



First Presbyterian Church
Burlington, NC

**Contemplative Ministry
Spring and Summer 2022 Offerings**

Prayer is the longing of the human heart for God. It is a yearning and desire for relationship with God, and it is God's attention to our desire: God-in-communion with us.

Illia Delio

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

Palm Sunday Taize Service @ 6:30 p.m. *The Lenten Journey*

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”. The focus of this Taize worship will be our Lenten journey.

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 in June and August 2022
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 transition and change. These meditations, shared with you by staff, church leaders and church members invite us to spend a few minutes “intentionally stepping away from our busy routines,” grounding us in the presence of God as we move through this time of transition within our church. These thoughtful messages will be emailed on Mondays and posted on the church website and FaceBook page.

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** – Sunday, April 3, 2022, 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
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 Allbright through the church office to sign up to participate.

- The Planning Team is considering several projects and will take the next few months to plan and publicize these experiences and events. Please keep watch on the FPC E-blasts for these meaningful contemplative activities.

Contemplative Practice for Daily Use

- *Intercessory Prayer*

Marjorie Thompson writes in her book Soul Feast, “Intercession is a concrete expression of the social dimension of prayer. It includes our concerns for other persons, communities, nations, the earth, and our fellow creatures.” We offer our petitions to God because we feel deeply about someone or some situation and their hurt or needs touch us in some way. The following is just one way of praying for someone or a situation that needs healing.

- Settle yourself into a comfortable position and relax your breathing. Imagine God’s presence surrounding you, covering you in light and warmth.
- Anytime we are in God’s presence, we are in community with all persons and all things. Choose one person or situation that brings concern to your heart, one person or situation that needs healing in some way.
- Lift up this person or situation to God with your thoughts and words. Imagine this person or situation in God’s embrace, being showered with love and grace, having the need attended to. Be careful not to “decide” what God should do. As

you pray, give yourself brief moments of quiet, listening for God's response and direction.

- See the person or situation in a state of wholeness, the broken parts mended, as a result of God's care and love.
- Ask God that this wholeness be fully realized as God would design.
- Thank God for the healing provided and release the person or situation into God's divine care.
- Complete your prayer with quiet meditation, feeling the Divine Presence and knowing that God has listened to and received your prayer.

Thompson urges us to remember that prayer is the essential expression of how God relates to us and how we relate to God. Prayer makes a difference.

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