



First Presbyterian Church
Burlington, NC

**Contemplative Ministry
Summer and Early Fall 2021 Offerings**

*To be holy demands that we slow down
and live in the moment we're in.*

*When we do
we have come to see the face of God.*

Joan Chittister

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

September 26, 2021 @ 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 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** – Mondays During the Month of August 2021

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 beginning August 2. 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 week that unfolds.

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 Face Book 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; 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.

Upcoming Contemplative Ministry Events

- **Soul Collage® Workshop** – Sunday, September 19, 2021, 2-4 p.m.

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 Eblasts as we get closer to the workshop date.

Contemplative Practice for Daily Use

- *Three Deep Breaths*

With three deep breaths, we intentionally come into the present moment with an understanding that the more present we are to our own life and experience, the more awake and transparent we become to the Divine Presence always in our midst. This practice can be used anytime but is especially helpful before, during and after a challenging encounter. Many contemplative followers use it as often as possible in their daily lives.

Sit with your feet on the floor and your body both alert and at ease. Close your eyes or look down softly. Bring your awareness to your breathing.

Allow your breath to drop deep into the bottom of your belly all the way to the top of your chest. As you exhale, picture all of the dust and debris and stress of the day floating away. You can pick it up later if you choose but for now allow it to drift away.

With your second deep breath, allow yourself to land more fully in this present moment – feel the weight of your body in the chair and your feet on the floor.

With your third deep breath, as your chest expands, picture your heart opening to receive whatever gift God has for you in this unique time and space.

Allow your breathing to return to its normal pattern and bring your awareness to your entire body. Allow your body to unbrace with each inbreath and relax all the more with each outbreath. Continue to allow your breath to guide your unbracing for a few more minutes.

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