



# HOLY GROUND

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**Thinking About the Spaces We Worship In**

*Download slides at [LiturgyBeyondWords.com](http://LiturgyBeyondWords.com)*



# JESS FISHER

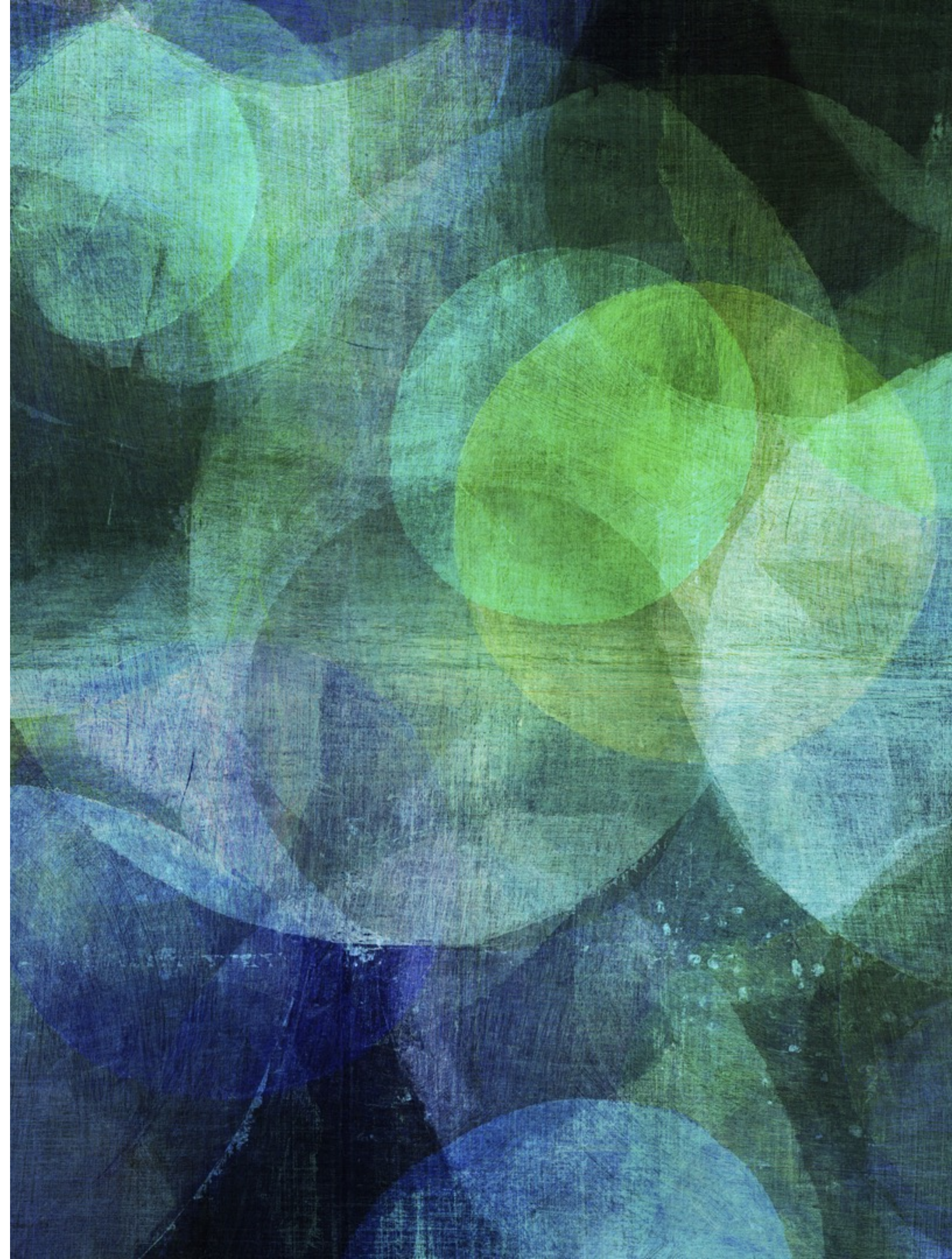
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# WHO'S IN THE ROOM?

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- Your Name
- Why you're here or what you're looking to get out of this workshop?





# WHERE WE'RE GOING

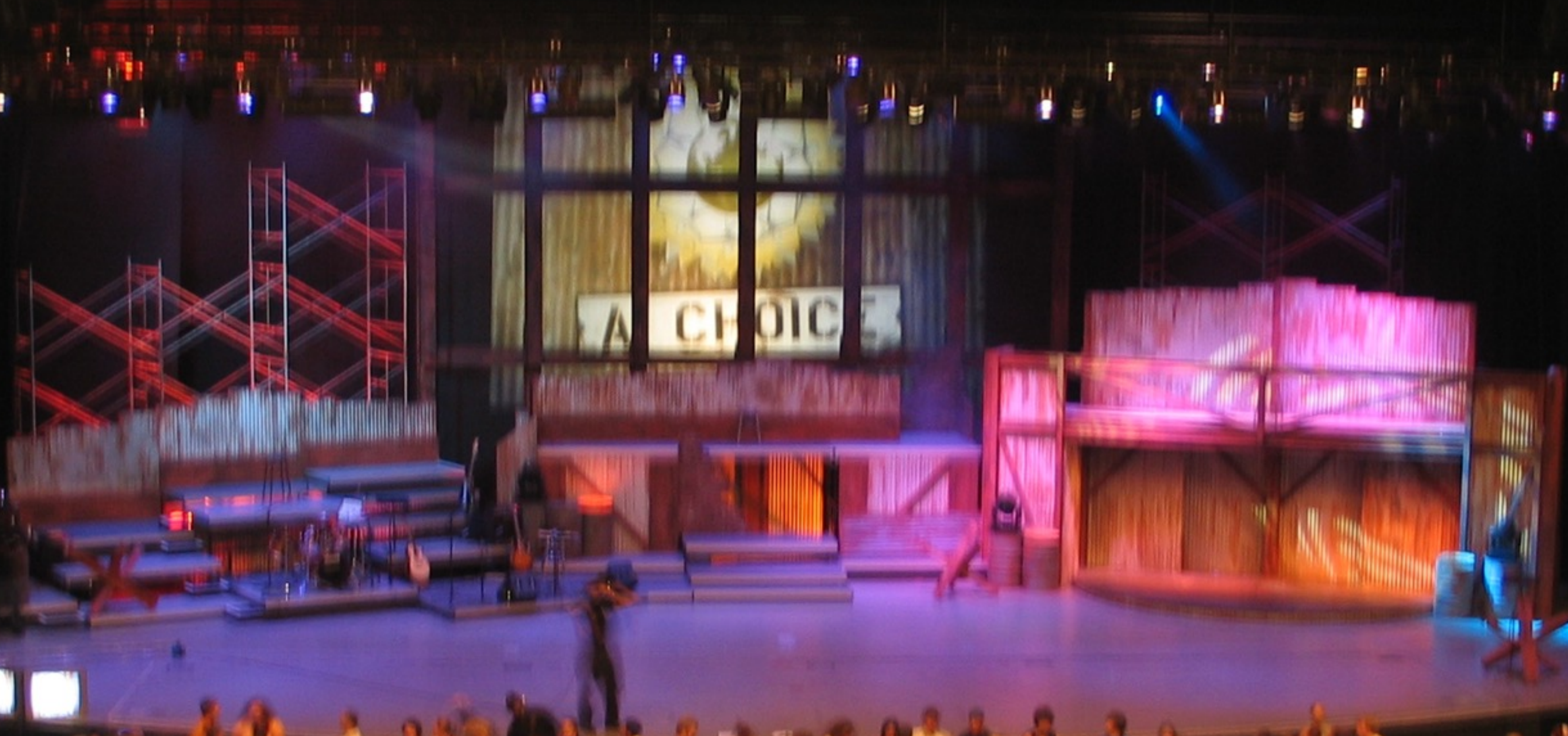
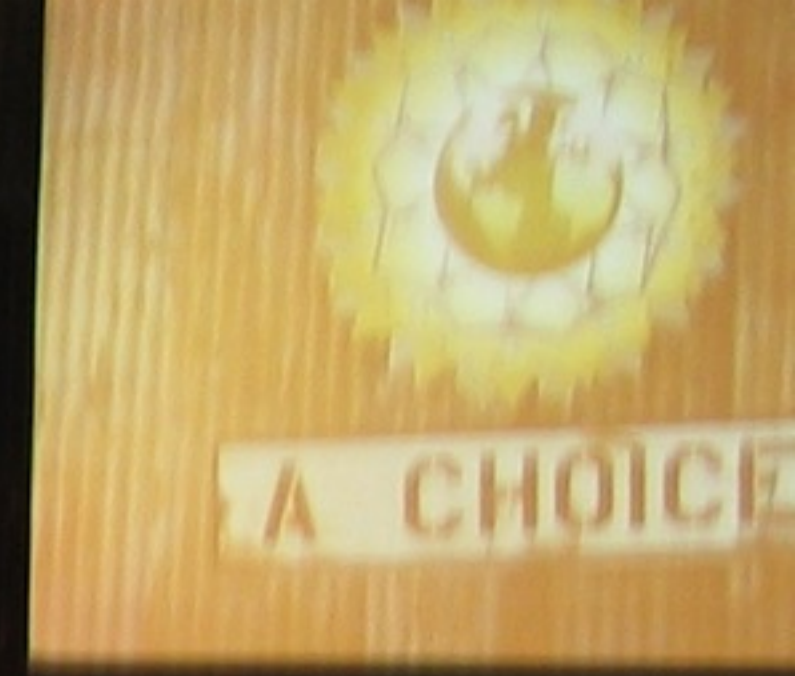
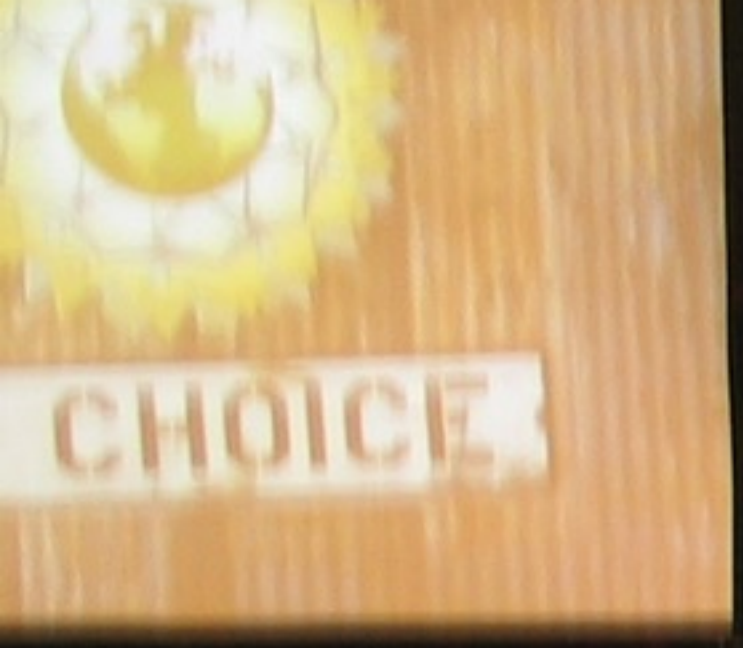
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- My journey in worship spaces
- Theology
- Theory:
  - Physical Setup
  - Movement
- Case Studies
- Process
- Mapping Your Space
- Taking it Home

# MY JOURNEY













## IMPROV – STATUES/TABLEAUX

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- Say “Yes, and...”
- Embody your engagement with the named space and hold the pose
- Touch at least one other person
- No props, unless needed for support

**THEOLOGY**

# BIBLICAL WITNESS

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- Adam and Eve cast out (Gen 3)
- Burning bush - "remove your sandals" (Ex 3)
- Tabernacle (Ex 25-27, 35-40)
- First Temple (1 Kings 5+)
- Second Temple (Ezra, 1 Chron, Nehemiah)
- Jesus will destroy and rebuild temple in three days (Mt 26:61, Mark 14:58, John 2:19)
- Place of honor at the table (Luke 14:7-11)
- Body as Temple (1 Cor 3:16, 6:19-20)
- Considering others in Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11)

# BOOK OF CONFESSIONS

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➤ **2nd Helvetic Confession - 5.216**

“For the true ornamentation of churches does not consist in ivory, gold, and precious stones, but in the *frugality, piety, and virtues* of those who are in the Church. Let all things be done decently and in order in the church, and finally, let all things be done for edification.”

➤ **The Confession of 1967 - 9.50**

“The arts, especially music and architecture, contribute to the praise and prayer of a Christian congregation *when they help people to look beyond themselves to God and to the world which is the object of his love.*”

# BOOK OF ORDER – DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP

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## ➤ **W-3.1001 Ordering Worship**

“Beyond Scripture no single warrant for ordering worship exists, but the worship of the Church is *informed and shaped by history, culture, and contemporary need.*”

## ➤ **W-3.1002a Form and Freedom**

“The PC(U.S.A.) acknowledges that *all forms of worship are provisional and subject to reformation.* In ordering worship the church is to *seek openness to the creativity of the Holy Spirit,* who guides the church toward worship which is *orderly yet spontaneous, consistent with God’s Word and open to the newness of God’s future.*”

## ➤ **W-1.3024 Arrangement of Space**

“When a place is set aside for worship it should *facilitate accessibility and ease of gathering,* *should generate a sense of community, and should open people to reverence before God...*

The arrangement of space should *visibly express the integral relation between Word and Sacrament and their centrality in Christian worship.*”

# BOOK OF ORDER – DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP

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## ➤ W-1.3021 Old Testament

“Christians may worship in any place, for the God who created time also created and ordered space. The Old Testament tells us God met with people in many different places. Yet particular locations became recognized as places where people had special encounter with God, *so they arranged space in such a way as to remember and enhance that meeting*. Whether the stone altars of the patriarchs, the Tent of Meeting for the wandering people of God, the Temple of the Kingdom in Jerusalem, or the house synagogue worship of the Dispersion, each place was ordered to invite and express God’s presence.”

# BOOK OF ORDER – DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP

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## ➤ W-1.3022 Jesus

“Jesus’ life reflects the covenant community’s understanding of places for worship. He regularly worshiped in the synagogue and in the Temple, in the wilderness and on the hillsides of Galilee. *Jesus especially disclaimed the notion that God could be confined to any one place.*”

## ➤ W-1.3023 Early Church

“Because the identifying reality of Christian worship was neither the place nor the space but the presence of God, the early Christians could worship in the Temple, in synagogues, in homes, in catacombs, and in prisons. Wherever Christ was present among them in the interpretation of the Word and the breaking of bread, that space was hallowed. Yet the Church began to set aside special places for gathering in the presence of the risen Christ and responding in praise and service. To this day, *when the Church gathers, it is not the particular place, but the presence of the risen Lord in the midst of the community which marks the reality of worship.*”



# BOOK OF ORDER – DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP (CONT'D)

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## ➤ W-2.1005 Enacted Prayer

In the Old and New Testaments and through the ages, the people of God expressed *prayer through actions* as well as speech and song.

So in worship today it is appropriate:

*a. to kneel, to bow, to stand, to lift hands in prayer,*

*b. to dance, to clap, to embrace in joy and praise,*

*c. to anoint and to lay hands in intercession and supplication,  
commissioning and ordination.*

# "INVITATION TO CHRIST" (2006)

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- “We encourage you to engage in “renewal, through Word and Sacrament, of our life together in Jesus Christ, by engaging in practices that deepen baptismal life and discipleship”...We invite you to join in these specific disciplines:
  - Set the font in full view of the congregation.
  - Open the font and fill it with water on every Lord’s Day.
  - Set cup and plate on the Lord’s Table on every Lord’s Day.
  - Lead appropriate parts of weekly worship from the font and from the table.
  - Increase the number of Sundays on which the Lord’s Supper is celebrated”

# OTHER THEOLOGICAL THEMES

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- How do our worship spaces and practices tell our story?
  - Emphasis on church as building or people has shifted throughout Judeo-Christian history
- Temporary vs. Permanent structures and elements
- We are holistic beings - body, spirit, and mind - with different intelligences and learning styles

**THEORY**



## PHYSICAL SETUP

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- Conscious choices in planning help us to unconsciously relate to a space in practice
- Architects and interior and urban designers know this

*< Nationwide Children's Hospital*



TOKYO  
NARITA  
AIRPORT



**CHURCH OF THE PILGRIMS (DC)**



**CHURCH OF THE PILGRIMS (DC)**





# CHURCH OF THE PILGRIMS (DC)

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- What does space say about story and values?
  - Shared, flat leadership
    - “The pulpit is in the middle, and we are all invited to go there. It’s revolutionary.”  
*- Amanda, Young Adult Pilgrim*
  - Importance of Word, Table, Font
  - Space for kids to be kids
  - History is valued, but not at expense of present and future
  - Small, but intimate

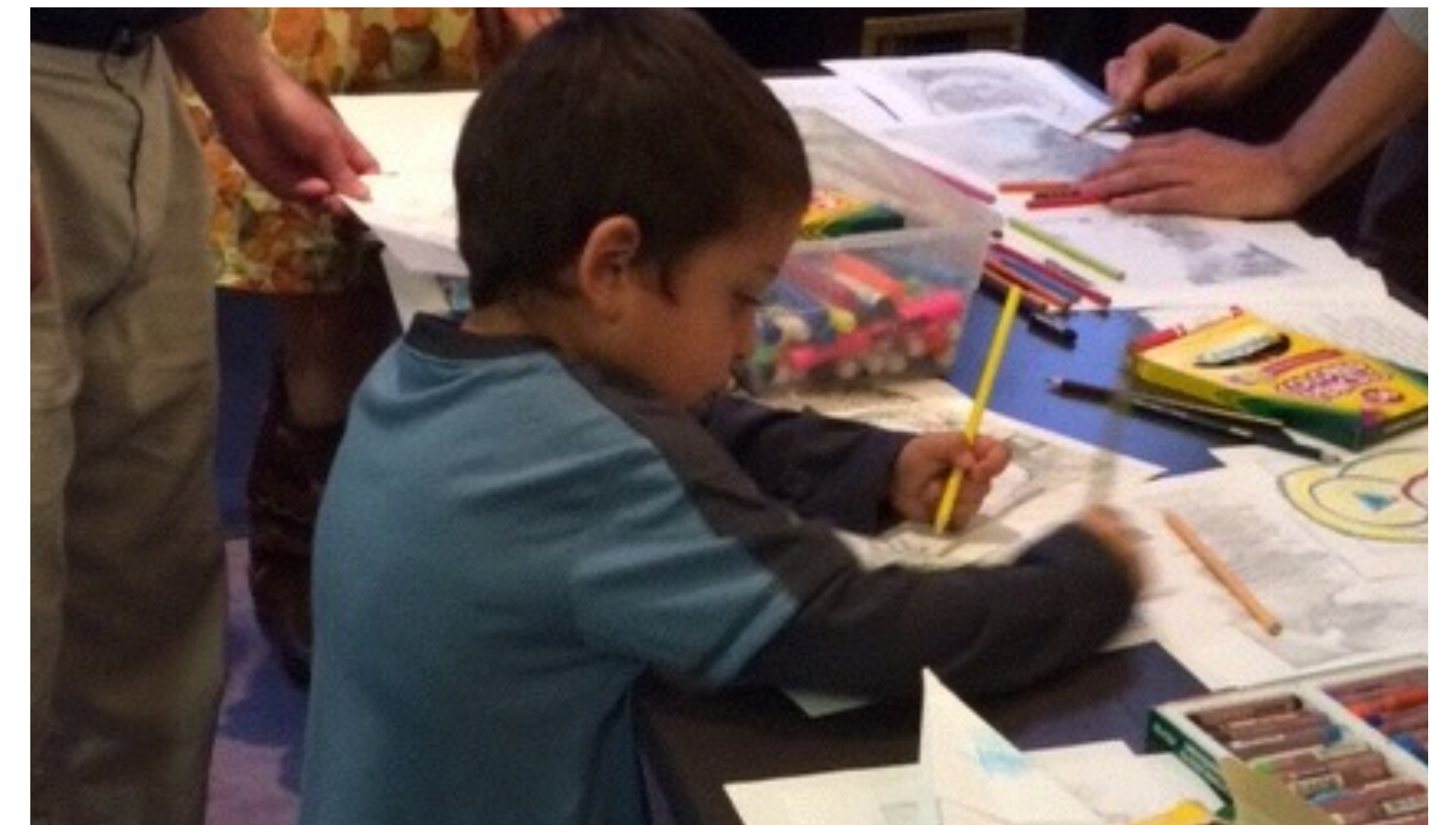
# MOVEMENT

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- Walk to the table or font; prayer stations
- Walk to meditate (Sitting meditation also brings awareness of body, breathe)
- Yoga/prayer postures
  - Mountain pose
  - Corpse Pose
- Children
- Tell the Story
  - Storytelling, Improv, Act it out
- Always give the option to stay put

*Liturgical Die-in at FTE Retreat >*





*Drum circle; Prayer stations: coloring Jesus and making prayer flags*



*Go outside! (Palm Sunday, Winter Solstice, Easter Godly Play in the Garden)*

# CASE STUDIES



*Holy Week Prayer Stations at Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains, NJ  
from Sacred Space by Dan Kimball, Lilly Lewin*



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from Sacred Space by Dan Kimball, Lilly Lewin*









*Lenten River: Font to Cross at Church of the Pilgrims*





*Dana Olson Telling the story of  
Jesus' Temptation on top of the Temple >*



**PROCESS**



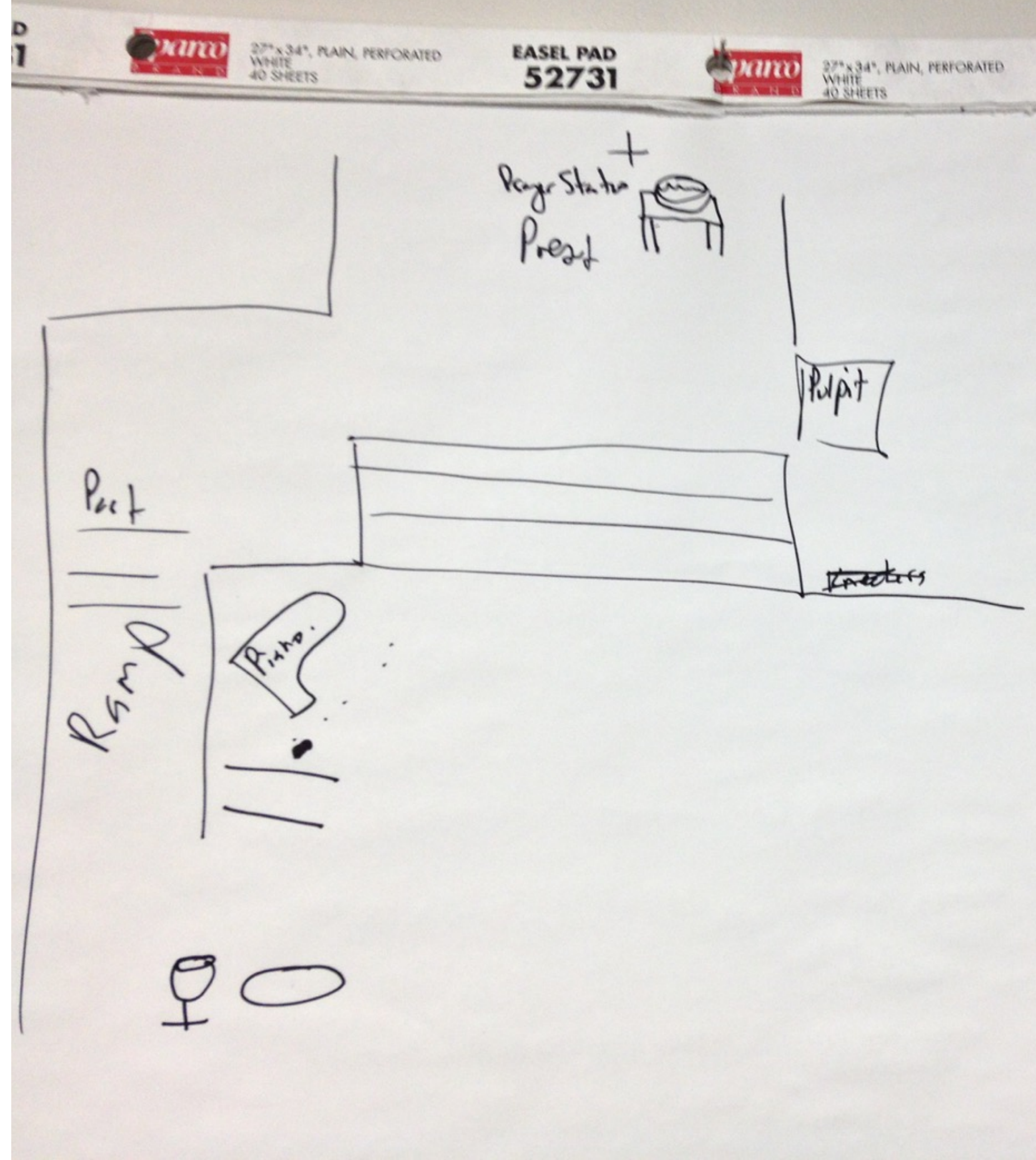
# PROCESS

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- Group effort
  - <http://godofthesparrow.com/the-landscape-of-liturgy-the-art-of-worship-planning/>
- Map out the space
- Sit somewhere new to get new perspective
- Clean out and reorganize your sacristy

# PROCESS

- Work through the Text and Themes for the season/day
- Where is there movement in them?
- What spiritual practices can help us engage them?
- What do we assume about our space?
- How can we be intentional about it?
- How does this connect to our story and context?







# RESPONDING TO FEARS

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- Root to tradition and history, adapt for today
- Set expectations: it won't be perfect
- Seasonal, short term, temporary
- Minute for symbols, scavenger hunt, etc to re-engage existing space and elements
- Communicate the intention,
- Acknowledge you hear the feedback

# MAPPING YOUR SPACE



## MAPPING IT

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- Sketch out the permanent structures
- Use Post-Its to create moveable elements
- What visual cues exist already? What barriers are in place?
- Overlays with tracing paper:
  - How do people usually move in the space
  - Your craziest, wildest ideas for the space
- Whats the story is told here?
- Where can you push the boundaries?



# GOING HOME

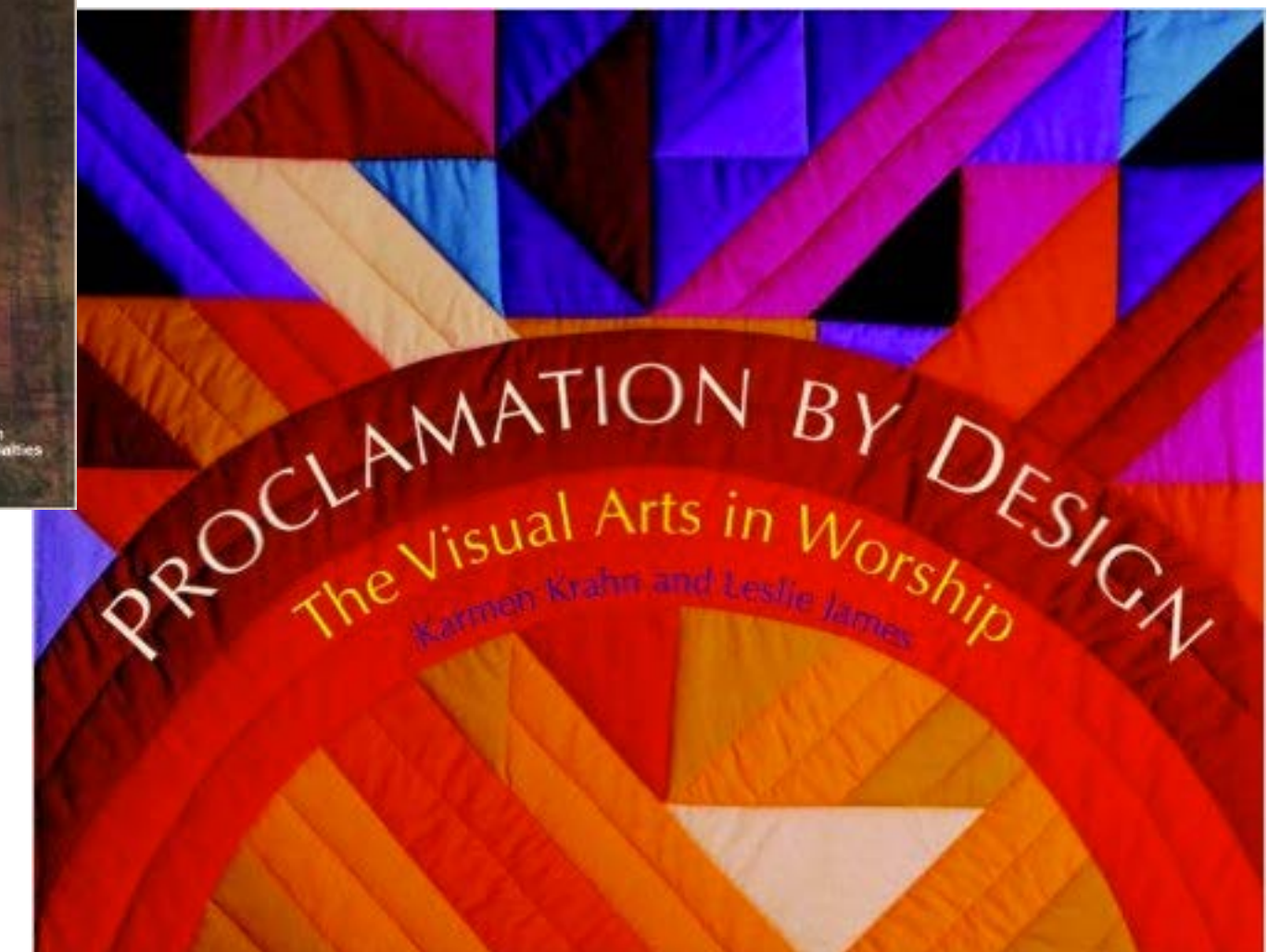
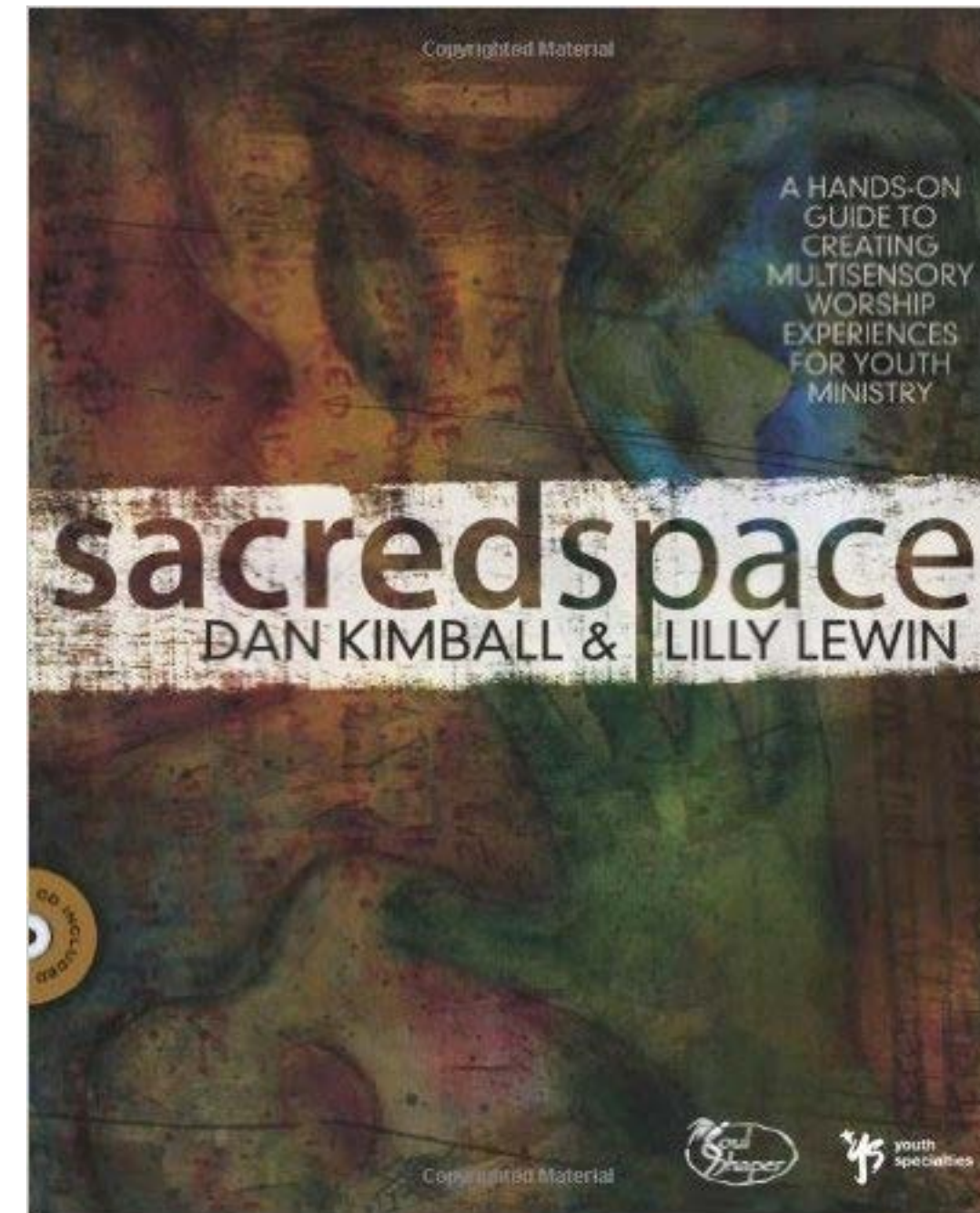
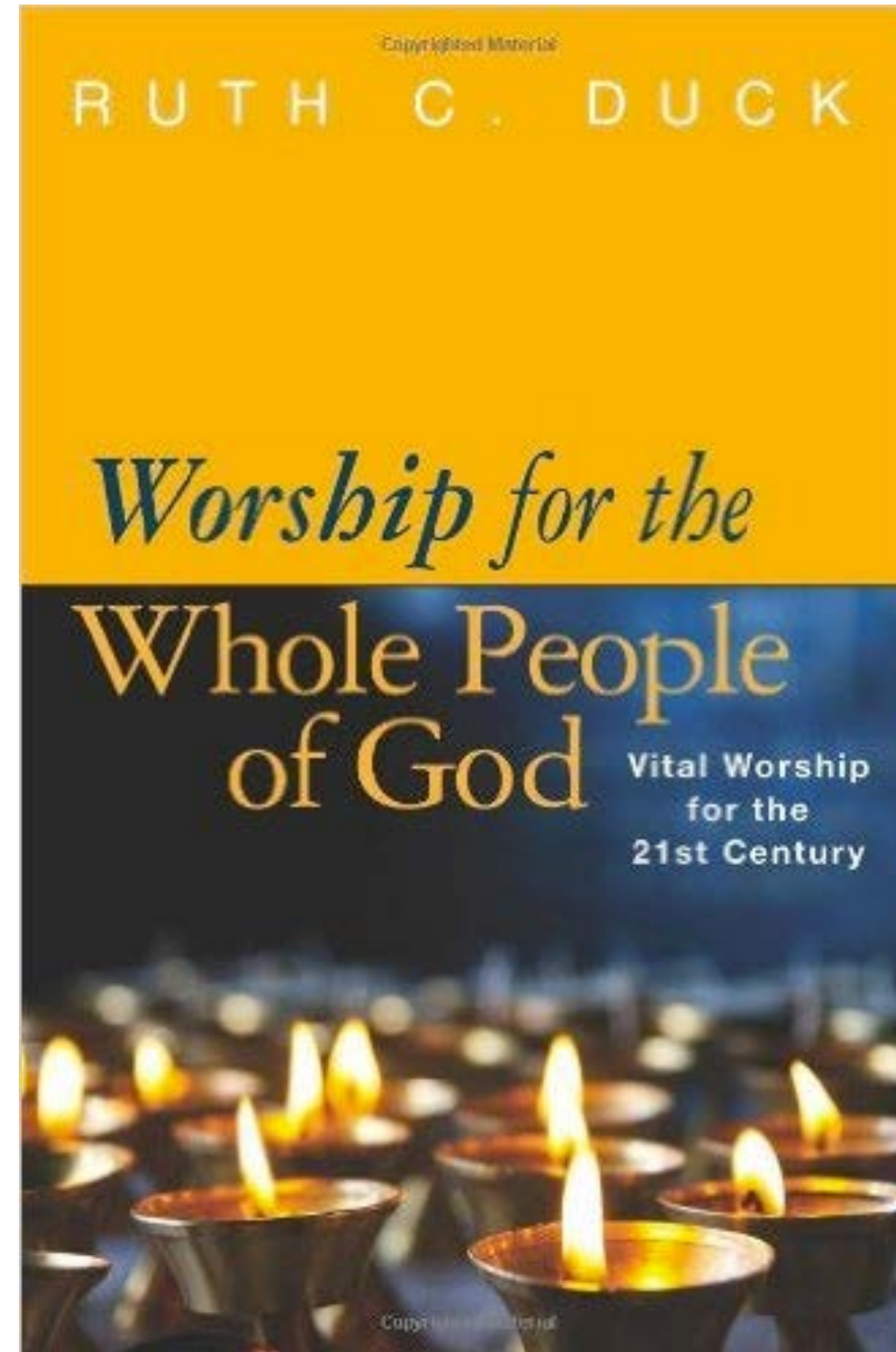
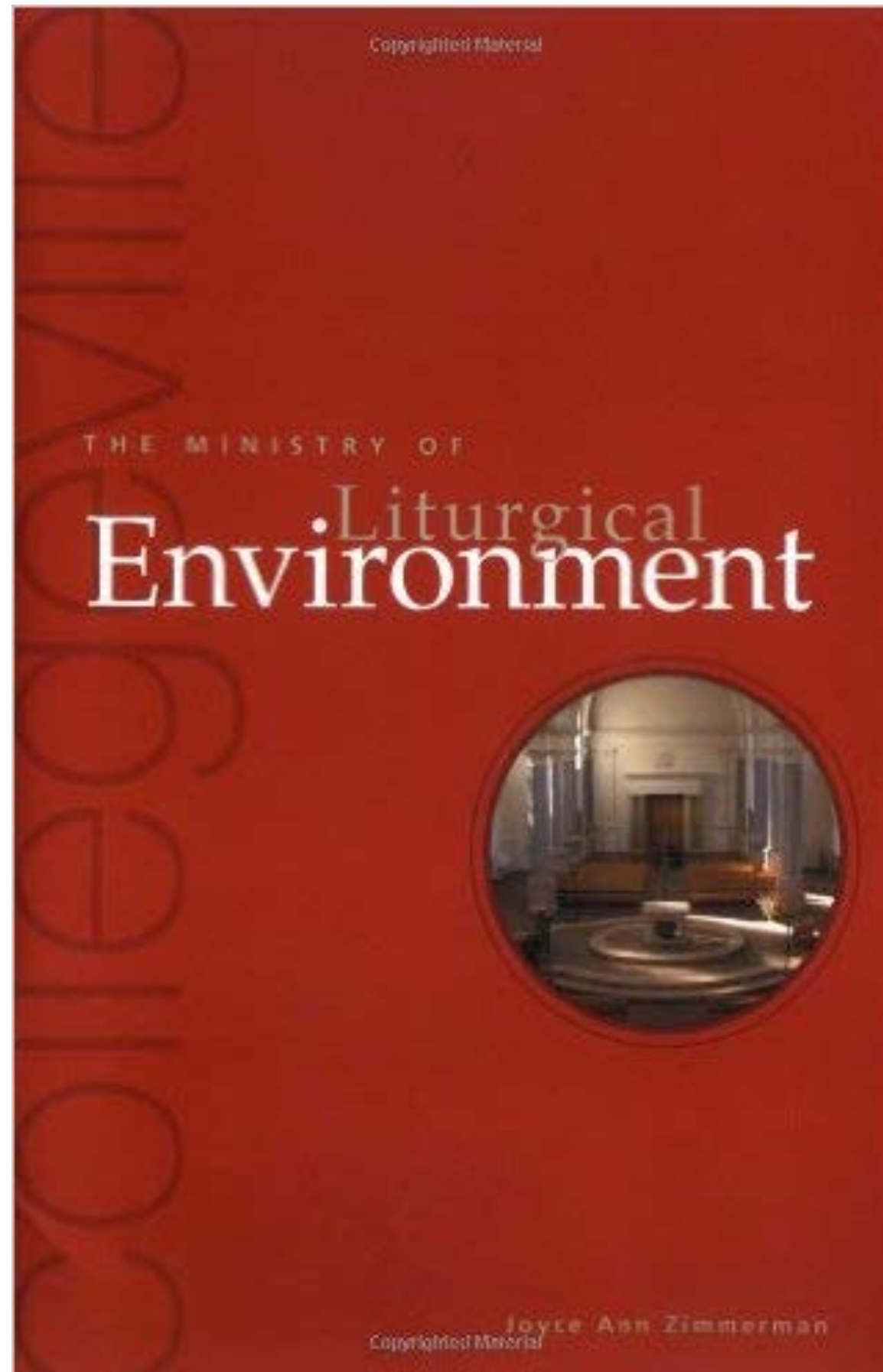
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- What do YOU need to do this? Where will you find the strength?
- Convene a group
- Create a map: on paper or in a box
- Learn more about Improv
- Contact Jess!

# BOOKS

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➤ [Click here for amazon.com List](#)





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