The Exhale

An Evening of Stories, Music & Hope
with Amber Ginter Johnson & Lauren Toney
Stories that tell the truth. Songs that meet you where you are. Space to breathe. Hope for the road ahead.

The Experience

There are seasons when we don't know what to pray. When gratitude feels complicated, when faith feels fragile, and when we're carrying more than we know how to say.

The Exhale invites people to come as they are.

Through honest stories, Scripture, meaningful reflection, and whimsical music, author and speaker Amber Ginter Johnson and singer-songwriter Lauren Toney create space to slow down, breathe deep, and encounter God in whatever season you're walking through.

This isn't a concert, book reading, or traditional speaking event; it's an intimate, thoughtfully guided experience that brings together storytelling, music, faith, and reflection. Our hope is that guests leave feeling seen, heard, understood, and a little more hopeful, even if their circumstances haven't changed and their questions remain unanswered.

Our prayer is simple: **Come as you are. Leave a little more hopeful.**

WHO

Amber Ginter Johnson is an author, speaker, and Christian mental health advocate who writes and speaks about the intersection of faith and mental health. A former high school English teacher, Amber is passionate about helping people find practical, biblical hope without minimizing the hard things they're experiencing. She hosts the *Authentically Amber* podcast and is the author of *Psalms in the Dark* (WaterBrook, Penguin Random House, Summer 2027).

Lauren Toney is a singer-songwriter whose music creates space for honesty, connection, and hope. Through original songs and meaningful musical moments, Lauren helps bring the heart of each gathering to life.

Together, Amber and Lauren create an experience that makes room for the hard and beautiful parts of being human, and points people toward hope without pretending that life is always easy. (See more in the “About the Artists” section below).

WHAT

Each gathering is shaped around the host community, the event's purpose, and the season people are navigating. Depending on the event, the experience may include:

- Honest, relatable storytelling
- Live music and original songs
- Scripture readings and biblical encouragement
- Short readings from *Psalms in the Dark* when relevant to the event
- Guided reflection and moments of quiet
- Gentle invitations to pause, breathe, and consider where hope might be found
- Opportunities for conversation and connection before or after the event

Our approach is honest, helpful, and community centered. We want people to feel welcome whether they've followed Jesus for years, are wrestling with their faith, or aren't sure what they believe.

Participation is always low-pressure. Guests won't be required to share personal stories, pray aloud, or participate in activities that feel uncomfortable.

THE FIRST SEASON: LAMENT, PRASIE & THANKS

For events connected to *Psalms in the Dark*, the experience may follow the emotional movement of lament, praise, and thanksgiving.

Lament: Tell the truth about what's hurting. Make room for grief, anxiety, disappointment, unanswered prayers, and the emotions we sometimes struggle to express.

Thanks: Notice what's still good, beautiful, and worth receiving. Reflect on what God has done and the small signs of grace that may be present even in difficult seasons.

Praise: Remember who God is, even when life doesn't look the way we hoped. Consider what it means to seek God in the middle of the struggle, not only after it ends.

This framework is designed for the *Psalms in the Dark* season; it is not necessarily a required structure for every future gathering. Other events may have a different focus, title, theme, or flow based on the needs of the community.

The goal is never to rush people from pain to praise or suggest that gratitude makes hardship disappear. We want to make room for the whole story while offering a way forward.

WHERE

The Exhale can be adapted for a variety of settings, including:

- Churches and ministry gatherings
- Coffee shops and bookstores
- College campuses and schools
- Community spaces and nonprofit organizations
- Retreats, conferences, and creative gatherings
- Other venues interested in an evening of stories, music, and hope

The format can be adjusted to fit the venue, audience, and purpose of the gathering.

Please ensure the venue has an appropriate sound system and adequate electrical access for the musical setup. For outdoor events, please inquire in advance so we can discuss power access, weather contingencies, sound, and other logistical needs.

WHAT'S THE SUGGESTED SCHEDULE?

The following is an example schedule. Timing can be adjusted to meet the needs of the host and event.

5:00 PM — Community Dinner / Fellowship

A shared meal or light refreshments give guests time to connect with one another before the evening program.

6:00 PM — The Exhale: An Evening of Stories, Music & Hope

Amber and Lauren lead an intimate evening of storytelling, music, Scripture, and reflection centered on faith, mental health, the realities of being human, and finding hope in the middle of real life.

Suggested age: Middle school and older, depending on the event's content and setting.

7:30 PM — Book Signing & Meet + Greet

Guests have an opportunity to meet Amber and Lauren, purchase available books or music, have books signed, and connect with them personally.

*****Times can be adjusted based on the event's needs.*****

The main experience typically lasts **60–90 minutes**, depending on the format. Additional time should be planned for setup, sound checks, book and merchandise sales, and post-event conversations.

Audience age recommendations will depend on the event's content. Some gatherings may be appropriate for middle school and older, while others may be designed specifically for adults. We'll discuss the intended audience during the booking process.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Stories that tell the truth** — Honest, relatable stories that make room for the complicated realities of being human.
- **Songs that meet you where you are** — Meaningful live music that gives voice to emotions and experiences that can be difficult to put into words.
- **Scripture and reflection** — Biblical truth and thoughtful encouragement that invite people to bring their whole selves before God.
- **Space to breathe, pause, and reflect** — Intentional moments to journal, pray, sit quietly, laugh, or simply listen.
- **Connection and encouragement** — A welcoming environment where people can feel seen, understood, and less alone.
- **Hope for the road ahead** — A reminder that hope doesn't require having all the answers or having everything fixed.

The Exhale is designed to feel warm, thoughtful, honest, and welcoming. Guests can expect a blend of spoken and musical elements, moments of reflection, and encouragement grounded in faith. The atmosphere should leave room for tears and laughter, honest questions and renewed hope. This is not a performance that requires the audience to respond in a certain way. People are welcome to listen quietly, reflect privately, participate as they feel comfortable, or simply take a breath. The event is Christian in its foundation, but the invitation is open to people in different places in their faith journeys.

When the gathering features *Psalms in the Dark*, guests can also expect reflections inspired by the Psalms and a journey through lament, praise, and thanksgiving.

WHO IS THIS EVENING FOR?

The Exhale may be a good fit for communities and audiences who:

- Are walking through grief, anxiety, depression, disappointment, waiting, or uncertainty.
- Want to talk honestly about faith and mental health.
- Need encouragement that doesn't rely on easy answers or spiritual clichés.
- Are looking for a meaningful gathering that blends music, storytelling, Scripture, and reflection.
- Want to create space for people to feel less alone and more connected.
- Value honest conversations, practical encouragement, and community care.

You don't have to be in a crisis to benefit from the evening. Sometimes we simply need permission to slow down, acknowledge what we're carrying, and remember that we don't have to carry it alone.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The host venue should coordinate with Amber and Lauren in advance to confirm the setup and equipment available.

Space and seating

- A comfortable event space appropriate for the expected audience, including chairs/set-up.
- Seating arranged to encourage listening and connection.
- A designated area for book and merchandise sales.
- A designated quiet area for Amber and Lauren to pause, pray, and prepare.
- A welcoming space for guests to gather and talk before or after the event, if possible.

Sound and equipment

- A reliable sound system appropriate for the venue.
- 2 microphones and 2 microphone stands (as needed).
- 2 music stands (1 for Amber, and 1 for Lauren).
- Instrument and audio connections appropriate for Lauren's performance setup (DI boxes and amplification as needed, and any necessary stands, cables, power access, and monitoring equipment.
- Larger events including other musical artists will be discussed at the time of booking (if needed or requested).
- A sound check before guests arrive.

Specific audio and instrument needs should be confirmed directly with Amber & Lauren before the event.

Book and merchandise booths

Please provide **two separate six-foot tables** in a visible, accessible location:

- **One six-foot table for Amber** to display and sell books and related merchandise.
- **One six-foot table for Lauren** to display and sell music and related merchandise.

Please provide chairs if available and ensure both tables have adequate space for displays, payment processing, and guest interaction. If the venue has restrictions regarding sales, payment processing, or merchandise setup, please communicate those in advance.

Host support

- A designated point of contact for event-day coordination.
- Volunteers to assist with setup, guest questions, hospitality, and book and merchandise tables.

- Clear arrival, parking, load-in, and setup instructions for both artists.

Please discuss venue-specific requirements and accessibility needs during the booking process.

COST

The following are **starting rates** for The Exhale. Final pricing depends on the location, event format, schedule, travel requirements, and agreed-upon responsibilities.

Booking category	Starting fee	How to determine the category
Local / Central Ohio	$2,000	Events within approximately a two-hour drive of Chillicothe, Ohio. This would include but isn't limited to: Kingston, Circleville, Lancaster, Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, etc.
Regional	$3,000	Events more than approximately two hours from Chillicothe, including farther-away destinations in Ohio or the surrounding region; eg; Cleveland, Akron, Sandusky, etc.
Out of State	$5,000	Events hosted outside Ohio.

Which category applies? As a general guideline, local events are within a two-hour drive of Chillicothe. Events requiring more than two hours of travel are generally regional, unless the event is out of state, in which case the out-of-state starting rate applies. We'll confirm the appropriate category and total fee based on the actual destination and travel arrangements before a booking is finalized.

These are starting rates, not guaranteed all-inclusive quotes. Additional expenses or special arrangements will be discussed in advance and documented in the agreement.

Travel and lodging

- Travel costs and lodging arrangements for both artists will be discussed as part of the booking.
- When overnight lodging is necessary, the host and artists will agree on appropriate accommodations, such as a hotel or private rental.
- Meals or an agreed-upon meal allowance should be provided for both artists during travel and the event.
- Family travel is not included unless specifically agreed upon in advance.

We recognize that every church, organization, and community has different needs and budgets. Because travel costs vary by location, date, and availability, final pricing may be adjusted accordingly. If cost is a barrier, **please reach out!** We're happy to work with each host to find an arrangement that makes sense for your community and event.

Love offerings and ticket sales

A host may choose to offer an optional love offering or sell tickets to help cover event costs. These arrangements should be discussed and agreed upon before the event. An optional love offering is not a substitute for the agreed booking fee unless both parties explicitly agree otherwise.

BOOKING

To inquire about hosting The Exhale, please email **both Amber and Lauren** so everyone is included in the conversation.

Amber: amber@amberginter.com
Lauren: laurentoneymusic@gmail.com

Subject line: The Exhale Booking Inquiry

Helpful details to include:

- Your name, role, church, ministry, or organization.
- Proposed event date or date range.
- Venue name and location.
- Estimated audience size and intended audience.
- The purpose of the event and what your community is hoping to offer attendees.
- Any theme, Scripture passage, or community initiative you'd like the event to support.
- Whether you are considering a ticketed event, optional love offering, or another arrangement.
- Any questions about pricing, travel, or event format.

We will review inquiries together and determine whether the event is a good fit for the host community, the purpose of The Exhale, and our schedules.

Planning Timeline & Booking Considerations

Start the conversation early. Churches and community organizations often plan months—or even years—in advance. Early outreach makes it easier to coordinate schedules, budgets, promotion, and volunteers.

As a general guideline:

- Begin conversations as early as possible.
- We generally do not book events less than two months in advance. Exceptions may be considered based on the circumstances, availability, and the needs of the host community.
- Aim to have the event details, agreement, promotion plan, and volunteer responsibilities settled well before event day.
- Give the host community enough time to share the event through its regular communication channels.

We want each event to be thoughtfully planned rather than rushed. A clear plan helps everyone prepare well and gives the host a better opportunity to invite the people who may benefit.

FAQ

How long is the event?

The formal program is approximately 60-90 minutes, with optional time afterward for conversation, book signing, and connection.

Is this a Christian event?

Yes. Our approach is rooted in Christian faith and Scripture. We also want the evening to feel welcoming to people who are curious about faith, wrestling with questions, or coming from different backgrounds. Guests are never expected to have everything figured out.

Is this a concert or a speaking event?

It's a blend of storytelling, live music, Scripture, and reflection. The balance can vary by event, but the goal is to create a meaningful shared experience rather than a traditional concert or lecture alone.

Will attendees be asked to share personal stories or participate?

No one is required to share, pray aloud, or participate in a way that feels uncomfortable. Reflection and participation are invitations, not expectations.

Can the evening be customized?

Yes. We can discuss the needs of your community, the intended audience, a relevant theme, and how the evening might complement your church or organization's existing work. The structure may vary from the *Psalms in the Dark* lament-praise-thanks framework, as needed.

Can books and merch be sold at the event?

Yes. Amber may offer books, including *Psalms in the Dark* when relevant, along with related merchandise. Book availability and any special ordering arrangements should be discussed in advance. Lauren may offer music and related merchandise at her designated table. Each artist will manage her own merchandise, sales, and payment arrangements unless another plan is agreed upon in advance.

What size audience works best? Does our venue need volunteers?

Yes, we strongly recommend a host-provided volunteer team. Volunteers can help with setup, hospitality, guest questions, the dinner or refreshments if offered, and each artist's merchandise table. Having dedicated support allows Amber and Lauren to focus on the event and connect with guests.

Can our church work together with other churches?

Absolutely. We encourage collaboration when it serves the community. Partnering organizations can share promotion, volunteers, resources, and outreach responsibilities. Please identify the primary booking contact and clarify each partner's role early in the planning process.

Can we connect you with other churches or organizations that may be interested?

Yes, we welcome introductions to other churches, ministries, and community organizations that may benefit from hosting The Exhale. We also value hearing about the work your community is already doing and ways we might encourage or complement it.

Do you offer other speaking or music opportunities?

Potentially. Please describe the event and what you have in mind in your inquiry email so we can discuss whether it is a good fit.

Do you travel?
Yes. Amber and Lauren are available for events outside their local area and are building The Exhale into an ongoing tour experience.

Are you able to speak at our local school or join us for Sunday services?
Absolutely. We've spoken at schools about mental health, music, faith, and creativity, spoken and sung at chapels and church services, led creative retreats, and much more. Get in touch. We're happy to brainstorm ideas for how we can make the most of our time together!

MERCH + BOOK COMMITMENT

Books and merchandise can be part of the event, but they are not necessarily always required for every gathering.

For events specifically planned as part of a *Psalms in the Dark* launch or book-focused season, **a minimum wholesale book commitment of 1 case of books may be requested**. Any required quantity, pricing, ordering deadline, and payment terms will be confirmed with the host before the booking is finalized.

For other editions of The Exhale, book sales and merchandise are optional and can be discussed based on the event's goals and audience.

Amber and Lauren will each manage their own merchandise table and sales unless otherwise agreed. **The host should provide two six-foot tables and recruit volunteers to help direct guests and support the tables as needed.** Volunteers should not be expected to handle sales or payments on behalf of an artist unless that arrangement has been explicitly agreed upon.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:



AMBER GINTER JOHNSON

AmberGinter.com

Amber Ginter Johnson is a teacher-turned author, speaker, and mental health advocate passionate about creating space for honest conversations about faith, mental health, suffering, hope, and the complicated realities of being human. She helps young adult Christians navigate anxiety, depression, and life's hard moments with practical, biblical hope.

Amber is the host of the Authentically Amber podcast and the author of Psalms in the Dark, a collection of 100 devotional reflections exploring what it looks like to bring our whole selves to God—even in seasons when faith feels hard. Her writing has been featured by Focus on the Family**, Tyndale House Publishers, and** Esther Press, along with other faith-based and mental health publications. She has written more than 1,000 articles on faith, mental health, and relationships and previously taught more than 1,500 students.

Amber holds a B.A. in English and an A.A. in Biblical Studies, along with certifications in writing, business, and entrepreneurship. She is a certified peer recovery supporter and volunteers with *To Write Love on Her Arms*.

Amber lives in Chillicothe, Ohio, with her husband, Ben, their Goldendoodle, Oso, and a love for granola, dancing, and finding joy in everyday life.



ABOUT LAUREN TONEY

Laurentoney.music

Lauren Toney is a Columbus based worship leader turned singer songwriter. Having attended Grove City College in undergrad, she deeply appreciates balancing liturgy with a folk-influenced sound.

During her time at Grove City, she met her now husband, and from there, they moved out west to Ohio! While she loves the Midwest, her sound is heavily influenced by Northeast Folk (Simon and Garfunkel, Joan Baez, etc.). The ultimate goal of her music is to create space for the listener to truly worship God with honesty, not cliches.

Her music is written for the believer who values *intimacy* and *honesty* in their walk with Jesus.

KIND WORDS

Encouragement from those who've experienced our speaking, storytelling, and music.

SPEAKING & STORYTELLING

"Amber spoke with vulnerability, but her words were
powerfully anchored in the hope we have in Jesus Christ. "

PROVOST AT OHIO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY & DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
- Krista Stonerock

“Amber Ginter Johnson is a gifted communicator whose passion for both faith and mental health shines through her work. As a writer and speaker, she brings a compassionate, biblically grounded perspective to the often-overlooked intersection of Christianity and mental wellness. Her ability to weave personal insight with practical truth makes her a trusted voice, encouraging others to pursue hope, healing, and spiritual growth.”

FORMER DEAN OF ROSS COUNTY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
- Valerie Jones

MUSIC & LIVE PERFORMANCE

"Lauren's writing is refreshingly honest in a world of music that often whitewashes the Christian life. Her songs meet real people in real places and paint a picture of what real hope in Christ actually feels like. She brings an urgency in her performances that can shake your seat, but somehow makes it sweet and comfortable at the same time."

GROVE CITY COLLEGE WORSHIP ARTS ADJUNCT FACULTY AND CHAPEL WORSHIP DIRECTOR
- Daniel Snoke

“Lauren Toney is an incredible songwriter with a beautiful heart and a genuine gift for putting honesty and vulnerability into music. Her songs feel deeply personal, yet speak to something universal. What I appreciate most about Lauren is her willingness to be real, to ask honest questions, and to share her heart without compromising her faith. Her music is more than just songs; it’s an authentic expression of who she is and what she believes, and that makes her and her art truly special.”

MUSIC PRODUCER, MUSIC DIRECTOR, SONGWRITER, AND KEYBOARDIST BASED IN NASHVILLE, TN
- David Amezaga

HOW TO MAKE THE EVENT A SUCCESS

The Exhale works best when the artists and host community collaborate. The goal isn't simply to fill a room; it's to create a meaningful experience that serves the people who attend.

1. Make sure the event meets a real community need.

Before booking, consider what your congregation or community is navigating and whether this experience would be helpful. We want the event to support the work already happening in your community, not become one more event that competes for attention without a clear purpose.

2. Build a volunteer team.

Please recruit a small team to help with:

- Venue setup and cleanup.
- Greeting guests and answering logistical questions.
- Food, refreshments, and hospitality, if offered.
- Managing the book and merchandise areas.
- Helping with directions, accessibility, and event flow.
- Being available for practical support and conversation before and after the event.

Please assign a primary event coordinator who can communicate with Amber and Lauren before and on the day of the event.

3. Promote consistently and collaboratively.

Promotion is a shared effort. The host should plan to:

- Share the event through church or organization announcements, newsletters, email lists, websites, and social media.

- Create and share event graphics and a Facebook event when appropriate.
- Personally invite people who may benefit from attending.
- Encourage ministry leaders, staff, and volunteers to spread the word.
- Coordinate with Amber and Lauren on approved graphics, copy, and posting dates.

A helpful general rhythm is to begin promotion **two to three months before the event**, then increase visibility during the **final two weeks**. More than one announcement is usually needed for people to see the invitation, consider attending, and make plans.

Amber and Lauren will also share the event through their available channels, but the host's direct relationships and local reach are essential. Please confirm the promotional plan together rather than assuming one party will handle all communication.

4. Work with the community you already serve.

Consider how the event might connect with existing ministries, support groups, mental health initiatives, local nonprofits, or community outreach. Invite relevant leaders and organizations to help share the invitation when appropriate.

5. Make space for connection.

The experience may be especially meaningful when guests have time to talk before or after the program. If possible, provide a comfortable gathering area and volunteers who can welcome guests without pressuring anyone to share.

6. Consider accessibility and practical needs.

Think about parking, mobility access, seating, ticket costs, childcare, and any other barriers that could prevent people from attending. If tickets are used, a modest price—sometimes in the $5–$10 range, depending on the event budget—may be worth considering. Free admission, sponsored tickets, or a love offering may be more appropriate for other communities.

7. Explore local support when helpful.

Depending on the host and event goals, community partners, ministry budgets, local sponsors, or grants may help make the event accessible. Any funding or sponsorship plan should be agreed upon in advance.

8. Share what worked.

After the event, we'd love to hear feedback from the host team and learn what served the community well. We welcome introductions to other churches and organizations that may be interested in hosting a future gathering.

HOSPITALITY & RIDER FOR AMBER & LAUREN

Please coordinate hospitality arrangements with Amber and Lauren in advance, especially if the event includes travel or an extended schedule.

When possible, helpful hospitality items include:

- Drinking water.
- Hot tea and/or coffee.
- Fresh fruit.
- Individually packaged snack bars, such as Made Good bars or a similar option.
- Fresh vegetables and hummus.

Please confirm food ingredients and dietary needs with both artists before purchasing or preparing food. The list above is a suggestion, not a requirement; we would rather coordinate ahead of time than have the host spend money on items that cannot be used.

If a meal is planned, please confirm the timing, menu, and arrangements in advance. Travel, lodging, meals, sound check, setup, and event-day timing should be communicated clearly so everyone can arrive prepared.

Amber's Allergies: Dairy, Eggs, Gluten, Tomatoes, Soy, Paprika, Red Pepper, Cayenne, Chili Powder, Black Walnuts, and Cashews

Lauren's Allergies: Gluten/Dairy sensitive

OUR HOPE

The Exhale is an invitation to slow down in a world that often asks us to keep going.

It's a place for honest stories, meaningful songs, Scripture, reflection, and the reminder that hope doesn't require us to pretend we're okay. We can acknowledge what's hard, make room for the questions, and still look for the next small step toward hope. **Come as you are. Leave a little more hopeful.**

BOOKING CONTACT

Please contact **both** artists for booking inquiries:

Amber Ginter Johnson
amber@amberginter.com

Lauren Toney
laurentoneymusic@gmail.com

Email subject: The Exhale Booking Inquiry

We look forward to exploring whether The Exhale might serve your community well.

Agape, Amber & Lauren