

# Patagonia Founder Gives Away Company in an Effort to 'Save Our Planet'

*The Wired Word for the Week of October 2, 2022*

## In the News

Yvon Chouinard founded the outdoor clothing retail company Patagonia almost 50 years ago, with a mission to help fellow mountain climbers. His company did extremely well, and in 2017 *Forbes* magazine labeled him a billionaire and put him on a list of the world's richest people. Chouinard was not pleased.

"While many people daydream of achieving a nine-zero fortune," reports *The Guardian*, "for Chouinard it was a sign he had failed in his life's mission to make the world a better and fairer place." Last month, the 83-year-old shocked many by announcing that he would give away all of the shares in Patagonia in an effort to fight climate change. Chouinard, his wife and their two adult children have irrevocably transferred their ownership of the company to a set of trusts and nonprofit organizations.

Chouinard said on the company's website that he will put 100% of the company's voting stock into the Patagonia Purpose Trust, which will own the company, run the company and help protect the company's values. "Earth is now our only shareholder," Chouinard said in a message to staff and customers. "Instead of 'going public,' you could say we're 'going purpose.' Instead of extracting value from nature and transforming it into wealth for investors, we'll use the wealth Patagonia creates to protect the source of all wealth."

In addition, according to *Fox4News*, all of the nonvoting Patagonia stock has been given to the Holdfast Collective, a nonprofit advocacy group funded by Patagonia's profits. Every year, the money made after reinvesting in the business will be distributed as a dividend, with the goal of fighting climate change.

"Truth be told, there were no good options available," Chouinard said on the website. "So, we created our own. ... As we began to witness the extent of global warming and ecological destruction, and our own contribution to it, Patagonia committed to using our company to change the way business was done," he continued. "Despite its immensity, the Earth's resources are not infinite, and it's clear we've exceeded its limits. But it's also resilient. We can save our planet if we commit to it," he added.

Patagonia will not become a nonprofit company, but will continue to remain a privately held enterprise, led by CEO Ryan Gellert. From now on, the corporation's profits will fund efforts to deal with climate change, as well as to protect wilderness areas. According to initial reports, Patagonia is worth about \$3 billion, and its profits will be donated in perpetuity.

"What's unusual about Chouinard's climate-change gift is its structure," said an Indiana University scholar named Ash Enrici to *The Conversation*. "By giving away his company and directing that the profits be spent fighting climate change in the long term in the form of regular installments, he is creating a new model for large-scale donations. ... It also sets a notable precedent. Chouinard and his family are giving away the source of their wealth and setting things up in a way that is going to result in a predictable form of support for work on climate issues -- an estimated \$100 million each year from Patagonia's profits."

Enrici thinks that it is "a great example for other business owners and very wealthy people to follow." But problems could arise. Enrici says that even "avid environmentalists are expressing deep concerns about the potential downsides of this new [Patagonia] model. They're asking whether it might be used to fund causes championed by other wealthy donors with starkly different agendas."

More on this story can be found at these links:

[Yvon Chouinard -- The 'Existential Dirtbag' Who Founded and Gifted Patagonia. \*The Guardian\*](#)  
[Patagonia Founder Yvon Chouinard Gives Away Company to Combat Climate Change. \*Fox4News\*](#)  
[Patagonia's Founder Has Given His Company Away to Fight Climate Change and Advance Conservation: 5 Questions Answered. \*The Conversation\*](#)

## Applying the News Story

Use this newsworthy gift to focus your attention on sacrificial giving, commitment to your values, and strategies for making a difference in the world.

### The Big Questions

1. To what cause have you made your single biggest donation (no need to reveal the amount)? Why did you do it? How did it make you feel?
2. "Instead of 'going public,'" said Yvon Chouinard, "you could say we're 'going purpose.'" What does it mean to you to commit to your personal values and "go purpose"?
3. What role does sacrificial giving play in your personal faith? In your support of the mission and ministry of the church?
4. *The Guardian* reports that Chouinard was on a mission "to make the world a better and fairer place." How would you describe your life's mission? What are you doing to achieve it?
5. What is your strategy for making a difference in the world? Gifts of time, talent, money or some combination of the three? Be specific.

### Confronting the News With Scripture and Hope

Here are some Bible verses to guide your discussion:

#### Exodus 36:5

*[They] said to Moses, "The people are bringing much more than enough for doing the work that the LORD has commanded us to do." (For context, read [Exodus 36:1-7](#).)*

After the exodus from Egypt, Moses led the people of Israel to Mount Sinai, where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. After leaving Sinai, Moses asked the people to take up an offering to support the building of a sanctuary. The artisans in charge of construction "received from Moses all the freewill offerings that the Israelites had brought for the work of constructing the sanctuary," and the people kept bringing Moses "freewill offerings every morning" (v. 3). A "freewill offering" was a voluntary religious offering made in addition to what was required by a vow or a tithe. The people were so generous with these offerings that Moses gave the command that the giving must stop: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary" (v. 6).

**Questions:** What does a freewill offering reveal about the condition of the giver's heart? How, if at all, does it have a greater impact than a gift made out of a sense of obligation? What effect does an impressive freewill offering have on the larger community? Have you ever had a gift graciously turned down by a congregation or another institution? If so, how did you react?

#### Ruth 2:13

*Then [Ruth] said [to Boaz], "May I continue to find favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, even though I am not one of your servants." (For context, read [Ruth 2:1-23](#).)*

After a Moabite woman named Ruth followed her Israelite mother-in-law named Naomi to Bethlehem, she went into a field to glean among the ears of grain. A prominent rich man named Boaz invited her to join his reapers, and to drink from a vessel of water if she became thirsty. Ruth wondered why she, a foreigner, should find favor in his sight. Boaz responded that he had heard the story of her faithfulness to her mother-in-law, and how she left her native land to follow Naomi to Bethlehem. "May the LORD reward you for your deeds," said Boaz, "and may you have a full reward from the LORD, the God of Israel" (v. 12). Boaz then invited her to eat, and she ate until he was satisfied. In time, Boaz and Ruth were married, and eventually she became the great-grandmother of King David.

**Questions:** Why was Boaz inspired to be generous toward Ruth, even though she was a foreigner? What were the impacts of his gifts on the future of the people of Israel? How was the generosity of Boaz a commitment to his values? How does your giving reflect your values?

### **Matthew 19:21-22**

*Jesus said to [the rich young man], "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.* (For context, read [Matthew 19:16-26](#).)

After Jesus left Galilee and entered Judea, large crowds followed him. A rich young man came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" (v. 16). Jesus encouraged him to keep the commandments, and the man replied, "I have kept all these; what do I still lack?" (v. 20). Jesus said that he must sell his possessions and give the money to the poor. The rich young man could not bring himself to do this, so he went away grieving. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God" (v. 24).

**Questions:** Why do you think it was so hard for the rich young man to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor? What concerns prevent you from being more generous in your giving? Where do you see specific spiritual challenges for rich people who want to enter the kingdom of God?

### **2 Corinthians 9:6-7**

*The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.* (For context, read [2 Corinthians 9:1-15](#).)

The apostle Paul asked the followers of Christ in Corinth to contribute to a collection for the needy Christ-followers in Jerusalem. He wrote them in advance so that they had time to prepare the "bountiful gift" that they had promised and "so that it may be ready as a voluntary gift and not as an extortion" (v. 5). Paul said that "God loves a cheerful giver," and promised that "God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance" (v. 8). He then predicted, "You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity" (v. 11).

**Questions:** How was the collection for Jerusalem a strategy for making the world a better place? What was its impact on the recipients in Jerusalem? On the givers in Corinth? How have Paul's words come true for you: "You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity"?

### **For Further Discussion**

1. TWW team member Mary Sells writes, "I am thinking of the woman who gave a few coins at the temple, all she had [[Luke 21:1-4](#)]. We all can do something, even if we are not very rich, to ease the plight of others." Where have you seen large changes made by relatively small gifts? Why do you think Jesus said that the poor widow "put in more" than the rich people who gave larger amounts (v. 3)? How does Jesus judge our giving?
2. In his book *Green Like God*, journalist Jonathan Merritt asks the question, "Was Jesus Green?" He answers, in part, by saying, "Jesus' mere presence on Earth affirms the value that God had already placed on our planet."

Merritt believes that Jesus aligns with creation care because "all things have been created through him and for him" ([Colossians 1:16](#)). Do you see a gift for "creation care" being a Christian gift? Why or why not?

3. TWW consultant James Gruetzner found it interesting that some people were wondering concerning Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard's strategy, "asking whether it might be used to fund causes championed by other wealthy donors with starkly different agendas." Clearly, other donors could make similar gifts in support of a wide variety of competing causes, including those who don't buy into the "global warming" -- rebranded as "climate change" -- narrative. Does this concern you? Why or why not?

4. [Bloomberg reports](#) that Chouinard structured the transfer of his firm in a way that keeps control within the family and avoids taxes. The particular structure of the gift helps him to avoid a \$700 million tax bill. Does this make you more or less supportive of such a gift? Why do you feel this way? In general, how do you feel about tax deductions for charitable contributions?

5. TWW team member Joanna Loucky-Ramsey writes, "A Canadian friend of mine went to the supermarket yesterday for a few items. The woman in front of her at the checkout spent over \$250 and got a free turkey. She turned to my friend and asked if she wanted it. My friend happily said yes, and thanked her benefactor profusely." Since the woman at the checkout did not want the turkey, this gift was not a big sacrifice for her. Does a gift have to be sacrificial to be meaningful? When have you given (or received) such a gift, and what was its effect?

## **Responding to the News**

In the week to come, reflect on your pattern of giving and assess whether it is a true reflection of your personal values. Identify an organization committed to making a positive difference in the world, and make a freewill offering.

## **Prayer**

Creator God, we thank you for making this beautiful world and placing us in it. We ask you to guide us as we seek to give of ourselves and our resources in ways that advance your will. We pray this in the name of Jesus, who gave of himself in a perfect sacrifice. Amen.

## **Other News This Week**

### **Smart Traffic Signals Aim to Move People Forward to a Better Future**

*The Wired Word* for the Week of October 2, 2022

## **In the News**

Recent advancements in traffic management technology could help decrease pollution, road rage, accidents, fuel costs, commuting time and climate change as more smart systems are adopted. A 2022 Juniper Research study showed that such systems could potentially lower greenhouse gas emissions by 226 million tons over the next five years.

Several companies around the world are studying ways to reduce time wasted when drivers are kept waiting at a traffic light when no cross-traffic is present. During the pandemic year of 2020, when vehicular travel was greatly reduced, inefficient traffic control patterns still added 27 hours to drivers' commute. Prior to the pandemic, in 2019, slowdowns added 54 hours' drive time and \$605 in additional fuel expense for the average commuter, according to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

In Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University research professor Stephen Smith, who created the Rapid Flow Technologies (RFT) company, has developed "smart" traffic signal software that is said to be highly effective at decreasing commuter travel time by 25%.

Before the advent of gas street lights, police and traffic control officers directed traffic at intersections using hand signals, gestures and whistles. By 1914, red and green electric traffic lights were becoming the norm. Yellow caution lights to warn drivers of a pending light change came later. Around 1920, signal lights that changed at fixed intervals were introduced. Computerization and the addition of cameras at intersections allowed for greater flexibility in management of traffic flow, depending on changing conditions rather than a rigid schedule.

Increasingly, as more vehicles and individuals are equipped with wireless capability, vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) technology can connect them to each other, and to digital mapping, traffic management infrastructure and traffic signals, to provide real-time information to improve the experience of pedestrians, drivers, public transit users and cyclists. This technique has been described as I2X -- Intersection to Everything technology.

"Once an intersection builds up a timing plan, and starts to execute it, it will send to its downstream neighbors ... what traffic it expects to be sending their way according to its schedule," Smith says. "If you imagine a future where all vehicles are connected, or all travelers are connected, then that's going to be transformational for traffic signal control," he added.

Griffin Schultz, the CEO of RFT, said in an interview: "Improving people's lives [is] what drew me the most to this ... the opportunity to impact people's time savings, fuel savings, the emission savings, and we haven't even talked about safety. There've been third-party analyses of our systems and other adaptive systems that show they can reduce traffic safety incidents by 20%. When you can save people time [and] money, [and provide] traffic reduction, safer streets, a better experience for pedestrians and a better experience for transit riders, then that's really exciting."

Jonathan Kertsting, Vice President of Communications and Media of the Pittsburgh Technology Council, responded: "Win! Win! Win!"

A smart traffic light can have the ability to detect pedestrians at street corners and calculate how much time they need to get across an intersection safely. Smith says his company is working on a smartphone app for pedestrians with disabilities, which would communicate with smart signals.

Dvir Reznik, Vice President of Marketing at the Israeli company NoTraffic says they combine cameras and radar sensors at intersections with a cloud-based Traffic Virtual Management Center.

"Our platform can potentially reduce the number of drivers driving through a red-light by an average of almost 80 percent, simply by optimizing the flow of traffic, in real time," he says.

One drawback of new traffic management systems may be the expense of implementation, which, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, could cost nearly \$20,000 per intersection to deploy some Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies.

The Russian UOMZ Industrial Design Center has two new traffic signal systems in development. The first is based on the older vertical three-color lights, which help people with color vision disorders interpret a signal by the location of the lights. The second uses square, interactive digital signs which can change rapidly, depending on changing road conditions. Even young children, non-readers and non-native language speakers can understand the signs, which rely on colors, symbols, pictograms and images such as these, rather than on words:

- White arrows on green (move forward, left, right)
- Black exclamation points on yellow (watch out, use caution!)

- X on red (stop)
- Arrows moving in circles (traffic circles)
- Changing lane or traffic patterns
- A reversing white arrow on green (U turn permitted)
- Worker with shovel (work zone)
- Cyclist or pedestrian (moving in green when it is safe to proceed, standing still in red to wait)
- Countdown numbers (seconds left before the light will change and people will need to stop or be permitted to move, using a combination of colors and symbols: a vertical red line combined with a flashing green arrow curving right means you can't proceed ahead but can proceed to the right; a red vertical line and a red line curving right combined with a flashing green arrow curving left means you can't proceed straight or right but can go left)

Visit the links below to view some of the signs.

More on this story can be found at these links:

[Traffic Lights of the Future. Art.lebedev](#)

[Going Nowhere Fast? Smart Traffic Lights Can Help Ease Gridlock. How Stuff Works](#)

[New Technology in Traffic Lights. SECO Equipment Company](#)

[The History and Evolution of Traffic Lights. SECO Equipment Company](#)

## Applying the News Story

Signs appear in the very first chapter of the Bible and are mentioned in many other parts of the sacred text, through the last book, Revelation. Physical features in the universe, such as the sun, moon, stars, planets and rainbows, are used as signs ([Genesis 1:14-15; 9:8-17](#)). The rainbow also serves as a sign of God's covenant with humanity and the rest of creation not to destroy all flesh by a flood.

Here are some of the rituals and religious observances that became signs of God's covenant, or special relationship, with the people of Israel: circumcision of male children ([Genesis 17:9-14](#)); the blood of the Passover lamb ([Exodus 12:1-13](#)); the feast of unleavened bread ([Exodus 13:7-9](#)); the redemption of firstborn male children ([Exodus 13:11-16](#)); the Sabbath ([Exodus 31:12-17](#)); the statement of faith in God, love for God and obedience to God's commandments ([Deuteronomy 6:1-8](#)).

Some signs indicated God's displeasure over human actions and the penalty for sin ([Exodus 4:8-9, 27-30](#); [Exodus 10:1-3](#); [Deuteronomy 28:45-46](#)).

Signs and wonders are not only performed by God and God's people. Satan and those who rebel against God's law use spectacles to deceive and delude people who will not believe what is true ([2 Thessalonians 2:1-12](#)).

For this lesson, we will explore how we can set up spiritual signals to guide our own steps and to help others find their way through life's hazards as well.

## The Big Questions

1. When might signs be misleading? What could happen when signs are unclear and confusing?
2. What is needed to ensure that any signs used in a community communicate the same message to everyone?
3. What signs or symbols can you name that are found in the Bible, and what do they signify?
4. What signs or symbols can be found in your local church? What do they mean to you? Do you think other people would understand them the way you do? Why or why not?

5. Do you believe God gives signs today? If so, give an example of one such sign, and explain what you think it means. If not, why not?

## Confronting the News With Scripture and Hope

Here are some Bible verses to guide your discussion:

### Joshua 4:5-7

*Joshua said to [the 12 men he had selected], "Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, so that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off in front of the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the Israelites a memorial forever." (For context, read [Joshua 4:1-7](#).)*

### Jeremiah 31:21

*Set up road markers for yourself; make yourself signposts; consider well the highway, the road by which you went. (For context, read [Jeremiah 31:18-21](#).)*

After the Israelites crossed over the Jordan River, the Lord directed Joshua to select one representative from each of the 12 tribes to create a memorial from stones taken from the middle of the river that God had enabled them to ford.

Centuries later, Jeremiah instructed God's people to remember how God had disciplined them and how they had walked the road of repentance to return to God. They were to make signposts and road markers for their future selves and for their children, to help them avoid the potholes and dangers they had encountered in the past.

**Questions:** How are the markers in these two passages alike and unlike? What purposes do spiritual landmarks or signposts serve? For whom should we erect such markers, and what messages should be conveyed with them?

### Matthew 24:23-24, 30-31

*[Jesus said,] "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!' or 'There he is!' -- do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. ... Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see 'the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven' with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (For context, read [Matthew 24:23-31](#).)*

In this chapter, Jesus lays out the signs of the end times and what the disciples should watch for that would indicate that his return is imminent: wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, persecution, apostasy, increased lawlessness and cold-heartedness, and the appearance of many false prophets and false messiahs who will come in Jesus' name.

**Questions:** How are Jesus' disciples to know him when he comes again? What will set him apart from all the false messiahs and false prophets who will also produce great signs and wonders? How can we avoid being led astray by misleading people posing as accurate and true signposts who say they point the way to God?

### John 20:30-31

*Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name. (No context needed.)*

Among the signs mentioned in the Gospel of John are the changing of water into wine at the marriage celebration in Cana ([John 2:1-25](#)), the healing of a dying boy ([John 4:46-54](#)), feeding the 5,000 ([John 6:1-14](#),

[25-36](#)), and raising Lazarus from the dead ([John 12:17-19, 37](#)). In John 20, we see the sign of Jesus' own resurrection, and his resurrection appearances with a transformed body that seems to have unusual powers, such as the ability to appear in a locked room without the use of a door or key.

**Questions:** Why did the gospel writer feel it was important to report on the signs Jesus did? What is the significance of the fact that Jesus did these and many other signs "in the presence of his disciples" rather than in private? In addition to the signs Jesus performed, in what sense is Jesus himself a sign from God? And what message(s) do you see written in Jesus himself, in his life, death, resurrection, teachings and character?

### **John 13:34-35**

*[Jesus said,] "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* (For context, read [John 13:1-5, 34-35](#).)

We see that the disciples also perform signs ([Acts 2:43; 5:12; 8:5-8; 14:3](#)). Or to put it another way, God empowered them through the Holy Spirit to perform such signs, through which many were healed, great joy was produced, people came to trust in God and put their faith in Jesus, and the good news of God's kingdom spread.

One of the most striking examples of the kind of Christlike love Jesus says will be the preeminent sign that marks his disciples occurs in [Acts 11:19-30](#). There, people who had been persecuted for their faith in Christ met with one of the men who had terrorized them before he turned to Christ himself: the apostle Paul. The fact that they could not only tolerate his presence but fully accept him into fellowship and even respect him as a leader speaks volumes about the power of loving others as Jesus has loved us.

**Questions:** How can we show the love of Christ to people who have hurt us deeply? When have you seen that kind of love, and how can we learn to love that way?

### **For Further Discussion**

1. Here is [a link](#) to a few well-known Christian symbols. Name one (from this list or another of your own choosing) that is meaningful to you. What does it signify? To what spiritual truth or virtue does that symbol point? How does contemplation of that symbol draw you closer to God?
2. Christian symbols represent who God is and who we are. They are not items to be worshiped. What happens when Christian symbols are misused or co-opted?
3. Discuss how you (as individuals and as a community of faith) are signs in the world. What message about God are you conveying to the world? Consider asking your neighbors and others in the community what signs and messages they see in you. Do their answers match your self-assessment? If not, do you sense God calling you to take some action about that?
4. Comment on this, from TWWteam member Mary Sells: "God can use anything and anyone to reach you with his message. When God wants to communicate with us, it can be subtle (like a gentle breeze in a cave, instead of lightning and thunder (see [1 Kings 19:11-13](#)), yet we will still be able to recognize the voice of God."
5. Reflect on this: In [Matthew 12:38-42](#), some scribes and Pharisees come to Jesus and say, "We wish to see a sign from you." In other words, "Come on, give us incontrovertible evidence that you really are speaking for God. Do some miracle. Perform some act so dazzling that we will be convinced."

In the rock musical *Jesus Christ, Superstar*, King Herod has Jesus under arrest in his courtyard. With mockery in his voice, Herod sings:

So, you are the Christ. You're the great Jesus Christ!  
Prove to me that you're no fool: Walk across my swimming pool!

While it's easy to poke fun at these scribes and Pharisees, we can also identify with them in some ways. Have you had to make a tough decision where you really weren't sure which choice was right and then said, "If only God would give me a sign"? That's what these opponents of Jesus were saying: "Remove the ambiguity and the doubt. Just tell us what the truth is, and prove it."

John tells us that in spite of the many miraculous signs Jesus performed, some did not believe him ([John 12:37](#)).

So what are we to make of the answer Jesus gave the scribes and Pharisees about the sign of Jonah? It was a metaphorical way of saying that Jesus would stay three days in the tomb, the period between his crucifixion and his reemergence to life. So Jesus was saying that his death and resurrection would be *the sign* for all on that day.

But when Jesus did rise from the dead, instead of accepting that as a sign proving he was sent from God, some tried to hide it.

Even when a sign as miraculous as a person coming back to life is given, some people choose not to accept it. That's what Abraham meant when, in Jesus' parable about the rich man and Lazarus, he told the rich man that his five brothers would not be convinced to repent and change their ways even if someone were to rise from the dead, if they were not predisposed to listen to Moses and the prophets already ([Luke 16:19-31](#)).

Signs are only useful to people who accept the messages they convey and act accordingly.

6. Think about this: Sometimes when we see something that looks like it could be a sign, we recognize that it could be interpreted more than one way, meaning that we can read what we want to into it.

There's an old story of a farmer who had been asking God for a sign to tell him what he should be doing with his life. One morning he looked up in the sky and saw clouds forming perfect letters: "PC."

"Preach Christ!" he exclaimed. "That's what God wants me to do." And he was all set to sell the farm and go into the ministry until one of his neighbors pointed out that the letters "PC" could just as well mean "Plant corn."

How are we to know whether something is truly a sign or is merely a coincidence, wishful thinking, a tendency to believe conspiracy theories or perhaps the after-effects of the extra slice of pizza we had last night?

## Responding to the News

Brainstorm ways you can mark significant personal and communal spiritual learnings or encounters or experiences with God.

### Prayer Suggested by [Psalm 65:1-13](#)

O God of our salvation,  
The hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas,  
We and those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs,  
Grateful for your mighty deeds that deliver us from the clutches of the evil one.  
As you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy,  
Fill our hearts with jubilant praise,  
And may our lives be signs for the world to see of your power to transform us by your love.  
For your glory and honor, we pray these things. Amen.