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*Thin Places*, an ecumenical sampler of events and resources for spiritual growth, with a particular interest in the contemplative spiritual journey, is published by the Spiritual Life Community of Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Look for *Thin Places* at:  
[thinplaces.us](http://thinplaces.us) or  
[westminstermpls.org/publications](http://westminstermpls.org/publications)



Westminster Presbyterian Church  
1200 Marquette Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-2419  
612.332.3421  
[westminstermpls.org](http://westminstermpls.org)

## Wild Rumpus . . .

by *The Very Rev. Paul J. Lebens-Englund*

*And a voice came from heaven,  
'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'  
And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.  
He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan;  
and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.*

Mark 1:11-13

I'm risk-averse. There, I said it.

I don't like uncertainty. I don't like disorder. I don't like vulnerability.

I prefer neat, predictable, safe environments and, to be honest, the rigid paradigm that comes from life within them – a life I'd readily describe as reasonable and responsible – a life scripture might categorize as 'city life,' or somewhat more pejoratively, 'captivity.' And I'm fine with that: I'm fine choosing my 'captivity.' So, you can imagine my chagrin when, in the summer of 2014, the Spirit drove me from my carefully-curated 'captivity' in Washington State to the wilds of Minnesota.

Having, by then, come to the ten-year point of my career, and of my family's life in Spokane, we'd found a sense of rhythm, balance, and support – a deep sense of 'rootedness' in a place we'd finally committed to as 'home.'

So, we entered the call process with what biblical scholars refer to as a 'hermeneutic of suspicion,' a set of lenses finely-tuned to detect fallacy and fault. We had a checklist of non-negotiables, all of which were met or exceeded. Erica and the boys were honored and cared for: check. The community was progressive and evolving: check. The bike paths were flat: check. The Cathedral community was warm, gracious, and hopeful: check. The challenges were interesting, and my gifts fit the needs: check. Four seasons: check. Great food and beer: check.

Waiting at MSP to board our return flight, Erica and I could only laugh a nervous laugh, newly aware there may be a call here – a push to do something we'd never imagined nor sought – a disruption to our carefully-curated 'captivity.'

Scripture says, time and again, that it's not just the bad stuff that keeps us stuck, but sometimes the good stuff, as well – and we had an over-abundance of 'good' in Spokane. Like those who found comfort in 'captivity' before us, it was the up-side of our love for the place that led us to imagine that that same love might never be found elsewhere – might never, like the pillar of flame, precede us or follow us. Over time,

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the pattern and practice of life in that place shaped a paradigm of that place, which, put most simply, was this: 'life is here, not there.'

While God must no doubt delight in this depth of commitment to a place, it's clear God seeks breadth for us, as well, if for no other reason than to push against the limits of our horizons and the ease of our prejudices. Time spent in the wilderness makes real for us God's loving provision of both comfort and challenge – of food and drink for the body, and demons, beasts, and angels for the soul. Time in the wilderness reminds us that we are citizens not of any particular place or people, but of all places and of all people – we are citizens not just of 'here,' but also of 'there.'

God clearly knows this is an uphill battle, so the Lenten story comes 'round annually – the story of our being not from a place or people, but from the dust, like everyone, in every place.

Lent is God's annual push into the wilderness – to the far margins of our faith's capacity to see and recognize God's loving provision beyond our own limited imaginations – to see not only ourselves anew, but to see the world anew, as well – to better see every place and every people shot through with the glory of God.

Lent is God's annual reminder that wherever and with whomever we find ourselves, God is there – has been there AND will be there long after we move on again. The season reminds us that the vocation of 'The Beloved' is revealed not in safety and security, but in risk and vulnerability – the prerequisites of any meaningful transformation God may be seeking to affect in us and the world around us. It has something to do with becoming more flexible, . . . more discerning, . . . more adventurous, . . . more expectant, . . . more joyful, . . . more certain that God is present and active where we may least expect it.

### Contact Us

Do you know of anyone—it's free to all who ask—who would like to receive this ecumenical newsletter?

Do you know of an up-coming *Opportunity* that might be of interest to others?

If "Yes," please contact Kristin Kieft at:  
**news@wpc-mpls.org** or 612.332.3421.

If you have other questions or comments, please contact us at: **thinplaces\_us@msn.com**

So, we find ourselves, now, three years later: 'Minnesotans.' We've taken on the 'flesh' of the place, including the heights of its delight and the depths of its despair. We're fully invested and setting roots, finding meaning, joy, and nourishment in the life we've found here. Yet we're conscious that we're 'home' in an altogether different way this time: clear that we needn't disparage any other place to affirm this one, that we needn't doubt God's presence elsewhere in order to affirm God's presence here, clearly we needn't say 'no' to what's next in order to say 'yes' to what's now. And there's great levity in this, what Scripture calls 'freedom in obedience.'

Wander with me, then, again, to the city's edge – to the limits of our own self-assurance and self-assessment – and see if we can't find there something new to be harvested for the year ahead. And as the demons praise our self-interest and bid us turn back, be mindful the beasts who live solely by the grace of God and the angels who assure us we can do likewise.

*To be a saint means to pass through the world  
gathering fruits for heaven from every tree  
and reaping God's glory in every field.*

Thomas Merton, *Seasons of Celebration*

*Paul Lebens-Englund is a son, a brother, a husband, a dad, an uncle, an Episcopal priest, and the Dean of Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral in Minneapolis. In his free time, he runs and bikes and drinks good beer. He may be reached at: paulle@ourcathedral.org.*

## Ongoing Opportunities

**[There seems to be an unusually rich variety of Ongoing and One-Time Opportunities this time:]**

### City House . . . an opportunity for listening

City House opened its metaphoric doors in 2000. In reality, though, City House is not a place but an independent non-profit based in the Twin Cities that focuses on spiritual listening **with people in our community who are generally unseen and unheard.**

We are motivated by faith to be *fully present* with people who are experiencing difficult times. We were formed and are grounded in the Christian tradition, but we welcome everyone, no matter what they believe.

Spiritual listening is practiced in a compassionate and non-judgmental way. It is not counseling or fixing. Spiritual listeners strive to help others see how they are connecting to their inner strength, wisdom, and peace, however they choose to name those things.

City House defines spirituality as whatever gives your life meaning. It is the wisdom within you. Volunteers listen to what is on and in your heart, listen to stories

of the heart, listen to who you are.

Many of our listeners are trained spiritual directors; others are not. We offer training either way, so that all volunteers are trained listeners. We seek a diverse body of people . . . to reach a diverse body of people.

We are seeking new volunteers to fill roles across the Twin Cities at our partner agencies. Our partners serve people experiencing homelessness, poverty, addiction, incarceration, and more. We come along side our partners, offering spiritual listening as complementary to what they are already doing. Some of our partners include: Harriet Tubman, Avivo, Youthlink, the Basilica of St. Mary, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, and the Union Gospel Mission.

Our next **Pilgrimage Day** will be a day-long urban exploration experience. We will learn, reflect, connect, and explore some of the places people go to in the city:

**Friday, March 2, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**

For more information about this and other up-coming opportunities, please go to [www.cityhouse.org](http://www.cityhouse.org).

Spiritual listening is more important now, than ever, especially with our neighbors who are experiencing difficult times.

If you are interested in learning more about or in **becoming a spiritual listener with City House**, please contact Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer [rolf@city-house.org](mailto:rolf@city-house.org) or Rena Turnham [rena@city-house.org](mailto:rena@city-house.org).

### **Soup & Sabbath: Reflections for Lent**

These annual gatherings continue. This year we will read and reflect on the meaning of RENEWAL and how we welcome it:

**Mondays of Lent, through March 26, Simple Soup, 6:30 p.m., Prayer and Reflection, 7:00-8:00 p.m.**

**“Letting go is never easy. . . .**

The desire to have, to hold, to possess  
and to control is part of our nature.

**But a more powerful part**

yearns to learn the lesson of growth and openness,  
to enter the mystery  
of secret loving without desiring,  
to live in emptiness and stillness and therefore  
in a state of receptivity and readiness . . .

so that the quality of our being  
and of ‘our being present to’  
are all that matter.”

Daniel O’Leary, *Year of the Heart: a Spirituality for Lovers*

### **Sabbath House, 3228 Portland Ave. So., Minneapolis**

For information or registration: 612.822.2623.

### **Taizé Prayer at the Basilica**

This is a contemplative prayer experience, centered on the singing of simple, mantra-like songs. Through the slow, repetitive singing of words from Scripture, we encounter the presence of God in profound ways.

A priest is also available in an adjacent room to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation if desired:

**Three Tuesdays, 5:30-6:15 p.m.:**

- **March 27, in the Teresa of Calcutta Hall**

- **April 9 & May 8, in the St Joseph Chapel**

**The Basilica of St. Mary, in the Saint Joseph Chapel**

**88 North 17th Street, Minneapolis**

For information or registration: 612.333.1381 or [www.mary.org](http://www.mary.org).

### **The Clearing: Weekly Contemplative Worship**

With its leafy-canopy-and-quiet-woods-ambience, Westminster Hall in our new building seems the perfect setting for contemplative worship services that aim to silence the noise of the world for a time . . . to clear our minds and hearts of the clutter of life today . . . and to allow us to center ourselves on the love of God.

The Clearing will feature sung prayer in the Taizé and Celtic traditions, candlelight, and silence. Following worship, we will enjoy tea and scones together:

**Every Wednesday, through May, 6:30-7:15 p.m.**

**Westminster Presbyterian Church**

**1200 Marquette Avenue Minneapolis**

For information: 612.322.3421 or [www.westminsternpls.org](http://www.westminsternpls.org) or [jteliczan@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:jteliczan@wpc-mpls.org).

### **Minnesota’s own Taizé Cross**

Worshippers at Friday Evening Prayer each week at the Taizé Community in France gather around a five-foot-tall painted wooden Cross, created by the Community’s resident artist, Br. Eric, in the 1980’s. Since the Cross was to be used weekly, Br. Eric made a second, duplicate Cross as a back-up; it was never used; and came here after the Brothers’ eleven-day Pilgrimage of Trust in Minnesota.

This **Taizé Cross** will often be used at The Clearing contemplative services at Westminster, but **it is equally available to any church or group** throughout Minnesota that would like to have it at their service.

For more information and a sign-out sheet, go to [www.westminsternpls.org](http://www.westminsternpls.org), click on the search symbol, and enter “Taize Cross”—or contact Dr. Rodney Allen Schwartz at [rschwartz@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:rschwartz@wpc-mpls.org) or 612.332.3421.

## Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina

At our next gathering on March 1, we will pray with Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina followed by a presentation by Dick Young on, “Four Moments of Awareness in Centering Prayer”:

**Four Thursdays: March 1 and 15, April 5 and 19,  
7:00-8:30 p.m., in the Hearth Room**

**Colonial Church of Edina, 6200 Colonial Way, Edina**

For information or registration: 952.926.2711 or [www.colonialchurch.org](http://www.colonialchurch.org) or [cjoanne1@comcast.net](mailto:cjoanne1@comcast.net).

## Taizé Evening Prayer

Christians from all traditions [fifty when recently revisited] gather for this special prayer service. This moving form of prayer centers around sung psalms and periods of holy silence. All are truly welcome:

**First Fridays (except July), 7:30-8:15 p.m.**

**St. Richard’s Catholic Church, in the Chapel**

**7540 Penn Ave. South, Richfield**

For information about our Taizé Prayer or other upcoming opportunities: 612.869.2426 or [www.strichards.com](http://www.strichards.com) or [cnedved@strichards.com](mailto:cnedved@strichards.com).

## One-Time Opportunities

### The Welcoming Prayer

The Welcoming Prayer is a simple and practical way to let go of the afflictive emotions that arise regularly. This is a discipline for daily life which originated through Centering Prayer, as a supplemental practice during active times.

Join us as we learn through practice this way of being present to reality by being free from the painful narratives that frequently hold us captive:

**Two Thursdays, March 1 and 8, 6:30-8:00 p.m.**

also:

### World Labyrinth Day Bus Tour

#### “This much I have learned:

Within the sorrow there is grace.  
When we come close to the things  
that break us down, we touch  
those things that also break us open.

When we have told our story,  
we can leave the story behind.  
What remains is hidden wholeness,  
alive and unbroken.”

Wayne Muller, *How Then Shall We Live*

Home to over 100 public labyrinths, the Twin Cities is a mecca. Spend a delightful day experiencing a variety of labyrinth designs and settings, including cathedral, park and school locations.

Join labyrinth enthusiasts around the world in walking and celebrating World Labyrinth Day:

**Saturday, May 5, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.**

**Wisdom Ways Center for Spirituality**

**Carondelet Center, 1890 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul**

For information about these and many other upcoming opportunities—like **Men’s Spirituality: On the Threshold of Transformation** (Wednesdays, May 2, 9, and 16, 7:30—9:00 a.m.): [www.wisdomwayscenter.org](http://www.wisdomwayscenter.org) or 651.696.2788 or [rdobias@wisdomwayscenter.org](mailto:rdobias@wisdomwayscenter.org).

### Meditation in Action: Three Interfaith Workshops

All are invited to explore the meditative calm of three world class practices and three local congregations. The first one has happened but is noticed for completeness:

#### Adath Jeshurun Congregation

10500 Hillside Lane West, Minnetonka

The first session of this three- part workshop is located 15 minutes west of downtown Minneapolis. Hazzan Joanna Dulkan will present and teach about Jewish mindfulness meditation. **February 11, 2:00-4:00 p.m.**

#### Minnesota Zen Center

3343 East Calhoun Parkway, Minneapolis

The second session will be led by Dr. Tim Burkett, who will explain the key features of Buddhist meditation, and help participants experiment with practices which form the core of Zen. **March 4, 2:00-4:00 p.m.**

#### Plymouth Congregational Church

1900 Nicollet Avenue South, Minneapolis

The third session will be facilitated by Diane Boruff, commissioned presenter of Centering Prayer and member of MN Contemplative Leadership team. She will present and lead participants through Christian meditation history and practice. The April session will conclude with an interfaith discussion among participants and leaders. **April 8, 2:00-4:00 p.m.**

Questions about these workshops? Call 612-871-7400  
For information about other upcoming opportunities:  
at Plymouth Congregational Church: 612.871.7400 or [www.plymouth.org/learning/spiritual.php](http://www.plymouth.org/learning/spiritual.php)  
or [churchinfo@plymouth.org](mailto:churchinfo@plymouth.org).

### Contemplative Outreach’s:

#### 26th Annual United in Prayer Day

This annual worldwide day of prayer includes locally-hosted group retreats [listed below], a 24-hour Prayer Vigil, and suggested schedules for individual, in-home

retreats for those who will not be able to join a group:  
**Saturday, March 17**, with three area groups:

**Rochester Covenant Church**, 4950 31st Avenue NW, Rochester, **9:00 to 11:45 a.m.**, refreshments, contact: Dave Jorgenson (fotodavret10@gmail.com), please e-mail RSVP by Thursday, March 15

**Salem Lutheran Church**, 11 West Bernard Street, West St. Paul, **9:15 Registration, Prayer 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**, lunch served at noon, contact: Kathleen Lindstrom (klindstrom@usfamily.net), please e-mail RSVP by Thursday, March 15

**Church of the Risen Savior**  
1501 E. County Road 42, Burnsville, **1:00 - 3:00 p.m.**, contact: Scott Brazil (Scott.Brazil@risensavior.org), please e-mail RSVP by Thursday, March 15  
For additional information:  
info@minnesotacontemplativeoutreach.org or  
www.minnesotacontemplativeoutreach.org.

### **Focusing: An Inner Journey to Healing and Wisdom**

How can we learn to be present to our body? How can we listen to its wisdom? Focusing teaches us to become aware of how our body communicates with us through sensations, images, words, and/or sounds.

Nurturing this relationship can be insightful and healing. Participants will be introduced to Focusing and being the process of learning how to listen and nurture a relationship with their body:

**Tuesday, March 20, 9:30-11:30 a.m.**

### **Sacred Ground Center for Spirituality**

**Carondelet Center, 1890 Randolph, St. Paul**

For information or registration for this or other upcoming opportunities: [www.sacredgroundspirit.org](http://www.sacredgroundspirit.org) or 651.696.2798 or [info@sacredgroundspirit.org](mailto:info@sacredgroundspirit.org).

### **Sacred Space: A special Holy Week experience**

You are invited to experience a 45-minute guided contemplative walk, on a contemporary labyrinth.

When you arrive at Grace-Trinity, you'll be given a portable audio player to use during your time in Sacred Space (much like a museum tour). As you move through the Walk, each station will offer a meditative practice or prayer, with time to reflect. Along the way, you will have opportunities to reflect on your life, relationships, the world, and God's love. There's no need to sign up in advance, and all are welcome!

With its personal audio device, Sacred Space may be especially helpful for those who have never walked a labyrinth. Just bring yourself . . . and be gently guided into a quiet, meditative experience:

**Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday, March 26-27-28**  
**4:00-9:00 p.m. (with evening snacks, 5:30-7:30 p.m.)**

### **Grace-Trinity Community Church**

**1430 West 28th Street, Minneapolis**

Info: 612.872.8266 or [www.gracetrinitychurch.org](http://www.gracetrinitychurch.org)  
or [daniel@gracetrinitychurch.org](mailto:daniel@gracetrinitychurch.org).

### **The Sacred Triduum**

The Sacred Triduum celebrates the most solemn days of the liturgical year: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, leading to the Easter Vigil. This retreat will offer introductory sessions to prepare for the liturgies. Participants will then be invited to join the monastic community for the celebration:

**Thursday, March 29, at 3:00 p.m.-**

**Sunday, April 1, at 1:00 p.m.**

### The Welcoming Prayer

Many of us sometimes or often react rather than respond to the happenings of our daily lives, almost immediately beginning to think or feel "this is good" or "this is bad" (especially "this is bad") when something happens.

The Welcoming Prayer is the practice of seeking to experience each experience . . . without immediately trying to evaluate and label and isolate and control it.

The Welcoming Prayer is—especially when unwelcome experiences come—seeking to be present to the present.

For a deeper understanding, one might allow thirteenth century Sufi poet Rumi's words to settle in:

*This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.*

*Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows, . . .  
each may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.*

*. . . Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.*

from "The Guest House"

And, . . . one might also take part in the **Wisdom Way's workshop, "The Welcoming Prayer,"** conveniently noted to the left, on page 4.

**Spirituality Center, Saint Benedict's Monastery**  
**104 Chapel Lane, St. Joseph, MN**

For information or registration for these and other up-coming opportunities—like two sessions of the Benedictine Spirituality, **Reading with God; *Lectio Divina*** (March 11-3), **Praying the Psalms** (March 17) and **How Can We Be People of Peace in a Troubled World?** (April 6-7): 320.363.7112 or [www.sbm.osb.org](http://www.sbm.osb.org) or [mholicky@csbsju.edu](mailto:mholicky@csbsju.edu) or [eantony@csbsju.edu](mailto:eantony@csbsju.edu).

**Celebrate 40 Years of ARC!**

**Save the dates:**

**ARC All Community Reunion, September 7-8**  
**40th Anniversary Celebration, October (tba)**

But until then, consider:

**Graceful Renewal in Community:**

**A Silent Spring Retreat**

The beginning of Spring comes with the smell of new life and brings with it new energy. But how do we transition into it with grace? How do we honor who we've been and the Winter that has made it possible for us to journey inward? Join the ARC Community to explore these questions and many more in silence.

Many have said that what makes this different than other silent retreats that they have experienced is the welcoming and the interaction with the Community itself. The idea of "Graceful Renewal in Community" is to see and let yourself be seen through the beauty and discomfort of your unfolding while having—for those

**The Gift of Contemplative Prayer**

"Prayer is not primarily saying words  
or thinking thoughts.  
It is, rather, a stance.

It is a way of living in the Presence,  
Living in awareness of the Presence,  
And even of enjoying the Presence.

The full contemplative is not  
just aware of the Presence,  
but trusts, allows, and delights in it.

All spiritual disciplines have one purpose:  
To get rid of illusions so we can be present.  
These disciplines exist so that we can  
see what is,  
see who we are,  
and see what is happening"

Richard Rohr, *Everything Matters*

who wish it—the opportunity to reflect on your contemplations over meals with members of the Community and other retreatants. All are welcome: **Friday, March 30, at 11:00 a.m.-Sun., April 1, at noon ARC Retreat Community, Stanchfield, MN**

For information or registration for this or other up-coming opportunities—like **Artist in Residence** (May 6-9): 763.689.3540 or [www.ARCretreat.org](http://www.ARCretreat.org) or [retreat@arcetreat.org](mailto:retreat@arcetreat.org).

**Faiths Finding Faith in Each Other**

Join in this weekend retreat with the acclaimed spiritual teacher **John Philip Newell** at Ghost Ranch in the high desert of New Mexico.

The great spiritual traditions of humanity are given to complete one another, not to compete with one another. They each hold unique treasure, to be honored distinctly, and in true relationship, they are even stronger and deeper. This is the way of love.

Our weekend retreat will celebrate the wisdom of prophetic teachers from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The time together will consist of prayer at the rising and setting of the sun in the courtyard of Casa del Sol, teaching and spiritual practice in the mornings and evenings, and in the afternoon here will be rest and reflection and opportunities for hiking:

**Friday, April 6, with supper-Sunday, April 8, after lunch Ghost Ranch, Abiquiu, NM**

**Casa del Sol at Ghost Ranch, Abiquiu, NM**

For information or registration for these or other up-coming opportunities: [www.ghost ranch.org/retreat](http://www.ghost ranch.org/retreat) or 505.685.1001 or [registrar@ghost ranch.org](mailto:registrar@ghost ranch.org).

**Christos Center for Spiritual Formation introduces Vicki Howard as the new Senior Director of both the Twin Cities and Chicago Centers**

Meet Vicki Howard through a Welcoming Interview at: [www.christoscenter.org/christos-introduces-vicki-howard](http://www.christoscenter.org/christos-introduces-vicki-howard).

And while on the web-site, consider:

**An Enneagram Panel Series**

The Enneagram is a powerful tool to help each of us understand our hinderance and open ourselves to God's love. Whether you are new to the Enneagram or continuing to learn about it, these panels will offer unique insights and stories into each Enneagram style.

Drawing on the wisdom and experience of our panelists we will explore three Enneagram styles each Saturday morning. From their own experience, we will hear each panelist describe their style and how knowing the Enneagram has nurtured their spiritual journey.

Attend three mornings or just those that work for you:

**Three Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. to noon**

- **April 7: Enneagram styles 3, 7 and 8**
- **April 14: Enneagram styles 4, 5, and 9**
- **April 21 - Enneagram styles 1, 2, and 6**

**Christos Center for Spiritual Formation**  
**1212 Holly Drive, Lino Lakes, MN**

For information about this and other up-coming opportunities in the Twin Cities—like **Contemplative Pause, with Christos’ Founder, Joann Nesser** (Wednesdays, 9:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.), and **Journaling Workshop** (May 12): [info@christoscenter.org](mailto:info@christoscenter.org) or 651.653.8207 or [www.christoscenter.org](http://www.christoscenter.org).  
 For Opportunities in the Chicago area: 847.533.1265 or [becky.serpe@christoscenter.org](mailto:becky.serpe@christoscenter.org) or [www.christoscenter.org](http://www.christoscenter.org).

**Celebrating Our 70th Anniversary:  
 Welcoming All as Christ  
 Saint Paul’s Monastery**

You can join in the celebration and be warmly welcomed at the Special Prioress Dinner on April 12 . . . and/or be equally welcomed at our worship services, workshops, prayer groups, and retreats.

**The Spirituality of Gardening:**

**Finding the Sacred in the Ordinary**

George Bernard Shaw wrote, “The best place to seek God is in a garden. You can dig for Him there.” He understood how seeds, soil, plants, water and sun offer insights into the Divine at work in our life.

This retreat will focus on the sacred connections found in the ordinary tasks of gardening. Through discussion, reflection, prayer and music we will explore the many ways God speaks to us in a garden:

**Monday, April 9, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**

**The Benedictine Center, St. Paul’s Monastery**  
**2675 Benet Road, St. Paul**

For information or registration for this & other up-coming opportunities—like **“How Many?” “One, Please”**: **A Retreat for Single Men and Women** (March 6) and **Heard in Passing: The Secret Language of the Seasons** (April 7): [www.stpaulsmonastery.org](http://www.stpaulsmonastery.org) or [benedictinecenter@stpaulsmonastery.org](mailto:benedictinecenter@stpaulsmonastery.org) or 651.777.7251.

**The Loyola Spirituality Center  
 Celebrates its 40th Anniversary!  
 Serving the Twin Cities Spiritual Community . . .  
 1977-2017 and beyond!**

Throughout its forty years—offering individual Spiritual Direction, sponsoring retreats and other opportunities—Loyola as lived out its guiding belief:

*“As each person is awakened to the sacred in all life,  
 the world is transformed.”*

All are invited to consider an exploratory meeting with a Spiritual Director. And/or consider signing up for a retreat or workshop, like:

**I Can Hardly Wait to Grow Old!**

Together, we will explore the spirituality of aging—the practice of finding God in all things:

- Letting go
- Forgiveness and compassion for self and others
- Gratitude regardless of external circumstances
- Embracing diminishment and limitation
- Finding role models for aging fully alive
- Uncovering the gifts that come with growing old

Together we will create and experience a daily practice of gratitude:

**Saturday, April 21, 9:00-11:00 a.m.**

**Loyola Spirituality Center**  
**389 North Oxford Street, St. Paul**

For information or registration or other up-coming opportunities—like **Nurturing Spirituality in Children & Teens** (February 17), or **Spirituality in the Second Half of Life** (March 10): [info@loyolaspiritualitycenter.org](mailto:info@loyolaspiritualitycenter.org) or 651.641.9998 or [www.loyolaspiritualitycenter.org](http://www.loyolaspiritualitycenter.org).

**Sacred Intuition: Creative Spiritual Practices Inspiring  
 Intuitive Insight, Loving Action, and Sheer Joy**

An hour each week devoted to looking inside (with a wee bit of stretching, drawing, tea, and conversation). Weekly subjects include, “Journey through the Labyrinth,” “Meditation on a Joyful Experience,” and “Magic Door Prayer.” Open to people of all faiths and secular traditions:

**Five Mondays, April 23, 30, May 7, 14 and 21,  
 7:00-8:00 p.m.**

**Edina Morningside Community Church’**  
**4201 Morningside Road, Edina**

For information: 952.926.6555 or [ce.youth@emcucc.org](mailto:ce.youth@emcucc.org) or [www.emcucc.org](http://www.emcucc.org)

**An Evening with Joyce Rupp**

After the gathering and opening prayer, Sr. Joyce will talk about her new book, **Boundless Compassion: Creating a Way of Life**. Following her presentation will be a time for quiet reflection, dialogue, and questions. A special evening, recently arranged:

**Tuesday, April 24, 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

**Christ the King Retreat Center, Buffalo, MN**

For information or registration for this or many other up-coming opportunities—like **Lenten Silent Retreat for Men and Women: “Enoughness, the Cancer of the Spiritual Life”** (March 16-18) and **Mothers, Grandmothers, Daughters, Sisters, Friends Retreat: “What the Story of Ruth and Naomi Says to Women Today”** (May 5):

763.682.1394 or lpolman@kingshouse.com or www.kingshouse.com.

### Francis and Clare of Assisi:

#### A Spirituality of Poverty and Joy

As a Secular Franciscan, author Susan Pitchford follows a Franciscan way of life as a wife, Protestant, teacher and sociologist. It's a spirituality that speaks to people of all beliefs and none. It is a spirituality that speaks to divisions in our society today, to our relationship to creation and to suffering.

If you've ever wondered what marks a spirituality as "Franciscan," plan to join us for this special retreat day:

**Saturday, April 28, 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.**

#### Franciscan Spirituality Center

**920 Market Street, La Crosse WI**

For information or registration for this and other upcoming opportunities—like **Mindfulness for Busy People** (April 7) and **Compassionate Communications: The Language of the Heart** (April 13-14): 608.791.5295 or www.FSCenter.org or FSCenter@fspa.org.

#### Follow the Yellow Brick Road

The story of Dorothy and her companions in the Land of Oz is much more than a mere fairy tale. It is filled with spiritual and psychological insights. Come delve into this story for guidance along your own Yellow Brick Road - or the Way as early Christians and Taoists called it. Bring your Ruby slippers (or tennis shoes) and learn walking meditation as we travel the path to the Emerald City - the Kingdom of Heaven among us and within us:

**Saturday, May 19, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.**

**at the McCabe Renewal Center  
Center for Spirituality and Enrichment,**

**"When you are interiorly free . . .**

you call others to freedom,  
whether you know it or not.

A free man or a free woman creates a space where  
others feel safe and want to dwell.

Our world is so full of conditions, demands,  
requirements, and obligations, . . .

But when we meet a truly free person,  
there are no expectations,

only an invitation to reach into ourselves  
and discover there our own freedom.

Where true inner freedom is, there God is."

Henry Nouwen, *A Daybook of Wisdom and Faith*

**St. Scholastica Monastery, 1001 Kenwood Ave. Duluth  
and/or**

**McCabe Renewal Center,**

**2125 Abbotsford Ave. Duluth**

For information or registration for this or other upcoming opportunities—like **The Theology of M\*A\*S\*H** (March 24) and **Zentangle as a Contemplative Practice** (April 6): 218.723.6699 or 218.724.5266 or www.retreatduluth.org or www.duluthbenedictines.org/ministry-of-spirituality.

#### The Westminster Town Hall Forum Spring Series,

**Richard Stengel: Mandela's Way: Lessons for an  
Uncertain Age**

Richard Stengel is a former Managing Editor of Time, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy in the Obama administration, co-writer of Mandela's autobiography, *The Long Walk to Freedom*, and the author of *Mandela's Way: Fifteen Lessons of Live, Love and Courage*. Free and open to all:

**Tuesday, May 22, 7:00-8:00 p.m., the Gathering Music  
begins at 6:30, reception and book signing afterwards  
Westminster Presbyterian Church,**

**1200 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis**

Other Spring Forums on March 22, April 10, and May 1  
For information: www.westminsterforum.org.

#### Mere Spirituality:

***the Spiritual Life according to Henri Nouwen***

This presentation, by the book's author, Wil Hernandez, focuses on the three heart dynamics involved in our common union with God: **solitude, identity, and presence**—these requiring our cultivation of an **intimate, centered, and attentive** heart respectively—all of which are interrelated and must be integrated in our deepening experience of God.

Wil Hernandez, is the founder of The Nouwen Legacy <www.nouwenlegacy.com> and the founder and president of CenterQuest—an ecumenical hub for the study and practice of Christian spirituality <www.CQCenterQuest.org>. A trained counselor, spiritual director and retreat leader, he focuses on the spirituality of Henri Nouwen, perhaps especially Nouwen's "authentic, spacious spirituality of our being deeply beloved."

There will be no admission fee, only a free will offering. And no pre-registration, just come.

All will be welcomed to a special evening's exploration of the *Spiritual Life according to Henri Nouwen*:

**Wednesday, May 30, 7:30-9:00 p.m.,**

(with mingling/refreshments following)

**Offered by Venite Ministries, co-sponsored by**

**Restoration Ministries & *Thin Places***  
**Held at Westminster Presbyterian Church,**  
**1200 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis**  
**in Westminster Hall, in the newly opened**  
**Open Doors, Open Futures Building** (Free on-site  
parking, underground off Alice Rainbow Place)  
For information or registration for this and other up-  
coming opportunities: [www.veniteministries.org](http://www.veniteministries.org) or  
763.333.9876 or [nancy@veniteministries.org](mailto:nancy@veniteministries.org) or  
[info@restorationmn.org](mailto:info@restorationmn.org).

## Reading Opportunities

The first reaction of some people, upon being handed a book of twelve carefully described spiritual practices, might be one of hesitation if not discouragement, one of remembering that resolutions go oft awry.

**Barbara Brown Taylor** begins *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith* by suggesting that we go awry if we think of “spiritual practices” primarily as soul-work, as something set apart from our daily lives, something that’s easier for monks to do. Instead [like the Celtic Christians or Brother Lawrence], she sees them as being body-and-soul work, parts of our daily lives, “ordinary looking places where human beings have met and may continue to meet up with the divine More that they sometimes call God.”

And she adds,

“In a world where faith is often construed as a way of thinking, bodily practices remind the willing that faith is a way of living.”

The names of some of Barbara Brown Taylor’s twelve chapters look familiar: “The Practice of Paying Attention,” “The Practice of Being Present to God.” Others entice: “The Practice of Wearing Skin,” “. . . of Getting Lost,” “. . . of Saying No,” “. . . of Feeling Pain.”

But whether the practice described is familiar or newly seen, each chapter is filled with her insights and personal experiences. In “The Practice of Walking on Earth,” she observes,

“Jesus walked a lot, . . . This gave him time to see things, like the milky eyes of the beggar sitting by the side of the

**“Music needs the hollowness of the flute;  
Letters, the blankness of the page;  
Light, the void called a window;  
Holiness, the absence of the self.”**

Anthony De Mello,  
*Taking Flight: A Book of Story Meditations*

road, or the round black eyes of sparrows sitting in their cages in the market. . . .

Whether he was going somewhere or nowhere at all, [for many] going with him was the point. Food tasted better at the pace he set. Stories longer. Talk went deeper. While many of his present-day admirers pay close attention to what he said and did, they pay less attention to the pace at which he did it. Jesus was a walker, not a rider. He took his sweet time.”

In “. . . of Getting Lost,”

“We both learned to ask for directions on that trip. . . . Anything can become a spiritual practice once you are willing to approach it that way—once you let it bring you to your knees and show you what is real, including who you really are, and who other people are, and how near God can be when you have lost your way. . . .

Those most likely to befriend strangers are those who have been strangers themselves. The best way to grow empathy for those who are lost is to know what it means to be lost yourself.”

And in “. . . of Being Present to God,”

“Prayer, according to Brother David, is waking up to the presence of God no matter where I am or what I am doing. . . .

The longer I practice prayer, the more I think it is something that is always happening, like a radio wave that carries music through the air whether I tune in or not. This is hard to talk about, which is why prayer is a practice and not a discussion. . . .

**All I did was light the candle  
Did God find me, or did I find God?  
Hush  
The time for words is past”**

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**Afterwords:** continued from back page.

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*What do we need from Lent?* The sound of sheer silence. Few things are as important to our spiritual lives as making room for silence, the practice of being quiet so that the holy might have space.

Could we find time each day this Lenten season to be silent, intentionally quiet?

Let’s begin with five minutes. Or ten. Maybe we could work our way up.

It’s what we need from Lent:

***a sound, . . . a still, . . . a gentle. . . .***

Thanks be to God. Amen.



Westminster Presbyterian Church  
1200 Marquette Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-2419

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Holy Week experience . . .”  
“What do we need from Lent? ‘Silence . . .’”

## Afterwords: “What do we need from Lent? ‘Silence . . .’”

[Excerpted from a sermon by The Rev. Dr. Tim Hart-Andersen, at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis, on 17 February 2013]

The season of Lent is a gift to us. You and I and the church – we need the discipline of stopping for a time, of letting go of our regular routine for a period, of discovering anew what it means to be the people of God. It’s good for our work. It’s good for our bodies. It’s good for our relationships. *It’s essential for our faith. . . .*

And if the question is, *What do we need from Lent?* the answer may be, simply, *Silence*. The silence that comes from sleep. The silence that occurs when we stop and listen. The silence brought on by prayer.

The story of the prophet Elijah in the wilderness is an early antecedent to the forty days of Jesus. Elijah is guided through the wilderness to Mount Horeb, the sacred mountain where, long before, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. At Horeb, Elijah is told to be ready, because God is about to pass by. Suddenly there’s a mighty wind, but no God. Then a terrible earthquake, but no God. Then an all-consuming fire, but no God. Only after wind, earthquake and fire does God appear – in the “**sound of sheer silence.**”

Some of us who know this text may be more familiar with the phrase, “a still, small voice,” rather than “the sound of sheer silence.” This is tough Hebrew to translate. The words are *gowl demamah daggah*, and they mean, literally, a sound, a still, a gentle.

After the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, **a sound, a still, a gentle**. And God is there: a sound in the gentle stillness . . . a gentle stillness of sound . . . a still, small voice . . . the sound of sheer silence.

That’s what Jesus found in the desert. Lent gives us that same gift, and we need it. How many of us are too distracted to pay attention to those we love, too preoccupied to live and work well, too engaged in everything to take care of ourselves, too busy for God?

The most appropriate posture for us to assume when we stand before God is silence. Our worship is suffused with words; they can get in the way of the holy. The church lives in a culture overflowing with information, which is essentially ordered noise whether it comes digitally or in audio form. To live in our age is to live with a constant wind of data blowing hard at us, or an earthquake of information that never settles down, or a fire of opinion and comment and communication that consumes us.

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