



Faith & Flourishing in Politics

A Flourishing Future / Christian Ed. Discussion

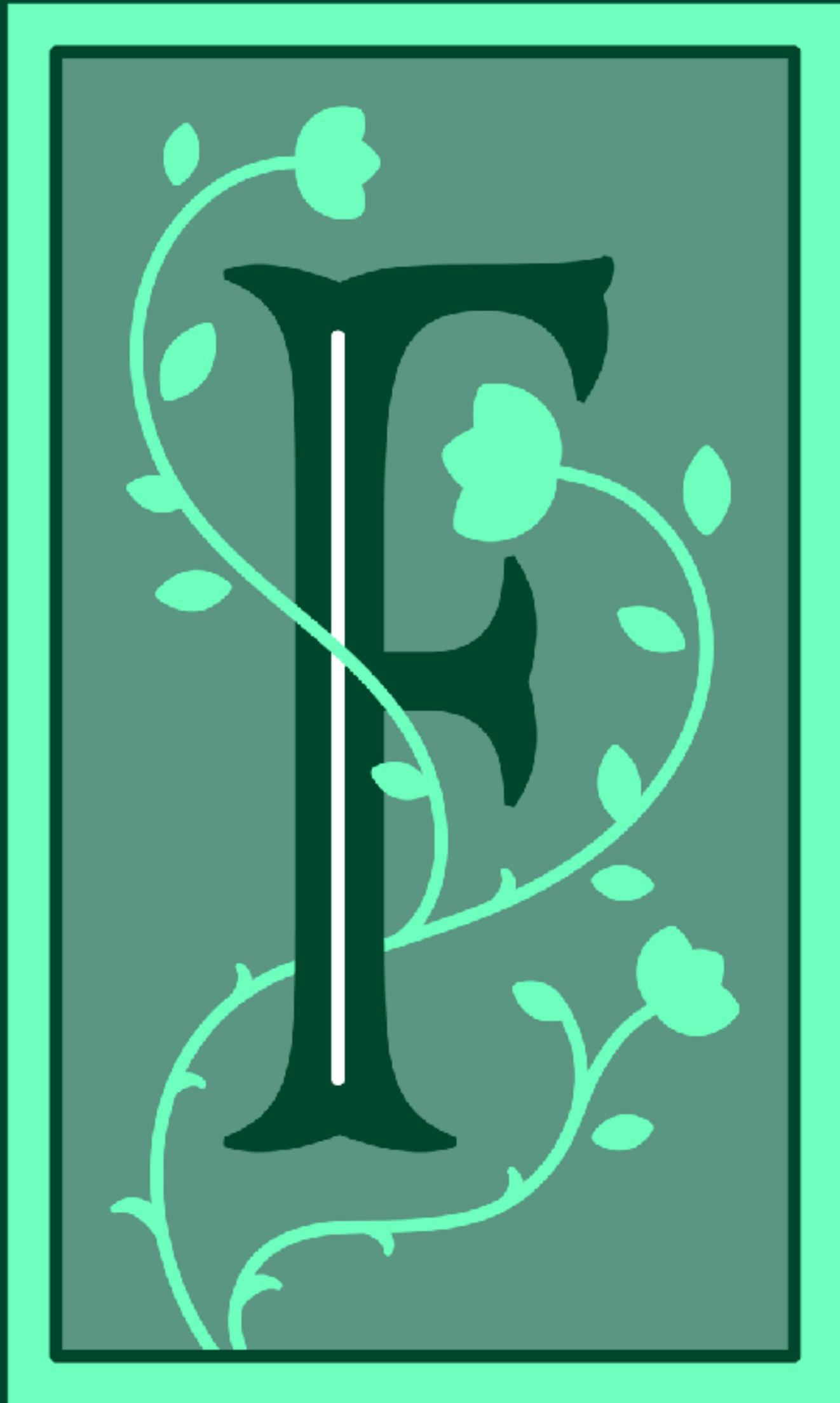
Rev. Jonathan M. Romig - Fall 2021

Our Garden Hedge:

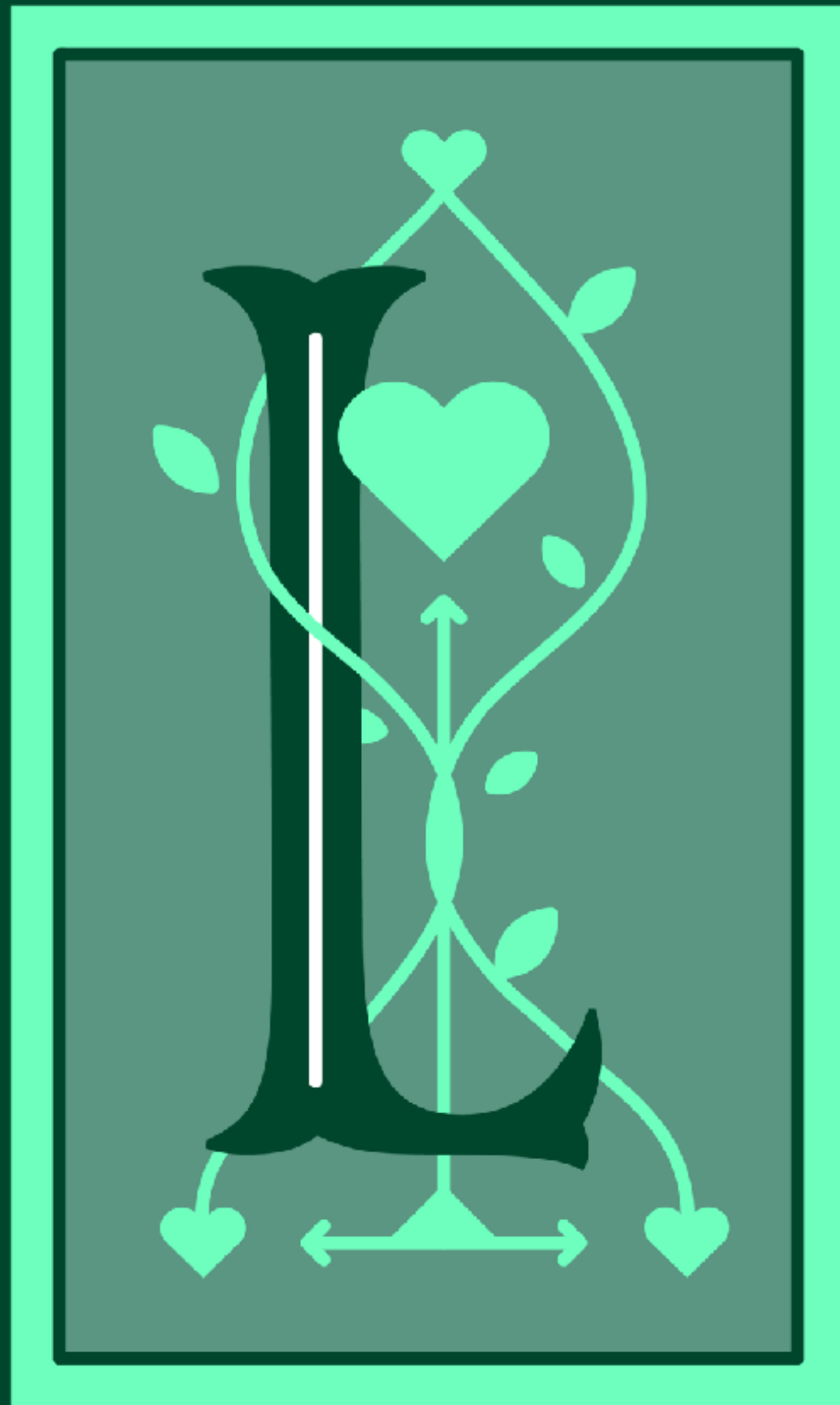
1. **Listen Well** - We don't have all the answers so let's ask what others think, really try to hear each other out, and let others finish their thoughts.
2. **Speak with Brevity & Focus** - Let's leave space for others to participate and stay on track ("Keep to our hedge").
3. **Practice Gentle Courage** - 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 for the Holy Spirit to be present and to bear fruit through our discussion.



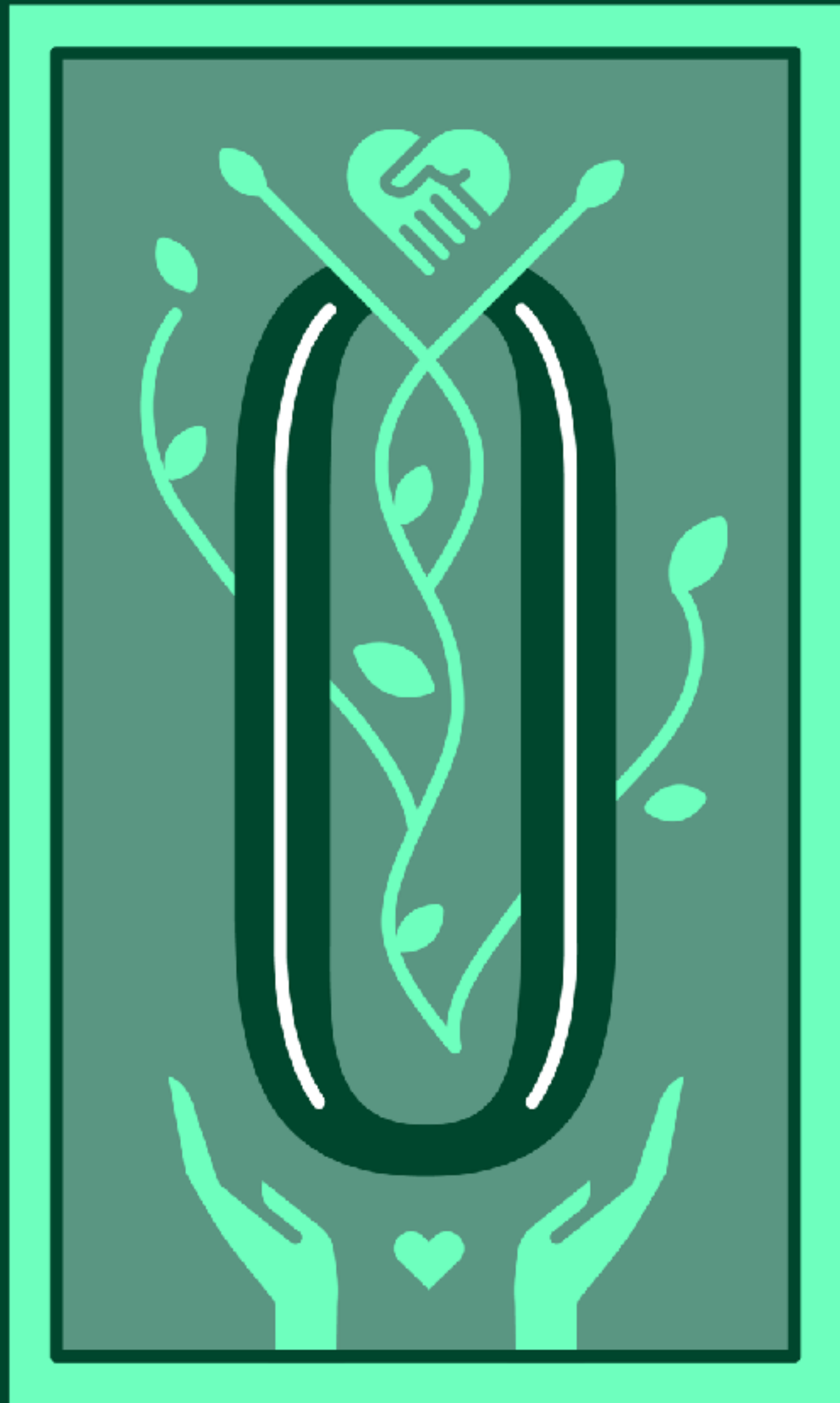
Can anyone recite this from memory?



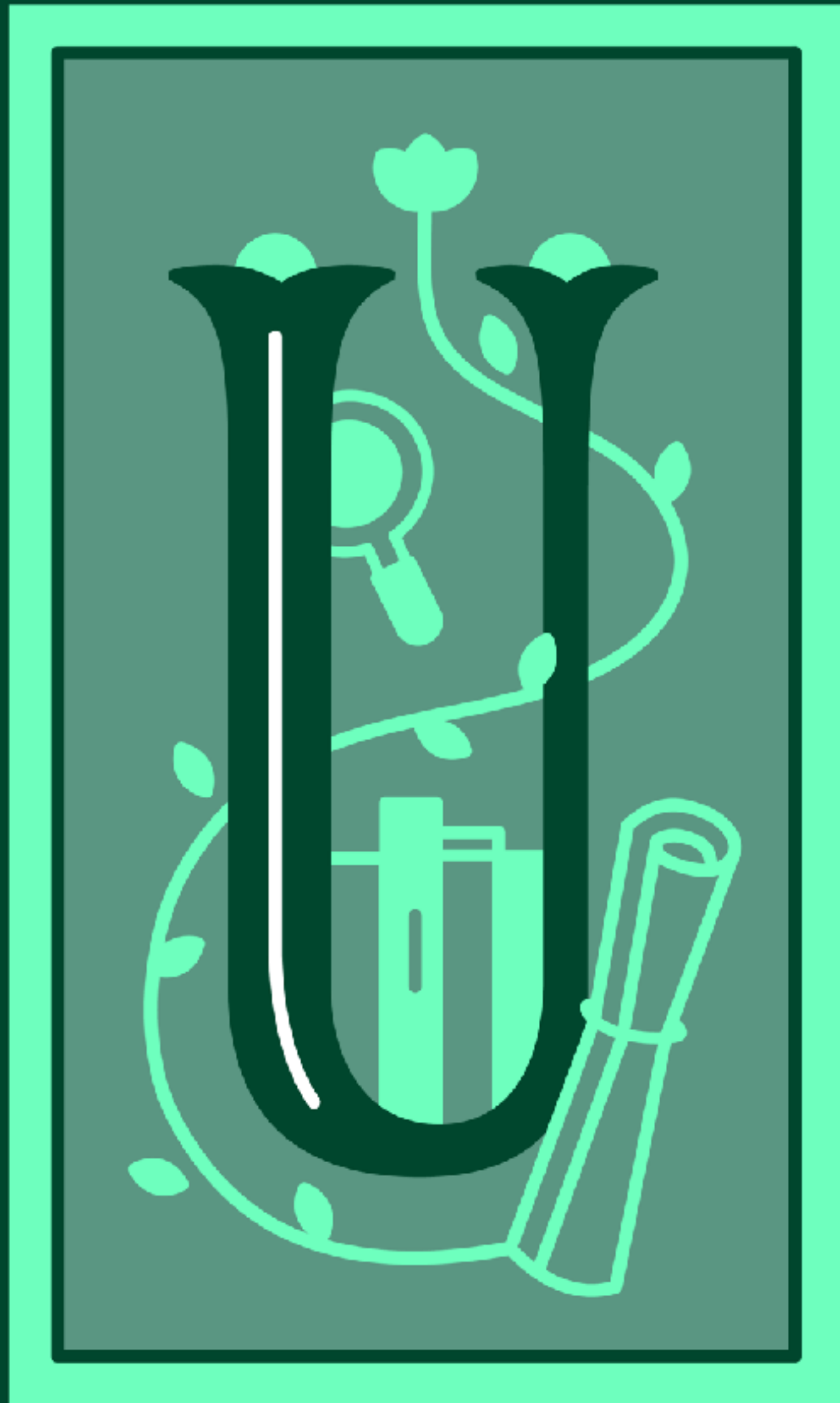
Faith, Not Fear
(faithful presence)



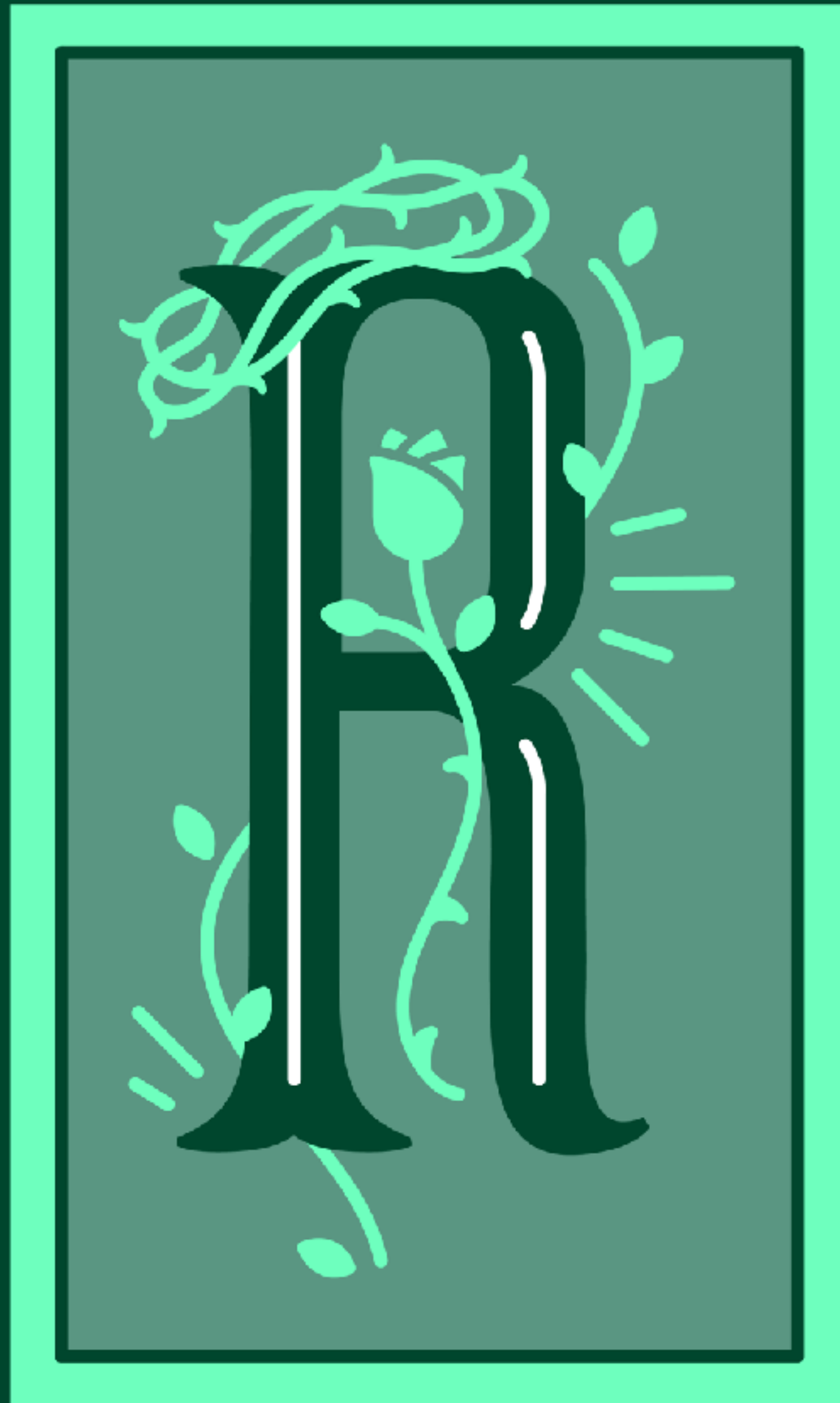
Love God &
Neighbor
(enemies too)



Other Peoples' Good (shalom/common good)



Understanding & Wisdom (setting policies)



Reign of Christ (allegiance/citizen)

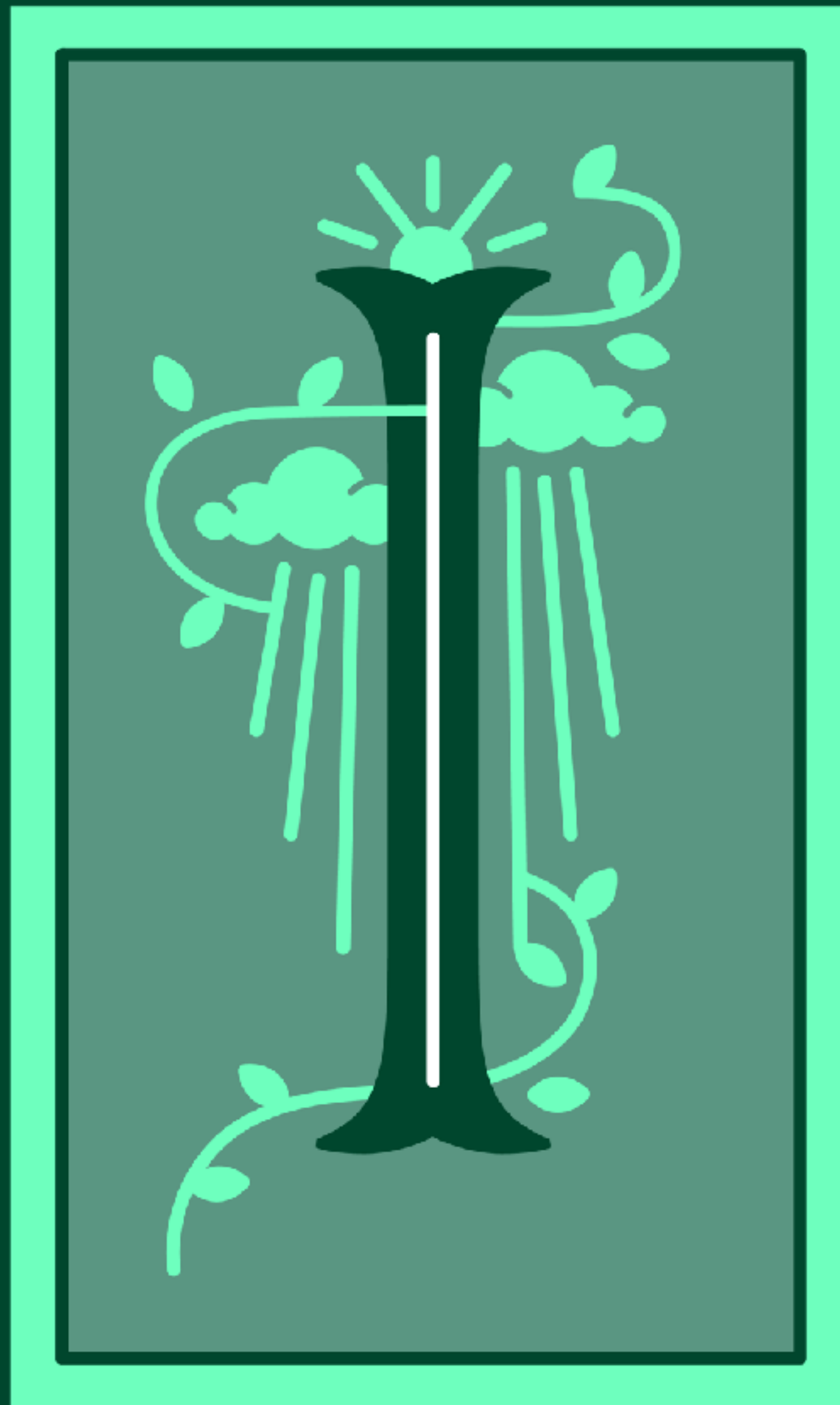
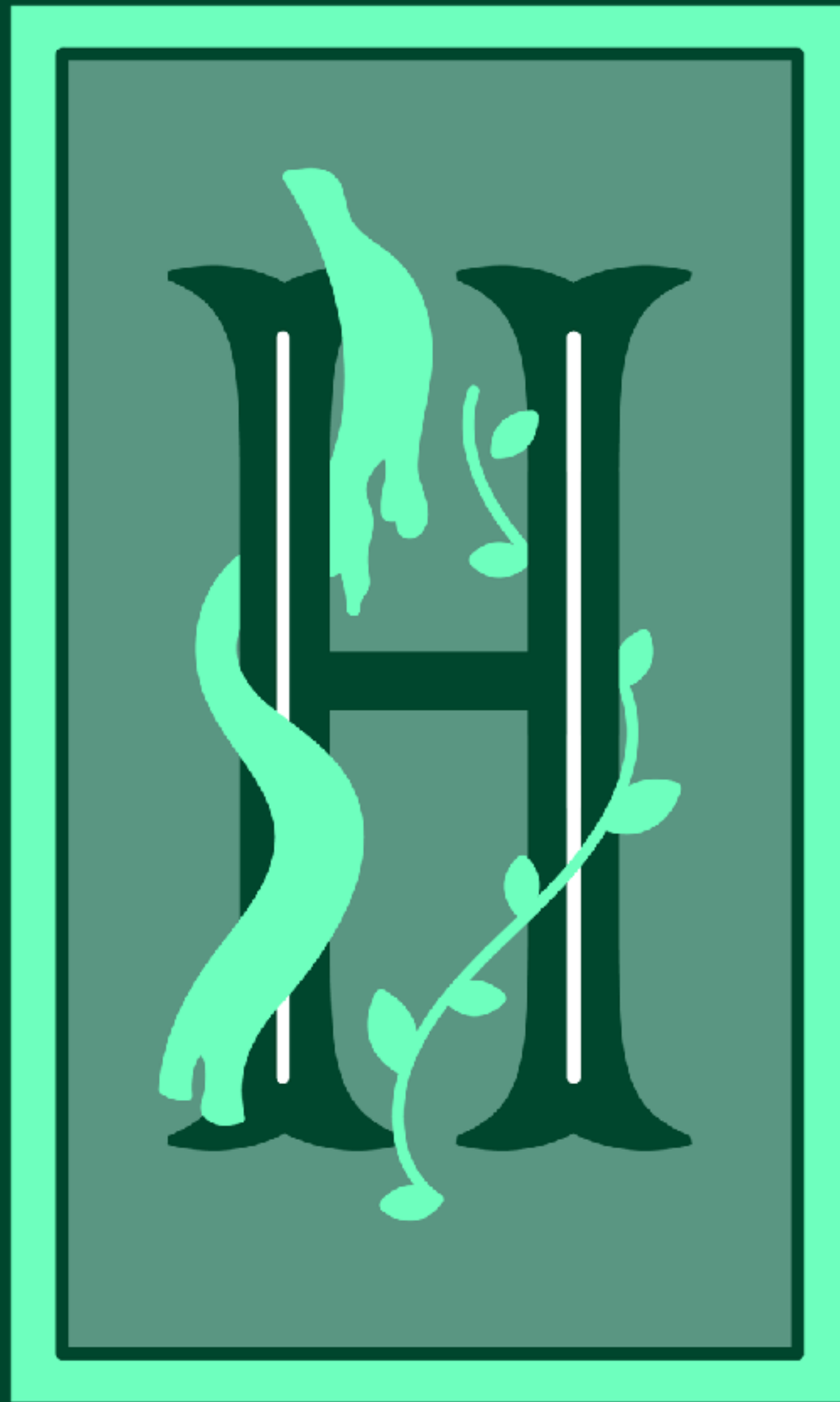


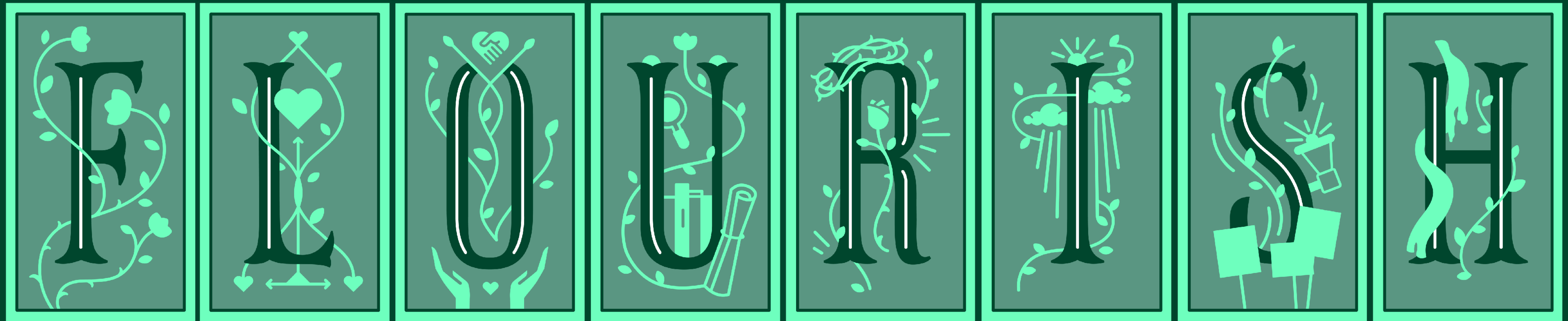
Image of God
(dignity/worth)



Speak
Prophetically
(God's truth)



Help the Needy
(poor & vulnerable)



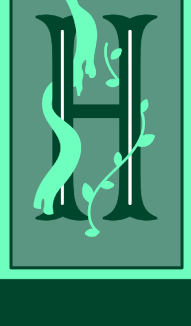
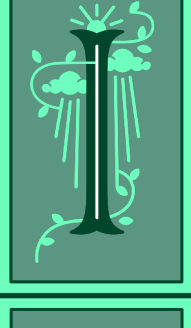
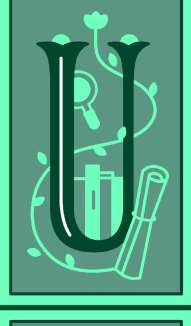
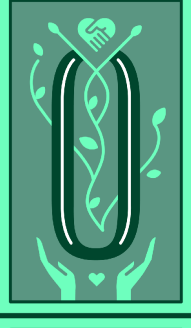
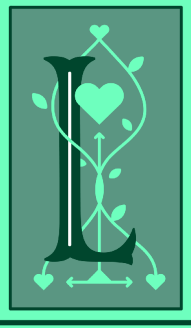
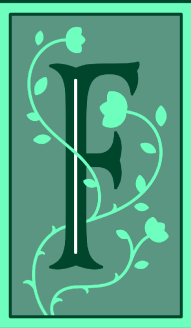
How does the “already but not yet” tension of the kingdom of God help us navigate life?

How does the “already but not yet” tension of the kingdom of God help us navigate life?

God’s kingdom is already here, but not all the way.

Luke 17:20-21 (ESV)

20 Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, 21 nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.” (Jesus is the kingdom manifest)

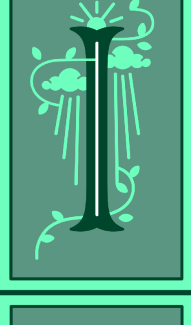
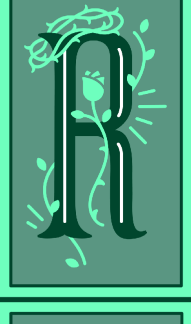
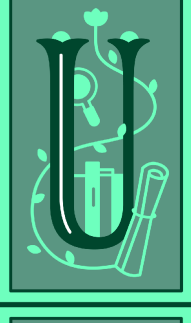
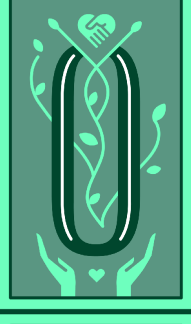
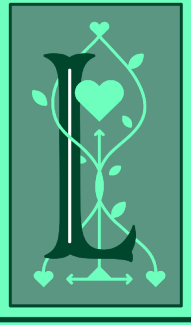
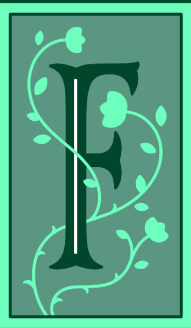


How does the “already but not yet” tension of the kingdom of God help us navigate life?

God’s kingdom comes in hidden & indiscernible ways.

Matthew 13:31-32 (ESV)

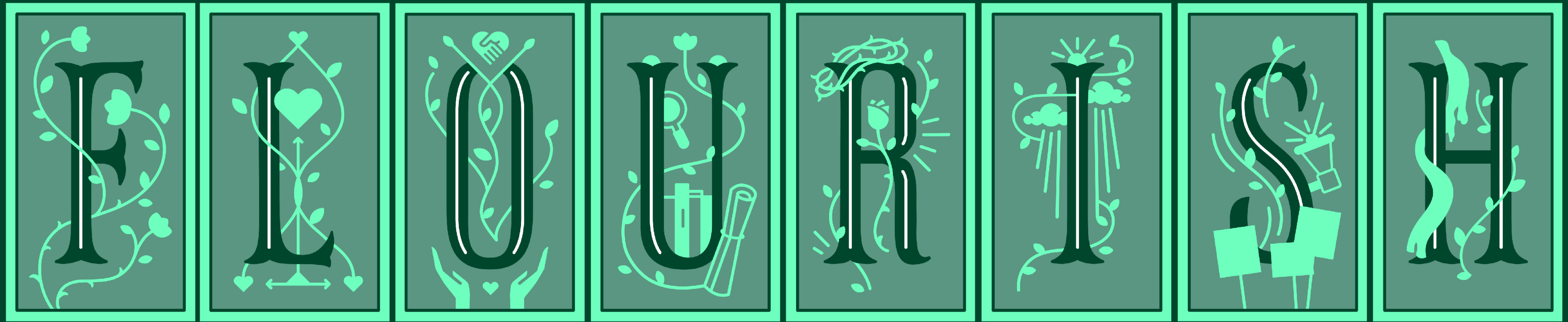
31 He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”



Those who mistakenly bring the kingdom too near (already) fall for utopianism, unrealistic expectations, politicized gospels, or, worst of all, the persecution of those who don't yet believe or who don't see things the same way. Those who keep the kingdom too distant (not yet) fall for prophecy chart fixations or cultural apathy or failed attempts to withdraw from society.

Russell D. Moore, *Onward: Engaging the Culture without Losing the Gospel* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015) chap. 3, Kindle.

How does the “already but not yet” tension of the kingdom of God help us navigate life?



How does the promise of eternal flourishing change the way we engage in our world today?



Image via: pixabay.com

“The two most potent images of human flourishing in the Western cultural traditions come from the Bible, from the opening chapters of its first book and from the final chapters of its last....The promise of these visions of flourishing is a prize jewel in the treasury of the Christian faith, one of its best gifts to the world.”

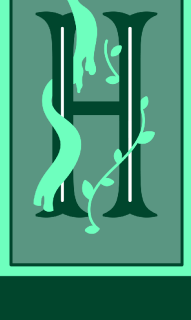
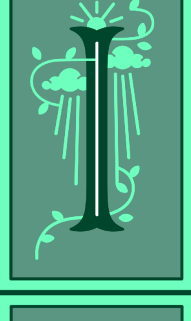
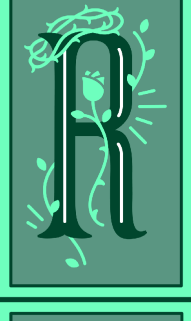
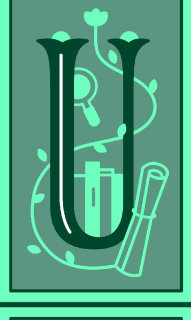
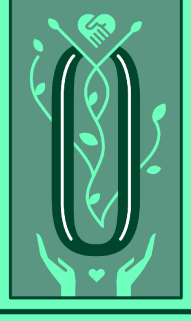
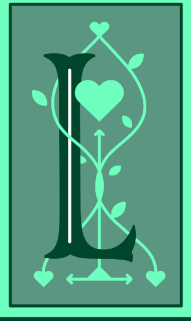
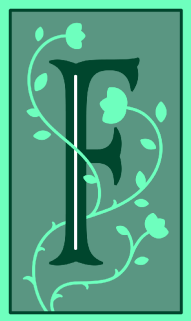
Miroslav Volf, *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), Preface, Kindle.



Image via: pixabay.com

If apocalyptic is not a revelation of specific future events but an imaginative vision of the future which functions to jolt us out of our status-quo perceptions and see current social reality for what it truly is in relation to God, our ways of knowing are newly opened, not dangerously closed.

Elizabeth Phillips, *Political Theology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing. 2012) 148, Kindle.

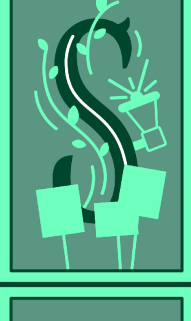
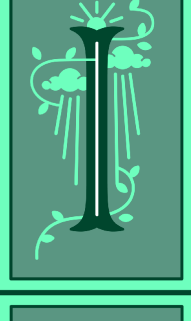
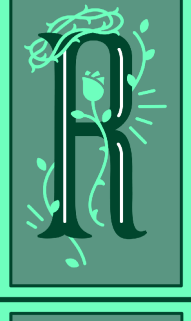
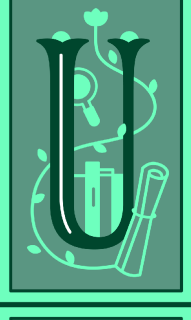
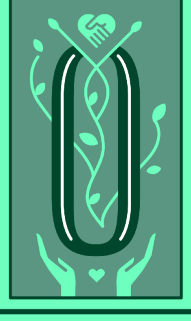
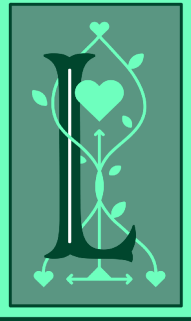
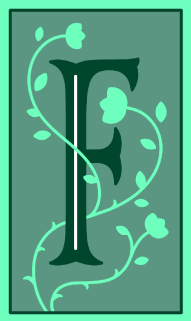


Revelation 7:9-10 (ESV)

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, I0 and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

Revelation 21:1-6 (ESV)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.





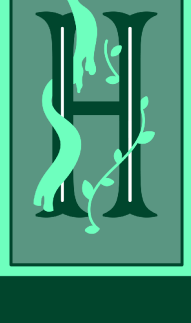
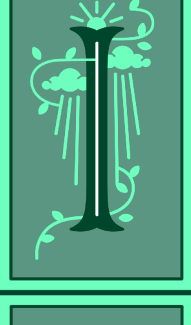
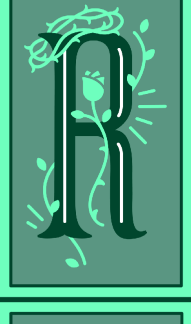
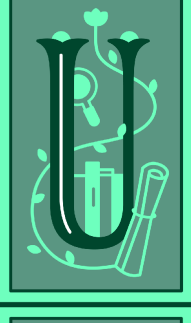
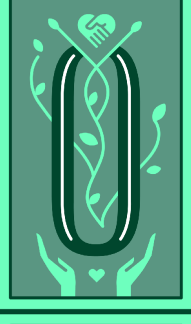
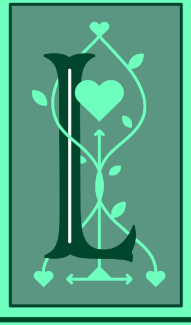
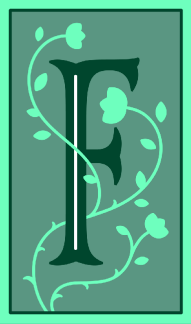
Revelation 21:24-27 (ESV)

By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Does this change anything about the way we engage in our world today?

Revelation 22:1-5 (ESV)

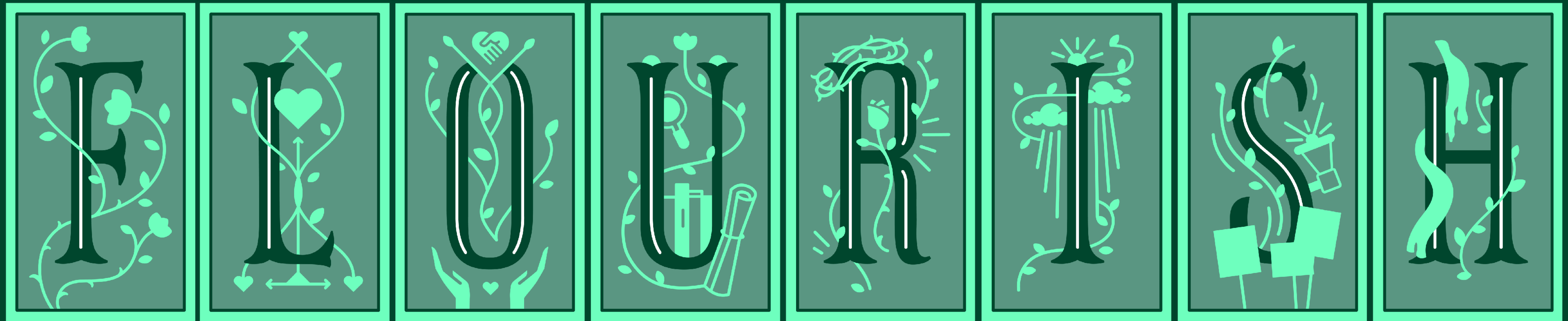
Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.



In the meantime, it is our task to trust God to bring about the final end without confusing our imperfect efforts with his closing act. What this means in terms of history is that we should refrain from both excessive pessimism and excessive optimism when it comes to our actions in the public realm. This leads us to have an approach to society where we are committed to transformation without putting pressure on ourselves to usher in the ultimate triumph.

Vincent E. Bacote, *The Political Disciple: A Theology of Public Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012) 82, Kindle.

How does the promise of eternal flourishing change the way we engage in our world today?



Are we and our work significant?
Does the way we engage in
politics matter, win or lose?



Image via: pixabay.com



Image by Jonathan Romig

Psalm 90:16-17 (ESV)

Let your work be shown to your servants,
and your glorious power to their children.

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
and establish the work of our hands upon us;
yes, establish the work of our hands!

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Image via: pixabay.com

We are working on earth with the knowledge that every true work of human flourishing, done in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, is a preview of the day that God's good creation is redeemed.

Kaitlyn Schiess, *The Liturgy of Politics: Spiritual Formation for the Sake of our Neighbor* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 177. Kindle.



Image via: pixabay.com

Revelation 14:13 (ESV)

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

There are going to be failures on this earth and they are not going to be recognized for being either failures or successes until eternity. It's really hard to gauge what was good work now. So if you're gauging it based on what seems like a failure now, then that's not going to be a good way to gauge political actions. You can fight for causes you don't think will win. You can support cases that look really hopeless because everything will be judged in light of eternity, which things that looked insignificant now will look really significant.

“Episode 420: Four False Political Gospels with Kaitlyn Schiess,” *Holy Post* podcast, published September 2, 2020, accessed November 29, 2021 <https://youtu.be/hh4Nh7g6wM0>.

Are we and our work significant? Does the way we engage in politics matter, win or lose?

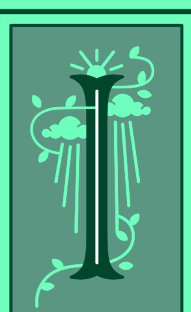
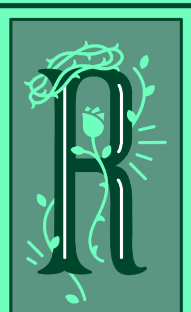
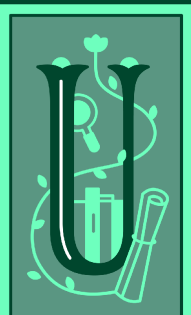
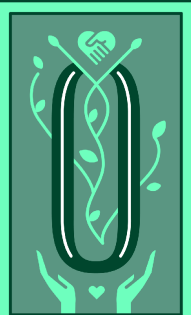
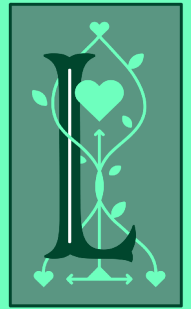
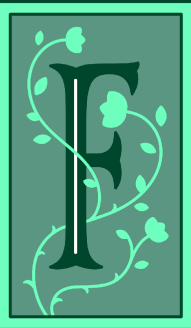
Are we and our work significant? Does the way we engage in politics matter, win or lose?

The way we rule today is preparation for the way we will rule with Christ for all eternity. How we work/rule matters.

2 Timothy 2:11-12 (ESV)

The saying is trustworthy, for:

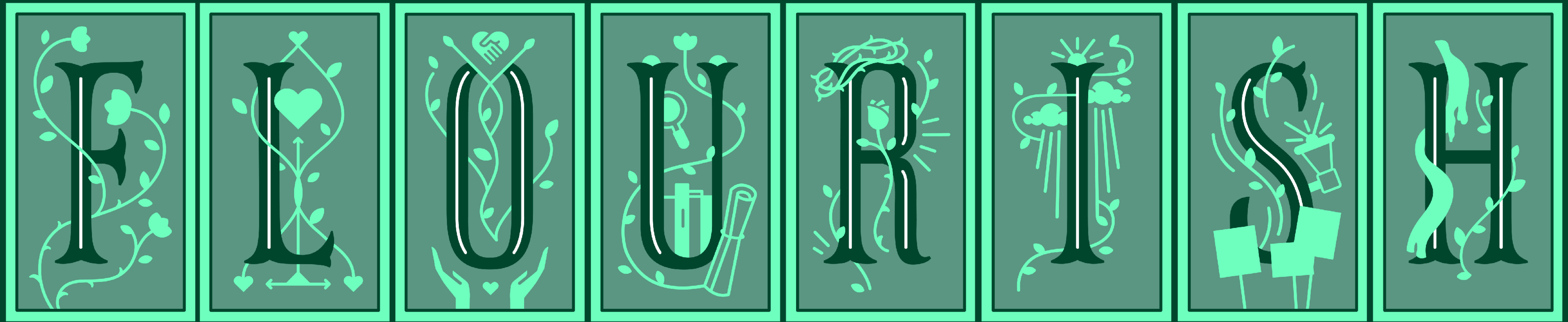
If we have died with him, we will also live with him;
if we endure, we will also reign with him;
if we deny him, he also will deny us;
if we are faithless, he remains faithful—



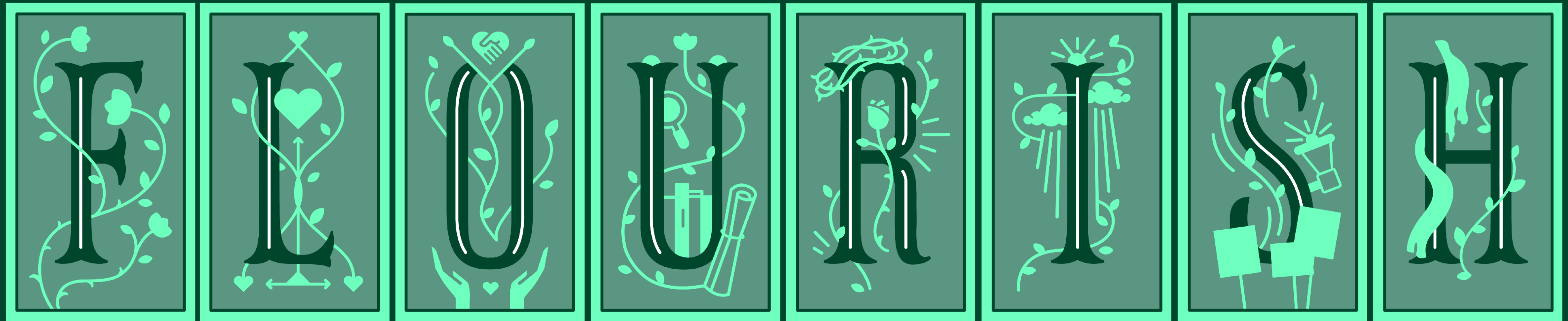
Finally, God makes sure that none of what is true, good, and beautiful in our work will be lost. In God, everything that we have done in cooperation with God will be preserved....The results of our work—the cumulative results of generations of workers across the globe—will also be preserved in the world to come. They may be preserved just in God's memory, or they may be preserved as actual building blocks of that new world.

Miroslav Volf, *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good* (Ada, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2011) 35-36, Kindle.

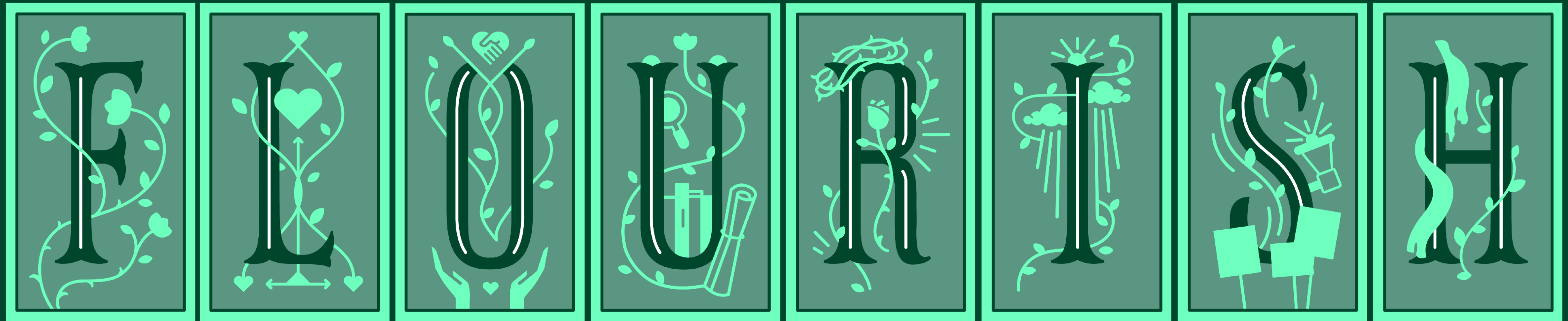
Are we and our work significant? Does the way we engage in politics matter, win or lose?



1. What did you find helpful or unhelpful about this series?
2. What would you propose changing or adding?
3. What further questions do you have?
4. Where should we go from here?



Please remember to fill out the
post-series research study
survey. Thank you!



Let's close by praying that we
would do the work of flourishing in
our church, town, state, and nation.



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Numbers 6:24-26 (ESV)

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

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