

designing for
SHALOM



PRINCIPLES & TACTICS

PREFACE

Designing for Shalom is rooted in the belief that design is not just functional—it is theological. Every space we shape tells a story about what we value, who we welcome, and how we understand our relationship to the divine, to one another, and to the more-than-human world.

We hope these pages inspire architects, landscapers, community leaders, and everyday practitioners to design not merely for function or aesthetics, but for shalom—the wholeness and harmony of God’s intended flourishing for all creation.

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BEAUTY

The formative and healing power of beauty lies not in the pursuit of perfection or symmetry, but in the alluring unity – not uniformity – of differences.

THEOLOGICAL BASE

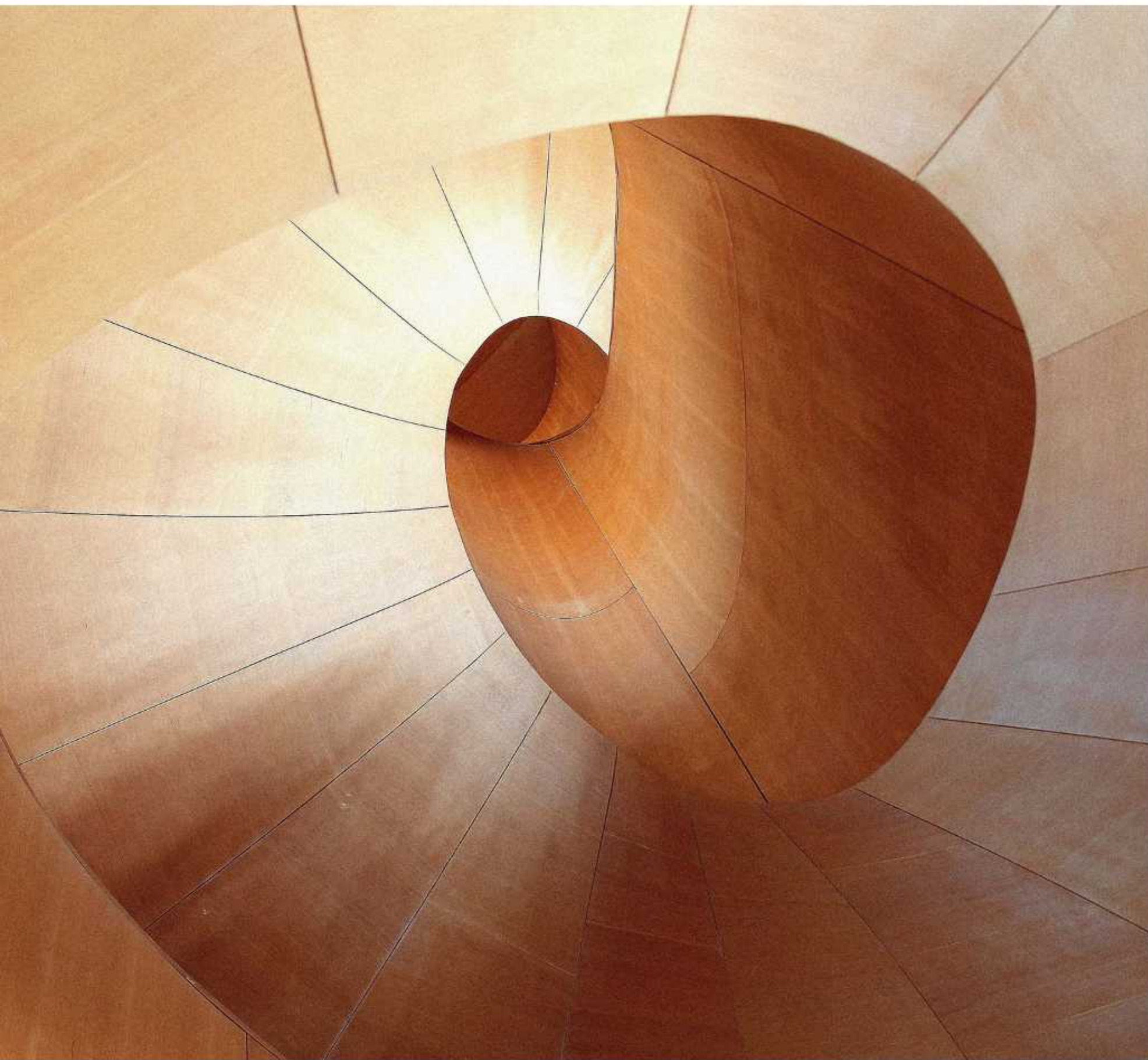
God's Self-Revelation in Glory

God reveals the divine nature through beauty, both in creation and redemption, as a foretaste of God's radiant, unifying presence.

DESIGN TACTICS

Architecture — Variety of house plans; use proportion, rhythm, and light to shape space; express unity-in-diversity through materials and forms.

Landscape — Wide variety of native plants; multi-sensory mix of colors, shapes, smells, sounds, textures, etc.





"BEAUTY
PERMEATES
OUR SOULS
THROUGH
EVERY SENSE..."

It shimmers through every crack, sounds through every silence, wafts down every street, lingers after every sip, radiates from every surface."

WESLEY VANDER LUGT
BEAUTY IS OXYGEN

DISCOVERY

Adventure, surprise, and play thrive in spaces with more choices than rules, creating opportunities for delightful encounters.



THEOLOGICAL BASE

Divine Mystery & Revelation

God's mystery is revealed to seekers, offering all the chance to delight, learn, and encounter God through a sense of wonder.

DESIGN TACTICS

Architecture — Create visual layering through sightlines, volumes, and floor plans; differentiated options for arrangement and interaction.

Landscape — Curves and irregularities that invite exploration; hidden places in the landscape; scattering of aesthetic objects.

HOSPITALITY

Residents and guests of all kinds are worthy of liberatory welcome, invited to experience belonging, connection, and a sense of home.



THEOLOGICAL BASE

Trinitarian Communion

God eternally exists as loving communion and welcomes us into relationship. Our hospitality reflects this divine invitation.



DESIGN TACTICS

Architecture — Design welcoming entries and hearth zones; create mixture of private and public spaces; warm, human-scaled materials.

Landscape — Common building and gardens as third spaces; multiple entry points; humble styles; options for scaled gatherings.

THRESHOLDS

Magical encounters happen at thresholds between spaces that are private and public, wild and cultivated, human and other-than-human, divine and human.

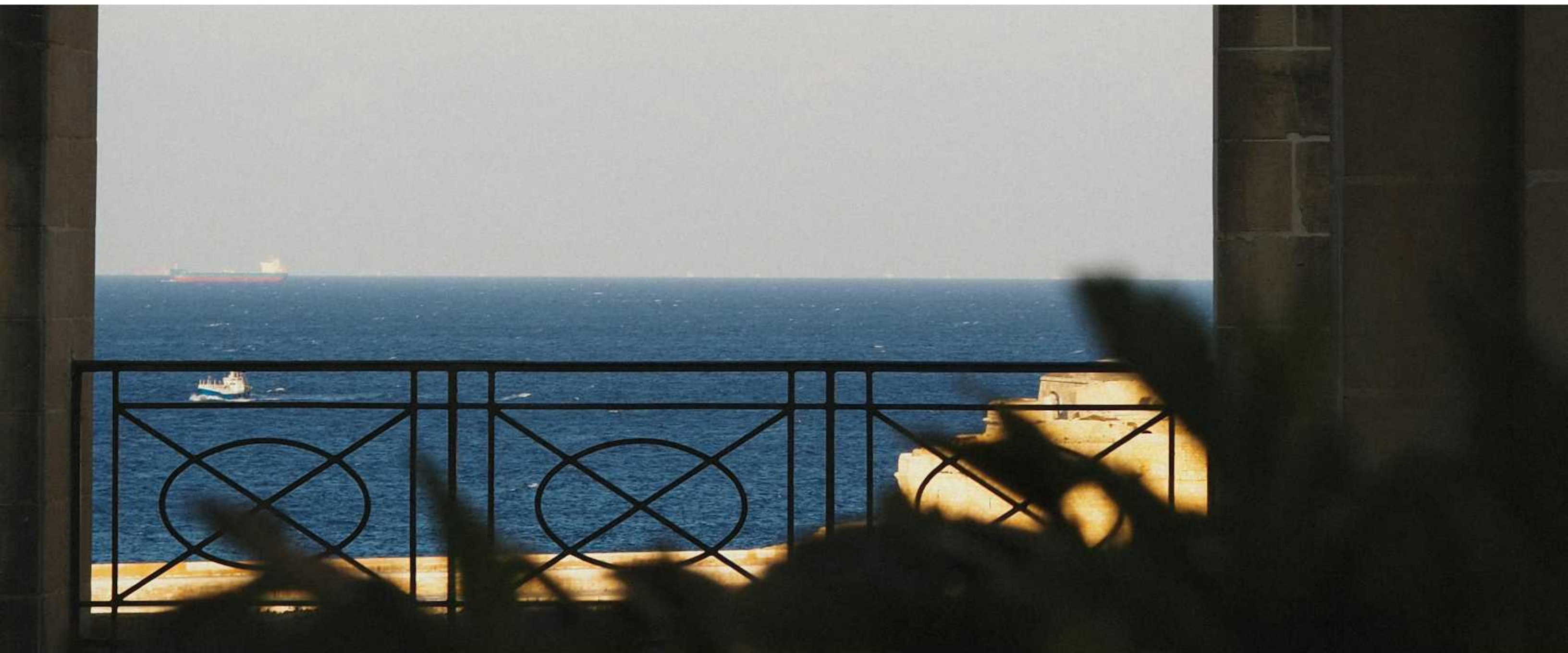
**THEOLOGICAL
BASE** Incarnation

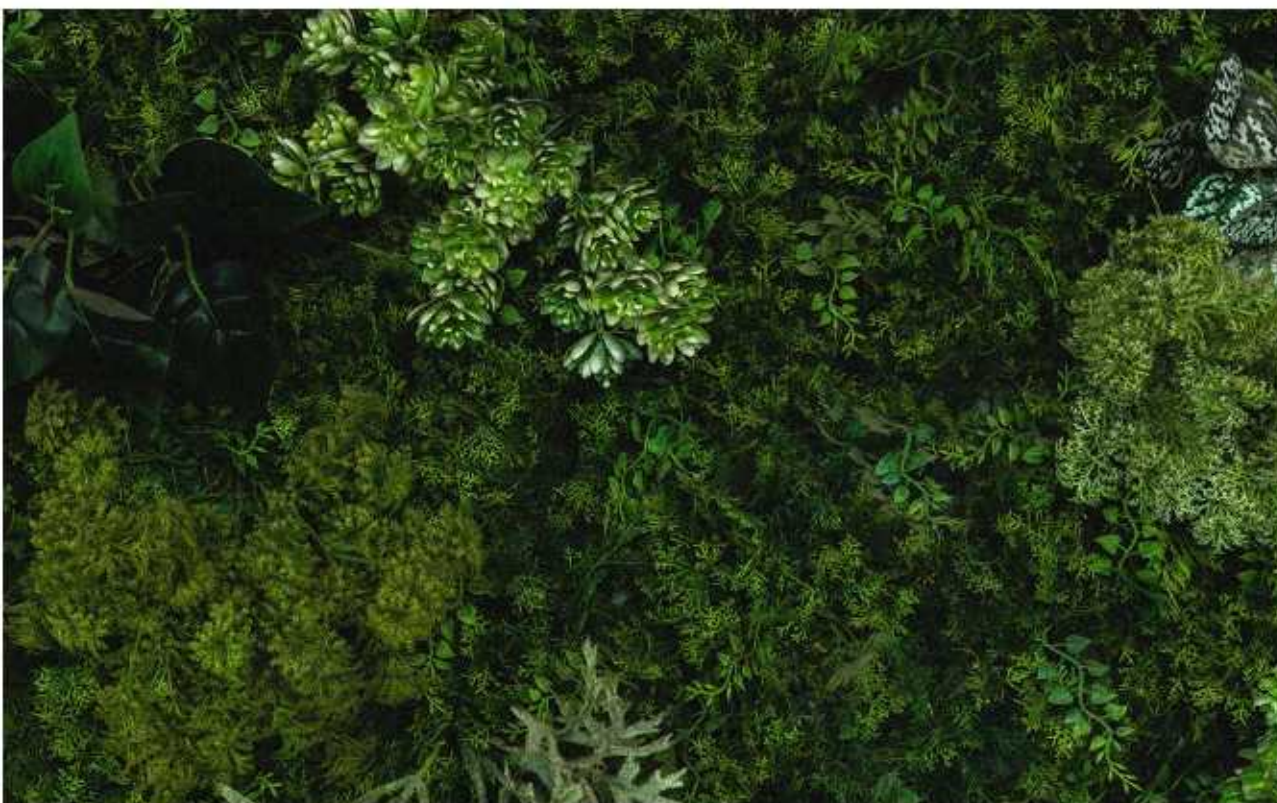
Liminal spaces echo God's presence at the intersections of heaven and earth.

**DESIGN
TACTICS**

Architecture — Emphasize porches, arcades, and breezeways; choreograph transitions with changes in light or height.

Landscape — Connective pathways; preservation of wild edges; ample openings between indoors and outdoors; prayer trails and stations; ecotones.





INTEGRATIVE BIOPHILIA

Humans are part of the whole community of creation, and every member of this community is valuable and worthy of care and attention.

THEOLOGICAL BASE

Creation as Theological Witness

All creation testifies to God's wisdom, order, balance, and care. To live in harmony with creation is to honor God's voice in the world.

DESIGN TACTICS

Architecture — Bring nature inside with planted walls, large openings, and abundant natural light that fills spaces with warmth and balance.

Landscape — Strong emphasis on landscape design; preserving trees and natural habitat; orientation of built environment toward natural and cultivated landscape; creating new habitat through native plants.





CONTEXTUAL WISDOM

The most beautiful places are in harmony with the culture, landscape, and all inhabitants – human and nonhuman alike.

THEOLOGICAL BASE

Incarnational Mission

God meets us in particular cultures and places. The gospel takes root contextually, not abstractly.

DESIGN TACTICS

Architecture — Draw from local forms and vernacular traditions; create building forms that match climate needs.

Landscape — Strong emphasis on landscape design; preserving trees and natural habitat; orientation of built environment toward natural and cultivated landscape; creating new habitat through native plants.

REGENERATIVE STEWARDSHIP

Shalom depends on right relationship with the land and all its inhabitants, which is characterized by reciprocity, mutual care, practices of interdependent flourishing, and respectful sharing of resources.



THEOLOGICAL BASE

Creation Care

God grants dominion not as exploitation but as a covenantal charge to preserve and nurture God's creation.

DESIGN TACTICS

Architecture — Sustainable environmental systems (e.g. solar, geo-thermal); sustainable building materials; natural surfaces.

Landscape — Utilize more plants and less grass; grey water recycling; natural light.

THIN PLACES

The perceived barrier between the physical and spiritual world is permeable, and even the most ordinary places can be thin places.



THEOLOGICAL BASE


Spirit of New Creation

God is making all things new by the power of the Spirit, and this new realm of God permeates the current world we inhabit.

DESIGN TACTICS

Architecture — Use verticality and symmetry to evoke awe.

Landscape — Natural and built buffers for city noise; sight lines and access to wild and cultivated spaces; labyrinth and meditation garden.

A scenic view of a city, likely Tokyo, seen from an elevated position. The foreground is dominated by a dense forest of trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and red. In the middle ground, a wide river flows through the city. The background shows a dense urban landscape with numerous high-rise buildings and skyscrapers under a clear sky.

"Build houses and settle down;
plant gardens and eat what they
produce... seek the peace (shalom)
and prosperity of the city."

JEREMIAH 29:5,7

"SEEK THE SHALOM
AND PROSPERITY
OF THE CITY"



REST & HEALING

Rest is essential for healing and vibrant wholeness, and rest provides the opportunity to divest from fast life values and find delight in people and places.

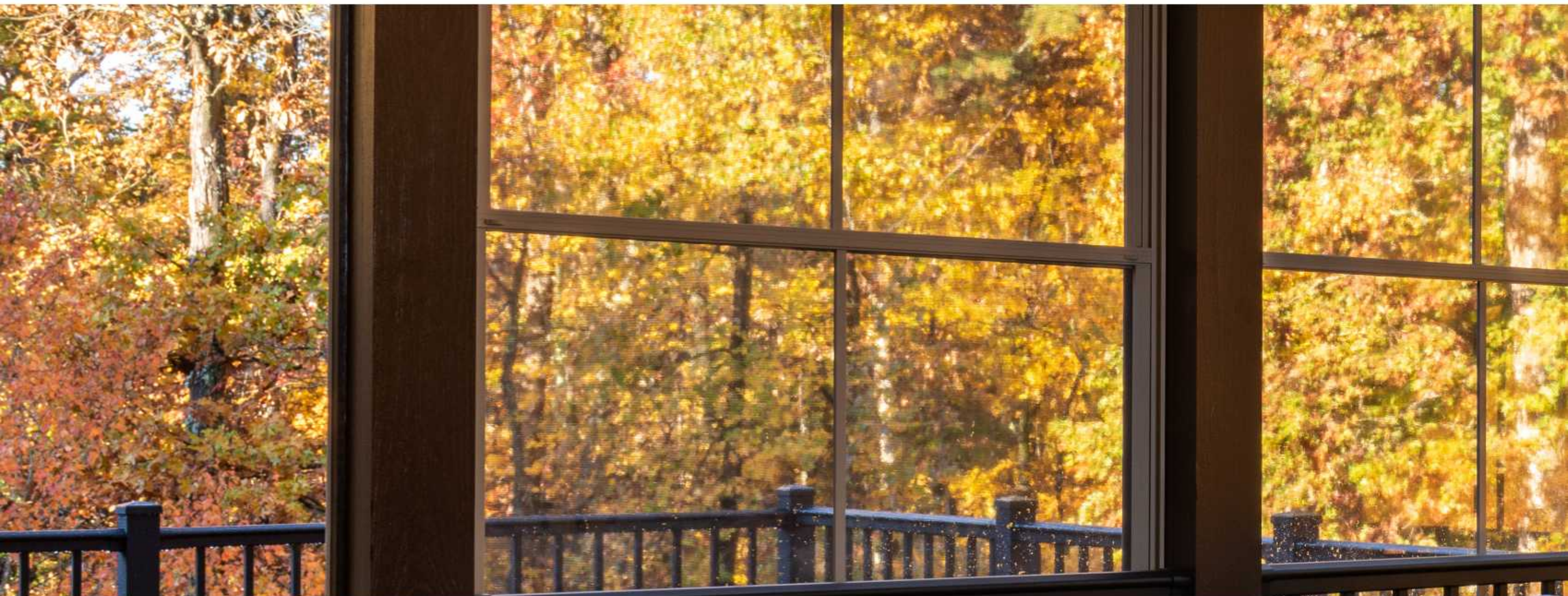
THEOLOGICAL BASE *Sabbath and Redemption*

God institutes rest not as escape but as re-creation, a rhythm of dependence, delight, and healing.

DESIGN TACTICS

Architecture — Carve out nooks for solitude and reflection; offer rhythmic shifts in openness and enclosure.

Landscape — Benches and open spaces for reclining; gathering places for individuals and groups; soft edges; places for restful solitude.



SEASONALITY

There is a time for everything, and nature shows us that there is a natural rhythm to fecundity and fallowness, which means embracing the unique gifts of each season.

THEOLOGICAL BASE

Providence and Time

God governs time with wisdom. Seasons reveal divine providence and call all to trust in his timing and sufficiency, while embracing the freeing boundaries of our humanity.

DESIGN TACTICS

Architecture — Add verandas, screens, and operable walls; align elements with sun paths or seasonal events.

Landscape — Plants with staggered blooms; mix of deciduous and evergreen; enough natural barrier to maintain privacy in winter.

