

Spirit Journal - September 2023

Preview

Our September issue includes:

- A quick look back at our *2023 One-Day Fall Workshop* featuring Susan Lincoln and Craig Toungate
- An invitation to join us for Alan Krema's new workshop, *A Path to Spiritual Connectedness*, in-person or online on November 18, presented in collaboration with the Theosophical Society in America.
- Information about two contemplative events coming up soon at Healing Gardens in St. Charles
- A listing of fall workshops and events of potential interest to you, from several Contemplative Outreach chapters and other groups
- Information about available Centering Prayer groups, in-person and online
- *Insights* from Hildegard of Bingen, Jacqui Lewis, W.E.B. DuBois, and Thomas Keating

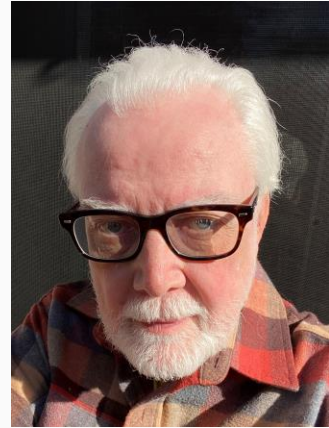
Please help us create the next edition of *Spirit Journal*. If you would like to send us something you've written or just explore an idea, please contact the newsletter editor at news@centeringprayerchicago.org. Your participation is always welcome!

We Enjoyed a Very Lively Fall Workshop!

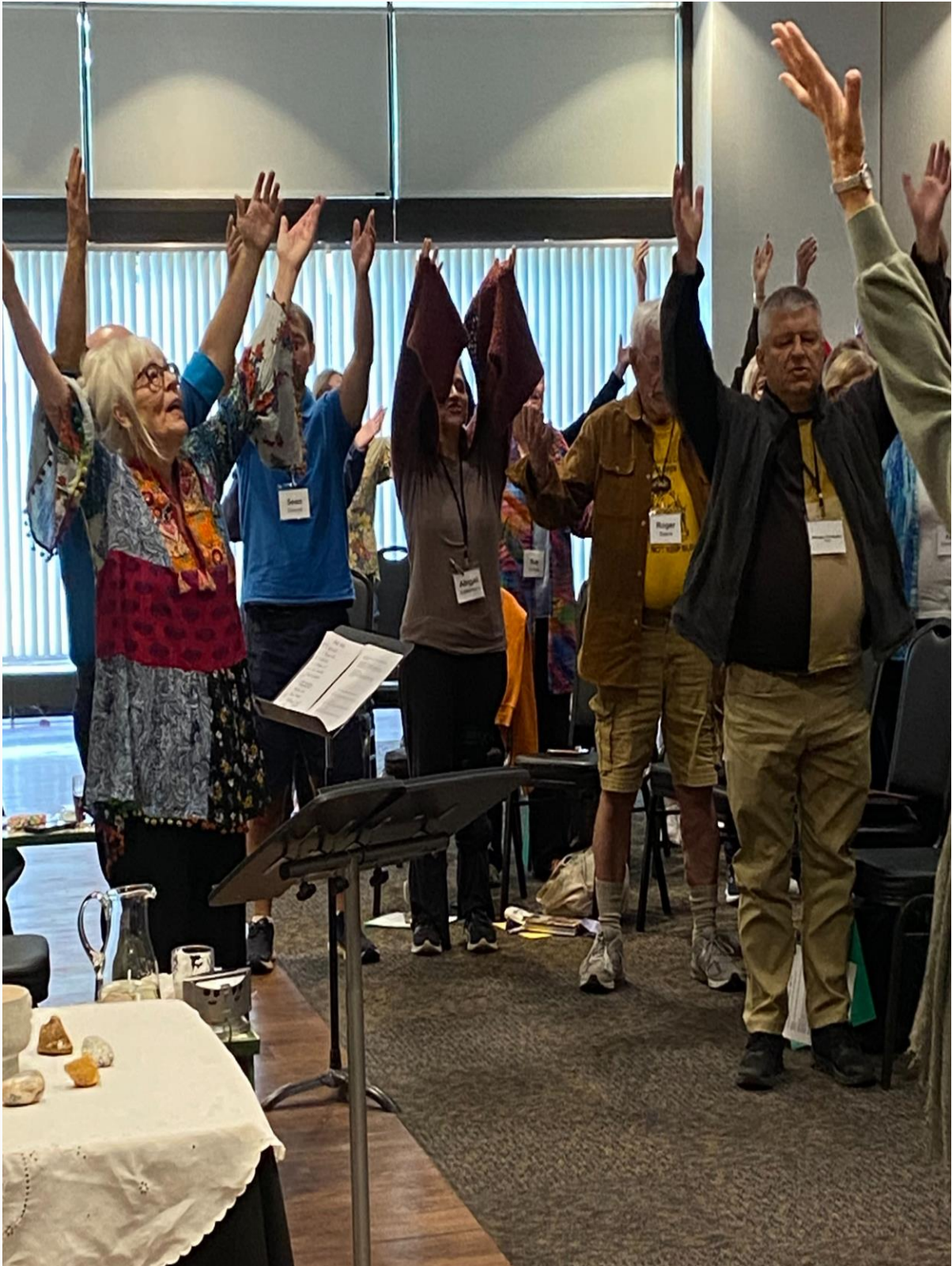
Up Next: Centering Prayer: A Path to Spiritual Connectedness, with Alan Krema

by Jack Lloyd

Summer has shifted into fall, and on September 16, after a three-year hiatus, Contemplative Outreach Chicago returned to our tradition of offering a one-day, in-person contemplative workshop each autumn. Even better, this year's event was in partnership with our friends at WCCM (World Community for Christian Meditation) at St. John of the Cross Church in Western Springs.



This year's workshop was especially lively. It featured [Susan Lincoln and Craig Toungate](#), who had the participants joyfully singing, moving, breathing and meditating, meanwhile teaching us a great deal about St. Hildegard of Bingen and the Aramaic Lord's Prayer. Even if you were not able to attend in person on the 16th, you may want to have a look at this great [list of reference materials](#) Susan and Craig provided. It was beyond wonderful to be back in community, sharing contemplation.



Up next, another exciting collaboration: In November, Alan Krema will be offering a new workshop we recommend very highly. It's a "practice-based prayer experience" entitled ***Centering Prayer: A Path to Spiritual Connectedness***.

Alan, who has developed this workshop to deepen our communal awareness and perception of the divine presence and action within, is someone we can all learn from. He's a facilitator of Centering Prayer groups, a retreat leader, a Wisdom guide, and a member of Contemplative Outreach Chicago since 2000, who has served on our leadership team for the past 10 years. Alan is also a Wisdom Waypoints facilitator and guide, and an alumnus of the Center for Action and Contemplation Living School, facilitating several of their online e-courses. He has recently completed the Shalem Institute's two-year program "Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups and Retreats."

We are very happy to be offering Alan's workshop jointly with the [Theosophical Society in America](#) at their headquarters in Wheaton, with the option of attending in person or watching online through a private YouTube link that will be shared with all registrants via email. This collaboration, like working with the WCCM on the fall workshop, is part of a conscious and growing effort on the part of Contemplative Outreach Chicago to team up with like-minded groups, broadening and adding diversity to our contemplative community.

See below for more information and a registration link for *Centering Prayer: A Path to Spiritual Connectedness*, and please consider participating.

***Centering Prayer:
A Path to Spiritual Connectedness
Saturday November 18 - In-Person in Wheaton or Online via
YouTube***

Join us for a practice-based prayer experience, presented in collaboration with the Theosophical Society in America. Participants will be invited to deeply listen to the

divine presence and action within as we explore Centering Prayer as a way to sense our relationship with God.

Alan Krema will share Jesus' practice of contemplative prayer and engage His invocation to "Love God with your whole being and love your neighbor as your Self." We will also discover Cynthia Bourgeault's teachings on three-centered awareness, and Fr. Thomas Keating's teachings on opening to the presence and action of God within us, both as individuals and as a community.



Finally, we will explore Centering Prayer as a communal prayer and source of compassionate embrace of societal issues, local and beyond. We will conclude by sharing a guided Centering Prayer meditation.

Date, time, and location: Saturday November 18, 1:00 - 3:00 PM Central, 1926 N. Main Street in Wheaton, IL or online via private YouTube link.

[More information and registration](#)

Two Autumn Events At Healing Gardens in St. Charles

Saturday, September 30

The Art of Frame Drumming: Rhythms for Meditation

Workshop participants will learn:

- A brief ‘her-story” of this ancient instrument
- How to play the five basic strokes in lap style, and how they are related to the elements
- How to write rhythms
- Embody basic rhythms in nature
- Create a drumming piece in relationship to the Healing Gardens

Frame drums will be provided. But if you have a native drum, you are welcome to bring it. Please bring notebook and comfortable clothes.

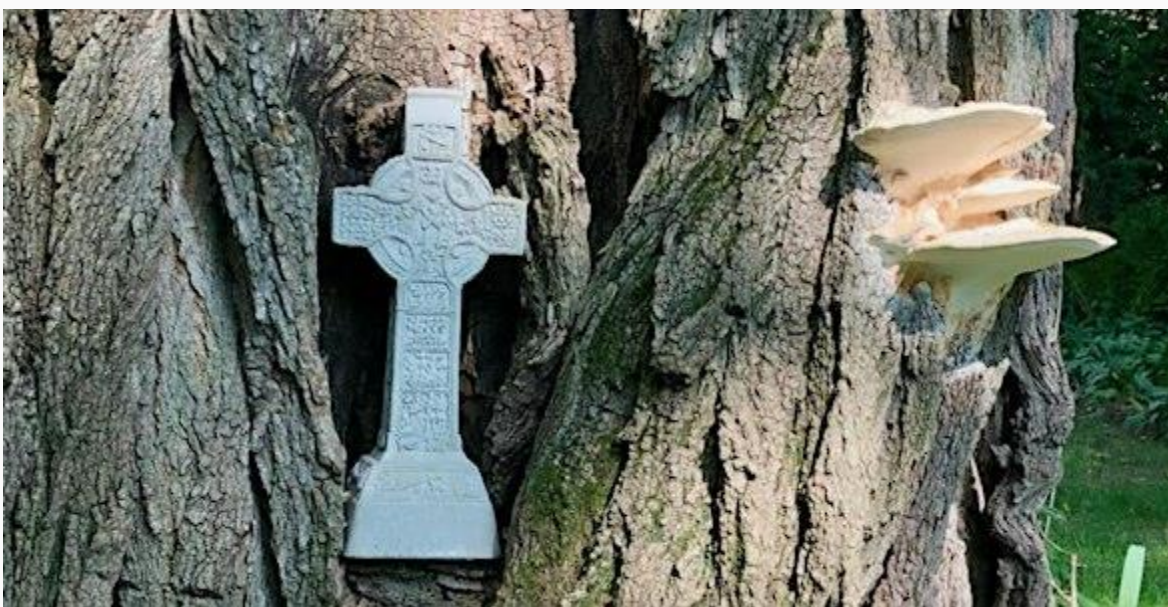
This workshop will be limited to 14 participants.

Presenter: Muriel Reymond is a musician, singer-songwriter, sound weaver. Her classical music education took place in France where she is originally from. Her drumming mentor is Marla Leigh, a talented American percussionist and Frame drum specialist. She also trained in Sound Healing with the voice and welcomes clients in her private practice in Saint Charles. She is passionate about empowering people to connect within through music.

Saturday, October 28

Introductory Centering Prayer Workshop





Introductory Centering Prayer workshops are held throughout the year at a variety of sites. The presenters are specially trained and commissioned in teaching this short course which covers the essentials of the practice and the history and conceptual background of Centering Prayer. If you are new to Centering Prayer or would like a more thorough grounding in the practice, please consider attending this workshop - it will be limited to 10 participants.

Presenter: Deborah Marqui, LCSW and owner of Healing Gardens at Stone Hill Farm, will teach the workshop. She is a commissioned presenter of Centering Prayer and has been practicing for more than 25 years. A cancer survivor, Deborah attributes her healing to the restorative power of nature and the simple prayer practice of Centering Prayer that keeps her centered and grounded in the present moment.

[More information about these and other events at Healing Gardens](#)

Additional Fall Events of Interest

***Silent Retreat: The Gifts of Darkness -
Oct. 6-8, Siena Retreat Center, Racine Wisconsin***



You are invited to a silent retreat on the shore of beautiful Lake Michigan at the Siena Retreat Center, Racine, Wisconsin.

The weekend retreat will explore a subject often avoided, embracing what may be the unique gifts to be found when encountering darkness. The retreat leaders are Shalem graduates Spencer Foon and Esther Simonson.

For more information, please contact emsimo61@gmail.co

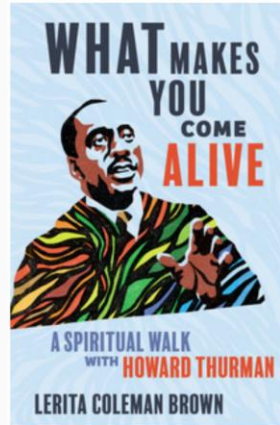
From Closer Than Breath, October 7, online

Howard Thurman & the Power of Silence, Stillness, & Solitude

This online contemplative mini-retreat will help participants tune in to what is most true and sacred, the contemplative heart needs stillness, slowness, silence and solitude. The retreat will explore the mystical development of the great

contemplative teacher, Howard Thurman, with a spotlight on the role of silence, stillness, and solitude in the spiritual life.

Presenter: Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown is a retreat leader, speaker, spiritual companion, and professor emerita of psychology at Agnes Scott College. With a BA from the University of California, Santa Cruz, a PhD from Harvard University, and a certificate from Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, Brown frequently speaks on



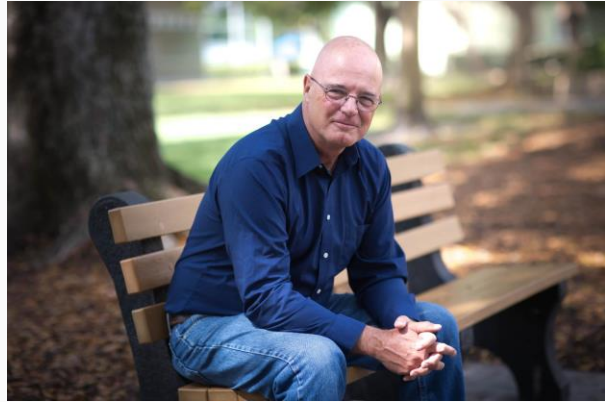
contemplative spirituality and Howard Thurman. Her second book, *What Makes You Come Alive—A Spiritual Walk with Howard Thurman* was recently released by Broadleaf Press. She has been featured in PBS documentaries about Howard Thurman and the Black church.

[More information and registration](#)

From Contemplative Outreach of Colorado, October 7, in-person or online
Fall Conference: Faith, Doubt and Contemplation: Being Contemplatives in a Dangerous Time

Institutional religion, much like many of our other institutions, is under stress, and that will seem like an understatement to many. Contemplative spirituality has provided a way for many of us to continue in faith even though our relationship to organized religion is troubled. How can those of us rooted in the contemplative tradition contribute constructively in this tense moment? How can we, from a position of personal centeredness, be salt and light in these times? How can we draw deep roots from our own Christian tradition while welcoming insights and seeking collaboration among traditions?

Presenter: Brian D. McLaren is an author, speaker, activist, and public theologian. A former college English teacher and pastor, he is a passionate advocate for “a new kind of Christianity” – just, generous, and working with people of all faiths for the common good. He is a core faculty member of [The Living School](#) and podcaster with [Learning How to See](#), which are part of the [Center for Action and Contemplation](#). He is also an Auburn Senior Fellow and is a co-host of [Southern Lights](#). His newest books are [Faith After Doubt](#) (January 2021), and [Do I Stay Christian?](#) (May 2022).



[More information and registration](#)

From Contemplative Outreach of Atlanta, October 11-15, online
Intensive/Post-Intensive 5-Day Retreat on Zoom

The Intensive portion of the two-track retreat will be inspired by Fr. Thomas Keating’s teachings on the Human Condition. This qualifies as the required retreat for those pursuing formation as commissioned presenters for Introduction to Centering Prayer Workshops. The Post-Intensive track will be inspired by David Frenette. Each full day offers Lectio Divina and three and a half hours of Centering Prayer. We look forward to welcoming and praying with you. There is a \$40 registration fee for this event. Scholarships are available.

[More information and registration](#)

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
- The Healing Gardens, Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina, last Friday of each month, 10:30am-11:30pm. Contact Deb Marqui at 630-740-2597 or deb@dmarqui.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 -

Even in a world that's being shipwrecked, remain brave and strong.

- Hildegard of Bingen

Let me talk a little bit about Ubuntu. What predates any of the world's religions is the origins of humankind in the cradle of civilization and this Zulu idea, this ancient idea, umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu. And that's Zulu for a human is human through other humans. We understood that our destinies were tied together.

- Jacqui Lewis

One thing alone I charge you. As you live, believe in life! Always human beings will live and progress to greater, broader and fuller life. The only possible death is to lose belief in this truth simply because the great end comes slowly, because time is long.

- W.E.B DuBois

Faith believes that whatever happens in the present moment is God's will, and the only thing God can will is what is for our greatest good. By letting go of our doubts and turning them over to God, the presence of God begins to grow even in the midst of activity and adversity.

- Thomas Keating

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.

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SOLIDARITY • SERVICE

Contemplative Outreach