

Spirit Journal - January 2024

Preview

In our first newsletter of 2024, you'll find:

- Information on the online workshop *Crisis Contemplation - Healing the Wounds of the Village*, with Barbara Holmes - which we will be co-sponsoring on February 3 along with two other Contemplative Outreach chapters
- An invitation to join us for a contemplative/musical experience - *Notes of Rest* with Julian Davis Reid - at St. Leonard's Ministry on February 15
- Our initial announcement of an event with Carl McColman, which we will be co-presenting with the Theological Society in America in March
- A reminder that you are invited to apply for the Alan Krema Scholarship - will 2024 be your year to take advantage of this opportunity?
- Notice of additional contemplative events coming up soon from Jeff Ediger, the St. John of the Cross Christian Meditation Groups, and Contemplative Outreach chapters in Colorado and Southeast Wisconsin
- An updated calendar of events of interest, local and online, through the end of this year
- A listing of in-person and online prayer groups
- *Insights* from Meister Eckhart, Shunryu Suzuki, St. Benedict, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

We invite you to get more involved with Contemplative Outreach Chicago. Please help make *Spirit Journal* a lively conversation. If you would like to send us something you've written or just explore an idea, please contact the newsletter editor at news@centeringprayerchicago.org. Your participation is always welcome!



Crisis Contemplation: Healing the Wounds of the Village with Barbara Holmes

***Feb. 3 via Zoom, 10:00AM - 1:00PM Central
From Contemplative Outreach of Colorado, Atlanta, and Chicago***

In Crisis Contemplation, the Rev. Dr. Barbara Holmes will address two entry points into contemplation which have seldom been addressed: contemplation during crisis, and how we contemplate as community.

Engaging deeply with both history and current events, Holmes will address the emergence of crisis contemplation, especially through the lenses of BIPOC peoples. Dr. Holmes will be exploring existing communal contemplative experiences. As she looks into types of crises (pandemics, earthquakes, and systemic abuses), she examines the resulting traumatic wounds which manifest across generations.

In the second half of the presentation, she will shift toward a village response to crises, addressing communal formation, belonging, resistance, and resilience. A deeper look at healing through memory and story, culture and ritual, will lead to a final chapter on envisioning different futures through liminality and bio-spiritual resurrection.

Recording Note: This event will be recorded. All registrants will receive a copy of the Zoom recording within two weeks of the event.

About Rev. Dr. Barbara A. Holmes

Dr. Holmes is a spiritual teacher and writer focused on African American spirituality, mysticism, cosmology and culture. She is President Emerita of United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities (2012-2016). She also served as Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Memphis Theological Seminary (2005-2010). She holds the title of Professor Emerita of Ethics and African American Religious Studies at that seminary. Currently, she is a core faculty member at the Center for Action and Contemplation founded by Fr. Richard Rohr.

Holmes was called to ministry while working as a corporate lawyer for the J.C. Penney Corporation, and was ordained in the Latter Rain Apostolic Holiness Church in Dallas, Texas. Today, she has privilege of call in the United Church of Christ and recognition of ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Dr. Holmes grew up in New Haven, Connecticut, and was a member of Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church.

Dr. Holmes has earned the following degrees: a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a minor in Theatre Arts from the University of Connecticut; a Master of Science in Education from Southern Connecticut University; a Master of Divinity degree from Columbia Theological Seminary; and a Doctor of Philosophy in Religion (Ethics) from Vanderbilt. Also, she earned a law degree from Walter F. George School of Law, at Mercer University and practiced law in Miami, Atlanta, Macon and Dallas. She specialized in civil litigation, corporate, and appellate practice. She says, "My life is committed to the struggle for justice, the healing of the human spirit, and the art of relevant and

radical creativity."

[More information and registration](#)

Experience Notes of Rest at St. Leonard's Ministries

In-person with Julian Davis Reid on February 15

This unique event brings [Notes of Rest](#) to the lovely St. Andrew's Church at [St. Leonard's Ministries](#), the very effective westside Chicago program that has been serving post-incarcerated people and greatly reducing recidivism - i.e., keeping people out of prison - since 1954!

Some readers may have experienced *Notes of Rest* when we presented Julian Davis Reid on Zoom in the spring of 2022. This musical-textual retreat is a Spirit-led ministry grounded in Christian Scripture and Black sacred music ([Rest Assured](#)) that invites people to receive God's gift of rest. Weaving together live piano music and reflections on a passage from the Bible, Julian will create a welcoming space for reflection on how to rely on God amidst uncertainty, transition, and even danger. Listen. Share. Flourish together.



In late 2022, St. Leonard's chaplain, Wes Smedley, approached Contemplative Outreach Chicago and asked if we would like to help introduce Centering Prayer to the program's participants. Alan Krema has been working to do just that, and this event is being offered free of charge to St. Leonard's residents and staff as part of that effort.

Other guests are most welcome at no charge, as well, although free-will offerings are appreciated. No registration is necessary. (If you do choose to

contribute, any amount is welcome. The recommended contribution of \$25 helps defray the costs of presenting this event. A sponsorship contribution of \$50 helps support the ongoing work of Contemplative Outreach Chicago. If you'd like to make a donation, you may do so [here](#) or at the event.)

We hope to you will join us for *Notes of Rest* at St. Leonard's Ministries on Thursday, February 15, 6:30 – 8:00 PM. The event will be held in St. Andrew's church on the St. Leonard's campus, 48 N. Hoyne St., Chicago.

Braiding Your Mystical Practice: Integrating Eastern, Western, and Earth-Centered Approaches for Nurturing the Soul
In-person or online March 2 with Carl McColman; presented in collaboration with the Theosophical Society in America

Join [Carl McColman](#), author of books like *The New Big Book of Christian Mysticism* and *Spirit of the Celtic Gods and Goddesses* in a visionary experience of cultivating your contemplative heart through Eastern, Western, and nature-based wisdom.



Some readers will remember Carl from our 2022 Fall Workshop, *Centering Prayer and the Mystical Imagination*. We're delighted to work with TSA to welcome him back!

Drawing on his own work of integrating Celtic wisdom, Zen, and Christian mysticism, Carl weaves stories, myths, wisdom teachings, imaginal exercises, and deep silence together to celebrate our existential unity as children of one earth and one love. The program will be experiential, with time for meditation, contemplation, visualization, journaling and optional conversation.

As part of this online retreat experience, participants will:

- Practice several methods of meditation from around the world;
- Explore how the human heart is the ultimate teacher of mystical truth;
- Learn to see the mystical union underlying our cultural and religious differences;
- Visualize your unique path for living a joyful mystical life.

This hybrid event will take place at the Theosophical Society's headquarters in Wheaton, or you may participate online. It will also be recorded, with the recording available for on-demand viewing by registrants for two weeks following the program date.

[Important note: Because of our co-sponsorship of this event, you are invited to take advantage of the discount offered to Theosophical Society members. Be sure to choose the discounted price when registering.]

[More information and registration](#)

An Invitation to Apply for the Alan Krema Scholarship

Is 2024 is the year for you to take advantage of the Alan Krema Scholarship? The Scholarship is designed to support the development of wisdom leaders who will work to enhance the modern contemplative movement. If you feel a calling to develop your abilities to contribute in this way, we may be able to help you defray some of the costs of retreats, workshops, or courses of study you feel will help you continue to grow spiritually.

This new scholarship program is named in honor of Alan Krema, who stepped aside about a year ago after six extraordinary years as coordinator. Alan remains a valued and very active member of our core volunteer group.

If you feel you could benefit from financial support to help with the cost of

undertaking a program of study and reflection, we urge you to [click here for detailed information](#) and a chance to apply for the inaugural Alan Krema Scholarship. Good luck!

Additional Contemplative Events of Interest

From Jeff Ediger, this Saturday



Jeff Ediger was an important part of our *Living Wisdom* series several years ago. About this new project, Jeff writes:

Walking down the street with my brother one day when I was a boy, I spied a key on the sidewalk. I picked up that key, held it as high as my short arm could reach and declared, "I'm going to build a go-cart around this key!" Beginnings are hard because beginners are grandiose. And that's just one of the challenges we face when beginning any new venture. Come learn more about them through story and song! There will be chariots and birds, baby steps and cowboys, and yes...there will also be keys--all culminating in the promise of the New Day!

Dawn and Other Difficult Beginnings: An Alchemical Blend of Story and Song Performed by Jeff Ediger and friends.

When: January 27, 7:00 PM

Where: Church of the Atonement Episcopal Church, 5749 N. Kenmore, Chicago -- free parking in the church lot on the west side of Kenmore

Cost: Suggested Donation: \$20. But it's only a suggestion. Come and enjoy! Refreshments served after the show.

From the SJC Christian Meditation Groups

Finding the Fruits of Meditation in Your Nervous System with Laura Bauhof Ph.D. - February 17, in person in Western Springs

This Lenten morning of meditation is sponsored by the Christian Meditation groups at St. John of the Cross Church (5005 Wolf Rd, Western Springs, Illinois). Dr. Bauhof will present her case for meditation as a holistic practice that connects body, mind and spirit. There will be time for discussion and meditation.

Presenter: Laura Bauhoff is a licensed clinical psychologist and meditator who practices in the western suburbs.

Hospitality begins at 9:00 AM; program 9:30-noon. Free will offering appreciated; reservations requested but not required. Contact: billjoanbinder@sbcglobal.net.

From Contemplative Outreach of Southeast Wisconsin

A Welcoming Prayer Introductory Workshop – February 2024, in-person or via Zoom

*God doesn't take away our difficulties . . .
God joins us in our difficulties.*

- Thomas Keating

As we go through each day the False Self manifests itself in many situations and ways. Afflictive emotions often flare up at these times; we become fearful, angry, anxious. In The Welcoming Prayer we invite the Spirit to join us in these situations. The Spirit brings God's healing power to the party, so to speak, and the healing of an aspect of the False Self that this situation has brought forth can progress. We are blessed.

The Welcoming Prayer helps to dismantle the acquired emotional programs that underly what we are experiencing. It addresses them where they are stored – in the body. Gradually, over time, with prayer, repeatedly bringing them into the light, the perfect love of the Most Holy, they are healed, removing the obstacles that keep God's all-powerful grace from flowing in and through us and out into a world in desperate need.

Contemplative Outreach of SE Wisconsin is offering the Welcoming Prayer Introductory Workshop in two parts on Zoom, February 19 and 26, or as a one-day in-person program in Elm Grove, Wisconsin on February 24.

[More information and registration](#)

From Contemplative Outreach of Colorado
***Contemplative Prayer and African Christian
Mysticism, with Michael Battle - March 23, in-
person or via Zoom***

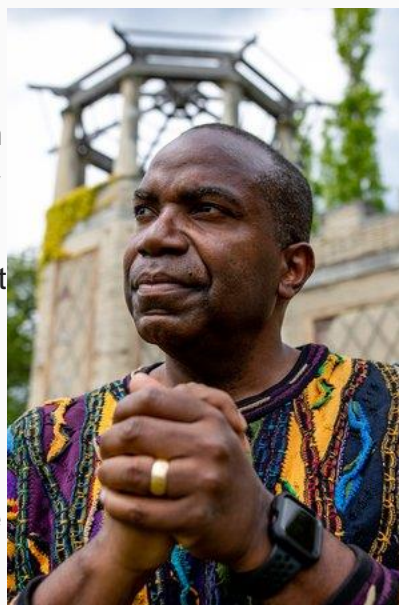
Very few speakers are as well-versed in this topic as Michael Battle, whose workshops for Contemplative Outreach Chicago in 2022 and 2023 have been highlights of our recent programming.

Michael holds that the essence of African Christian mysticism (founded in the desert tradition of monasticism) is not taught but caught. Such mysticism is a whole way of life. It is not an esoteric doctrine or a predetermined plan of ascetic practice. It is important to understand this, because there really is no way of talking about the way of prayer, or the spiritual teaching of God's life.

African Christian mystics did not try to systematize the way to God; instead, they relied upon the experience of a lifetime of striving to re-direct every aspect of body, mind, and soul to God. There was no Protestant or Catholic dichotomy of salvation based upon grace or work because salvation was caught up in how the community is so much more than the sum of individuals striving for heaven. And yet, personal prayer and personal salvation could be better understood through interpersonal prayer and interpersonal salvation.

This is summed up today through the contemporary lens of African Christian mysticism known as Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me. In short, African contemplative prayer is not only an activity undertaken each day, but also a life continually turned towards God.

Presenter: The Very Rev. Michael Battle, Ph.D. was ordained a priest by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in 1993. Battle's clergy experience, in addition to his academic work, makes him an internationally sought after speaker, teacher, writer and spiritual leader. In 2010, Battle was given one of the highest Anglican Church distinctions as "Six Preacher," by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams. A distinction given to only a few who demonstrate great dedication to the church that goes back to 16th century England and Thomas Cranmer. Battle has published eleven books, including his latest: *Desmond Tutu: A Spiritual Biography of South Africa's Confessor*. Battle's PeaceBattle Institute works on subjects of diversity, spirituality, prayer, race and reconciliation. In addition, Battle has



served as pastor and spiritual director to thousands of clergy and laity. He has also served as chaplain to Archbishop Tutu, Congressman John Lewis, the Episcopal House of Bishops and the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops. In addition, Battle has served as vice president to the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Arun Gandhi's Institute for Nonviolence. Battle and his wife, Raquel, were married by Archbishop Tutu and are parents to two daughters, Sage and Bliss, and a son, Zion. All of whom were baptized by Archbishop Tutu as well.

[More information and registration](#)

The 2024 Contemplative Events Calendar

To learn about even more upcoming workshops and retreats, download and have a look at this [annual calendar](#). It provides a comprehensive listing of Chicago-area and online programs we're currently aware of - 27 listings now through December!

Centering Prayer Groups In-Person and Online

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 ten invitations to gather with Centering Prayer groups via Zoom. Listed below are the groups, times, and contact information:

- 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
- St. Mary of Emig Centering Prayer Group Tuesday 6:30 – 7:30pm. Contact Rose Magiera for link and phone number – rmmagiera@gmail.com
- North Park Covenant Church, Monday 7:15pm. Contact Sarah Hillabrant, (773) 509-1095, yoopergirl37@gmail.com
- Contemplative Worship, every Wednesday, 5:00pm. Contact Jenny Russel at – jir8546@yahoo.com
- St. Michael's Catholic Church, Schererville, Indiana, Monday, 6:00 PM. Contact Peggy Kolarik, peggy.kolarik@att.net, 219-322-1886
- Northern Illinois Zoom Centering Prayer Group, every Saturday 9:30 – 10:15am. Contact Anne Smith 815-245-4088 or Kathy Putnam 815-568-7641, Katiarel@aol.com
- Contemplative Outreach of NYC & Beyond - Brief prayers, 20 minutes of silent meditation, followed by lectio divina. The full program lasts about 45 minutes. Contact: Jane Coakley at coakley53@gmail.com
- Metanoia Journey (Austin, Texas) - Sunday morning "Centering Prayer/Lectio Divina" online service. Sundays, 8:30-9:30am Central. [Register here.](#)

Offerings in the Meditation Chapel

Meditation Chapel is an independent, nonprofit global platform with which Contemplative Outreach Ltd. partners to encourage groups and individuals in a life of contemplative practice. Therefore, the global website of our parent organization features this Online Meditation Chapel, which is very easy to use and provides the opportunity to see, hear and join in silent prayer with others

from all over the world.

Registering for Meditation Chapel – You must first register to attend the meetings in the Chapel. You can do so at this link: <https://meditationchapel.org/getting-started/>. Once registered, you will receive the chapel links and can then check the [calendar](#) to pick one or more groups convenient for your schedule..

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.* A friend writes: “I have been attending meditation in the virtual Keating Chapel and had a lovely experience. The facilitator was very good!”

Centering Down: Meditations with Howard Thurman for the BIPOC Community – Join Colleen Thomas and Leslie Geer in the virtual Meditation Chapel for a contemplative meeting place for those identifying as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color). We will reflect on the various writings and teachings of Howard Thurman. Our time together will include a 20-minute Centering Prayer sit, Lectio Divina, and faith-sharing. Every Monday, 9:30am Central: <https://meditationchapel.org/mary-of-magdala-chapel/>

Healing Together: A Gathering of Consciousness – In silence we focus on an intention for peace and healing. 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 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

Be willing to be a beginner every single morning.

- Meister Eckhart

If your mind is empty ... it is open to everything. In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert's mind there are few.

- Shunryu Suzuki

Always, we begin again.

- St. Benedict

Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Your Turn

Please write in to contribute your ideas or to comment on any aspect of *Spirit Journal*. For example, you are most welcome 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.

SILENCE • SOLITUDE



SOLIDARITY • SERVICE

Contemplative Outreach