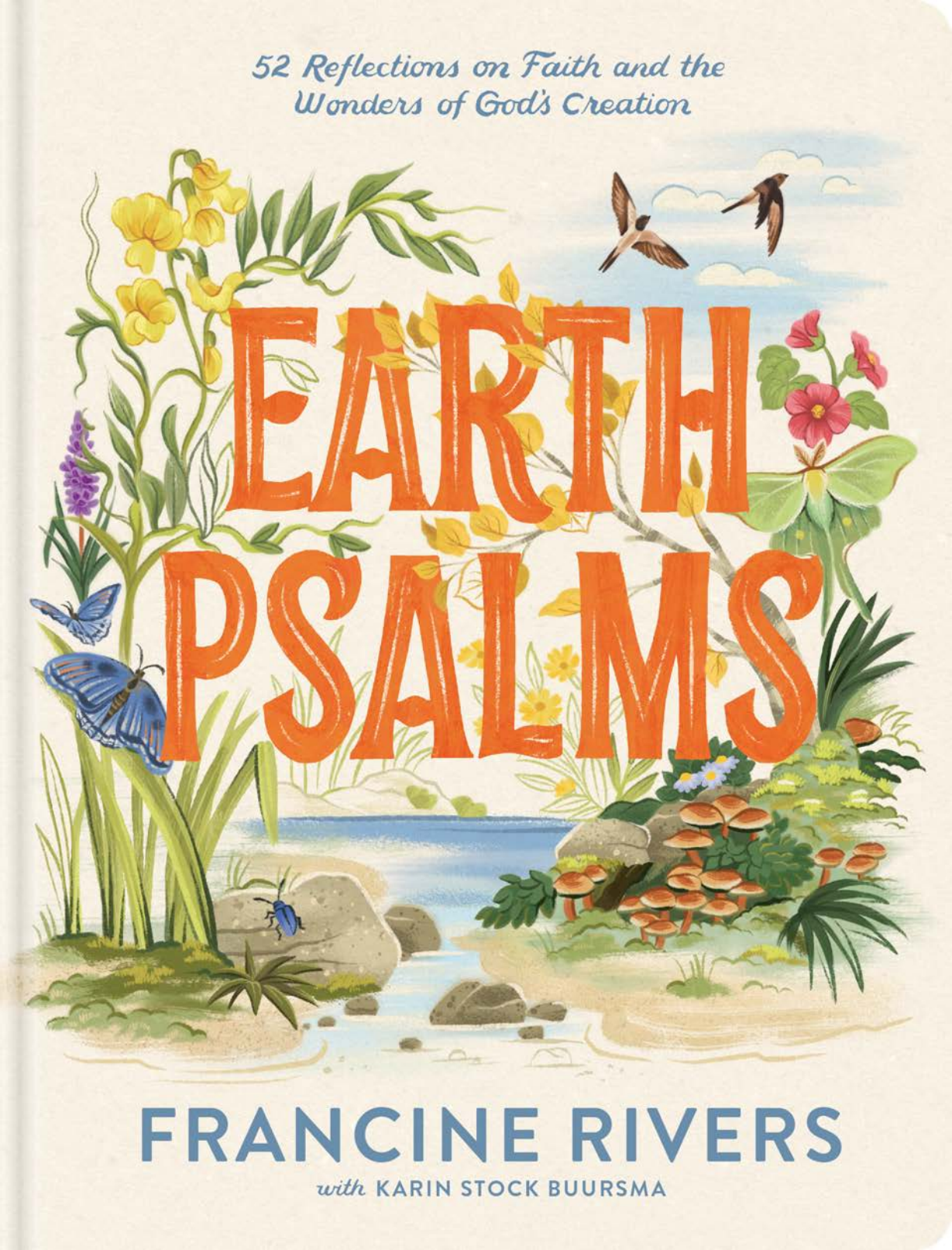


*52 Reflections on Faith and the
Wonders of God's Creation*



EARTH PSALMS

FRANCINE RIVERS

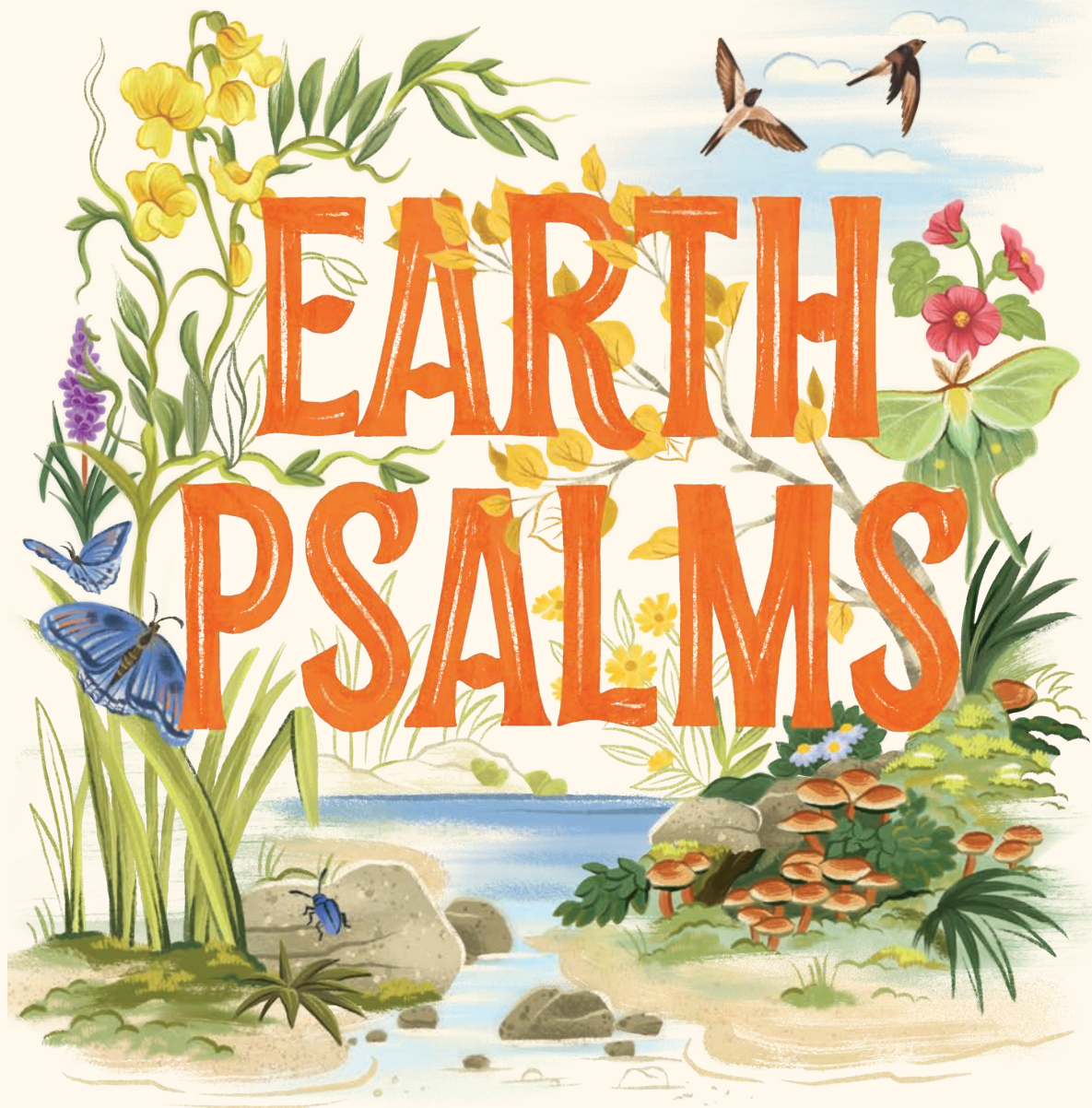
with KARIN STOCK BUURSMAN

EARTH PSALMS



Tyndale House Publishers
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*52 Reflections on Faith and the
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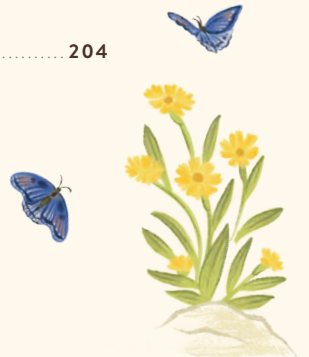
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INTRODUCTION

SCRIPTURES SAY, “For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, [we] can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So [we] have no excuse for not knowing God” (Romans 1:20). Everything God has created is a wonder to behold. If we look closely, we find lessons in our observations.

Writers of the Bible taught lessons through all aspects of the natural world, including plants and animals, reptiles and insects. King David used metaphors of sheep and pastures. Solomon wrote proverbs about sparrows and dogs, pigs and vipers, ants, hyraxes, locusts, and lizards. The prophets warned of how God could stop the rain and bring climate change. When Jesus walked the earth, He spoke about wheat and tares, the mustard seed, a pearl, seeds and soil.

God is an artist, and the earth and the universe are His canvas. From the microscopic complexities of an atom to the immense, expanding universe with nebulae, black holes, and galaxies, God shows His power and majesty, His attention to detail, and His great and unfailing love for us. Jesus said if people did not praise Him, “the stones will cry out” (Luke 19:40, NIV).

When I was a girl, my family traveled, camped, and explored God's creation. I tried to do the same with my children. It's in my DNA, so the idea of writing earth psalms as worship to the Lord sprang from my heart. Once I started, I couldn't help but praise Him for the diversity and beauty of His handiwork. I sought lessons and hidden messages in the myriad animals, plants, reptiles, and insects God has made. Now I have the privilege of sharing with you some of my observations.

Before now, I'd often considered writing a devotional, but I knew I wanted more than my limited view and personal insights. Tyndale graciously connected me with Karin Buursma, who has enriched my offering with hymns, quotes, reflections, and applications for connecting with God.

A painting is not the painter, but the passion of the artist's heart is revealed through his work. Karin and I hope this book will encourage you to look at the world God created and search for the subtle messages that will expand your love for Him and your desire for a closer relationship with Him. So lean in, look more closely at the treasure trove, and seek Him. What lessons might God have embedded in the plants, animals, life cycles, and characteristics of His immense, complex, and marvelous creation? From the depths of the sea to the far reaches of space are countless blessings the Lord offers you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes, ears, and heart to receive what God has for you.

Enjoy!

Francine Rivers







Quail's nest on the ground.



FAITHFULNESS DAY & NIGHT

*The faithful love of the LORD never ends!
His mercies never cease.
Great is his faithfulness;
his mercies begin afresh each morning.*

LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23

RICK AND I get up early, and we're often treated to a sunrise casting its glow along the horizon. Early evening brings the sunset. Each winter, winds strip our oak of its broad leaves, so we can see the full blaze of glory from our deck.

Colors, so many colors. Sunrise often brings pinks, lavenders, and pale yellows that give way to pale blue above a sea of white cotton clouds. By five o'clock, the sun is going down. One night, the sky was molten hot red with streaks of fiery orange and gold. Another night, the clouds turned lavender and pink, then purple. When the sun disappeared, the sky turned indigo, then black with diamond dust tossed onto heavenly canvas.

Sunrise, sunset. Both amaze us. Each day is different, unique, rich in variant

hues, with swirls of gauzy cloud designs that change shape and color by the minute—all painted by the Artist as we watch in awe.

I have come to see these times of incredible beauty as God’s daily greetings, a reminder that He loves us and is ever present. We are never alone. We can speak with Him anytime, day or night. Sunrise is God’s “Good morning.” I can look forward to the day, knowing He will guide and protect me. As Scripture tells us, “His mercies begin afresh each morning.” What a wonderful promise! Yesterday’s mistakes don’t carry over. Today is a new beginning, and God can open my eyes to new friends, possibilities, opportunities. And then, in the evening as the sun goes down in all its glory, God’s “Good night” reassures me that I am in His hand and on His heart, and He watches over me as I sleep. Morning, evening, or in the darkest stretches of the night, He is never off duty.



REFLECT

What does it mean that God’s mercies are new, or fresh, every day? How can remembering God’s faithful presence and protection give you peace as you go about your daily activities?

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APPLY

This week, make an effort to view at least one sunrise and one sunset, observing the incredible beauty of our Creator. Choose one Scripture passage to read every morning and another every evening (perhaps Lamentations 3:22-23 in the morning and Psalm 121 at night). Let these truths about God's presence, mercy, and loving protection fill your mind and influence your thoughts through the day and the night.



CONNECT WITH GOD

Lord God, I am grateful for Your amazing sunrises and sunsets, which remind me of Your love and Your presence. Thank You that Your mercies begin afresh each day. Your forgiveness allows me to begin every morning anew, ready to see what You have for me. In the evening, when I lie down to sleep, may I rest in the knowledge that You have been with me all day and will continue to watch over me.

