

# Listen to your life

“What I propose to do now is to try listening to my life as a whole ... for whatever of meaning, of holiness, of God, there may be in it to hear.”

My assumption is that the story of any one of us is in some measure the story of us all.”

Frederick Buechner  
“The Sacred Journey”



Perhaps Frederick Buechner's  
call seems redundant in  
the age of social media.

*Listen to your life, you say?*

I can hardly get away from it, with my constant posting of pictures and stories. But on second glance, Buechner is beckoning us through the steady stream of posts and likes to something deeper, something that demands much more than scrolling. He is calling us to pay attention. When we listen to our lives in this way, we open ourselves to hear the “incarnate words” whose meaning “becomes clear and effective in our lives only when we ferret it out for ourselves.”

And yet, perhaps to our surprise, listening to our lives is done best with others. Buechner likens it to sharing a photo album: as we page through the pictures, we recognize places or persons, perhaps even ourselves – and it spurs each of us to look through our own album, finding “the sacredness of [our] own journey.”

This year at the King Institute, we celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Buechner’s “The Sacred Journey” with a year of paying attention, being invited to see the photo albums of others, and listening to our lives. We’ll be guided by a remarkable group of visitors, from many walks of

life and many perspectives. For King University’s Opening Convocation, we welcome Jonathan Lee Walton, Dean of Divinity at Wake Forest University. At Dr. Walton’s evening lecture, we’ll honor the 60<sup>th</sup> year in ministry of a Bristol pastor committed to Christian care for social justice and civil rights, Dr. W.A. Johnson.

Many guests will invite us to their own sacred journeys. Investigative journalist Hannah Rappleye, scholar and author Vincent Bacote, author Natasha Sistrunk Robinson, retired Detroit Chief of Police Isaiah McKinnon, and Holocaust survivor Peter Gorog will share compelling and illuminating stories of survival and vocation and flourishing.

Others will invite us to the stories of others, real or imagined. Anthropologist Maria Liston ‘82 will uncover lives from ancient Greek burials, author Katherine Paterson ‘54 brings us her rich experience of creating unforgettable fictional characters, Peter Croft will introduce us anew to the important work of his grandfather J.B. Phillips, and critic Alissa Wilkinson will open cinematic story to us with a focus on paying attention.

We can also listen to lives through their creative work. The poetry of Malcolm Guite, the songs of Becky Buller, and the compositions of Bill Linderman will bring us story through the arts. To cap it all off, Jeff Munroe will guide us through Buechner’s own sacred journey, in our annual Frederick Buechner Lecture.

From our early days as the Buechner Institute, we’ve sought faith engaging culture, creating a space for people to meet and converse in an atmosphere of gracious openness, full of hope, expecting serendipity. This year will be especially good. Come join us, enjoy these remarkable stories, and listen to your own life with us.



**Martin Holt Dotterweich, Ph.D.**  
*Director, King Institute for Faith & Culture*



## Wednesday, Aug. 25 **Jonathan Lee Walton**

Dean, Wake Forest Divinity School

**9:15 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel  
*Opening Convocation*

**7:00 p.m.** | [Lee Street Baptist Church, Bristol, Va.](#)  
*Honoring the [Rev. Dr. W.A. Johnson](#)*

Jonathan Lee Walton is a social ethicist whose scholarship focuses on evangelical Christianity and its relationship to mass media and political culture. He is an outspoken advocate for social justice and civil rights.

His work and insights have been featured in several national and international news outlets, including the New York Times, CNN, Time Magazine, and the BBC. His latest book, "[A Lens of Love: Reading the Bible in Its World for Our World](#)," explores the Bible from the perspective of the most vulnerable and violated characters toward developing a Christian social ethic of radical inclusion and human affirmation.

Walton earned his Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Divinity degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary. He served as the Plummer Professor of Christian Morals and Pusey Minister in the Memorial Church at Harvard University prior to being appointed Dean of the Divinity School and Wait Chapel at Wake Forest University in 2019. He also occupies the Presidential Chair in Religion & Society at Wake Forest.

Walton is married to the former Cecily Cline, and they are the parents of three children — Zora Neale, Elijah Mays, and Baldwin Cline.



## Thursday, Sept. 9 **Hannah Rappleye**

Investigative Reporter, NBC News

**10:00 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel  
*Water, Spirit, Truth: Serving Others through the Calling of Journalism*

**7:00 p.m.** | [Sinking Spring Presbyterian, Abingdon, Va.](#)  
*Faith, Blood, Bone: Connecting with Others through the Art of Storytelling*

Hannah Rappleye is an Emmy award-winning investigative reporter with a focus on [criminal justice](#), [civil rights](#), and the [environment](#).

She currently works as a reporter and producer with the Investigative Unit at NBC News. In 2017, she won an Emmy for her coverage of the [Flint water crisis](#). Her work has been recognized by several organizations, including Harvard's Shorenstein Center, the Alliance for Women in Media, the National Association of Black Journalists, Investigative Reporters and Editors, and the Society of Professional Journalists. Her reporting has also been supported by several foundations, including The Investigative Fund and the Open Society Foundation.

Rappleye received her bachelor's degree from The New School and her master's degree in Journalism from the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York.

She was raised in Ottawa County, Michigan, and now lives in the Pioneer Valley in Western Massachusetts. In her off time, she can probably be found either working on her first novel or riding her horse.



Monday, Sept. 13  
20th Anniversary of 9/11

## Vincent Bacote

Professor of Theology & Director of the Center for Applied Christian Ethics, Wheaton College

**9:15 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel  
*Learning from Looking Back*

**7:00 p.m.** | First Baptist Church, Bristol, Va.  
*Loving All of Our Neighbors*

Vincent Bacote (Ph.D., Drew University) is Professor of Theology and the Director of the Center for Applied Christian Ethics at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. His publications include the books “Reckoning with Race and Performing the Good News: In Search of a Better Evangelical Theology” and “The Political Disciple: A Theology of Public Life.” He has also contributed to “Cultural Engagement: A Crash Course in Contemporary Issues,” “The Church’s Social Responsibility,” and “Black Scholars in White Space.”

He has been an assistant theology editor for Christianity Today and a regular columnist for Comment, with articles also appearing in magazines including The Banner, Books and Culture, Christianity Today, Think Christian and re:generation quarterly, plus journals such as The Journal of Markets and Morality, Christian Scholars Review, Urban Mission, and the Journal for Christian Theological Research. An avid tennis player, occasional bass guitarist and incessantly curious person, he lives in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, with his family.



Wednesday, Oct. 13,  
and Thursday, Oct. 14  
The IFC Annual Medical Lecture

## Maria Liston ‘82

Professor of Anthropology, University of Waterloo

**Wednesday, Oct. 13, 7:00 p.m.**  
Central Presbyterian Church, Bristol, Va.

*Looking Back to Earlier Pandemics: Plagues, Pestilence  
and the Origins of the Hospital in Early Christian Thebes, Greece*

**Thursday, Oct. 14, 10:00 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel  
*A Tale of Two Wells: Mothers, Midwives and  
Infant Mortality in Ancient Greece*

Maria Liston is Professor and Chair in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Waterloo, Ontario. She is a 1982 graduate of King College with majors in Classics and English. She also earned a master’s degree in Classics from Indiana University and a second bachelor’s and doctorate in Anthropology from the University of Tennessee.

Liston has been working in Greece for more than 30 years, studying skeletons from sites in east Crete, the Athenian Agora, Thebes, and Eretria on the island of Euboea. She is the co-author of “The Agora Bone Well,” and has two co-authored volumes in press on the Kavousi, Crete cemeteries, as well as various articles and book chapters. Her research interests include infant and juvenile remains, cremations, and paleopathology, and her current favorite ancient disease is leprosy.



Monday, Oct. 18

## Katherine Paterson '54

Library of Congress Living Legend

**9:15 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel

*Writers must write out of their own lives, so we'd better listen, hadn't we?*

**7:00 p.m.** | First Presbyterian Church, Bristol, Tenn.

*In conversation with two-time Newbery Honoree and NYT Bestselling Author Kimberly Brubaker Bradley*

King alumna Katherine Paterson '54 is the author of more than 30 books, including 16 novels for children and young people. She has twice won the Newbery Medal, for "Bridge to Terabithia" in 1978 and "Jacob Have I Loved" in 1981. "The Master Puppeteer" won the National Book Award in 1977, and "The Great Gilly Hopkins" won the National Book Award in 1979 and was also a Newbery Honor Book. For the body of her work, she received the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 1998 and the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award in 2006, and was named a Living Legend by the Library of Congress in 2000.

Paterson is a vice president of the National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance, and is a member of the board of trustees for Vermont College of Fine Arts. She is also an honorary lifetime member of the International Board of Books for Young People, and an Alida Cutts lifetime member of the US section, USBBY. She is the 2010-2011 National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. Her newest book, "Birdie's Bargain," will be published by Candlewick Press in the autumn of 2021.



Monday, Nov. 8

## Peter Croft

Founder, J.B. Phillips Society

**9:15 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel

*J.B. Phillips: The Ring of Truth and the Price of Success*

**7:00 p.m.** | Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Bristol, Va.

*J.B. Phillips: The Fresh Air of Heaven*

Peter Croft is the founder of the J.B. Phillips Society, an organization named for his late grandfather, which encourages new generations to be challenged and changed by the living quality of scripture. He grew up in England and taught Ethics, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at a prestigious boarding school in Dorset before spending time in Charlottesville, Virginia, and South Carolina, where he lived and travelled with Nobel laureate Gov. David Beasley.

Croft also spent time in Austin, Texas, where he earned his MBA in Entrepreneurship from the Acton School of Business. While there, he met his future wife, and is now the father of two boys, with another child on the way. In addition to his work with the Phillips Society, Croft also works as a businessman in Austin, where he focuses on issues of work, faith, entrepreneurship, and business ethics.



Tuesday, Feb. 1, and Wednesday, Feb. 2  
The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecture

## Natasha Sistrunk Robinson

President, T3 Leadership Solutions, Inc.

**Tuesday, Feb. 1, 7:00 p.m.** | Lee Street Baptist Church, Bristol, Va.  
*A Sojourner's Truth: Choosing Freedom and Courage in a Divided World*

**Wednesday, Feb. 2, 9:15 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel  
*Beauty from Ashes: A Purpose and a Call*

Natasha Sistrunk Robinson is the President of T3 Leadership Solutions, Inc. She is a sought-after international speaker, leadership consultant, and executive leadership and mentoring coach, with more than 20 years of leadership experience in the military, federal government, church, seminary, and non-profit sectors.

She is the author of “A Sojourner’s Truth: Choosing Freedom and Courage in a Divided World,” “Mentor for Life,” its accompanying leader’s training manual, and the “Hope for Us” Bible study. She also hosts “A Sojourner’s Truth: Conversations for a Changing Culture” podcast. Additionally, she is the Visionary Founder and Chairperson of the non-profit Leadership LINKS, Inc., where she cultivates a multi-generational network of influencers who offer leadership education that facilitates impactful living, character, and spiritual development.

Currently a doctorate student at North Park Theological Seminary, she earned a master’s degree in Christian Leadership from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Charlotte, and is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. She served her country as a Marine Corps officer and federal government employee at the Department of Homeland Security.



Monday, February 7

## Bill Turner

Appalachian region scholar and researcher with an emphasis on the African-American experience

**9:15 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel

*The Central Appalachian Origins of the Modern Civil Rights Movement*

**7:00 p.m.** | Central Presbyterian Church, Bristol, Va.

*The Harlan Renaissance: An Appalachian case study of the diverse Black experience in America*

William H. “Bill” Turner, Ph.D., is a prominent scholar on the African-American experience in Appalachia. Born in 1946 in the coal town of Lynch, Kentucky, he is the fifth of 10 children. His grandfathers, father, four uncles, and older brother were all coal miners.

Turner has spent his professional career studying and working on behalf of marginalized communities, helping them create opportunities in the larger world while not abandoning important cultural ties. Although his work applies to communities across the country, he is best known for his groundbreaking research on African-American communities in Appalachia.

As an academic and consultant, Turner has studied economic systems and social structures in the urban South and burgeoning Latino communities in the Southwest. He is the author of “The Harlan Renaissance,” which offers deeply personal reminiscences of his youth. He also co-edited the path-breaking textbook, “Blacks in Appalachia,” and his essay on Black Appalachians was published in the Encyclopedia of Southern Culture. Additionally, he served as a research assistant to “Roots” author Alex Haley for a decade. Prior to his retirement, Turner served as the Dean of Arts and Sciences and Interim President at Kentucky State University, the Vice President for Multicultural Affairs at the University of Kentucky, and the Distinguished Professor of Appalachian Studies and Regional Ambassador at Berea College.

Turner and his wife, Vivian, the retired president of the R.J. Reynolds Foundation in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, live near their children and grandchildren in Houston, Texas. His February 2022 visit to the King Institute for Faith and Culture will be his third, which is a record for the Institute. For more information about Dr. Turner, visit <https://whturnerphd.com/>.



Monday, Feb. 28

## In Concert: The Becky Buller Band

**9:15 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel

**7:00 p.m.** | Birthplace of Country Music Museum, Bristol, Va.

Becky Buller is a multi-instrumentalist, singer, songwriter, and producer from St. James, Minnesota, who has traversed the globe performing bluegrass music to underwrite her insatiable songwriting habit. Her compositions can be heard on records by Ricky Skaggs, Rhonda Vincent, and Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver, to name just a few.

Buller has written songs for Grammy award-winning albums, including co-writing “Freedom,” the lead-off track for The Infamous Stringdusters’ 2018 Grammy-winning album, “Laws of Gravity,” as well as “The Shaker” on The Travelin’ McCoury’s self-titled release, which brought home the Grammy for Best Bluegrass in 2019.

Buller is the recipient of eight International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) awards, including the 2016 Fiddler and Female Vocalist, and the 2018 Gospel Recorded Performance for the song, “Speakin’ to That Mountain.” She was a 2020 nominee for SPBGMA’s Fiddle Player of the Year, and served as a musician and songwriter on three additional Grammy-nominated albums in 2020. She tours extensively with the Becky Buller Band and recently released her third album, “Distance and Time.”

Equally passionate about bluegrass music education, Buller has 20 years of experience teaching fiddle, singing, and songwriting at workshops and camps around the world. She currently serves on the board of the IBMA Foundation.



Monday, March 21

## Kellie Brown

Chair of the Music Department and Professor of Music at Milligan University

**9:15 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel

*Refuting the Silence: Musical Works that Defied the Nazi Cultural Agenda*

**7:00 p.m.** | Central Presbyterian Church, Bristol, Va.

*The Sound of Hope: Holocaust Music as an Agent of Remembrance, Resistance, Resilience, and Reconciliation*

Kellie Brown, Ed.D., serves as Chair of the Music Department and Professor of Music at Milligan University. She also serves as the conductor of the Milligan Orchestra. Brown joined the faculty in 1998.

She is a gifted violinist and conductor who has performed throughout the country. As a soloist, Dr. Brown has performed several world premieres, including “An Encounter for Violin and Piano” by Jane Perry. She has also conducted numerous world premieres, including “Genesis” by internationally renowned composer Kenton Coe. In addition, she is an accomplished writer and researcher.

As a recognized authority on music during the Holocaust, Brown has spoken frequently at academic institutions and conferences around the world. Her latest book, “The Sound of Hope: Music as Solace, Resistance, and Salvation during the Holocaust & World War II,” was released by McFarland Publishing in 2020 and has received both national and international acclaim. In their review of her book, The Washington Post has declared that she “...has succeeded admirably in bringing together in one volume so much important research.” Brown is currently working on a new project for Oxford University Press that will release in 2022.



Sunday, April 3, and  
Monday, April 4

## **In Concert:** **Bill Linderman**

**Sunday, April 3, 3:00 p.m.** | Memorial Chapel

**Monday, April 4, 9:15 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel

**B**ill Linderman is Professor of Mathematics at King University, where he currently serves as an Associate Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences and Chairman of the Department of Mathematics and Physics.

As Visiting Associate Professor of Mathematics at Cornell University, he studied piano performance and music composition, and composes for piano, cello, flute, and voice. He studied piano with Betty Kuhnert for many years and has given several solo piano recitals.

An avid traveler, Linderman has participated in King mission trips to India and Kenya. He has also undertaken National Science Foundation courses in Mexico on Ancient Maya Mathematics, in Peru on Ancient Inca Mathematics, and in Cambodia on Ancient Khmer Mathematics. He and his wife, Elizabeth, live in Bristol with their two sons.

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Thursday, April 7, and  
Friday, April 8

## **Malcolm Guite**

Poet, priest, and musician

**Thursday, April 7, 7:00 p.m.** | Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Bristol, Va.  
*Songs and Sonnets: An Evening of Poetry, Song, and Story*

**Friday, April 8, 9:15 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel  
*An Unexpected Music: Poetry and Renewal*

**P**oet-Priest Malcolm Guite was Chaplain for 20 years at Girton College, Cambridge, and remains Supernumerary Fellow. He teaches at the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge, and lectures widely in England and North America on theology and literature.

Guite has a particular interest in the imagination as a truth-bearing faculty, and reflects deeply on how poetry can stimulate and re-awaken prayer life.

He has published works of poetry, theology, and literary criticism, and has worked as a librettist. His most recent books include “Love, Remember,” “Mariner,” a spiritual biography of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Parable and Paradox,” and “The Singing Bowl.” His poetic response to the psalms, “David’s Crown,” was released in January 2021, and anthologies of his Poet’s Corner writings, “In Every Corner Sing” and “Heaven in Ordinary,” were published in 2019 and 2020.

Guite enjoys sailing, walking, old books, live music, riding his Harley Davidson motorbike, and performing with the UK-based rock band Mystery Train.





Monday, April 11  
The Frederick Buechner Lecture

## Jeffrey Munroe

Author and Editor of The Reformed Journal

**9:15 a.m.** | Memorial Chapel |  
*The Stewardship of Pain: A Case Study*

**7.00 p.m.** | Central Presbyterian Church, Bristol, Va.  
*On Paying Attention: Frederick Buechner and  
the Art of Listening to Your Life*

Jeffrey Munroe is the author of “Reading Buechner” and was a charter member of the Buechner Institute Advisory Board. After working for Young Life for almost three decades, he served as Executive Vice President of Western Theological Seminary and is an ordained minister in the Reformed Church in America.

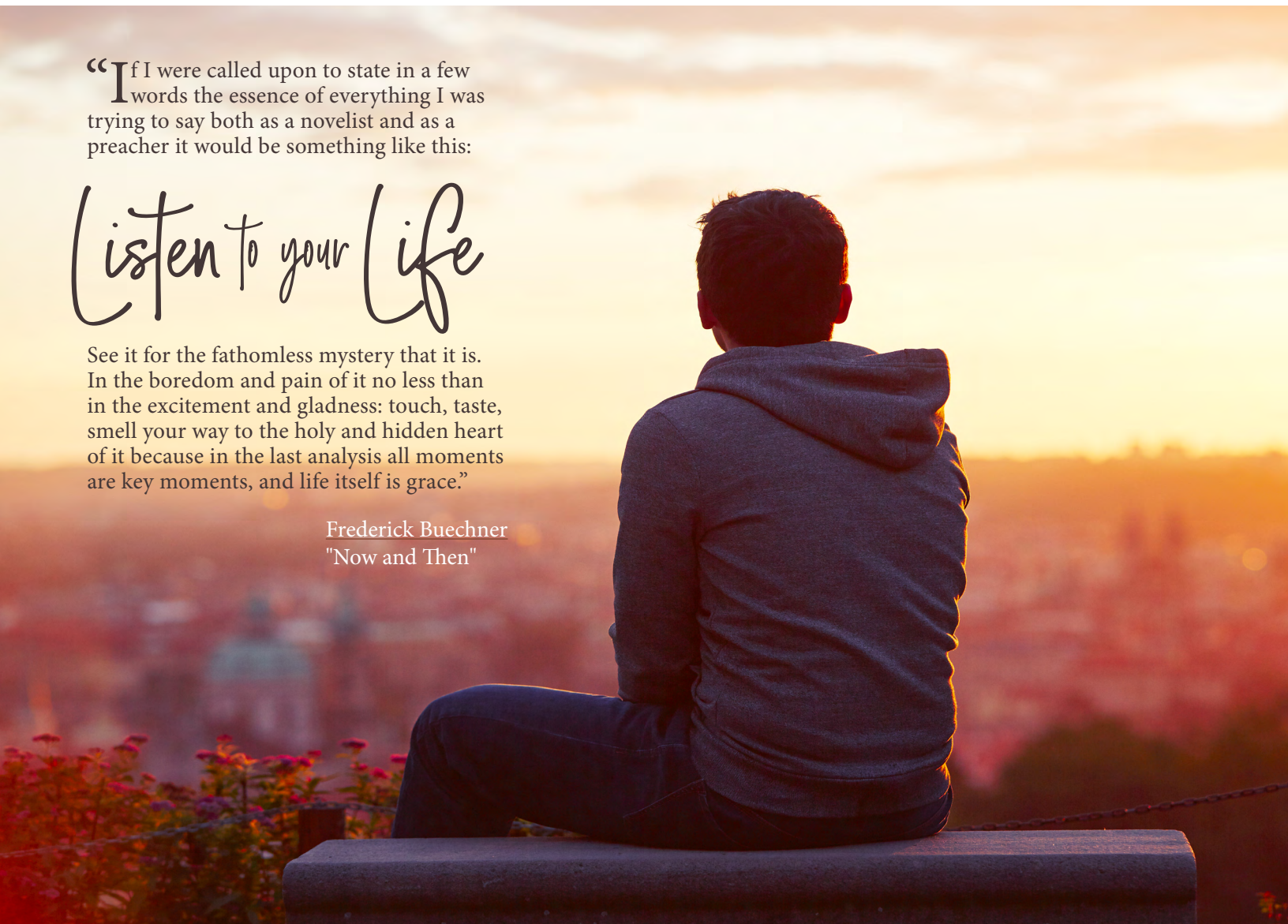
He blogs regularly and serves as editor for The Reformed Journal, and has had poems and pieces published in The Christian Century, Christianity Today, US Catholic, Think Christian, and also frequently writes devotionals for Words of Hope. He lives in Holland, Michigan, with his wife, Gretchen, and they are the parents of two grown children.

“If I were called upon to state in a few words the essence of everything I was trying to say both as a novelist and as a preacher it would be something like this:

*Listen to your life*

See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.”

Frederick Buechner  
“Now and Then”



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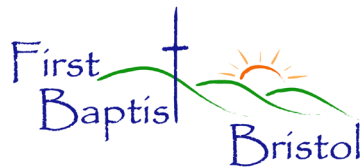
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