



First Presbyterian Church
Burlington, NC

**Contemplative Ministry
Mid-Winter and Spring 2021 Offerings**

*There is no argument needed for the necessity
of taking time out for being alone, for withdrawal,
for being quiet without and still within...*

*When the awareness of God comes in – how He entered,
one does not know – one is certain that He has been there all the time.*

Howard Thurman, Meditations of the Heart

Greetings from the FPC Contemplative Ministry Planning Team to our extended contemplative family.

This newsletter shares information about

- **Taize Services**
- **“Quiet Spaces for Lent” meditations**
- **Ongoing Contemplative Ministry offerings**
- **Contemplative Practices for Daily Use**

Taize Worship – A Service of Quiet and Reflection

January 31 and April 25 @ 6:30 pm (livestream from FPC website)

This service follows the Taize tradition of community, meditation and reflection. Contemplative music, scripture, prayer and moments of silence will frame our worship as we gather “in community”.

Quiet Spaces for Lent

The poet Ann Weems writes that Lent is “the time to listen to who *he* says *he* is” – “the one who brings good news to the poor, freedom to the oppressed, sight to the blind...that Holy One who said, Follow me, Feed my sheep.” Moments of quiet reflection during Lent give us space to listen and for preparing for the coming of Easter and the Resurrection.

- **Meditation on Word and Music** – Wednesdays during Lent beginning February 24
These mid-week meditations, led by the pastoral staff, include scripture, poetry, prayer and music, helping us journey through Lent in anticipation of Easter and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Son of God. Meditations will be emailed and posted on the church website and FaceBook page.
- **Lenten Quiet Time Meditations** – Mondays during Lent beginning Monday, February 22

Guided meditations to give space and form for quiet contemplation using the spiritual practices of *Lectio Divina* and *Visio Divina* will be emailed on Mondays and posted on the church website and FaceBook page. These meditations invite us to spend a few minutes “intentionally stepping away from our busy routines,” grounding us in the presence of God as we anticipate Easter and the Resurrection.

Ongoing Contemplative Offerings

- Tuesday Morning Meditation Group – facilitated by Jane Wellford (Group meetings suspended due to COVID 19.) An email including a contemplative practice, a passage for *Lectio Divina* or sacred reading and a guided meditation is sent weekly to group participants and mediation guide is also posted on the FPC website and Face Book each Tuesday.
(The first several months of these meditation guides have been printed in booklet form and copies for personal use can be requested through the church office.)
- Wednesday Morning Meditation Group – facilitated by Nan Perkins (Group meetings through Zoom; capacity is currently filled.) One hour of conversation, reflection on a spiritual text and silent meditation for those seeking to create space in busy lives to become more aware of the divine and to travel their faith journey with spiritual friends.

Contemplative Practices for Daily Use

- *Lectio Divina* and *Visio Divina*

Lectio Divina directions

In *Lectio Divina* or sacred reading, we slowly and prayerfully interact with a selection of Scripture or other inspirational passage. We allow God to speak to us through it.

Find a quiet place where you can focus on today's reading uninterrupted. You may wish to have pen and paper with you. Breathe into and reside in the moment.

Read the passage. Be alert to any word or phrase that draws your attention.

What is the word or phrase to which you are drawn?

Now read the passage again.

Reflect silently on these two questions:

- How does the word or phrase you are drawn to connect with something in your life now?
- What feelings are stirred in you?

Now, read the passage again.

Shape your thoughts or feelings into a prayer. Ask God to show you what this passage may be inviting you to do today.

Now, sit quietly, focus on your breath, and let your mind go blank. Simply be open and available to God's loving presence. Finish by giving gratitude for your experience.

Visio Divina directions

In *Visio Divina*, we experience "divine seeing." We slowly and prayerfully interact with a visual image. We allow God to speak to us through it.

Choose an inspiring visual image, a photograph or piece of art.

Settle into a quiet space, perhaps with pen and paper. Breathe into and reside in the moment.

Gaze on the image. Be present to it, allowing the image to speak to your heart. Be aware of your first impressions, paying attention to your thoughts.

Enter the image and walk around, seeing it from all vantage points. Explore details, shapes, patterns, textures, lines, light, colors.

Savor the experience. Allow it to unfold in your heart. Listen, in silence, for God's voice.

Allow the image to lead you into a time of prayer. Offer God prayers of gratitude, anguish, confession, praise – whatever you find stirring in you. Write your insights and prayers down if you wish.

Now, sit quietly, focus on your breath, and let your mind go blank. Simply be open and available to God's loving presence. Finish by giving gratitude for your experience.

The FPC Contemplative Ministry Planning Team is open to your suggestions and participation in the ministry of meditation and quiet. Please keep us in your prayers.

Blessings from "The Team,"

Nan Perkins

Bruce Shields

Jane Wellford

Peggy Harrelson

Patrick Murphy

Trina Holt

Sarah Vincent

Charlotte Allbright

Laura Mann

Wade Harrison

Meet every moment with your conscious presence. Peace.

*Photograph credit – Trina Holt