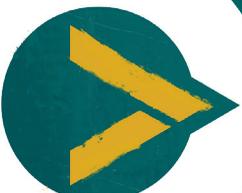


BIG PROBLEMS

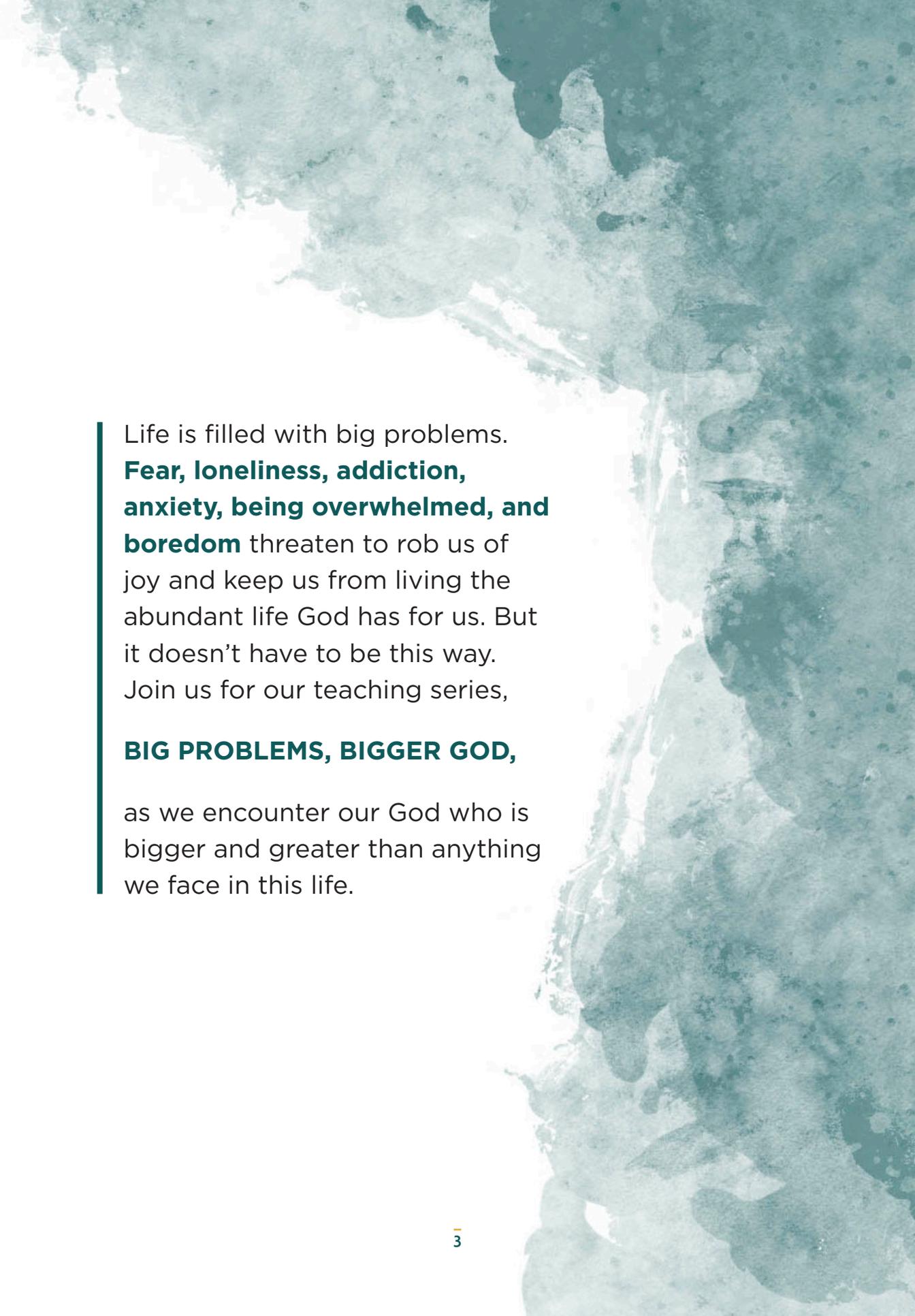
BIGGER

GOD



THIS BOOK
BELONGS TO:





Life is filled with big problems. **Fear, loneliness, addiction, anxiety, being overwhelmed, and boredom** threaten to rob us of joy and keep us from living the abundant life God has for us. But it doesn't have to be this way. Join us for our teaching series,

BIG PROBLEMS, BIGGER GOD,

as we encounter our God who is bigger and greater than anything we face in this life.



TABLE OF CONTENTS



How To Use This Magazine.....	6
From The Senior Pastor.....	8
From The Volunteer Editorial Team...	10

WEEK 1

Sermon Scripture & Notes	14
Life Group Discussion Guide.....	16
Psalm 133	18
Rooted In Him.....	20
A Community Of Leaders	24
Why Community Matters	28

WEEK 2

Sermon Scripture & Notes	36
Life Group Discussion Guide.....	38
Psalm 121	40
Rest In God.....	42
A Heart For You	46
A Rising Rescue	48

WEEK 3

Sermon Scripture & Notes	52
Life Group Discussion Guide.....	54
Psalm 103.....	56
Noah & Julia's Story	60
Forgiven.....	69

WEEK 4

Sermon Scripture & Notes	72
Life Group Discussion Guide.....	74
Psalm 42	76
Fear & Forgetfulness	78
Matt's Story	84

WEEK 5

Sermon Scripture & Notes	92
Life Group Discussion Guide.....	94
Psalm 34	96
I Am Here. Look Up.	98
The Power Of Restoration	100

WEEK 6

Sermon Scripture & Notes	108
Life Group Discussion Guide.....	110
Psalm 145.....	112
Santiago's Story	114
Loving and Serving Our Cities and Beyond.....	120
Made To Create	125
Creative Arts Volunteers.....	128

HOW TO USE THIS MAGAZINE

This magazine was created for you. It's filled with resources, original artwork, stories, photography, and creative written pieces to enhance your own personal study throughout our teaching series, *Big Problems, Bigger God*. It's a resource meant to travel. Bring it with you to weekend services to take notes and follow along with messages. Take it to your Life Group gathering to go deeper into God's Word with others. Use it in your own time with the Lord as you process the wisdom and teaching of each message and passage of Scripture. We pray it inspires and encourages you in your own walk with the Lord every day.

Here is a breakdown of the different elements to guide you:

- **SERMON NOTES**

Each week there is space for you to take notes during the weekend message. It's a great way for you to follow along each week of the series and record how God is speaking to you through His Word.

- **LIFE GROUP CURRICULUM**

These lessons are meant to be explored in the context of a Life Group. In Life Groups, we grow in our faith together and experience life as God intended—in community. We encourage you to join a Life Group and dive into each message with others during the week. Visit marinerschurch.org/join-a-group/ to learn more.

- **PSALMS & REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

We've included a psalm every week of the series for you to read and reflect on during your personal devotional time. The book of Psalms is filled with prayers to God during times of crisis and struggle, and they're an amazing starting point for our own prayer life. Use this space as an opportunity to journal and process what God is showing you through each psalm.

- **CREATIVE ELEMENTS**

At the end of each week's content, you'll find creative pieces, including original artwork, photography, personal stories, and creative writing contributed by our amazing Creative Arts Volunteer Team. Each piece is inspired by the themes and Scripture of our teaching series.



I love verses in the Bible that remind me how big and amazing our God is. His arm is not too short to save (Isaiah 59:1). His eyes roam the whole Earth to encourage those who are committed to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9). His foolishness is wiser than our wisdom, and His weakness is stronger than our strength (1 Corinthians 1:25).

Those verses remind me that our big God is bigger than my problems. God presses near to the broken-hearted, is present with us in our struggles, and is always working for our good.

It is my hope that as you bring your burdens, addictions, fears, overwhelming struggles, and anxieties to our big God, you will be reminded that your Savior is bigger than your struggles. The famous hymn, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*, reminds us: "Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear. All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer."

A team of talented creative volunteers from Mariners Church worked together to create this beautiful magazine to encourage and inspire you. I'm so thankful for them and their willingness to serve God's Church with their gifts. Within these pages, you'll find resources, original content, and amazing stories to guide you. You'll also find opportunities to go deeper in your faith.

I invite you to bring this magazine back with you each week during our teaching series to follow along with the weekend messages and take notes as we are reminded God is bigger than our big problems. I also encourage you to use it as a resource for your Life Group gatherings and for your personal time with God.

In Christ,

Eric Geiger

Senior Pastor





Now more than ever, we need our Heavenly Father to rescue us.

Although we were made in God’s image, we are not perfect. We struggle with real issues like exhaustion, loneliness, addiction, anxiety, and boredom. The good news is that we have a God that is greater than our problems.

In this magazine, you will find creative pieces that express how God has triumphed over challenges and brokenness with salvation, grace, and love. It is our hope that each piece will remind you of God’s almighty power. When we are fighting our battles, He is already at the frontlines.

As a group of volunteers, we are blessed and humbled to share our creative gifts and talents in this publication that we hope will make an impact in your lives and ours. Once again, we encourage you to make this magazine your own. Document your journey as you confront your problems and declare the truth, “I have a bigger God.”

Let’s claim that victory together.

With thanks and gratitude,

The Mariners Creative Arts Editorial Team

I AM LONELY...

**BUT GOD IS
THE
CREATOR OF
COMMUNITY**

Week 1

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25



GENESIS 1:26-28

26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.”

27 So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image

of God; he created them male and female.

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.”

GENESIS 2:15-25

15 The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.” 18 Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him.” 19 The LORD God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every

wild animal; but for the man no helper was found corresponding to him.

21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. 22 Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called “woman,” for she was taken from man.

24 This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

As a society, we are more connected but in less community. Loneliness is a major problem, even impacting our physical health. It also impacts our spiritual health. In the first few chapters in the Bible, we see the triune God declare that loneliness is not good. God, already existing in perfect community with Himself, sought to establish community for His creation.

LEAN IN

List out as many songs as you can about loneliness. Why do you think there are so many?

.....
.....
.....
.....

LOOK DOWN *Read Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25 (pg. 14)*

What do you learn about God's intention for community?

.....
.....
.....

LOOK OUT

What are the key components to experiencing healthy community?

.....
.....

Where outside of the Church do people seek out community? How do these places fall short?

.....
.....
.....

LOOK IN

What have been the barriers in your own life that prevent you from practicing biblical community?

.....
.....
.....

How have you experienced healthy community in your group?

.....
.....

7 RHYTHMS OF ROOTED

Without rhythms in place, it is easy for any group to fall away from its original intention. Life Groups are most often built from Rooted whose rhythms lay the groundwork for biblical community. By integrating these 7 Rhythms into your Life Group, we believe you are embodying God’s design for the Church by spurring each other along in your spiritual growth. At the end of your discussion, look over the 7 Rhythms of Rooted and talk about how your group can implement these over this teaching series.

PSALM 133

LIVING IN HARMONY

A SONG OF ASCENTS OF DAVID

1 How good and pleasant it is
when brothers live together in harmony!

2 It is like fine oil on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down Aaron's beard
onto his robes.

3 It is like the dew of Hermon
falling on the mountains of Zion.
For there the LORD has appointed the
blessing—life forevermore.



ROOTED IN HIM

BY BRANDON GROSS

Born with cerebral palsy, mobility has always been a challenge for Patricia. Her early years were spent being pushed in a stroller by her mother, which was normal and didn't draw attention. It wasn't until Patricia began using a wheelchair, and eventually a specialized scooter, that people began to see her in a different light.

Nothing about Patricia's daily life is easy; she requires full-time care, and the simplest things like getting out of the house or going to church require special transportation and assistance.

"I credit my mother for teaching me to be strong," Patricia said. "Not to let me use my disorders as an excuse to feel sorry for myself."

But being strong could only carry Patricia so far. She was missing what people crave so deeply: community with others. Not having connection led to feelings of isolation and depression. Over time, it drained the confidence and bravery even a strong person like Patricia possesses.

Then, about seven years ago, the lifeline Patricia had so badly craved came in the form of her caretaker, Rosa, who introduced her to Jesus. As Patricia's relationship with God developed, her sense of confidence

returned, as well as the bravery to "put herself out there" in the hopes of finding community. But what Patricia didn't count on was how differently she would be treated by the churches she visited.

.....
As Patricia's relationship with God developed, her sense of confidence returned, as well as the bravery to "put herself out there" in the hopes of finding community.

"It was like they saw my disability, not me," she said.

While she wasn't mistreated, Patricia wasn't finding the community her heart desired. It wasn't until she found Mariners Huntington Beach her prayers were answered. From day one, Patricia has felt seen for who she is.

"Pastor Brandon says hello to me and makes me feel valued," Patricia said.

But this was just the beginning of finding community for Patricia at

WEEK 1

Mariners HB. As her comfort level grew, she decided to take a bigger step and signed up for Rooted. Those 10 weeks forged a greater sense of community for Patricia than she had ever known before.

“While we spent those couple of hours at the beach, Patricia seemed so at peace and content,” her Rooted leader, Barbara, recalled.

After graduating from Rooted, Patricia joined a Life Group of which she is still a very active member. Now, she

feels close to God and takes solace in community with other believers.

Today, you can find Patricia at Mariners HB volunteering as a greeter most Sundays, where her infectious smile and enthusiasm for the church body makes her a congregation staple.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY:
BARBARA BERG



LONELINESS

BY: MARTHA CAPUTO





A COMMUNITY OF LEADERS

BY BRANDON GROSS

Attend a Mariners congregation on any given weekend, and you will notice a common denominator: the crowds of volunteers with their lanyards and welcoming smiles. From musicians to prayer leaders, each one answered God's calling to serve others in the name of His Kingdom.

An integral volunteer role to Mariners' success and continued growth is the Rooted facilitator. Those who have gone through the Rooted program have witnessed the amount of time and effort invested by these facilitators. However, what a lot of people don't see is the calling these

volunteers receive from God to serve their community in a vulnerable capacity, and the leap of faith it requires for them to take the plunge.

One volunteer who took the plunge is Barbara Berg, a Rooted facilitator at Mariners HB (and also the Photography Lead of this magazine). I spoke with Barbara to learn about her commitment to serve the Mariners community and how her faith can be a beacon of guidance for others looking to serve.

THERE ARE A LOT OF WAYS TO GET INVOLVED AND SERVE AT MARINERS, AND YOU CHOSE TO BE A ROOTED FACILITATOR, NOT ONCE, BUT FIVE TIMES. WHAT TOOK YOU DOWN THIS PATH?

Having been through Rooted and having nothing but positive feedback, I was asked a few years ago to facilitate an upcoming Rooted session. It wasn't really that big of a deal to me; I'm just an ordinary person and leading Rooted seemed like a good fit. I knew the power those 10 weeks could have in transforming lives. Something magical happens when God brings together a group of people going through similar challenges in life. I think of 2 Corinthians 3:16-17, "but whenever a person turns to the Lord,

the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

Freedom in community is exactly what I had experienced when going through Rooted, and having the opportunity to not only experience community again, but also facilitate and be a light to those who may not know Jesus was exciting to me. It's also a good opportunity to draw close to God on a regular basis: reading the Rooted handbook, doing the journal entries, spending quiet time in prayer, fulfilling His desire for me to serve. There really isn't a downside.



THINKING BACK TO NIGHT ONE OF YOUR FIRST ROOTED SESSION AS A FACILITATOR, WERE YOU NERVOUS?

I probably should've been, but I wasn't. First of all, I'm a former teacher so not much rattles me. But I knew this was God's desire for me, and it's His strength and love channeled through me as a leader. I also thought about these women joining the group on night one and how nervous some of them may be. Rooted usually brings people to Mariners during challenging times in their lives. If everything was smooth

sailing, we'd have less people join for sure.

What I focus on is grace and making this a safe space for others to share. "The veil is lifted, and there is freedom..." So, I let the ladies talk and listen. I allow them to be real and point them to God so He can guide them to healing.

Besides, we facilitators have a support group of our own which meets weekly to discuss the curriculum and provide support as needed. Between that and God leading me, there's really nothing to fear.



**WHAT ARE YOUR ROOTED
“GREATEST HITS?”**

Seeing God bring people together who are going through the same challenges in life never ceases to amaze me. In one of our groups, He brought three women together who were escaping abusive marriages. I don't think there could have been a more amazing support system for those three than what God set in motion. They reached out to each other constantly, and as a result, they had community in the most trying of situations and times.

There was also COVID. That was challenging for so many people. There were a lot of young ladies who joined Rooted in 2020. I think cabin fever was part of it; they wanted to get out and have an escape with other adults and women.

Patricia from my last Rooted group will forever stand out in my mind. Having cerebral palsy has really affected her ability to take part in community with others (make sure to read her powerful story in this magazine). But this was her time to shine. The group really rallied around her, and she is now part of a small group with several other ladies who meet regularly and enjoy Sunday service at Mariners together.

This reminds me of Romans 12:4-5: “Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.”

.....
What I focus on is grace and making this a safe space for others to share.

WHAT ARE SOME REWARDS YOU REAP FROM BEING A ROOTED FACILITATOR?

Being able to witness what He does in others' lives through Rooted has been amazing. How He cultivates community where there was none—specifically, the prayer experience during Rooted. I take my group to the beach each time, and we go off on our own to spend time with Him. It has been incredible to see how these ladies have been moved. Their tears of joy, their conviction, their relationship with Jesus strengthened. I'm the tool God uses to bring those ladies to that point, to encourage them, and to support them along the way.



WHY COMMUNITY MATTERS

BY VAN IBASAN / LEAD PASTOR, MARINERS OCEANSIDE

Regardless of what your personality type is—introverted, extroverted, a little social butterfly, or a little socially awkward—we are all wired for community, and there exists within each and every one of us a yearning for meaningful relationships and a longing to know others and be known by others. Why? Because we are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). We bear His likeness and characteristics. We were made to reflect God’s image in the same way the moon reflects the sun. So if God is a loving God, we are made to be loving. If God is a God of justice, we long for justice and are troubled by injustices around us. If God is a Trinity, meaning there is one true God who has forever existed in perfect, loving unity and community as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then we long for this

kind of community the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit experience.

God, for all of eternity, has existed as a community. There was never a moment when God existed outside of community, and because you were created in the image of God, you were not meant to exist outside of it. Rather, you are wired for community.

A problematic phrase often circulates among Christian communities and it is the phrase, “All you need is God.” Now, don’t get me wrong, there are so many ways this statement rings true. Regarding our salvation, we don’t bring anything to the table. However, the statement, “All you need is God” in the context of relationships is problematic. Why is it problematic? Because God never said those words. In fact, He says you need each other.



In Genesis 1, we are told in the creation narrative that God created “and it was good.” But in Genesis 2, when God created Adam, he said to Adam, “It is not good for the man to be alone...” (Genesis 2:18)

Interestingly, this declaration was before sin, death, and brokenness entered God’s good creation. Adam lived in harmony with God. Adam had unbroken fellowship with God, and yet God declares there is a problem that needs to be fixed—and it’s not sin. The first problem God solves in the Bible is not sin but solitude. Think about that. The first problem in the world was not

idolatry—it was isolation. God makes this declaration to warn us of the dangers of isolation and loneliness.

This Easter, we launched our seventh Mariners congregation in Oceanside, California, where I have the privilege to serve as lead pastor. We have witnessed God not only birth a church but a community. On opening day, we invited our newly-formed church to sign up to join Rooted, a 10-week small group gathering of strangers and experience what following Jesus looks like with others. We had no idea who would sign up, especially since this was their first time hearing about

Rooted. But there was a hunger, and there was a longing for community. As a result, more than 60 people

signed up to join Rooted. Our team was so blown away by the response that we had to create new groups and train new leaders.

There was never a moment when God existed outside of community, and because you were created in the image of God, you were not meant to exist outside of it.

When we commissioned the first-ever Rooted graduates at our congregation, I not only saw God's faithfulness in establishing His Church, but in people living out their purpose. People discovering their design. People reflecting their Creator. All because we are wired for community.



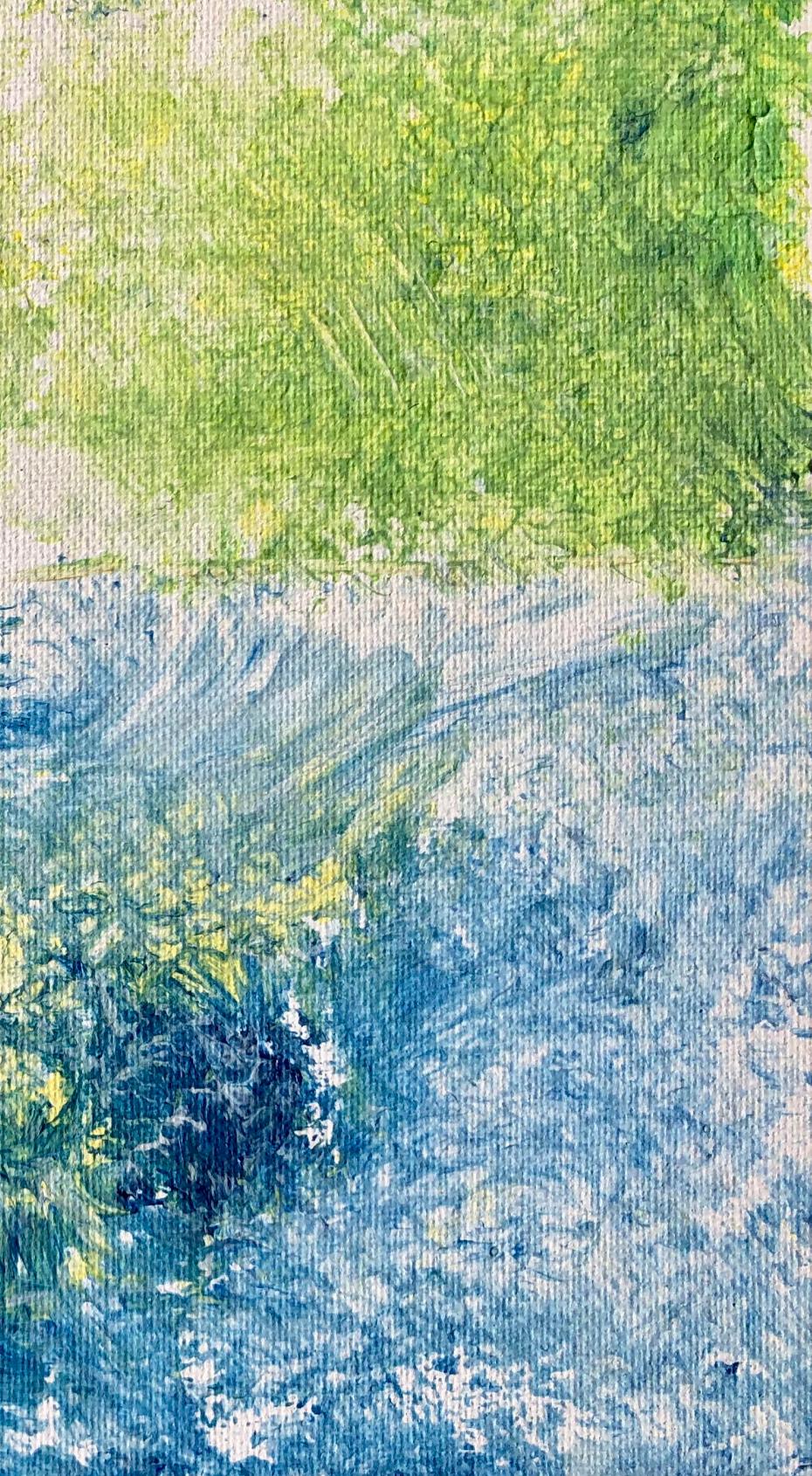
ROOTED

Finding lasting community at Mariners begins with Rooted.

Rooted is a 10-week small group experience designed to connect you to God, the Church, and your purpose. Together, in a group of 10-15 people from all walks of life, you'll explore the Bible, engage in prayer and serve experiences, share stories, and practice rhythms essential to a healthy spiritual life.

Scan the QR Code below for information.





***HE LEADS ME IN
THE PATH***

BY: ***NATANYAH
CAPUTO***

AGE: ***10***