



First Presbyterian Church  
Burlington, NC

**Contemplative Ministry  
Fall and Mid-Winter 2022-2023 Offerings**

*Maybe the desire to make something beautiful  
is the piece of God that is inside each of us.*

*Mary Oliver, "Franz Marc's Blue Horses"*

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

**This newsletter shares information about**

- **Services of Contemplation**
- **“Quiet Spaces” Meditations**
- **Ongoing Contemplative Ministry Offerings**
- **Upcoming Contemplative Ministry Events**
- **Contemplative Practice for Daily Use**

**Service of Contemplation**

September 25th @ 6:30 pm

This service is a time of quiet and reflection, filled with candlelight, music and prayer. Held in the sanctuary, it becomes a sacred space, a refuge, a connection to God, in both location and spirit. It offers time and space for us to meet God and for God to meet us where we are.

**Quiet Spaces Meditations**

Most Mondays arriving via email

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.

These guided meditations, coming to your inbox on most Mondays, will help you to “be present to the moment” stepping away from your busy routine to be grounded in the presence of God. These meditations which use the spiritual practices of *Lectio Divina* and *Visio Divina* will be emailed on Mondays and posted on the church’s 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](mailto: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

- **Knot Prayers** – Sunday, September 11 @ 9:45 am; FPC Mission and Ministry Fair

Stop by the Contemplative Ministry table at the Mission and Ministry Fair held in Shive Hall to learn more about the “knot prayer.” Simple in words, enormous in its power the “knot prayer” is *Dear God: Please untie the knots that are in my mind, my heart and my life. Remove the have nots, the can nots and the do nots.....* At the Fair, pick up your knot strand and contemplative prayer practice card to incorporate this simple practice into your life.

- **Contemplative Ministry Article**

Catch a full description of Contemplative Ministry at First Presbyterian Church-Burlington in the fall edition of the church news magazine.

- **Contemplative Ministry Newsletter**

The team publishes a newsletter 3 to 4 times annually to share Contemplative Ministry events with the congregation and community. Please look for this newsletter in the Thursday E-blasts from the church, on the website and on the FPC FaceBook page.

- **Book Studies**

The team is always interested in sponsoring short-term book discussions centering on faith formation, faith exploration, and/or living out our faith in today’s world. If you have read and would like to suggest a book for consideration, please reach out to a member of the team to share your suggestion.

### Contemplative Practice for Daily Use

- *Self Compassion*

*In the practice of Self Compassion, we learn to treat ourselves with gentleness and love. It is a way of responding to our needs with love rather than criticism and harshness. It quiets the voice of the inner critic and creates space for kindness. Having deep compassion for ourselves increases resilience and improves our general well-being.*

*Sit in your favorite comfortable place and surround yourself with items that you love and appreciate. Inhale a deep breath and exhale slowly. Release your body.*

*Contemplate a time when you have suffered. It may involve a conflict with someone you care about, or a time that you did not succeed in something you wanted, or a period of physical*

*illness. Bring awareness to your body. Do you feel tension in your stomach, shoulders, jaw? Is you breathing shallow? Is there an ache in your heart?*

*Now call to mind a person, pet, or memory that warms you heart. Maybe it's the way your dog greets you when you arrive at home, or walking with a loved one on the beach, or holding a baby, or hearing the laughter of a child. Imagine that you are able to breathe that feeling of warmth and compassion into your body. With each in breath, like a warm glow, imagine the light of compassion grows brighter and brighter until it fills your entire body from the bottom of your feet to the tips of your fingers to the top of your head.*

*As you continue to breathe, silently recite to yourself:*

***May I know peace in this suffering.***

***May I have joy and happiness.***

***May I know peace in this suffering.***

***May I have joy and happiness.***

***May I love and accept myself just as I am.***

*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