You are invited to attend The Clearing, a contemplative worship experience held the 2nd Saturday of every month at the

**Vineyard Church of Augusta**  
**3126 Parrish Rd., Augusta GA  30907**  
**9-10 am**

The next Clearing will be held on:

**Saturday, September 12th**

Childcare is not available at this time.

Please join us as we rest from the noise and busyness of life. Prayer prompts and Scripture meditation exercises are offered as an invitation to be still in God’s presence.

Questions? Please contact:  
Michelle Bauer  
706.863.9766  
michelle@vineyardaugusta.org
Looking for a place to call home?

Join us Sundays @ 10 AM
In person or online at Facebook Live
Vineyard Church of Augusta

Nursery through middle school ministry at each celebration.

Small group opportunities throughout the week.

For more information, please call 706.863.9766
or go online: vineyardaugusta.org

3126 Parrish Rd., Augusta, GA
Sowing Seed

September 2020
Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your strength.
Deuteronomy 6:5

So many times we hear this familiar verse as a command – something to be obeyed. But what if we heard it as an invitation? God, who loves you with all of his heart, soul and strength, is inviting you to love him back. That changes everything!

If your desire is to accept this divine invitation then we must begin to prepare our hearts and souls and bodies for the task of loving well. For many, it is easier to think about strengthening our bodies than it is our souls. We are grateful for the treadmills, classes, pools, courts and instructors that provide opportunities to build muscle and condition our cardiovascular systems. If we aren’t careful, though, our souls are left behind.

This series of booklets has been designed as tool to care for your soul. Or better yet, as a tool that will allow God to care for your soul. When you are able, find a few moments in a quiet space to talk with and listen to God. We trust that God will be waiting to meet you there.

If you would like to talk with someone about your faith or would like someone to pray for you, you are invited to send an email to prayer@vineyardaugusta.org.
Sowing Seed

God is always at work in our lives – loving, teaching, guiding, and correcting. The Parable of the Sower uses the metaphor of seed and soil to help us understand why we aren’t always able to hear his voice or put what he shows us into practice.

Forming a close relationship with Jesus is a two way street – he initiates by scattering the seed and then waits for us to respond. Is the soil of your soul ready to receive him?
Matthew 13: 1-9 and 18-23

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. 3 Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 9 He who has ears, let him hear.”

18 “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. 22 The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. 23 But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”
When you are able, find a quiet spot where you can spend a few moments alone with God.

**Quiet**
Once you have found a comfortable place, spend a few moments in silence. Take a few deep breaths and feel your body begin to relax. When you feel your mind becoming quiet, offer a simple prayer to God, thanking him for his presence and inviting him to speak to you.

**Read**
Slowly read through Matthew 13: 1-9 and 18-23.

*The complete text of this passage is included at the beginning of this booklet.*

**Ponder**
Sunday: Farmers put in long days of hard work. However, even all of their effort doesn’t make their crops grow. What does this teach us about rest?

Monday: What is the largest crowd you’ve ever been a part of? How did it feel to be one person among so many? What was the mood of the crowd and how did that effect your experience? Take a moment and imagine the crowd Jesus finds himself in. What do you think Jesus might have felt as he stood in this crowd?

Tuesday: A parable is a story with a deeper meaning. Jesus used a lot of parables as he taught those who followed him. What does this tell you about Jesus? Do you like to garden or work in your yard? How does the story about a farmer relate to you? If Jesus was going to write a parable specifically for you, what would he use as the premise?
Wednesday: Talk to God about a time when you felt like your efforts to accomplish something were eaten by the birds. What did you feel about that experience then? How do you feel about it now?

Thursday: What about the gospel or the kingdom do you struggle to understand? What do you do with your questions or confusion? Has that been an effective strategy?

Friday: The parable describes a path in the middle of the field. A path is a trail packed down hard over time. Where are the hard places in your heart? How did they get there? If you are ready, spend some time today releasing those places into the Spirit’s care.

Saturday: Is there something you’ve heard about God or how he works that seems too good to be true? Talk to him about those things and ask him to soften your heart to believe.

**Quiet**
Offer your ponderings to God and ask him to speak to you.

**Pray**
Offer a prayer in words to God. Thank him for his presence. Express your desire to experience his presence in an even deeper way.

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*Leave this quiet time trusting that the Spirit is at work in you.*
Week Two
Sunday, September 6th – Saturday, September 12th

When you are able, find a quiet spot where you can spend a few moments alone with God.

Quiet
Once you have found a comfortable place, spend a few moments in silence. Take a few deep breaths and feel your body begin to relax. When you feel your mind becoming quiet, offer a simple prayer to God, thanking him for his presence and inviting him to speak to you.

Read
Slowly read through Matthew 13: 1-9 and 18-23.

The complete text of this passage is included at the beginning of this booklet.

Ponder
Sunday: This week we will focus on the effects of the sun. Today, though, you are invited to find a shady spot. Where do you go when the sun is too strong? What brings you rest and refreshment when the things of your life get too uncomfortable?

Monday: An important step in preparing a field for planting is removing the rocks. Ask the Spirit to show you where the “rocks” are in the field of your life. What are the things - relationships, beliefs, wounds - that keep you from growing? Perhaps you’d like to make a list of them somewhere – your journal, a piece of paper, or this booklet?

Tuesday: Look back at the list of “rocks” you made yesterday. How did they get there? Which “rock” came first? Which feels like the biggest? Which seems like the most difficult to dig out?
Wednesday: Pick one of the “rocks” from the list you made on Monday and ask Jesus to look at it with you. Experiment with just looking at it – no talking or asking, just looking. What do you sense Jesus telling you or showing you about this “rock”?

Thursday: The rocks and the sun work together to scorch the seeds. What is the “sun” in your life right now? What relationship, circumstance, health condition or other thing makes your life difficult today?

Friday: How does the description of the person in verses 20 and 21 fit you? Talk to God about a time when your joy was cut short by difficult circumstances?

Saturday: Roots are the strength of a plant or tree. Ask the Spirit to tell you about your root system. Is it deep enough? Does it need to be strengthened? Has it been damaged? Ask him to help you build the root structure you will need to sustain joy and continued growth.

**Quiet**
Offer your ponderings to God and ask him to speak to you.

**Pray**
Offer a prayer in words to God. Thank him for his presence. Express your desire to experience his presence in an even deeper way.

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*Leave this quiet time trusting that the Spirit is at work in you.*
Week Three  
Sunday, September 13\textsuperscript{th} – Saturday, September 19\textsuperscript{th}

When you are able, find a quiet spot where you can spend a few moments alone with God.

\textbf{Quiet}  
Once you have found a comfortable place, spend a few moments in silence. Take a few deep breaths and feel your body begin to relax. When you feel your mind becoming quiet, offer a simple prayer to God, thanking him for his presence and inviting him to speak to you.

\textbf{Read}  
Slowly read through Matthew 13: 1-9 and 18-23.

\textit{The complete text of this passage is included at the beginning of this booklet.}

\textbf{Ponder}  
Sunday: What worry would you like to rest from today? Are you able to imagine yourself handing over this issue to God? Is it easy or hard? What feelings does this bring up in you?

Monday: Thorny weeds are a hard reality of life. No garden or field is exempt. Jesus tells the disciples that the thorns represent worry and the lies that we believe about wealth and living a life of luxury. What are you the most tempted to worry about? When did this worry enter your life? What have you done to try to remove this weed? How successful have you been?

Tuesday: In what ways is worry choking the life out of your “plant”? Ask the Spirit to give you a vision of what a life free of worry would look like.

Wednesday: The parable describes a plant that is not necessarily dead but unfruitful. What areas of your life are living but not producing fruit? What would fruitfulness look like in that area? Talk to God about your desire to be fruitful.
Thursday: Our culture is pretty convincing when it talks to us about what it means to live the “good life”. What lies have you believed about what success looks like? What about your current lifestyle would be the hardest to give up? What about your finances causes you to worry?

Friday: Jesus is the Divine Gardener. He can uproot the toughest weed in your garden. Take a few moments today and give him permission to do his work in your life.

Saturday: A greenhouse protects fragile plants and seedlings until they are ready to face the elements. What parts of your heart and mind need protecting today? How does it feel to acknowledge that parts of your life are fragile?

**Quiet**
Offer your ponderings to God and ask him to speak to you.

**Pray**
Offer a prayer in words to God. Thank him for his presence. Express your desire to experience his presence in an even deeper way.

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*Leave this quiet time trusting that the Spirit is at work in you.*
Weekly Reflections:

**Week Four**

**Sunday, September 20th – Saturday, September 26th**

When you are able, find a quiet spot where you can spend a few moments alone with God.

**Quiet**

Once you have found a comfortable place, spend a few moments in silence. Take a few deep breaths and feel your body begin to relax. When you feel your mind becoming quiet, offer a simple prayer to God, thanking him for his presence and inviting him to speak to you.

**Read**

Slowly read through Matthew 13: 1-9 and 18-23.

*The complete text of this passage may be found on the proceeding page.*

**Ponder**

Sunday: Healthy soil must be rested occasionally. Do an internal check. How is your “soil”? Is it in need of rest? Nutrients? Water? Sun? What steps will you take to get your soil as healthy as it can be?

Monday: Many things go into making good soil. In most places, soil has to be cultivated before planting. In what ways is your soil healthy? How did it get that way? What is your plan for keeping it that way?

Tuesday: When the seed falls on good soil, it doesn’t take much effort to produce a bumper crop! Have you ever had the experience of reaping more than you had sown? What did you learn from that experience?

Wednesday: Too many times we put our efforts into the outcome rather than into cultivating the soil of our souls. Is this a temptation for you? Why?
Thursday: The person who is able to hear the word and understand it, produces a crop. Which area is more difficult for you – hearing or understanding? In what contexts do you hear God’s word? What resources do you have for understanding what you hear?

Friday: Jesus seems to indicate that having ears doesn’t always lead to really hearing. What things are hard for you to hear? Sometimes we don’t even know what we aren’t hearing. Ask the Spirit to make you aware of anything you might be missing out on.

Saturday: Take a moment today to think about your field or garden. If you enjoy drawing or sketching, maybe you’d even like to make a visual representation of your space. What areas are healthy? Which are in need of weeding? Where does the ground require some softening? Are there any rocks in need of removal?

Quiet
Offer your ponderings to God and ask him to speak to you.

Pray
Offer a prayer in words to God. Thank him for his presence. Express your desire to experience his presence in an even deeper way.

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*Leave this quiet time trusting that the Spirit is at work in you.*
God Loves You

It’s simple but true. You are loved by God – no matter who you are, what you’ve done, who you’ve disappointed, or what you have suffered.

Unlike others who may say they love you and fail to show it, God demonstrated his love for you by sending his son, Jesus, to earth to give his life as a ransom for yours.

Jesus died and was raised to life by his loving Father not as a one-time, show-off move but as an example of what God wants to do in your life. He wants to give you new life.

The invitation has been offered. How will you respond?

Maybe you are ready to tell Jesus that you want him to be your Savior and Lord? Maybe you want to begin a conversation with God?

Whatever your next step is, you will find God ready and waiting to listen and respond to you.

If you have questions or would like to talk about your next step with someone, please email us at prayer@vineyardaugusta.org.