

Preview

In our late-September/early fall issue, we:

- Announce with regret the postponement of the Fall Retreat that had been scheduled for October 8-10
- Urge you to register now for November's 2021 Fall Workshop with Phileena Heuertz
- Announce for the first time a very special event coming up in January with Michael Battle
- Share a "vision statement" for 2021-2022, developed with input from many Contemplative Outreach Chicago members
- Inform you about other selected contemplative events and resources to support your journey, including two that will be of special interest to those engaged in 12-step recovery programs
- Share *Insights* from Shankara, Thomas Keating, Sophronia Scott, and Srimad Bhagavatam

Please share your reactions and reflections with us. If you would like to submit something you've written or just explore an idea, please contact the newsletter editor at news@centeringprayerchicago.org. We need your involvement to help *Spirit Journal* become an even more vibrant conversation!

We Regret to Postpone Our Weekend Retreat, Which Was Scheduled for October 8-10

With regret, we announce the postponement of our October retreat, *Centering Prayer: Weekend Immersion*. We are hoping to reschedule it as a series of online events/winter practice gatherings in early 2022. More details will follow soon.

Register Now for the 2021 Fall Workshop with Phileena Heuertz

***Deepening Spiritual Practice through
Three-Centered Awareness, 10:00am-
1:00pm November 13 via Zoom***

Some of you may have seen and heard Phileena Heuertz when she had a chance to speak at the recent Global Embrace Conference, which brought together Centering Prayer practitioners from all over the world via Zoom. She chose to use her brief time on the Saturday afternoon agenda to focus on three-centered awareness, the topic she will be exploring in much more depth during our Fall Workshop this year.



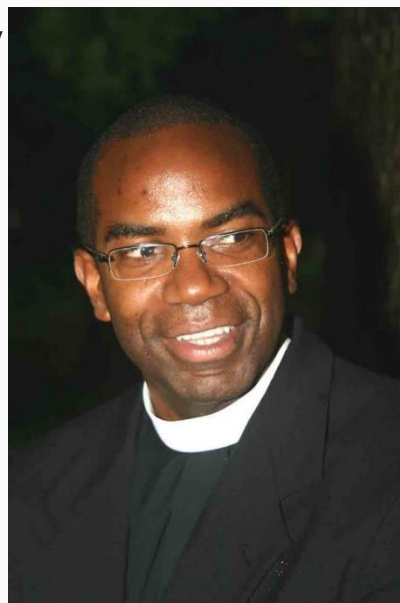
Three-centered awareness is crucial for experiencing Divine Presence; mind, heart, and body coming online and cooperating together. But too often, we experience shut-down in one or more of these centers. This limits our capacity for opening to Presence and receiving the integration and wholeness for which we long.

Are you curious about how three-centered awareness can help us experience the deeper, subtle, life-changing dynamics of contemplative prayer? [Click here to visit our website for complete information about the Fall Workshop and Phileena Heuertz, and for a chance to register.](#)

**Please Save Save the Date for a Special Event
Coming Up in January**

We are very pleased to announce that, on Saturday morning **January 22, 2022**, Contemplative Outreach Chicago will present *Releasing an Enslaved Spirit*, a unique three-hour Workshop on Communal Contemplative Spirituality, led by Michael Battle.

In this online workshop, it is our hope to bring together people from diverse backgrounds who share an interest in contemplation. Rev. Battle is the author of 11 books and is the Herbert Thompson Professor of Church and Society and Director of the Desmond Tutu Center at General Theological Seminary in New York.



We hope you will join us for this event - please mark your calendars now and look for more information in the next issue of *Spirit Journal*.

Sharing Our Vision for Contemplative Outreach Chicago

Since its beginnings in the 1990s, our chapter's purpose has been consistent: To support the process of transformation in Christ, both in ourselves and in others, through Centering Prayer and other contemplative practices. This aligns with the mission defined by Father Thomas Keating, who started the global Contemplative Outreach movement of which we're a part in 1983.

Our Chicago chapter is led by a team of volunteers or "circle of service." Early this year, we decided to take some time to think through and discern our "vision" for 2021-2022, a time during which we would be "coming out of the pandemic," or so we hoped. After doing some preliminary brainstorming, we invited the broader membership of the chapter to a Zoom conversation in June to help us think about where we are headed. Several dozen

participated in the meeting, bringing forth a number of great ideas and critiquing some of ours.

The resulting "[vision statement](#)" is now posted on our website for all to see. We hope and intend to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all our efforts, so this document is actually a summary of where we feel we are being led, rather than a "to do" list. We are not defining outcomes that we feel we must achieve, but rather offering the vision as an invitation that may suggest opportunities for you to engage with the work of Contemplative Outreach. If you have an interest, please [take a look](#). As always, we would love to know your reactions.

Events and Resources

You may wish to participate in some of these local, regional, and online events:

12-Step Outreach Fall Spirituality Online Series October 2-16

A program of Contemplative Outreach's national organization, 12-Step Outreach's primary purpose is to support one another in the process of spiritual transformation through the primary practice of Centering Prayer and several companion practices. Whether you've been in recovery for a long time or are just beginning, you may find greater emotional sobriety and healing from the wounds of a lifetime as you deepen your 11th Step practice through Centering Prayer, the Welcoming Prayer, and the Forgiveness Prayer.

During this online series, experienced practitioners will present introductory workshops on each of these practices, which can also be taken as a refresher course to breathe new life into your daily practice. Workshops take place on Saturdays from 11:00am-12:30pm: Centering Prayer on October 2; the Welcoming Prayer on October 9; and Forgiveness Prayer on October 16.

Donations are appreciated but not required. [Download further information](#).

Centering Prayer as an 11th Step Process, October 9

In another special program designed for those in 12-step recovery, Contemplative Outreach of Madison, Wisconsin will present a *Centering Prayer as an 11th Step Practice Introductory Workshop* and a presentation on *The Human Condition*, based on the teaching of Thomas Keating, on Saturday, October 9, 8:00am-12:30pm. (Note: An email we sent several days ago had the right date but the wrong hours for this event; the information shown here is correct.)

Participants may attend in-person or via Zoom, and are also invited to take part in four continuing prayer sessions via Zoom on subsequent Saturdays through November 6.

[For more information and to register click here.](#)

Two October Online Events from Contemplative Outreach Atlanta

The Atlanta chapter invites us to take part in two online events this fall:

- *Praise and Protect the Earth "Big Sit"* on Saturday, October 9
- *At the Edge of Waiting: Centering Prayer and Celtic One-Day Retreat* with Carl McColman on Saturday October 30

For more information and registration, visit the [Contemplative Outreach Atlanta website](#).

Autumn Is a Wonderful Time to Visit Healing Gardens

Healing Gardens, the lovely park-like contemplative center in St. Charles, offers special fall activities:

- The final *Sunday in the Gardens* of 2021 is October 10, when the Gardens are open to the public 11:00am-4:00pm
- *Silent Saturday Mornings*: October 16 and November 6, 9:00am-noon



Please visit the [Healing Gardens website](#) for more information or to register. There are several other events on the calendar and, in addition, the gardens are open now for anyone who needs some quiet time in Nature. To make arrangements, text 630-740-2597.

Unfolding the Advent Journey, December 9-12 in Racine Wisconsin

This advent weekend retreat is offered by Contemplative Outreach of Southeast Wisconsin at the Siena Retreat Center in Racine and will be led by Shawn Kafader.

The retreat will explore the familiar characters of the Advent story from a contemplative perspective. How can these people of old invite us into a deeper contemplative stance in our advent journey? Together we will look at the invitations of the prophets, angels, shepherds, sages, the innkeeper and Herod, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus as patterns for a contemplative advent journey.

Complete information and registration are at the [Contemplative Outreach of Southeast Wisconsin website](#).

From Contemplative Outreach of Colorado: Bob Mischke on the "Guard of the Heart" Practice, October 23

This online workshop will teach the practice of "Guard of the Heart" (also referred to as "Watchfulness" or "Presence Practice") and how it complements Centering Prayer, and the practices of the Welcoming Prayer and the Active Prayer Phrase. Participants will learn the three ways any afflictive thought or emotional disturbance can be instantly released as it arises.

According to Thomas Keating: "One practice to bring the effects of contemplative prayer into daily life is traditionally known as "Guard of the Heart." This consists of letting go of every emotional disturbance as it arises and before we start thinking about it. This method is more sophisticated than dismantling the emotional programs for happiness because it deals with the whole of life. It expresses our ongoing intention to be with God in the present

moment and sustains it.”

Bob Mischke, who has worked with Contemplative Outreach of Colorado for more than 25 years, learned this practice directly from Father Thomas. The workshop will take place Saturday October 23, 10:00am-1:00pm Central. For further information, please visit the [Contemplative Outreach of Colorado website](#).

Centering Prayer Groups, In-Person and via Zoom

Participants who attend a Centering Prayer introductory workshop often decide to join an existing prayer group or form one of their own. The groups generally meet weekly or every other week to share their experience of Centering Prayer and growing relationship with God.

Many groups decide to view videos or read and discuss books by Fr. Thomas and others to deepen their individual understanding of their spiritual practices. Formats usually include a session of Centering Prayer and discussion and sharing. These small faith communities build trust and unity while encouraging and supporting members on their spiritual journey.

More than 40 Chicago-area prayer groups are listed on our [website](#). If you would like help finding a prayer group, please contact the facilitators' team leader at: groups@centeringprayerchicago.org.

While more and more prayer groups are returning to meeting in-person, here are four invitations to gather with Chicago-area Centering Prayer groups via Zoom. Listed below are the groups, times, and contact information.

- St. Clement's Centering Prayer Group every Saturday 9:30-10:30am. Contact Bill Epperly at bill@integralawakenings.com
- St. Katharine Drexel Church every Tuesday 8:30-9:30am. Contact Lori Dressel at lorijdressel@gmail.com
- The Healing Gardens - Centering Prayer with Lectio Divina, last Friday of each month, 10:30am-11:30pm. Contact Deb Marqui at deb@dmarqui.com or text/call 630-740-259.

- Permanent Zoom group (not associated with an in-person group) Tuesday 6:00 - 7:00pm. Contact Rose Magiera for link and phone number – rmmagiera@gmail.com

Bill Epperly has also invited everyone to *Interspiritual Sundays* which gathers Sunday from 9:00-10:00am. You may contact Bill at bill@integralawakenings.com and he'll be happy to share more information with you.

Offerings in the Contemplative Outreach Meditation Chapel

The national website of our parent organization features an Online Meditation Chapel that is very easy to use and provides the opportunity to see, hear and join in silent prayer with others from all over the world. You must first register to attend the meetings in the Chapel. You can do that by using the [calendar](#) link. Once you know what chapel your desired meeting is in, use the [chapel](#) link.

Meditation Groups – Groups meet via Zoom at all hours of the day and night and are open to anyone. *There is no cost/fee to attend, charging is prohibited.* A friend writes: "I have been attending meditation in the virtual Keating Chapel and had a lovely experience. The facilitator was very good!" For further information, visit the [calendar](#) or [chapel listing](#).

Healing Together: A Gathering of Consciousness – In silence we focus on an intention for peace and healing in 2020. The format is an opening prayer, a short reading, two 25-minute sessions of silent prayer with a short break in-between and closing prayer. These sessions are scheduled every Thursday from 11:00am to 12:00pm Central Time (US & Ca) in the Thomas Keating Chapel with Mary Lapham. You can contact Mary at marylapham2@gmail.com.

Please let us know about any additional events and resources you're aware of. Write to: news@centeringprayerchicago.org

Insights

The highest form of the love of God is an immediate spiritual intuition, by which knower, known and knowledge are made one.

- Shankara

When the presence of God emerges from our inmost being into our faculties, whether we walk down the street or drink a cup of soup, divine life is pouring into the world.

- Thomas Keating

I am a seeker into the mystery of what tethers my life to the divine, and I long to see the notes of grace scattered in the crevices of experience, to learn how to read those messages, continually saying, "I love you anyway."

- Sofphronia Scott

Learn to look with an equal eye upon all beings, seeing the one Self in all.

- Srimad Bhagavatam

Your Turn

Please write in to contribute your ideas or to comment on any aspect of *Spirit Journal*. For example, you are invited to submit something you've written on a spiritual topic, or to let us know about an upcoming event, or send an inspirational quote you'd like to share, or information about a book, website, podcast, or video you recommend. You can contribute by emailing the newsletter editor at news@centeringprayerchicago.org.
