

Spirit Journal - May 2024

Preview

In this issue, you'll find:

- A link to our first member survey in four years - please help us plan for the future
- Your invitation to this summer's Intensive/Post-Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat - next month at the Siena Retreat Center
- Information about WCCM's 2024 John Main Seminar, coming up in July
- Notice of a weekend retreat, "Abide," starting May 31
- A link to the 2024 Contemplative Events Calendar, which lists online and in-person events through December
- A "help-wanted" notice: Can you help us build an effective social media presence?
- A listing of in-person and online prayer groups you may wish to join
- May *Insights* from Maya Angelou, John Main, Thomas Keating, and James Baldwin

We encourage you to get more involved with Contemplative Outreach Chicago by helping to make *Spirit Journal* a lively interactive forum. 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.

Please Help Us Get to Know You Better

If you've already responded to our survey invitations, [thank you very much for your help!](#)

If not, please take a few moments now to participate in Contemplative Outreach Chicago's 2024 Member Survey. It takes only eight minutes to help us understand your interests and needs, so that we can develop programs and

services that meet them.

This is our first member survey since 2020. We've been using the ideas you provided then to guide our decisions ever since, but a lot has changed. Please share your insights!

[Go to survey.](#)



From Contemplative Outreach of Southeast Wisconsin

Two Track Retreat:

Intensive and Post Intensive

June 23-29

**Siena Retreat Center
Racine, Wisconsin**

Centering Prayer retreats immerse participants in the practice of Centering Prayer as taught by Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.

This two-track retreat will allow the participants to come together for Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina, and meal times. The retreat will provide an atmosphere of silence, solitude, and community. Persons new to long retreats (4+ days) are encouraged to choose the Intensive Track, which includes watching a daily video followed by discussion. Persons with experience in long retreats may choose the Post Intensive Track, which includes additional prayer periods.

The retreats take place at the lovely [Siena Retreat Center](#) on the shore of Lake Michigan in Racine, approximately 90 minutes from Chicago. These extended retreats are offered every summer, sponsored by our friends at CO Of Southeast Wisconsin in even-numbered years like this one and by CO Chicago in odd-numbered years.

Retreat Staff:

Ann Koerner, CSA, Commissioned presenter, Experienced Retreat Director, Masters-Christian Spirituality.

Christine Bender, Commissioned Presenter, Experienced Retreat Director, Interest in Wholistic Healing.

Carol Ann Meverden, Commissioned Presenter of 11th Step, Assisted with several retreats.

[More information and registration](#)

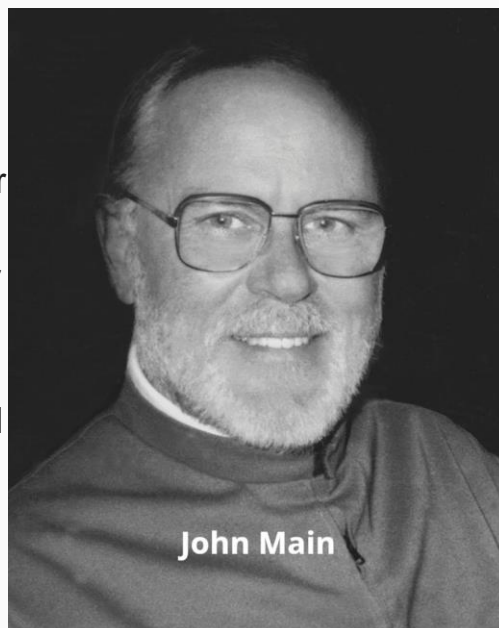
Please contact Ann Koerner if you have questions: 262-282-8622, akoerner45@gmail.com

From WCCM

The 2024 John Main Seminar: Widen Your Tent

In-person in New Harmony, Indiana or Online, July 8-13

There are two leading networks that bring together and support Christian contemplatives: Contemplative Outreach and the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM). WCCM's John Main Seminar has been an annual event since 1984, when it was established to honor the memory of John Main (1926-1982) and develop the influence of his teaching in new fields and dialogue with the modern world.



This year's John Main Seminar will be held in-person and virtually in New Harmony, Indiana, July 8-13. Each day will weave together silence, prayer, and meditation, with small groups and discussion.

Last September, our annual fall workshop was presented at St. John of the Cross in Western Springs in collaboration with our good friends, the WCCM-affiliated community that practices there. They have

extended to us the invitation to attend the John Main Seminar, which is open to all.

Presenters: Jason Gordon, Archbishop of Trinidad and Tobago, and Laurence Freeman, monk and teacher, Director of WCCM.

[More information and registration](#)

From Siena Retreat Center

Abide: A Weekend Retreat

In-person in Racine, Wisconsin, May 31-June 2

Retreat participants are invited to linger in the blooming days of spring to:

- Pay **A**ttention to what is happening within us and around us.
- Drink in the **B**eauty that is always present in our lives and our world.
- Imagine more peaceful and just ways of being.
- **D**eepen our connection to self, others. and Spirit (however you name this great mystery.)
- **E**nergize ourselves to be a more loving presence for ourselves and others.

This contemplative retreat includes guided meditation, individual reflection, small and large group discussion, creative expression, and more.

Presenter: Bridget Purdome is a Spiritual Director, Retreat Leader, Life Coach, and Educator who is sensitive to the movement of the Spirit in the very ordinary experiences of daily life. For over ten years, Bridget ministered to those experiencing homelessness, HIV/AIDS, substance addictions and other mental illness.

[More information and registration](#)

The 2024 Contemplative Events Calendar

To learn about more upcoming workshops and retreats, download and peruse this recently updated [annual calendar](#). It provides a comprehensive listing of in-person and online programs we're currently aware of - now through December. *Special note:* The Living Flame 2 program is being offered online starting on September 7.

Volunteer Opportunity: Social Media Volunteer Needed!

As you may know, volunteers do 100 percent of the work that keeps Contemplative Outreach Chicago going. Our dedicated volunteers have many talents, but there's one gap that's pretty glaring: We don't have anyone to take on the role of creating and growing our social media presence. This diminishes our ability to share our message with the broadest possible cross-section of folks who might be interested in Centering Prayer and other contemplative practices, and might benefit greatly.

If you have some social media talent and skill and can devote a few hours a month to getting the word out about our programs, please contact the editor at news@centeringprayerchicago.org to discuss this opportunity. Thank you for considering helping out in this way!

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:

- *New* - Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina every Thursday, 9:30-10:15am. Contact Bob Gorman at rbrtgorman@protonmail.com
- 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, Katiairel@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

We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.

- Maya Angelou

That is the conviction we must come to in our meditation, that the darkness cannot quench the light.

- John Main

The basic disposition in the spiritual journey is the capacity to accept all reality; God, ourselves, other people, and all creation as they are.

- Thomas Keating

If the concept of God has any validity or any use, it can only be to make us larger, freer, and more loving.

- James Baldwin

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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