

Contemplative Outreach of Indianapolis

Spring 2022 Newsletter



Greetings, All!

Our big news this quarter is that we will be back meeting in-person at St. Luke's Methodist Church starting on Saturday, April 23. This will be a joyous occasion for us all, I'm sure. We're looking into continuing to make our meetings accessible via Zoom and will pass on information as it becomes available.

Our programming on 2nd and 4th Saturdays continues. We'll meet via Zoom on Saturday, April 9 at 9:00 a.m. for Centering Prayer and *Lectio*. New programs for our 4th Saturdays will begin on Saturday, April 23 at 9:00 a.m.. Details within.

I hope those of you who took part in our March 20 Contemplative Nature Walk enjoyed your walks and the prayer and sharing via Zoom that evening. We'll have another walk for the Summer Solstice on Monday, June 20. See details within and in forthcoming emails.

Finally, in the last page of this issue, the Northwest Indianapolis Centering Prayer Group shares its members' spiritual reading with us. You might see something there that piques your interest!

Peace,

Karen Spear
Communications
Servant Leadership Team

UPCOMING 4TH SATURDAY PROGRAMMING



Guard of the Heart (Apr 23, 2022; 9:00 a.m.)

As Centering Prayer opens our heart more deeply in prayer, how can we best carry that open heart into daily life? Join us as Chris Haynes reviews perhaps the most direct answer to that question: the practice of Guard of the Heart. The material is drawn mostly from a workshop by Bob Mischke, who worked directly with Fr. Keating to clarify these powerful and subtle practices for our benefit. Please join us on the 4th Saturday of April to explore these simple traditional practices and reflect on them together.

Lectio Divina (May-Jul 2022; 9:00 a.m.)

Engage with a small group as we explore the practice of *Lectio Divina*, a method of heart-to-heart conversation with God involving reading, reflecting, responding, and resting in the words of Scripture. Even if you practice *Lectio*, you will find this workshop will deepen your practice and will bring the scripture texts into your everyday life. This is not a scripture study. It is a way to allow God to have a conversation with you and to give you a gift of understanding.

The May and July sessions will be led by Mary Beth Riner. In June, Sandy Guancial will be the presenter of the 2nd session on *Lectio Divina*. Sandy is an experienced practitioner of Centering Prayer and a commissioned Centering Prayer presenter through the New England chapter of Contemplative Outreach. She has been an oblate of St. Benedict since 1988. An experienced facilitator of several Centering Prayer groups in the Dallas area, Sandy was asked to coordinate the Contemplative Outreach chapter in the Dallas area. Since early 2020, she has facilitated one weekly Centering Prayer group in the practice of *Lectio Divina* via Zoom.



CONTEMPLATIVE NATURE WALK

The CO Indy Chapter is hosting its next contemplative nature walk for the summer solstice on Monday, June 20. You are invited to join us in two ways: First, on the designated day go outside and take a walk with the intention of noticing what is happening within and without yourself. Then join us at the end of the day at 8:00 via Zoom for Centering Prayer and sharing about our walks.

IN-PERSON MEETINGS START APRIL 23

We are pleased to announce that we will begin meeting in person at St. Luke's Methodist Church starting with our next 4th Saturday meeting on April 23 at 9:00 a.m.

St. Luke's Methodist is located at 100 W. 86th Street, Indianapolis. Details on the meeting will be provided via email closer to the date.

We are working on arrangements to accommodate those who would still like to participate via Zoom and will provide those details in reminder emails.

If you are not receiving emails about our events and would like to do so, send an email to co.indy.it@gmail.com.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS AT ST. LUKE'S METHODIST



St. Luke's Methodist Church invites you to participate in the Stations of the Cross Monday, April 4 through Monday, April 18, inside the St. Luke's United Methodist Church's main building, 100 W.86th St, Indianapolis, IN.

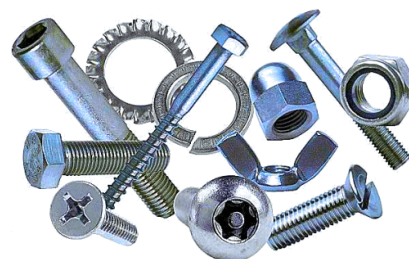
The Welcome Station is inside door #6. You will be walking in the St. Luke's hallways and stopping along the way at the 15 Stations. You can pick up a guide to accompany you on the journey.

We invite you to remember the final footsteps of Jesus on his journey to the cross. Each station offers a scripture, a meditation, and an invitation to stop and pray. The entire journey takes about 45 minutes and is wheelchair accessible.

All are welcome. Contact betty.brandt@stlukesumc.com with questions.

CHAPTER NUTS AND BOLTS

- If you receive this newsletter via US Mail and would like to receive it via email, please send an email to co.indy.it@gmail.com.
- Information about the Bloomington Centering Prayer group has changed. Please take note:
 - Chris Haynes has taken over facilitating from Br. Ramon Garcia.
 - chaynes56@gmail.com; (812-360-0296)
 - The group is currently being held on Zoom at 7:00 p.m. (not at First United Church and not 6:00 p.m., as listed on the website).
 - Plans to meet in person are being considered and will be communicated in the future.
- The national Contemplative Outreach website has an archive full of past bulletins with exceptional articles and interesting events.
 - To access past national bulletins, go to the national CO website (contemplativeoutreach.org); click on "Resources"; then click on "e-Bulletin Archive."



What has Centering Prayer Meant in My Life?

Mary Beth Riner



Centering Prayer has given me a way to think about and engage with both my inner and outer lives. Think of the Thespian image of actors: the image that has the two faces; I see life as being composed of an outward-facing aspect and an inward aspect.

I accepted Christ and was baptized as an 8-year-old in a Protestant church. In the beginning, my Christian journey focused on being a Christian within organized religion and serving the church and the community. This mainly meant doing good work by serving others. While I continued to appreciate this aspect of my Christian life, in my 30s I began to realize there was still a vacuum. At the time, I didn't know how to identify the missing piece. A friend invited me to attend silent retreats with her at a Catholic Retreat center on the banks of the Mississippi River south of St. Louis. Here I began to gain a deeper awareness of the sacred inner journey. Through readings, I was introduced to and developed some tools for living life in relationship with the indwelling Christ Spirit.

I moved to Indianapolis in 1991 and was introduced to Centering Prayer at the Benedict Inn. I'm now 30 years into my journey with Centering Prayer. I've worked with and have come to understand the external-facing aspects of myself. The outward-facing self presents itself to and engages with "the world's" agenda for power, security, and affection – what Fr. Thomas refers to as the false self: the self that lives in the external world of society, family, career, church, and neighbors.

Centering Prayer has given me a way to balance my external false self with my inner, true self. My true self emerges from the Christ Spirit that indwells my soul. I'm continuing to develop a richer inner life where I experience the presence of the Christ Spirit. Through my commitment to Centering Prayer, based on Fr. Thomas's theology and developmental psychology, I am freer to live out of a place of love.

Centering Prayer offers me a way to loosen the bonds of my false self, thereby increasing space for my true self. Now as I engage in "the world," I understand that my true self is grounded in my continued love relationship with God. Drawing on the energy of this relationship, I am deeply aware of the sacredness in life and of life. So, like the Thespian, I'm aware of my different natures, and this is a gift of self-knowing, one that comes from inner work.

A Vocation of Love

By Linda Farley

One of my most beloved friends is Marie Françoise Thérèse Martin, whom you may know as St. Thérèse of Lisieux. When God introduced her and her outlook on life to me, my own life changed. I was so attracted to what she called “her little way”: her humanness, her intensity, and her deep love of God. At the time, I struggled to see my worth, and my shortcomings were so apparent, seemingly bigger than life itself! God and Thérèse showed me the way of humility and the wisdom of being “little.” Being “little” meant beginning to recognize my weaknesses and to surrender and trust in God’s deep, compassionate love for me. This revelation energized my being. I began searching for ways to reveal God’s glory. But sometimes I tried to do all the work myself, and it was not entirely inspired by the Spirit.



After dark days and nights, what I found left was love. Thérèse declared her vocation was love, and God revealed to me that this was to be my vocation as well. I wanted to love Jesus, as St. Thérèse did, with the audacity of the Magdalene!

I still hold this to be true today. Right now, what this vocation of love means to me is to search tirelessly for Jesus in all people, all events, and in all circumstances. I liken it to the consent we offer during Centering Prayer to be present to God’s presence and action within us. A protective mask during the pandemic may be able to hide the warmth of a smile, but it cannot take away the love of Jesus; my eyes and actions can reveal His empathy, mercy, love, and light! Sometimes, I am aware of the energy of Jesus being released from my body, and I marvel at what Jesus leaves behind: healing, hope, awe, and peace. St. Thérèse said, “Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love.”

In my relationship with my family, this vocation of love continues to be a source of light, of forgiveness, of understanding, and of wanting in the waiting. My life has been filled with more blessings than I imagined, but it has also held difficult challenges and not always gone according to the way I planned it. Generational trauma, mental illness, and addiction have continued to spread throughout my life and the lives of my family. And yet, this vocation of love waters that wanting in the waiting, remaining hopeful that God’s healing power will sprout in His time. It allows me to be patient and loving in the here and the now, regardless of how hopeless current circumstances may appear. I am always holding Psalm 27 close to my heart: “I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the Living. Wait for the Lord, be strong, and take heart, and wait for the Lord.”

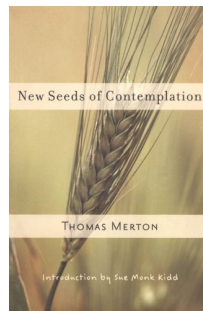
SUGGESTIONS FOR SPIRITUAL READING

This quarter, the members of the Northwest Indianapolis Centering Prayer group, facilitated by Marilyn Webb, share their spiritual reading with the rest of the chapter. If your group is interested in sharing what your members are reading in their personal prayer time, please contact Karen Spear at kspear@marian.edu.

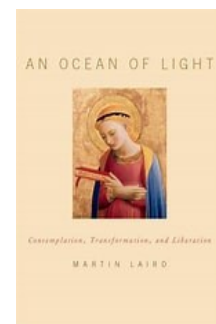
Many thanks to the Northwest Indianapolis Centering Prayer group for their contributions!



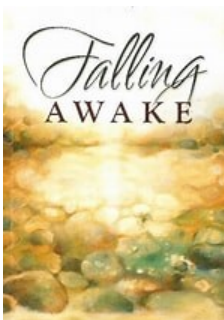
Cynthia Bourgeault
*Centering Prayer and
Inner Awakening*
[Reviews](#)



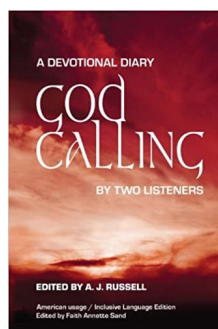
Thomas Merton
*New Seeds of Con-
templation*
[Review](#)



Martin Laird
Oceans of Light
[Review](#)



Fr. Mark Burger
Falling Awake
[Review](#)



A. J. Russell
God Calling
[Review](#)



Esther De Waal
The White Stone
[Review](#)