**Three Steps for Welcoming Prayer/Welcoming Practice from Opening Worship**

1. Focus (sink in). When knocked off course by an emotional or physical upset, allow yourself to become present to the upset as a physical sensation in your body. Where are you feeling the emotion? (Compression in your chest, head swimming, restlessness in your legs, tension in your shoulders, sick feeling in your gut, breathing fast, etc.?) Stay present to this feeling/sensation as best you can.
2. Welcome. Accept the reality of this sensation. It is always the *sensation* you are accepting – the inner circumstances, and never the external situation itself. You are connected to the sensation but separated from the story.
3. Unconditional embrace of the Now. “By the power of the Divine Indwelling active within me, I unconditionally embrace this moment, no matter its physical or psychological content.” As we restore our inner wholeness in this practice, we can then choose how to deal with the external situation, be it by acceptance or by spirited resistance/action.

\*These notes and direct wording throughout are drawn directly from Cynthia Bourgeault’s book, *The Heart of Centering Prayer,* p. 90ff.