

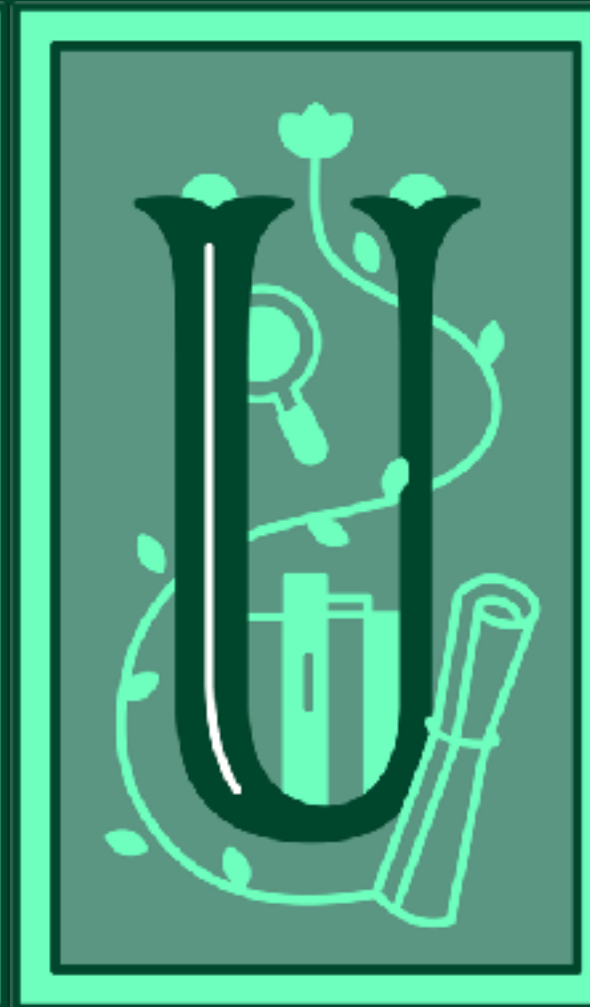
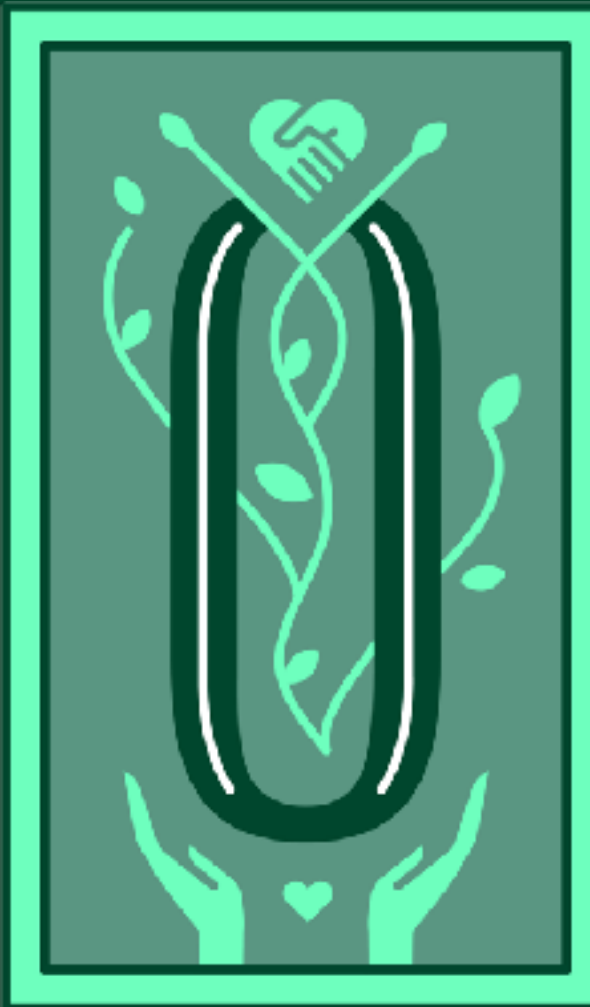
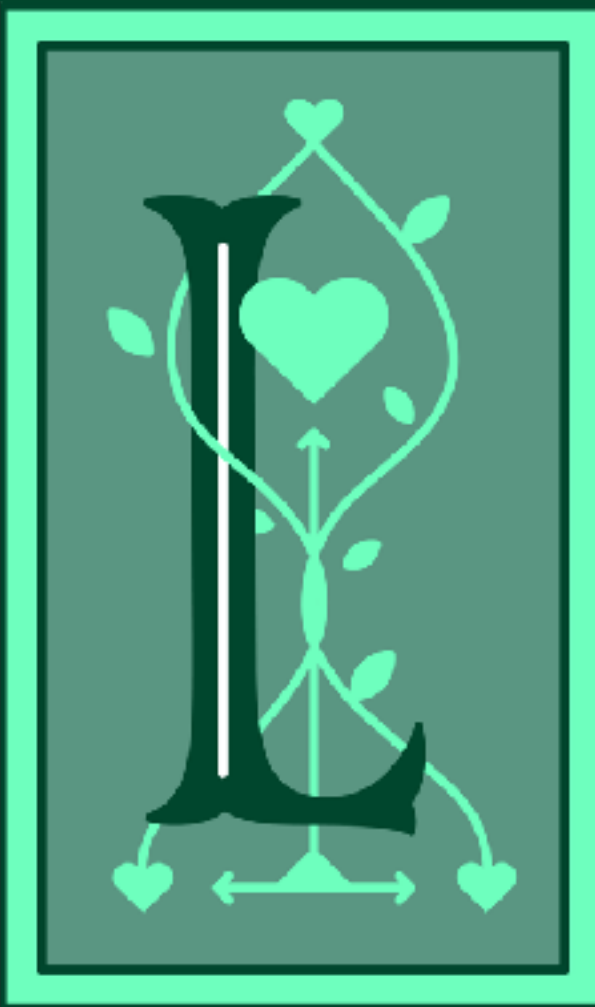
Faith, Not Fear

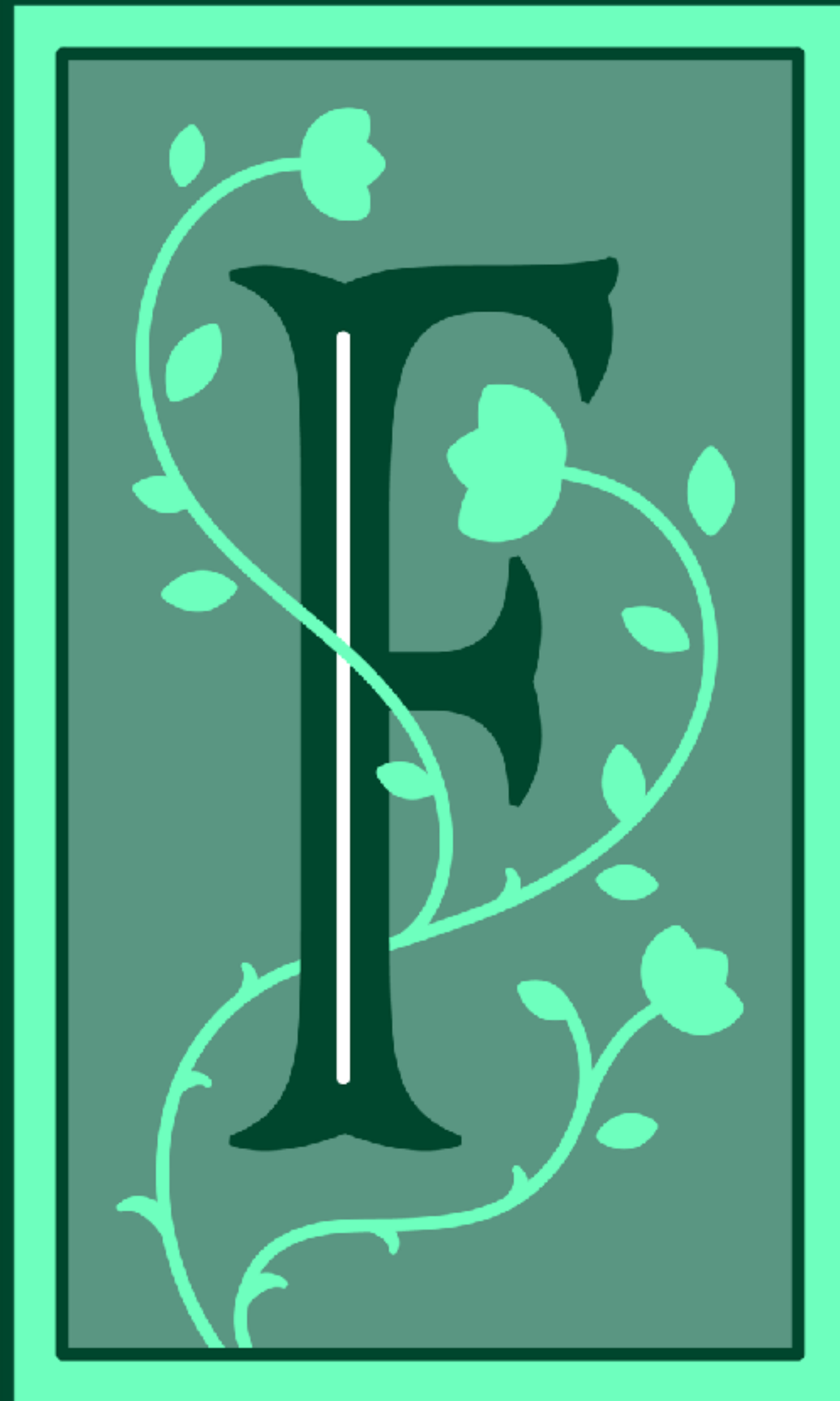
*Faith & Flourishing in Politics
- Sunday School Discussion*

Rev. Jonathan M. Romig - Fall 2021

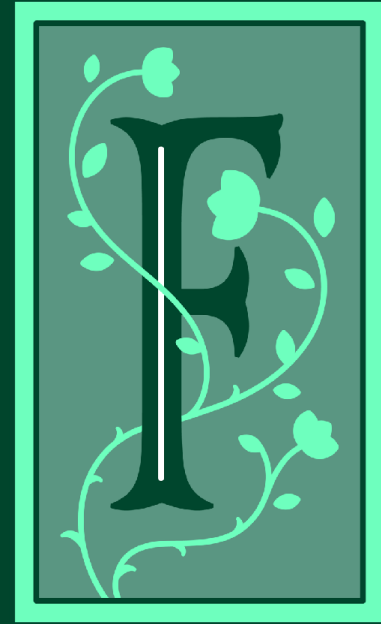
Our Garden Hedge:

1. **Listen Well** - We don't have all the answers so let's ask what others think, really try to hear each other out, and let others finish their thoughts.
2. **Speak with Brevity & Focus** - Let's leave space for others to participate and stay on track ("Keep to our hedge").
3. **Practice Gentle Courage** - Let's be bold and share our thoughts and ideas, point to what we believe the Scripture and wisdom says, and yet do so with a gentle and humble spirit.
4. **Keep Praying** - Let's pray in preparation, silently while we discuss, and to get the class started. We need the Holy Spirit!





What is the
difference
between the fear
of the Lord and
the fear of man?



What is the difference between the fear of the Lord and the fear of man?

Psalm 56:4 (ESV)

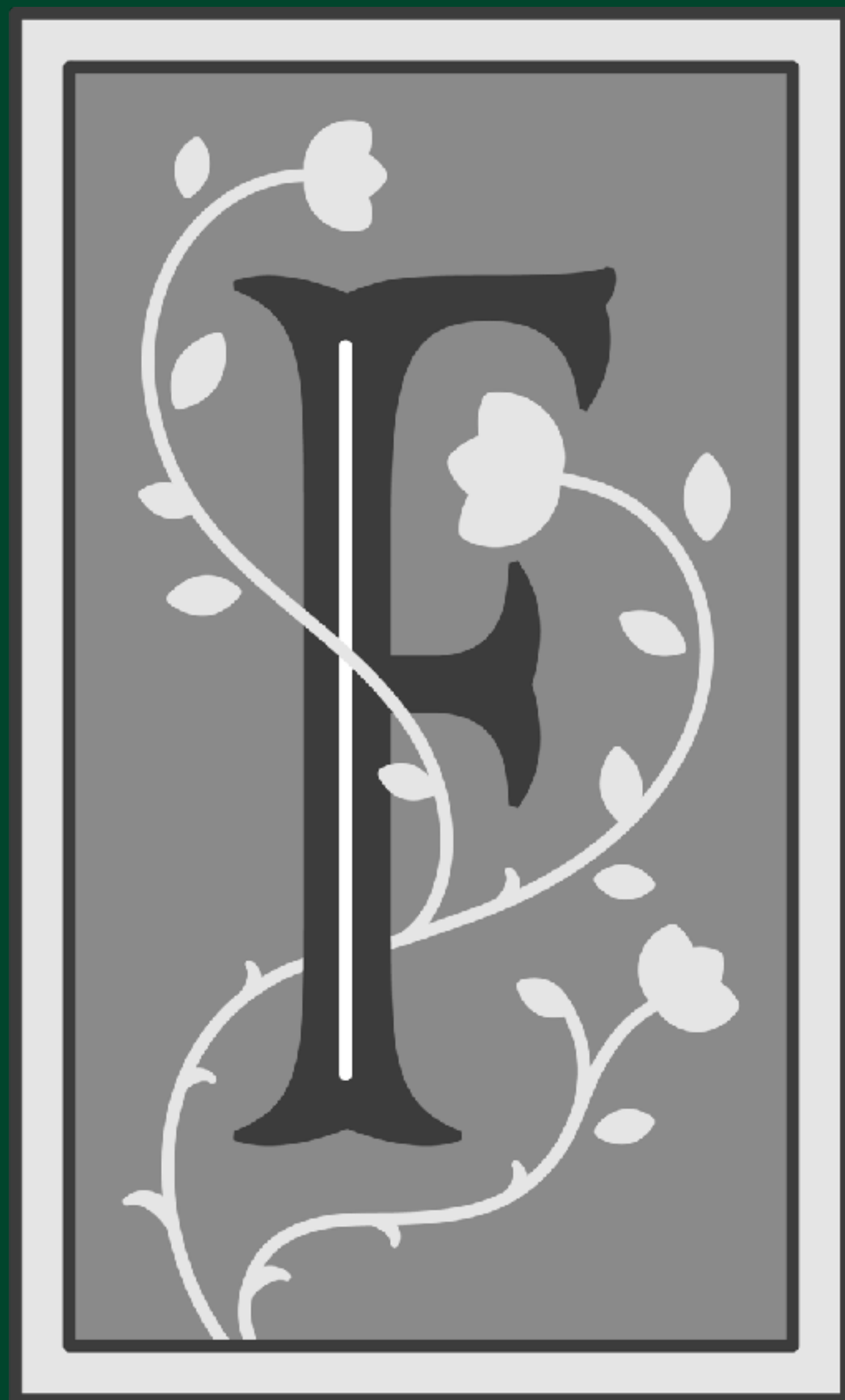
In God, whose word I praise,
in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.
What can flesh do to me?

Proverbs 29:25 (ESV)

The fear of man lays a snare,
but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.

Proverbs 1:7 (ESV)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and instruction.



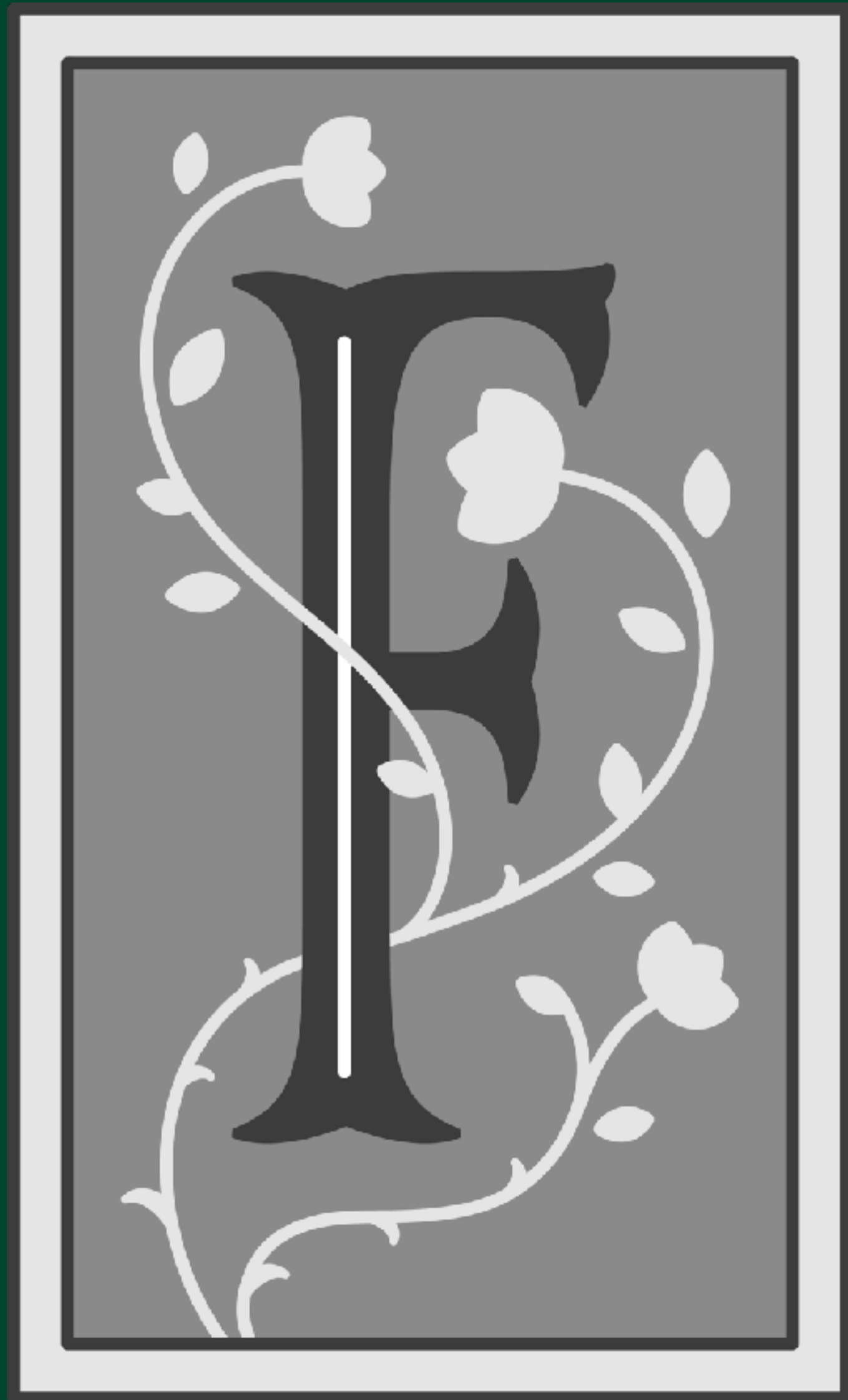
How has fear
influenced your
own political
engagement?

Philippians 4:6-9 (ESV)

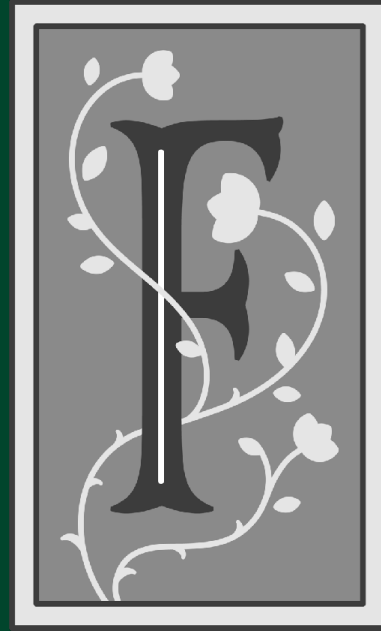
6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.



What are some potential outcomes of a fear-based engagement with culture?



What are some potential outcomes of a fear-based engagement with culture?

Fight – Vilifying and trying to overcome others to protect our beliefs, group and identity.

Flight - Isolating from the world to preserve our beliefs, group and identity.

Fusion - Fully embracing the world at the cost of our beliefs, group and identity.

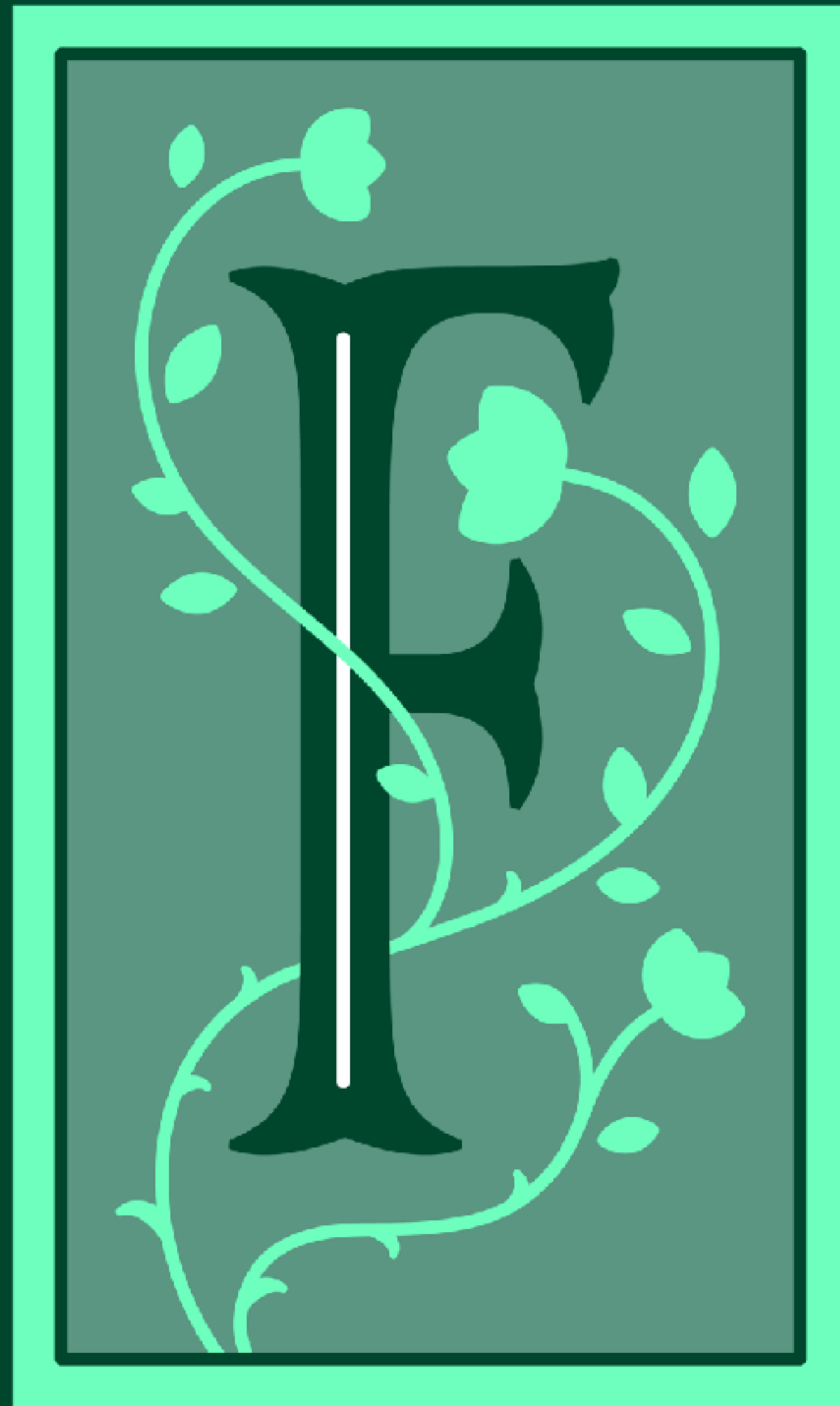
Question: Do you feel these categories are fair? Why or why not? Would you add any additional ones?

“Our fear easily isolates and pits us against each other in a contest for security and safety, and God continually commands us not to fear but to trust in Him, the Creator and sustainer of the community into which we were called.”

Kaitlyn Schiess, *The Liturgy of Politics: Spiritual Formation for the Sake of our Neighbor* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 52. Kindle.

“What is this asking me to love? Who is this asking me to fear or hate? And what kind of good life is it describing? How can I be conscious of that so that I recognize where that doesn’t line up with what Scripture tells me?”

Kaitlyn Schiess, *The Holy Post Podcast*, episode 420, published September 2, 2020, accessed September 4, 2020, <https://www.holypost.com/post/episode-420-four-false-political-gospels-with-kaitlyn-schiess>.



What is “faithful presence” and how is it different?

Matthew 6:25-34 (ESV)

... 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? [...] 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

34 “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Question: What is “faithful presence” and how is it different?

First, faithful presence means that we are to be fully present to each other within the community of faith and fully present to those who are not. Whether within the community of believers or among those outside the church, we imitate our creator and redeemer: we pursue each other, identify with each other, and direct our lives toward the flourishing of each other through sacrificial love.

Second, faithful presence requires that Christians be fully present and committed to their tasks

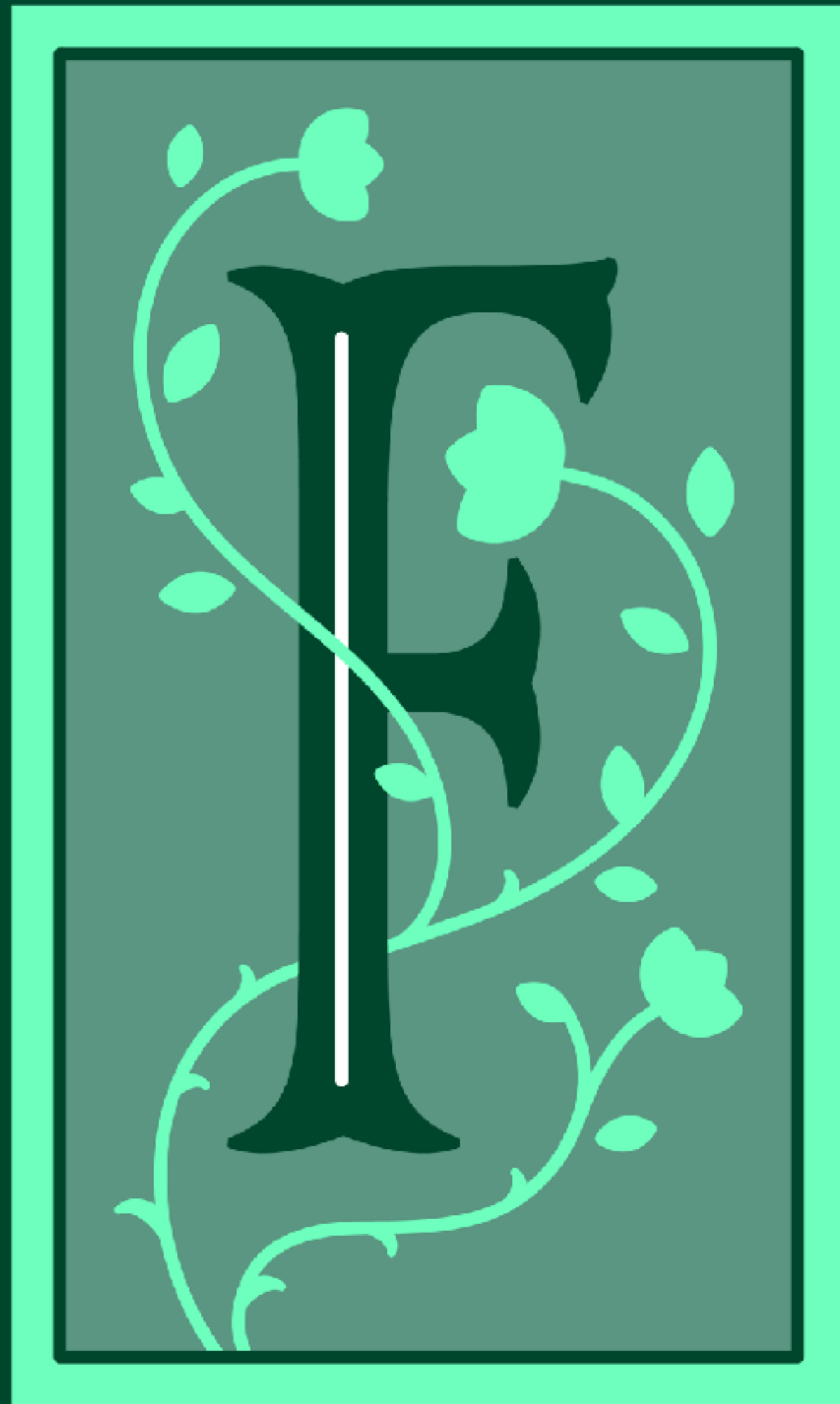
Third, faithful presence in the world means that Christians are fully present and committed in their spheres of social influence, whatever they may be: their families, neighborhoods, voluntary activities, and places of work.

James Davidson Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 244, 246-247, Kindle.

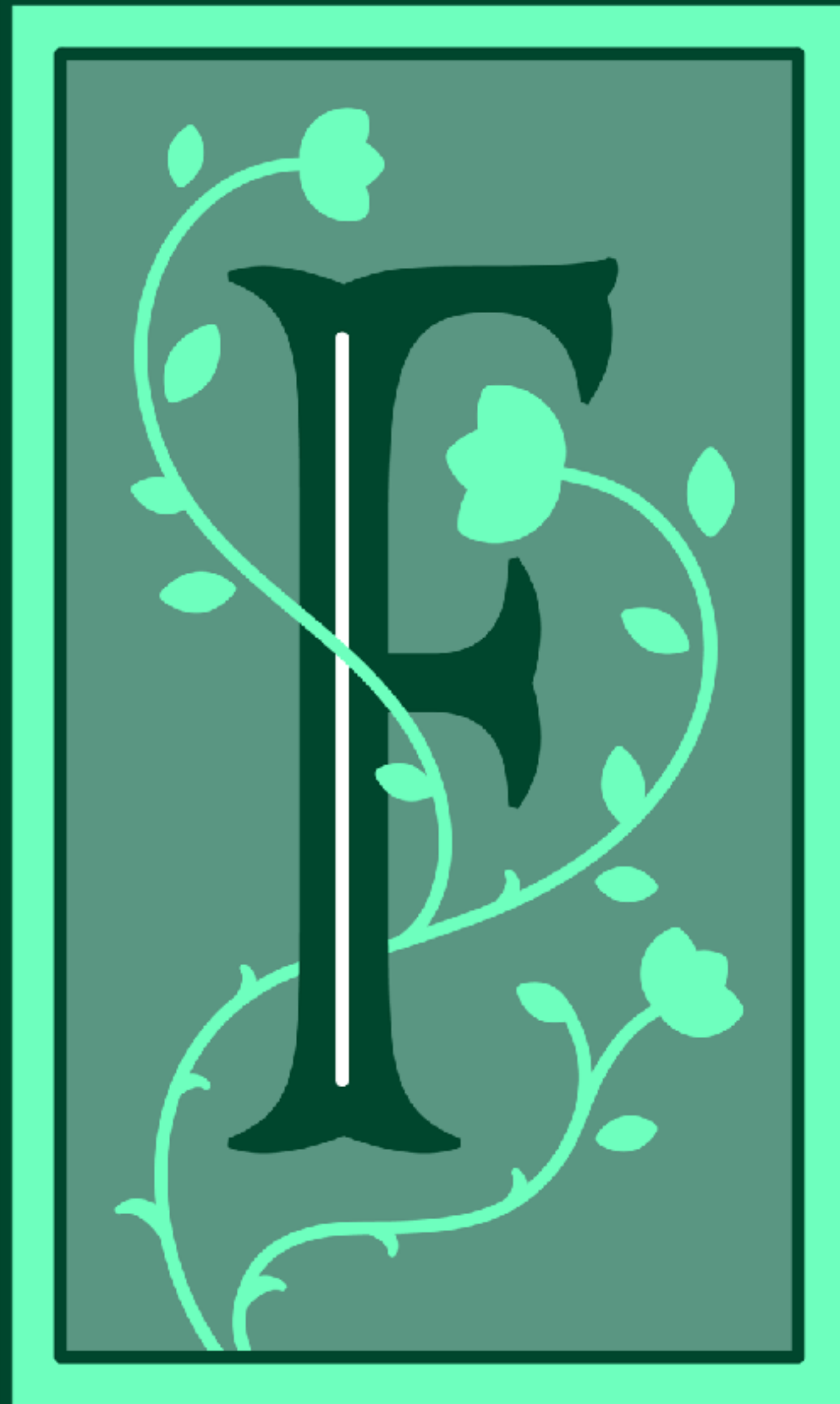
Unlike fortification (flight), the incarnational church (faithful presence) seeks to follow Jesus into every sphere of creation. Unlike accommodation (fusion), the incarnational church not only moves fully into the world but also retains the integrity of its God-given character and proclamation as it does so. And unlike domination (fight), the incarnational church sees its movement into the world not as an angry movement of conquest but as a hopeful movement of redemptive love; seeking not to triumph over its neighbors, but to work for their flourishing.

Gregory Thompson, “The Church in Our Time: Nurturing Congregations of Faithful Presence,” (Charlottesville, VA: New City Commons, October 2011), 12, https://www.flourishcollective.org/academy/wp-content/uploads/The-Church-In-Our-Time-A-New-City-Commons-White-Paper_4.pdf.

Faithful Presence – Trust Jesus and live completely for him, in whatever context he has us, for the good of those around us.



Have you seen
examples of what
you would consider
“faithful presence”
in the public square?



Let's pray to live by
faith in Jesus, not
fear, as we engage
with our world.

Copyright

© 2021 by Jonathan M. Romig.

All rights reserved. No portion of this sermon series may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of Jonathan M. Romig.

Share by linking directly to the original CornerstoneWestford.com posting or by printing out pdf copies (click “save” for sermon or “download” for slides).

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.