



Week 4 | January | Stillness of Winter

In the Christian liturgical calendar, the year opens... To celebrate the miracle of the unheralded everyday, to lift up those unadorned hours of our lives that beg no attention but quietly, certainly, invite in the sacred.

- Read Psalms 8, 19, 33, 136
- Read 1 Kings 19:1-21
- Read Stillness of Winter, pp 129-156  
(*Blessed be January to Recipe Box*)

The *Count-Your-Blessings Calendar* offers a short-course curriculum in paying attention, slowing time, fine-tuning your gaze on the gifts of the season of deepening stillness. Embracing the cold days, long winter evenings and winter rhythm brings the opportunity to become

aware of the wonder of the newborn year and hear the call to the holy. May we each quiet our minds in order to notice the blessings before and around us – may some come in the form of cozy comforts!

Discussion/journal prompts –

1. For the Psalmist, the moon sparks wonder at God’s power. The Message Bible says it this way, “I look up at your macro-skies, dark and enormous, your handmade sky-jewelry, Moon and stars mounted in their settings. Then I look at my micro-self and wonder, Why do you bother with us?” (Psalm 8:3-4). When you see the various phases of the moon, do you respond in wonder?
2. Do you remember the last big winter storm you experienced? Were there snowbanks piled high, or ice weighing down tree branches? Describe what you saw and how you weathered the storm.
3. The bright red color of the cardinal, especially when spotted in a snowy landscape, *shatters all that’s bleak, shouts: ‘There is life where you are doubting.’* Do you ever notice the bright red cardinal outside? What else do you see or observe that serves as a reminder of hope and promise?
4. Our book suggests an early morning rise, *to open your ears, open your soul*. Are you an early riser? If not, when do you find quiet during your day? What is it you hear, in the quiet?
5. During the month of January, what are your favorite comfort foods? What tastes do you associate with this time of year?
6. Everyone has a *no-fail, last-ditch, best-hope-of-filling-a-hole-in-a-heart-by-way-of-the-belly* meal. What’s yours?

Before next week, read *Stillness of Winter* pp 162-178 (February Field Notes to Survival).