Introduction)

This workshop is called “Yoga Church,” though that name does not quite fit. The name that feels most true is **Embodied Grace** — the weaving of two traditions: yoga with the contemplative heart of Christian mysticism, inviting body and spirit to awaken together to the nearness of God.

## **Why Christian Mysticism?**

The mystics remind us that God is already present, grace is not earned, silence is holy, and transformation happens from the inside out.

Teresa of Ávila described the soul as a dwelling place for God.

John of the Cross taught that God works even in our darkness.

Isaac of Nineveh insisted that God’s compassion is not defeated by our brokenness.

Meister Eckhart said, God is at home. It is we who have gone out for a walk.

These voices remind us that spiritual life is not about striving — it is about awakening.

## **Why Yoga?**

Yoga is not merely exercise. It is a philosophy of embodied awareness — a way of listening to the wisdom of the body. Yoga is a bridge — a way for us to discover where we are. Yoga helps people notice where they are tense, tired, afraid, or longing for God. Yoga, at its best, is also a practice of awakening: awakening to breath, to presence, to the truth that we are held.

In Embodied Grace, we practice yoga that is accessible, invitational, and grounded in grace guided by Christian mysticism.

## **Embodied Grace - Sample Yoga Practice**

Warm up: Carpenters “On Top of The World.” – community building

Yoga: We light a candle — a symbol of the Light that has never left us.  
And we ring a bell — a call to arrive, to awaken, to listen.

### **1. Breath Prayer in Lungs + Stomach**

Chair: Sit tall, feet grounded.

Standing: Feet hip-width, knees soft.

Mat: Sit or kneel comfortably.

Hands on belly and ribs.

Inhale into the stomach, then the lungs.

Exhale slowly.

Prayer phrase:

Inhale: “Receive.”

Exhale: “Release.”

### **2. Shoulder Release + Gentle Groove**

Chair: Shoulder rolls, torso sway, optional arm sweeps.

Standing: Add gentle weight shift side to side.

Mat: Sit tall or kneel; same movements.

Cue: Let movement be easy. Let joy be simple.

### **3. Mountain + Subtle Rocking**

Chair: Gentle rock forward/back with breath.

Standing: Rock from heels to toes.

Mat: Seated pelvic rocking.

Cue: Imagine breath as dawn light slowly filling the body—nothing rushed, nothing demanded.

### **4. Side Body Opening**

Chair: One arm up, lean gently.

Standing: Same, feet grounded.

Mat: Seated side stretch.

Cue: Expand my heart... make room for grace

## **5. Gentle Twist**

Chair: Inhale lengthen, exhale twist.

Standing: Hands on hips or heart, gentle torso twist.

Mat: Seated twist.

Prayer phrase: "God, turn me toward what gives life."

## **6. Goddess + Warrior II + Reverse Warrior II**

Goddess Base

Chair: Sit toward the front, feet wide, toes out.

Standing: Wide stance, soft knees, bent knee.

Mat: Same as standing.

Warrior II Arms

Extend arms wide.

Gaze over front fingertips.

Reverse Warrior II (all positions)

Chair: Keep legs wide. Slide back hand down the chair or thigh. Lift front arm up and back in a gentle arc.

Standing: Front knee soft. Back hand slides down back leg. Front arm reaches up and back.

Mat: Same as standing.

Cue: Let the heart lift without strain. Let grace rise where effort softens.

## **7. Hamstring Extension**

Chair: Extend one leg, flex/point foot.

Standing: Heel forward, toes up, spine tall.

Mat: Seated leg extension.

Release what the night held. Make room for what the morning brings.

## **8. Closing Breath with Hands Over Heart**

Inhale deeply  
Exhale slowly

Cue: Beloved

### **Savasana**

Chair: Lean back, fully supported.

Standing: Soft knees, hands over heart.

Mat: Recline or lie down.

Cue: Let breath move without managing it.  
Let the whole body rest in grace.

### **Meditation: Catherine of Siena**

Imagine a quiet flame glowing at the center of your being — the place Catherine of Siena called the “cell (space) of self-knowledge,” where we meet God and discover who we truly are.

With each inhale, feel that flame brighten.

With each exhale, feel fear loosen its grip.

Hear Catherine’s wisdom: ‘Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire.’

Not by striving.

Not by perfection.

But by “letting Love rise within you.”

Silence

### **Closing**

We ring the bell once more — a reminder that awakening continues beyond this moment.

We extinguish the candle, trusting the Light remains within us.

Thank you for sharing this space of grace. Namaste (Benediction)

**Circle Time: QUESTIONS**