

EVERY DAY INSPIRATION  
**purpose**

*Follow these monthly themes when writing stories for Purpose magazine. The explanations are to help you think about themes; you do not need to answer any of the questions or statements directly. Use this as a springboard for writing and do not feel you need to use the theme topic as your title! We appreciate creative and captivating titles but of course reserve the right to edit. Please put the stated theme and projected publishing month on your manuscript.*

TO PUBLISH	THEME	DUE DATE
<b>September 2019</b>	<b>Overcoming Excuses</b>	<b>January 1, 2019</b>

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We can all come up with lots of excuses for not getting things done: not having that conversation we need to have with a loved one, employee or child; putting off planning for retirement or end of life. The people we meet in the pages of the Bible were no exception—perhaps they’ll give you ideas for stories or illustrations on this theme. From Adam and Eve, to Moses, to Jonah, Ananias and others, dealing with our excuses is important personally and as Christians. Why do I delay reading my Bible? Visiting the shut-in? Reaching out to those who are disadvantaged? God lets us know in many ways the truth of Ephesians 3:20-21, “Now to Him who is able to do ... all that we ask or think ...” So how do you deal with your own excuses?

TO PUBLISH	THEME	DUE DATE
<b>October 2019</b>	<b>Transformation</b>	<b>February 1, 2019</b>

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Think of the various times in your life that you’ve been transformed: certainly times such as accepting Christ as your Savior, baptism, and walking with the Holy Spirit, but also marriage, parenting, a job change or ways you understand your spouse, family, or living as a single. Who or what had a key role in a significant transformation for you? Perhaps you enjoy renovating or changing up things—any stories along these lines could lead to articles on transformation that others would benefit from.

TO PUBLISH	THEME	DUE DATE
<b>November 2019</b>	<b>Abundance</b>	<b>March 1, 2019</b>

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Building from the writing of Walter Brueggemann and others, we believe that God created a world of abundance. If we share with others widely (and wisely), there can be enough for all. Some say Christ’s miracle at the feeding of the 5000 perhaps came about from the miracle of people sharing rather than hoarding the food they had. How have you experienced abundance, even in the face of hard times? How do you, your church, or small group live out a theology of abundance? When is it hard to practice a spirit of freedom with your possessions? What are your stories?

TO PUBLISH	THEME	DUE DATE
<b>December 2019</b>	<b>God still speaks</b>	<b>April 1, 2019</b>

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How does God speak to you—whether at Christmas or anytime? We’re open to memorable occasions, stories and times when the spirit of Christ and Christmas hit you afresh and you were moved to worship, pray, or act out your faith in special and meaningful ways. How do you find ways to listen for God’s voice or God’s activity in the world?

**TO PUBLISH**  
**January 2020**

**THEME**  
**Presence (and pay attention)**

**DUE DATE**  
**May 1, 2019**

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We hear a lot about mindfulness. Presence, paying attention, or focus are similar ways of saying when you're with someone, really be with them in body, soul and spirit. This includes our times of worship or devotion. How do you work at being fully present in worship, or with your family or friends? How do you experience God's presence in your life? Our days are full of distractions, but we want to hear stories of times you have done well at practicing presence with others, or times you failed and what you learned, or through the experiences of others.

**TO PUBLISH**  
**February 2020**

**THEME**  
**In God's hands ... or God's provision**

**DUE DATE**  
**June 1, 2019**

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All of us have known the almost miraculous feeling or experience of being in God's hands—when something came through at just the right moment or the marvelous gift of healing through medicine, doctors, and God's people. Here we're looking for stories of course, but also different slants—possibly even when things don't turn out right, or as our first choice. But how do we grow to new understanding or faith even through suffering? How was God's love or hands visible? What can we do to make ourselves open to seeing the many gifts of God?

**TO PUBLISH**  
**March 2020**

**THEME**  
**Powerful faith**

**DUE DATE**  
**July 1, 2019**

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Who, in your opinion, showed or possessed powerful faith in the Bible? Or in early church history, or perhaps recent religious or Christian social action history? How have you experienced examples of friends, family, church members and colleagues with extraordinary or special faith. Perhaps they even had doubts—but how did the negative or challenging times grow faith or illustrate God's abiding love and support? What stories come to mind, and can you tell them in a suspenseful, captivating way?

**TO PUBLISH**  
**April 2020**

**THEME**  
**Christ lives!**

**DUE DATE**  
**August 1, 2019**

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An old gospel song comes to mind: "I serve a risen savior, he's in the world today. I know that he is risen whatever folks may say!" How do you see and serve a living Christ, or how have you observed others living the resurrection story? How does Easter speak to you—how does it remain fresh after even many years of following Jesus and hearing the old old story? Perhaps even reflect on your own favorite (or not favorite) old Easter hymns and choruses we too often sing only once a year, if then. We invite any and all stories, whether or not music-related; most of us can't help from singing at Easter!

**TO PUBLISH**  
**May 2020**

**THEME**  
**Planting seeds**

**DUE DATE**  
**September 1, 2019**

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An obvious theme perhaps for this time of year, but let's take the metaphor beyond the garden. Who has planted fruitful seeds in your own life or that of your family? How did they go about it? What kinds of fruit or product did they hope to bear? What about when seeds did not grow as you hoped? Or take it another level to efforts to reach out to those in your church, community, or larger society? Growing new ideas or paving the way for change, justice, poverty, better education, family unity or ----- fill in the blank.

**TO PUBLISH**  
**June 2020**

**THEME**  
**One body (in Christ)—Pentecost**

**DUE DATE**  
**October 1, 2019**

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Ephesians 4: 3-6 can be the theme statement for this issue: “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” How do we practice being one body? How does unity call for conversation, confession, correction, and cooperation? Have you seen or experienced unity in the body of Christ? How and why? Stories, illustrations and examples you’ve experienced personally are great to share. How did the early church struggle with unity, and what does that say or not say to you and your fellowship of believers?

**TO PUBLISH**  
**July 2020**

**THEME**  
**Little Things**

**DUE DATE**  
**November 1, 2019**

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This theme calls for stories and articles celebrating the little things in our lives that bring joy or promise, but also the smaller things that cause us to stumble—and bring perhaps hurt, wasted time, or fretting. A theme verse for this focus could be Matthew 6:26, “Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” How have you experienced this or yearn to live it out? Stories and real life experiences show the way.

**TO PUBLISH**  
**August 2020**

**THEME**  
**Personal Growth**

**DUE DATE**  
**December 1, 2019**

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August brings the end of summer (and gardening for most), and we invite reflections on nature and growth, or harvest season and progress, looking ahead to September and new opportunities and paths. What have been the seasons of your life where you experience the most growth? What events, persons, or circumstances contribute to that? Did you experience pruning back, or editing, so to speak? Did other people have a hand in your growth? How does personal growth contribute to your spiritual development as well? How do you foster spiritual growth?

**TO PUBLISH**  
**September 2020**

**THEME**  
**Nurturing children (tentative)**

**DUE DATE**  
**January 1, 2020**

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This theme can encompass the many different ways we nurture children whether they are our own, grandchildren, nieces/nephews, or children in your church, school or neighborhood. Stories from your own family or youth surely abound. If you grew up in a Christian atmosphere, who taught you the most about the way of Jesus and how to follow and serve him? With changing Sunday habits for so many families, how can parents and the church community best teach and guide children, even if they’re not always in Sunday school? Or, how about stories and ideas that look at “the ministry of children” to us? How are children nurturing and modeling being “little Christs” for you?