

Spirit Journal - November 2024

Preview

Welcome to our November issue, which includes:

- A note of gratitude for the Annual Fall Workshop that took place on November 2, and for the coming of Advent
- Our first announcement and an early bird registration link for the Black Contemplative Prayer Summit, coming in February
- Short descriptions of other contemplative events and activities you may choose to engage with this winter
- An opportunity to learn about a weekly online gathering of young contemplatives
- A video recommendation from our friends at ITMS
- A link to the 2024 Contemplative Events Calendar, which lists online and in-person events through September 2025
- A listing of in-person and online prayer groups you may wish to join
- Thanksgiving *Insights* from Thomas Keating, Simone Weil, Howard Thurman, and David Steindl-Rast

It's your participation that makes *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.

Giving Thanks; the Approach of Advent; and an Early Bird Special!

by Jack Lloyd

We are truly grateful to all who worked on and participated in Contemplative Outreach Chicago's 2024 Annual Fall One-Day Workshop on November 2. This includes especially Alan Krema, Carl McColman, and the Theosophical Society in America!

Alan brought great insight to leading our in-person morning meditation, which was held in the lovely and inspiring chapel at St. Leonard's Ministries in Chicago. His theme was the importance of contemplation in community. Carl's online afternoon session was a deep inter-spiritual reflection, showing us how contemplative practices from several faith traditions are in harmony, and how they point to one ineffable spiritual reality. Our friends

at the Theosophical Society in America, which is based in Wheaton, were great collaborators, co-hosting the entire event. Over the past couple of years, we have presented several events with TSA, and we look forward to continuing this valuable relationship.

Another thing that inspires gratitude at this moment, of course, is the approach of Thanksgiving and then Advent, with its anticipation of Jesus' life and ministry. May Thanksgiving be a reminder of God's grace, and may Advent help us remember Jesus' great teachings of hope, love, joy, and peace.

One more thing: As you start to make plans for the start of 2025, please consider joining us for the Black Contemplative Prayer Summit coming up in February – [an Early Bird Discount is available through December 15.](#)

Contemplative Outreach Chicago is co-sponsoring this first-of-its-kind event in collaboration with Awakenings, a burgeoning contemplative community based in Houston, Texas. The summit is open to everyone who wants to participate. It will bring together Black spiritual teachers and thought leaders to lead a powerful and enriching dialogue on prayer and practice. Please see below for more information and a registration link.

Thank you for being a member and supporter of Contemplative Outreach Chicago. We are always thankful for *you*!



BLACK CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER SUMMIT

FEBRUARY 22-23, 2025

JOIN US FOR A TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE AT THE FIRST BLACK CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER VIRTUAL SUMMIT, WHERE WE BRING TOGETHER BLACK SPIRITUAL TEACHERS AND THOUGHT LEADERS TO LEAD A POWERFUL AND ENRICHING DIALOGUE ON PRAYER AND PRACTICE. THIS SUMMIT IS DESIGNED FOR EVERYONE, LED BY BLACK VOICES, AND AIMED AT DIVERSIFYING THE CONTEMPLATIVE SPACE.



The summit will be hosted by Pastor Tia Norman, friend of Contemplative Outreach and Centering Prayer Facilitator. Acclaimed author Cole Arthur Reilly will be the keynote speaker.

Eight additional speakers include Colleen Thomas, Diversity Director for Contemplative Outreach, and our good friend Chicago-based musician and theologian Julian Davis Reid.

In contemplative community, diversity is essential. By providing a platform for Black contemplative speakers and teachers, this first of its kind summit will center Black voices offering the wider contemplative community language and tools that may help in our efforts to include, invite and diversify the conversation on spiritual growth, transformation and practice.

[More information and registration](#)

Discounted early bird registration is available through December 15th.

Additional Upcoming Contemplative Events That May Be Of Interest

From the International Thomas Merton Society

Merton's Advent Tidings of Great Joy

Online - December 10

This special Advent presentation is part of ITMS's ongoing and very worthwhile online series, *Tuesdays with Merton*. Iconographer Fr. Bill McNichols and theologian Christopher Pramuk will reflect on the power of sacred art to quicken the hope of Advent in our hearts, and to bring the creativity and courage of love into “this demented inn,” where Christ “has come uninvited.” Their book together, *All My Eyes See: The Artistic Vocation of Fr. William Hart McNichols*, has been described as “incandescent,” an “intimate conversation between two soul friends,” which “contributes to the awakening of the world.”

[More information and registration](#)

From Contemplative Outreach of Southeast Wisconsin

The Heavens are Telling -

The Spirituality of the Universe Story

December 12-15 Siena Retreat Center - Racine Wisconsin

Today the on-going development of scientific understandings of the origins of the universe are deeply shaping spirituality. The Universe, or New Story moves us, among other things, from a fall-redemption spirituality to a creation-centered, evolutionary one, and from an adolescent spirituality to an adult one.

Come aside for this retreat to look deeply into this new chapter in the evolution of spirituality, and reflect on its implications for ourselves, our faith traditions, and the world.

Presenter. Jim Gill holds a master's degree from the Institute in Creation Centered Spirituality at Mundelein College in Chicago and trained as a spiritual guide through Siena Retreat Center's Spiritual Guidance Training Program. He ministered in Milwaukee area parishes for over three decades in Adult, Family and Child formation.

[More information and registration](#)

From Siena Retreat Center - Two Retreats

In the Flow

Tuesdays, January 14 and 21, via Zoom

In the flow of life, the image of a river calls us to dip in a toe, swim, or even float. How might we move from fear to trust? How might we let go of the illusion of control and surrender to the great mysterious flow of peace and love?

This two-part Zoom series will include facilitator reflections, guided meditation, self-reflection, small and large group discussion, and more.

[More information and registration.](#)

Move Over, St. Patrick: St. Brigid's in the House!

Saturday, February 1, In-Person

Who is this woman who has a bank holiday in Ireland, a mural in Kildare, Ireland, and pilgrims flocking to connect with her? During this day of reflection, we will explore Brigid's example of caring for earth, promoting peace, showing compassion and justice, demonstrating hospitality, and engaging in contemplation. We will reflect on what Brigid has to say to us today. The day will include facilitator reflections, contemplative practices, time for self-reflection, and small and large group discussion.

[More information and registration.](#)

Presenter for Both of These Programs: 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.



The Spiritual Journey Series



Join us!

Saturdays | 10:30am/EDT | begins July 13

a weekly online gathering
for young contemplatives (under 50)

For more information use the QR code above or [click here](#).

A Recommended Video

Thanks to Michael Brennan at the International Thomas Merton Society for this tip: The

2024 Thomas Merton Lecture at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, featured Fr. Bryan Massingale discussing *Courageous Hope in Precarious Times*. The lecture was held November 12th and is [now available on YouTube](#). Highly recommended!

The 2024 Contemplative Events Calendar

To learn about more upcoming workshops and retreats, download and use this recently updated [annual calendar](#). It provides a comprehensive listing of in-person and online programs we're currently aware of - now through December 2025. (Thanks to volunteer extraordinaire Charles Welsh for compiling all of this information!)

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
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- 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 -

*I met him but I do not
know his name.
In gratitude, tears fall.*

— Thomas Keating

Love of God is pure when joy and suffering inspire an equal degree of gratitude.

- Simone Weil

*Today, I make my Sacrament of Thanksgiving.
I begin with the simple things of my days:
Fresh air to breathe,
Cool water to drink,
The taste of food,
The protection of houses and clothes,
The comforts of home.
For all these I make an act of Thanksgiving this day!*

- Howard Thurman

The root of joy is gratefulness...It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful.

- David Steindl-Rast

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.



