



First Presbyterian Church
Burlington, NC

**Contemplative Ministry
Fall and Mid-Winter 2021-2022 Offerings**

*What is precious inside us
does not care to be known by the mind
in ways that diminish its presence.
What we strive for in perfection
is not what turns us into the lit angel
we desire...*

David Whyte, Essentials

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

This newsletter shares information about

- Taize Services
- “Quiet Spaces” meditations
- Ongoing Contemplative Ministry offerings
- Upcoming Contemplative Ministry events
- Contemplative Practice for Daily Use

Taize Worship – A Service of Quiet and Reflection

December 5, 2021 @ 6:30 pm

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 Meditations

Henry Nouwen, the highly recognized spiritual author, wrote *“Every time you listen with great attentiveness to the voice that calls you the Beloved, you will discover within yourself a desire to hear that voice longer and more deeply. It is like discovering a well in the desert. Once you have touched wet ground, you want to dig deeper.”* Quiet Spaces meditations give you the opportunity to sit in the Divine Presence of God, to feel wrapped in the arms of love and to be covered in God’s ultimate grace.

- **Quiet Spaces Meditations** – Advent Mondays – November 29, December 6, 13, 20 and December 27, 2021

Guided meditations to give space and form for quiet contemplation using the spiritual practices of *Lectio Divina* and *Visio Divina* and focused on the elements of Advent – Hope, Peace, Love, Joy and The Christ Candle - 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 and prepare for the coming of the Christ Child.

Ongoing Contemplative Offerings

- Tuesday Morning Meditation Group – facilitated by Jane Wellford (Group meetings through Zoom from 8:00 am until 8:45 am.) 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 a mediation guide is also posted on the FPC website and FaceBook each Tuesday. If you are interested in participating in this group, contact Jane Wellford.
(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. New members are welcome. Contact Nan Perkins at perkinsn@elon.edu for additional information.) 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.

Upcoming Contemplative Ministry Events

- **Soul Collage ® Workshop** – Wednesday, December 8, 2021, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Facilitated by Terri Burleson

Do you long for a creative outlet that will let you express your spiritual nature? Do you enjoy discovering your God-created person through the creative arts? Then this workshop will appeal to you. Soul Collage ®, developed by Seena B. Frost, MA, M.Div., is a method of self-discovery through the creation and intuitive analysis of a deck of card-sized collages created by each participant. Involving art, creativity, self-awareness, journaling, meditation and personal growth, it is a process that facilitates a dialogue with the soul. Terri Burleson notes that “it is a wonderful technique with contemplative groups and is helpful in learning ways to incorporate the mind, heart and body to listen to the Spirit.” Terri, a member of the Contemplative Ministry team at Westover Presbyterian Church in Greensboro and a certified Soul Collage facilitator, will lead the workshop at our church. Look for additional information on registration in the FPC Thursday E-blasts or call Charlotte Albright through the church office to sign up to participate.

- **Monday Morning Quiet Spaces Meditations 2022**

Beginning Monday, January 3, 2022, the Contemplative Ministry Team with the help of members of the FPC family will appear in your Inbox, on the church website and Facebook page, to provide an opportunity for each of us to quiet ourselves and listen for God’s message to us. A short spiritual reading, a scripture passage, words of wisdom and touching visual imagery will offer time to listen, to reflect, to feel, to respond to God’s presence. These meditations will arrive each Monday of the year to provide a sacred start to a busy week.

- **Soul Feast – An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life** – Tuesdays, 7 – 8:30 p.m., January 11 – March 29, 2022; leadership team: Nan Perkins, Jane Wellford, Peggy Harrelson

Join us in an exploration of Soul Feast – An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life. We will be following the book by the same title written by Marjorie J. Thompson, an accomplished spiritual writer and guide. Throughout the book, Thompson encourages the seeker to engage in the spiritual life through the use of tools that promote this engagement. Thompson is anxious to help readers learn and use the disciplines of the spiritual life to create the space in each of us where God resides. Weekly readings, use of spiritual practices, and thoughtful conversation carried out in a community of friends seeking a closer relationship with God will form the context of the class. First meetings will be through a Zoom platform and then the group will decide on the location of later meetings. If you are interested in developing a deeper spiritual life and walking that journey with others, then this class might be the beginning. Look for registration details

as the new year approaches or contact any one of the leadership team to express your interest.

Contemplative Practice for Daily Use

- *Centering Prayer*

In Centering Prayer, we consent to God's presence and action within us. Recommended as a daily practice, it is typically done first thing in the morning or last thing before bed.

Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within – your intention to surrender yourself into God's loving presence. Some examples of words include "Grace, Jesus, Divine Love, Mercy, Peace." Stay with the word or phrase you choose during your Centering Prayer time.

Silently introduce the sacred word and allow our thoughts to drift by like leaves on a stream or clouds in the sky. When you find yourself thinking of other things, silently say your sacred word and gently return to observing your thoughts pass by.

This practice is not about "having no thoughts" or "getting it right" but about showing up and consenting to God's presence within us. Each time we notice our thinking, we have the opportunity to surrender ourselves once again into God's loving presence.

End the practice in prayer, giving thanks to God for the experience.

(Shared from Second Breath Center's Inward Journey: Spiritual Practices by permission)

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