



February/March 2008  
Year Nine, Issue Three  
Number 50

page 3  
*Ongoing Opportunities*  
page 4  
*One-Time Opportunities*  
page 8  
*Afterwords*

An ecumenical sampler of events  
and resources for spiritual growth,  
with a particular interest in the  
contemplative spiritual journey,  
published by the Spiritual Growth  
Community of Westminster  
Presbyterian Church



**WESTMINSTER**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1200 Marquette Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-2419  
612.332.3421  
[www.eWestminster.org](http://www.eWestminster.org)

## Through All . . .

by Jeannette Bakke

Listen to me, O house of Jacob,  
all you who remain of the house of Israel, . . .

I am he, I am he who will sustain you.

I have made you and I will carry you;

I will sustain you and I will rescue you. *Is. 46:3-4*

As it was for Israel, it is also for us. Through all—God is faithful. I am embarrassed by seeing how often I am surprised by the delicate or dramatic, consistent, stretching faithfulness of God—and by what points me in that direction . . . what becomes a Thin Place.

Our neighborhood of sixty-five families recently decided to replace our individual septic systems and wells with city sewer and water. The time was right because new technology allowed for shooting pipes long distances underground—avoiding open trenches and preserving hundreds of mature trees. But it was a different scenario in our yard, even though the pipes had arrived as if by magic traveling underground a thousand feet.

An over-sized steam shovel made its way through the woods and perched on our tiny backyard hill. It quickly transformed what had been a recently landscaped hillside filled with Hostas, ferns and a meandering New York Bluestone path into an unrecognizable pit. Gouging great caverns to remove a holding tank and three settling tanks. The smooth green yard became clay mountains.

Four men labored for two days creating a labyrinth of underground systems. Nothing visible was left of the garden or the hillside.

At the end of the second day the workers began piling soil into the gaping new ravines. The steam shovel lifting mountains from one place to another. Lifting and dumping, lifting and dumping, lifting and dumping for a very long time. But all of a sudden, the work changed. The steam shovel operator began delicately maneuvering the enormous bucket, gingerly replacing each Hosta and fern, patting them in as if by a giant hand. The steam shovel artfully settled Bluestone slabs into an old/new path. By late afternoon external traces of major upheaval had disappeared.

Suddenly I recognized Steam Shovel God—the faithful one who tends my life through great and small, chosen and unchosen transformations . . . with huge, sometimes frightening scenes—and became aware of divine tenderness accompanying me . . . the God who creates

*Through All* . . . concludes on page 2

Look for *Thin Places* at: [www.thinplaces.us](http://www.thinplaces.us) or [www.eWestminster.org/thinplaces.asp](http://www.eWestminster.org/thinplaces.asp)

the universe, tends my soul . . . always. And gets my attention in the midst of the ordinariness of everyday life.

Lent's simplifications re-awaken me to awareness of how I feel when life's circumstances and patterns get rearranged. What has been is no longer what is. Space opens toward something new. I both welcome and resist change. I see that I become addicted to what is familiar. I glimpse tightly held mixed motivations—wanting a “place,” “meaningful work to do,” pushing ahead with minimal inquiry, “God, is this you?” I am invited to slow down and ask to see.

Life develops differently when I stop, turn in the midst of complexities and upheavals, and ask for divine participation/vision/courage/help. . . . I offer my confused self to God. No matter what my mixture of distractions and diversions and collection of attitudes and choices, the faithful One appears somewhere along the way.

I seem to be learning to own up to blindness and notice more of my tendencies toward independence. Perhaps hiding less or for shorter periods of time. God initiates

and responds. It is impossible to guess where a Thin Place will appear or what will stir my recognition of God's nearness. A shift from the outside or something within . . . a letter or an email, a phone call or a prayer, a conversation or a project, reading or solitude, silence, sudden “seeing.”

Whether hindsight causes me to interpret choices as “right” or “wrong,” I am easily startled by a renewed awareness of God's faithfulness in the midst of all possibilities. In this Lenten Season, I sit with the words shown below that came to me during the two years that my mother was slowly, painfully dying. Over and over and over, in small ways and enormous ones, in gentle moments and excruciating decisions, we became aware of God's faithful presence within all.

So, I sit aware of the growing edges of my trust in God. I invite God to increase my willingness and ability to relax into God's faithfulness—into a quiet prayer.

Now is enough / God is enough. . . .

Stillness and Motion * Prayer and Pride * Disappointment and Fulfillment * Yes and No * Little and Much		
Loss and Gain * Joy and Sorrow * Reaching and Letting Go * Desires and Fears * Sleeping and Awakening		
Clarity and Confusion * Old and New * Bitterness and Forgiveness * Open and Closed * Limited and Infinite		
Freedom and Bondage		Comfort and Disease
Alone and Together	THROUGH ALL	Beginning and Ending
Laughter and Tears	GOD IS FAITHFUL	Health and Sickness
Peace and War		Guilt and Grace
Arrival and Departure * Brokenness and Wholeness * Calm and Turmoil * Hope and Despair * Love and Hate		
Emptiness and Fullness * First and Last * Alpha and Omega * Now and Forever * Lavishness and Simplicity		
True and False * Creation and Destruction * Silence and Word * Presence and Absence * Pain and Pleasure		
Life and Death * Apparent and Concealed * Never and Always * Planting and Harvesting * Light and Dark		

*Jeannette A. Bakke, Ph.D., D.Min., author of Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction is a teacher, consultant, retreat leader and spiritual director. Jeannette teaches at Bethel Theological Seminary and Christos Center for Spiritual Formation and is on the editorial board of Conversations: A Journal for Authentic Transformation. She may be reached at: j-bakke@bethel.edu.*

### **Enough Light for the Next Step: trusting in the faithfulness of God**

“Often we want to be able to see the future. We say, ‘How will next year be for me? Where will I be five or ten years from now?’ There are no answers to these questions. Mostly we just have enough light to see the next step: what we have to do in the coming hour or the following day.

The art of living is to enjoy what we can see and not complain about what remains in the dark. When we are able to take the next step with trust that we will have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life with joy and be surprised at how far we go. Let's rejoice in the little light we carry and not ask for the great beam that would take all shadows away.”

Henri Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey*

### City House, A Soul Partnership

City House is expanding its mission. Our past mission was “Tending to the spiritual life of the poor, inspiring hope.” Within that context, the last 5 years has been committed to connecting trained spiritual directors with those who are economically disadvantaged. We have seen many lives transformed in that work. [www.city-house.org](http://www.city-house.org).

We have now expanded our mission, coming to recognize that this ministry is mutual, and is as much about God’s work in us as it is about the persons on the margins of society with whom we are privileged to walk.

Those who find themselves poor can mentor us. Through them we can experience first hand the paradox of the Gospel. That we find power in humility, strength in weakness, and light in darkness. We come to discover our own poverty and need for healing and blessing.

Commitment to personal relationships with the poor is a spiritual practice, and it is our desire to make it available to more people. So, we have expanded our programming.

To give people a taste, we have added one day inner city pilgrimages. “Will You Drink From This Cup?” is a 12-week spiritual enrichment program that goes deeper. We are also looking for opportunities to work with congregations to help them enter into and / or deepen their relationship with the poor. Finally, we have launched a blog, where anyone can go to be inspired, informed, or participate in the “inside story” of what is happening spiritually on the streets of the Twin Cities:

[www.spiritonthemargins.org](http://www.spiritonthemargins.org)

If interested in any of these opportunities, contact Tom Allen at 763.227.0686 or [tomallen@city-house.org](mailto:tomallen@city-house.org).

Consider joining us in this exciting journey!!!

### Lenten Taizé Evening Prayer

All are invited to gather around the peacefulness of a candle lit table (a peacefulness that is somehow made more necessary and yet more real by the juxtaposed thorny Cross hanging above it), receiving the ashes as Lent begins on February 6th, and continuing each Wednesday evening through March 12th. Before each

Do you know of anyone who might like to receive Thin Places? It’s sent free to all who request it.

Or do you know of an up-coming Opportunity that might be of interest to others?

If you can answer, “yes,” to either of these, please contact Kathy Fisher at: [kfisher@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:kfisher@wpc-mpls.org) or 612.332.3421

service, a nice supper (at modest cost) and fellowship are available in the Refectory beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Particularly for those who may work in downtown Minneapolis, there is also a Wednesday Noon Lenten service in the Chapel, a thirty-minute quiet reflection and music following the Lenten theme: Teach Us to Pray. Worship is followed by a modest lunch (\$7) and fellowship in the Meisel Room.

Each Wednesday during Lent, 6:30-7:00 p.m.

Westminster Presbyterian Church, in the Great Hall  
1200 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis

For information: 612.332.3421 or

[www.ewestminster.org/holidays.asp](http://www.ewestminster.org/holidays.asp)

### Like a wave in the ocean . . .

Seven young women from Minnesota began the New Year by joining with 40,000 (!) other young adults for the Taizé Community’s annual European Gathering, in Geneva this time. They report finding—as many do—that experiencing something is far more powerful, more meaningful, than hearing about it, or talking about it. They have particularly commented on their experience of prayer and silence in a gathering of 40,000.

Here are some answers that other young adults have given when asked, What impressed you about the Taizé worship itself?

- “The songs sung during the worship stay with you all day. Wherever you walk, someone is singing or humming a chant. The songs penetrate so deeply.”
- “Consistency, God-focused worship, silence, simplicity, beauty, inclusive, fervor.”
- “There was no place for announcements or talking. God was the center, the only focus. Worship was never used as a means of conveying logical concerns...”

### “Isn’t it a consolation

to know that life is not a straight line? Many of us wish and have been told that it should be, but I haven’t met a life yet that’s a straight line to God. . . . It’s always getting the point and missing the point. It’s God entering our lives and then fighting it, avoiding it, running from it. There is the moment of divine communion or intimacy, and then the pullback . . . Fortunately God works with all of it, and that’s called mercy or steadfast love [or faithfulness].

Richard Rohr,

*Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality*

- “The simple, repeating words of each song touched my heart. As we repeated the songs, I moved further away from thinking of me, and closer to the presence of God.”
- “I loved how you never knew what language to expect next during the service, and found the ten minutes of silence very helpful to me.”
- “It’s the simplicity and authenticity. Like a wave in the ocean, it just moves you along with it.”

**Now, your help is needed:**

*Thin Places* is frequently asked about the locations of Taizé services in Minnesota. We know about the First Friday Taizé Prayer at St. Stephen’s Episcopal [952.920.0595], the First Wednesday Taizé Evening Prayer at Christ the King in Buffalo [763.682.1394], the

Second Friday Taizé service at Minnehaha United Methodist [612.721.6231], and the Third Friday Taizé Prayer at St. Paul’s Monastery [651.777.8181].

But there may well be others—at least, many others have appeared in “Ongoing Opportunities” over the years, some meeting regularly (like those above), some meeting during Lent (like Westminster’s).

Now, your help is needed: if your church has Taizé services—regularly or occasionally—or if you know of other churches or groups that do, please let us know at: [thinplaces\\_us@msn.com](mailto:thinplaces_us@msn.com).

We’ll follow up, get the details, and share it through Ongoing Opportunities. For many, it is the actual experience of this Prayer—perhaps it’s simplicity and authenticity—which moves them. **Please help if you can.**

## ONE-TIME OPPORTUNITIES

**“The Earth is the Lord’s: A Liturgical Response to Environmental Concerns”**

This special worship service will give us an opportunity to offer thanksgiving to God for the earth on which we live, confession for humanity’s abuse of the earth, intercession for all who are adversely affected by the broken environment, supplication for wisdom as we seek to repair the breach. Readings and hymns will be plentiful.

**Wednesday, January 30, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

**“ . . . no one’s business, not even your own.”**

“What goes on in those silent depths during the time of Centering Prayer is no one’s business, not even your own; it is between your innermost being and God; that place where, as St. Augustine once said, ‘God is closer to your soul than you are yourself.’

Your own subjective experience of the prayer may be that nothing is happening—except for the more-or-less continuous motion of letting go of thoughts. But in the depths of your being, in fact, plenty has been going on, and things are quietly but firmly being rearranged. That interior rearrangement—or to give it its rightful name, that interior awakening—is the real business of Centering Prayer.”

Cynthia Bourgeault,  
*Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*

Westminster Presbyterian Church, in the Chapel  
1200 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis

For information: 612.332.3421 or [www.wpc-mpls.org](http://www.wpc-mpls.org).

**“Reading God”**

One of the major causes of the religious fundamentalism sweeping the globe today is the superficial reading of sacred texts. This course will uncover the ancient learning techniques that approach spiritual writings (both new and old) which involve purification preparations, contemplative study through living transmissions, mantric chants opening us to the language of the texts, all ultimately bringing us into greater union and deeper communication.

Each participant will discover new meaning and enlightenment as the mysteries of these texts become revealed through deep prayer and practice. Those seeking a new Lenten discipline might well find this to be most appropriate material.

**Mondays, Feb. 4 to March 10, 7:30-9:00 p.m.**

The Episcopal House of Prayer in the City  
425 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis  
For information: 320.363.3293 or  
[houseprayer@csbsj.edu](mailto:houseprayer@csbsj.edu)

**Men’s Spirituality Series**

The Men’s Spirituality Series continues in its 12th year with gatherings in February, March, and April:

- **Men & Their Bodies: Body as Sacred Vessel**  
**Wednesday, Feb. 6, 5:30-8:00 p.m., dinner**

This workshop will include movement, sound work,

and guided imagery. Please wear comfortable clothing.

• **Men & Their Souls, The Soul's Language: Poetry of the Sacred**

**Wednesday, Mar. 5, 5:30-8:00 p.m., dinner**

A way to revive the connection to the sacred is through poetry and expressive writing. Poem-making is the language of the heart. Examine the questions: What opens your heart? How can we learn to listen?

• **Men & Their Spirits: Servitude, Freedom, and Service**

**Wednesday, April 2, 7:15-9:00 a.m., breakfast**

Explore how Jewish sources raise and connect the themes of servitude, freedom, and service in the weeks stretching from Passover to the festival of Shavuot/Pentecost. Shavuot is a celebration of exercising responsibility for one's self, one's neighbor, and the world at large.

Wisdom Ways, Carondelet Center, 1890 Randolph Ave., St. Paul

For information and registration: 651.696.2788 or [wisdomways@csjstpaul.org](mailto:wisdomways@csjstpaul.org).

“**Bridging Body/Mind and Spirituality**”

You are invited to join the Rev. Julie Nerass to explore the body-spirit connection and to share personal reflections on that connection's significant role in illness and healing. During small group sessions, we will have sample introductions to several practices that connect body-mind-spirit: yoga, chi gong, and therapeutic message. All will be welcomed.

**Sunday, February 10, 2:00-5:00 p.m.**

The Center for Wholeness, Presbyterian Church of the Apostles

701 East 130th Street, Burnsville

For information: 952.890.7877

**Women's Spirituality Circle: Explore and Enliven Your Spiritual Journey**

Gather with other women to refresh your spirit and listen for God's movement in our lives. The Circle, led by Jean Greenwood, Presbyterian minister, is designed to be a safe, supportive space in which to learn and grow, through presentations, readings, reflection, individual and group exercises, prayer and meditation.

**Four Tuesdays—Feb. 12, 26; March 11, 25**

**7:00-9:00 p.m.**

4515 Garfield Avenue South, Minneapolis

For information: 612.825.4927 or [green104@umn.edu](mailto:green104@umn.edu).

“**Rachel's Cry: The Prayer of Lament as a Way to Hope and Healing**”

All are invited to a day of learning, where an atmosphere of spiritual nurture will surround us as we explore: what part the prayer of lament has played in biblical and Christian theological tradition . . . how to express alienation and distress while generating hope . . . practical uses for lament (including depression and experiences of violence) . . . and a pastoral theology of lament in modern usage.

The day will include presentations, discussions and times of reflection. Come and learn from Rachael's Cry.

**Saturday, February 16, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.**

Sacred Ground Center for Spirituality

1890 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul

For information and registration: 651.696.2798 or

[www.sacredgroundspirit.org](http://www.sacredgroundspirit.org)

or [sacredground@sacredgroundspirit.org](mailto:sacredground@sacredgroundspirit.org).

**WomenSpirit presents: Krista Tippet, “Speaking of Faith: Why Religion Matters and How to Talk about It”**

Krista Tippet—host of public radio's “Speaking of Faith” who has interviewed widely diverse people, from many faith traditions over these last six years—will share some of what she has come to feel about: What does it mean to be human? Why does religion matter so much in the 21st century? How can we begin to talk about it?

This talk, question and answer period, and reception is being sponsored by WomenSpirit—an ecumenical collaboration of women's religious groups—continuing the series which has brought many women thinkers, authors, and theologians to the Twin Cities in recent years.

Tickets are available through TicketWorks (*no service fee*) or at the door.

**Sunday, February 17, 2:00-4:30 p.m.**

Westminster Presbyterian Church

1200 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis

For tickets [\$12]: 651.209.6689 or [www.ticketworks.com](http://www.ticketworks.com).

For information: 612.202.1200 or

[www.womenspirit-twincities.org](http://www.womenspirit-twincities.org).

“What a man takes in by contemplation,  
that he pours out in love. . . .”

“What we plant in the soil of contemplation,  
we shall reap in the harvest of action. . . .”

Meister Eckhart

### “The Pilgrim’s Way from Ash Wednesday to Easter”

Since the days of the early Church, Christian life has been characterized as a journey to God. Christian spirituality has come to reflect this with the development of pilgrimage—whether physical, in travel to the great holy places, or metaphorical in the personal seeking of God in everyday life. Lent can be a time of special reflection, in which we step aside from our daily routine to seek God through our own deepened spiritual quest.

This retreat will draw from the experience and writings of the Christian tradition and focus on Lent as a pilgrimage in which we see and find God through prayer and reflection, through religious ritual, and through our service to others along the journey. All are invited.

**Friday, Feb. 29, at 6:00 p.m. to Sunday, March 2, at 1:00 pm.**

St. John’s Abbey, in the new Guesthouse, Collegetown  
For information and registration: 320.363.3929 or  
spiritlife@osb.org .

#### Three Retreat Opportunities:

- **Intensive Centering Prayer**

**Friday, March 7, at 7:00 p.m. to Sunday, March 9, at 1:00 p.m.**

Experience a weekend of silence. This includes an opening presentation and several periods of centering prayer each day. Two half-hour video segments by Thomas Keating, followed by short discussions are optional. This retreat is designed for those who have been practicing centering prayer regularly for three months or longer.

- **Finding God in the Ordinary: Spirituality for Busy People**

**Friday, March 14, at 7:00 p.m. to Saturday, March 15, at 3:30 p.m.**

At the edge of our longing is a hunger for God. If

#### **Thomas Merton, in his Hermitage at Gethsemani**

“When psalms surprise me with their music,  
And antiphons turn to rum,  
The Spirit sings; the bottom drops out of my soul.

And from the center of my cellar, Love,  
Louder than thunder,  
Opens a heaven of naked air.”

“Psalm,” from *The Collected Poems*

God is to be found, it is in the “stuff” of our seemingly ordinary lives. This retreat focuses on positive spirituality for busy people, a spirituality rooted in Benedictine wisdom and practice. Presentations, reflection, shared and personal prayer, in an atmosphere of quiet.

- **Triduum / Easter Retreat**

**Thursday, March 20, at 4:00 p.m. to Sunday, March 23, at 1:00 p.m.**

Celebrate the mystery of God’s redemption through Jesus Christ during these sacred days of the Triduum. Join the monastic community in observing the liturgies of Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday. There will be presentations on the liturgies of each day, with group sharing and time for personal reflection and prayer.

Saint Benedict’s Monastery, St. Joseph  
For information and registration: 320.363.7173 or  
dmanuel@csbsju.edu.

#### Three More:

- **Spirituality of the Seasons: Spring**

**Saturday, March 8, 9:00 a.m.-Noon**

The liturgical year has long witnessed how the change of the seasons can be a time of reflection and renewal. This seasonal retreat is an ideal way to make the coming of the solstice a time of spiritual journey.

- **May the Sun Light Our Way: Celtic Wisdom for Pilgrims Today**

**Friday, March 14, at 7:00 p.m. to Sunday, March 16, at 1:00 p.m.**

Join in this annual retreat to celebrate the spirit and joy of the Celtic vision for Christian life.

- **Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina**

**Friday, April 4, at 7:00 p.m. to Sunday, April 6, at 1:00 p.m.**

A time for profound silence and praying with the Scriptures.

The Benedictine Center  
2675 Larpentour Ave. East, St. Paul  
For information and registration: 651.777.7251 or  
www.stpaulsmonastery.org .

### “The Pilgrim’s Way: Desert Simplicity”

This pilgrimage to Ghost Ranch on the high desert of northern New Mexico (where Georgia O’Keefe had her desert home), sponsored by the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation (and led by several long-time *Thin Places* readers), is a very special opportunity for spiritual deepening and renewal, in and by the desert.

The desert has always been a special place of

encounter with God. The fierce beauty of the landscape invites us to let go of any falseness that would get in the way of our truest, most authentic self in God. On this journey, we will draw from the spiritual resources of natural beauty, the simplicity of the desert, and the wisdom of desert peoples.

Our intention will be to let this landscape fill our souls with its beauty, be our guide into prayer and our teacher in simplicity. Daily spiritual practices will include those disciplines which school our eyes in gazing with love and appreciation, our ears in listening to the “still small voice,” our hearts in opening more fully with compassion, and our feet in blessing the earth with each step.

Each of the seven days has a special emphasis: Forming Pilgrim Community . . . Dialogue with the Soul of Place . . . The Wisdom Way . . . The Beautiful Way . . . The Healing Way . . . The Simple Way . . . The Blessing Way. Through it all, we will invite the desert to be our teacher.

**Monday, March 31, before dinner to Monday, April 7, after breakfast**

Ghost Ranch Retreat Center, Abiquiu, NM  
For information or registration: 301.897.7334, ext. 212  
or  
pilgrimage@shalem.org or  
www.shalem.org/short\_programs/pilgrimages/  
ewmexico\_pilgrimage.html.

**“Leading a Life with God: The Practice of Spiritual Leadership”**

Taught by the Rev. Daniel Wolpert, this class will examine the nature of spiritual leadership and how the practice of prayer helps develop spiritual leaders. We will examine, and practice, several methods of prayer and see how each method speaks to a different aspect of leadership. We will also look in detail about how leadership functions to develop spiritual communities.

**Monday-Friday, April 21-25**

Luther Seminary, 2481 Como Avenue, St. Paul  
For information and registration: 218.281.4853 or  
revdoc@gvtel.com  
or www.luthersem.edu/lifelong\_learning/kairos/  
courses/asp#id336.

**Interfaith Theater Fest seeks Volunteers**

“Spirit In The House!” is a festival of sacred performance that will present theater, storytelling, dance and film for ten days, **starting May 23**. Artistic Director Dean J. Seal, former Director of the Fringe Festival, is seeking people who are interested in Interfaith Dialogue to help out. “We need people at the event, but also before, to help spread

the word at any church. We’d like people who want to do shows, or those who want to see them—people who have an interest in learning about the traditions and wisdom of other faiths. It’s a great way to develop the Interfaith Dialogue.”

Past festivals have included shows from Lutheran, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Unitarian, Quaker, Native American, UCC, and non-denominational viewpoints. Titles range from *Witnessing To a Murder* to *Martin Luther: The Musical*. Shows can be comedy, drama, multi-media, original, established, whatever. It must be about ethical, spiritual and religious matters.

For specific opportunities or more information:  
sealtotal@aol.com or 612.823.6005.

**And the “Festival of Homiletics: Transformational Preaching!” is also coming to the Twin Cities: May 19-23**

The 2008 Festival of Homiletics is coming to Central Lutheran Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church, both in Minneapolis. The list of speakers and presenters includes Frederick Buechner, Garrison Keillor (on “Preaching in Lake Wobegon”) Jim Wallis, Walter Brueggemann, Anna Carter Florence, The National Lutheran Choir, and much more.

For full information: [www.goodpreacher.com/festival](http://www.goodpreacher.com/festival).

**Every Day . . .**

“Prayer is a source of loving for you.  
In total selflessness, abandon yourself,  
body and spirit.”

“Every day go deeply into a few lines  
of the Scriptures,  
to be brought face to face  
with Another,  
with the Risen Lord.”

“In silence, let the living word of Christ  
be born in you,  
then put it into practice right away.”

Brother Roger



Westminster Presbyterian Church  
1200 Marquette Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-2419

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 3280  
Minneapolis, MN

“Through All . . .”  
“Centering down . . .”



## AFTERWORDS: “Centering Down . . .”

How often must something be said? How long does it take to hear? The “Afterwords” in the last issue began by remembering Thomas Keating and others saying that we only hear what we are ready to hear. Perhaps a case in point: Morton Kelsey’s **The Other Side of Silence**. A book published in 1976 recently noticed, resting on the shelf, apparently with only the first few pages read before having been put aside. Picked up, and opened. And here are John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, The Jesus Prayer and *The Pilgrim’s Tale*, Brother Lawrence and *The Practice of the Presence of God* . . . no Rumi noted, but here are *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Catherine of Siena and Dag Hammarskjöld and Thomas Merton and . . . names that resonate when we read them now.

A few passages in the early pages were marked, but many more seemed to have been passed over without pausing:

“There is mana in certain places that can draw a person to silence, for instance in a room which has known the silence and listening of many people. This was the power that Jacob felt when he woke from dreaming of the ladder to heaven and cried out, ‘Truly, Yahweh is in this place and I never knew it!’”

“Meditation is a way for us to unlock the door and come out from the places where many of us have been hiding . . . a process of opening ourselves . . .”

“One’s effort is to be silent enough to hear: first, the deepest needs of one’s own heart, and then the promptings of the creative Spirit in whatever direction it may indicate.”

And a few passages (in thought or in phrase) catch the ear in a different way. Writing thirty years ago—before even the earliest days of the Shalem Institute—Episcopalian Kelsey laments that “there are very few spiritual directors in the modern Church, Catholic or Protestant.” And a little later, summarizing his early chapters, Kelsey writes, “Centering down . . . is the way to find the meaning of silence.”

A snowy morning. Picking up a long-unnoticed book. A reminder that we only hear what we are ready to hear . . . that readiness is all . . . that (as in Holman Hunt’s famous painting of Christ at the Door) the knob is on our side of the door . . . that meditation is a way to unlock the door . . . centering down . . . the meaning of silence . . .