



Horizons (Westminster)

# Thin Places

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## Oneness . . . by the Rev. Peg Chamberlin

Moving towards oneness has always felt life-giving to me. And encountering divisions—or perhaps creating them—has ultimately felt life-draining.

I vividly remember one of my own deep experiences of division. I grew up in the Moravian Church and in 1965, when I was 16 and at church camp, the president of the church came to us and announced, “If there are any who think you are being called to ministry, please meet me in the chapel after lunch.” I was the only one who came. He hemmed and hawed, “Well, have you ever thought about being a teacher or a nurse? We certainly do need those vocations in the mission field right now!”

I didn’t know enough to be mad, and I walked away with a vague sense of being left out. Responsibilities were divided. Men could be ministers. Women could be teachers or nurses. That was the way it was. In time, of course, that division came to be seen as artificial. The denomination began to ordain women, and eventually the possibility of going to seminary and of ordination opened to me. And, in what may seem like an ironic twist, I married a nurse, a wonderful nurse. And if you ever have to be in hospital at Abbot Northwestern, you will be fortunate if you are able to receive his care!

After ordination I thought of myself as a Moravian Christian. And at some level I still do. If you ask, in meeting me, who I am, I might say that I am a Moravian clergyperson. But more and more I have come to describe myself as an ecumenical Christian, from the Greek word, *oikoumene*, the ‘whole inhabited earth,’ or the ‘whole earth household.’

I remember a number of years ago when a few religious leaders were called to a meeting at the White House to talk about the possibilities of life on Mars. Most of those there were biologists, physicists, astronomers. In the conversation, the word “ecumenical” came up a number of times. And it wasn’t from the religious leaders. It was the scientists who talked about the ecumenical nature of the foundations of life . . . who said that in order for life to exist, diversity is required . . . who claimed that the richness of all created things comes from their diversity rather than from their sameness. The basic assumption of the ecumenical movement—just as fundamental an assumption as that of these scientists—is that the earth is one earth, the inhabited earth is all part of one inter-related whole.

So, too, the Body of Christ. And this oneness is not something that we create but a gift already given by God in Christ. Our unity is not a function of agreements or of votes taken at synod meetings or even of deliberations over interpretations of scripture or fine points of theology or agreement to doctrine. The Body of Christ is One: one Lord, one faith, one baptism. In Christ, God has already prevailed against all division of Christ.

“Oneness . . .” . . . continues on page 2

page 3  
*Ongoing Opportunities*  
page 4  
*One-Time Opportunities*  
page 7  
*Reading 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



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Look for *Thin Places* at: [www.thinplaces.us](http://www.thinplaces.us) or [www.ewestminster.org/thin\\_places](http://www.ewestminster.org/thin_places)

Thus, as Christians in relationship in Christ, we are in relationship with each other. If you say you love the Lord, if you call yourself a Christian, if you have been baptized in the waters of baptism, then you are part of the One Body, the one family.

And diversity within this one family is not division. Our diversity can be and should be the source of our richness rather than of our separateness. The task of the ecumenical Christian is not to ignore differences or move toward sameness. It is not to whitewash the diverse character of our being. It is, instead, to act to see our diversity as a gift. And to understand that diversity needs freedom to flourish.

That is true in biology, and it is true in the journey of every human being. I'll say it again. Diversity needs freedom to flourish. True for us, true for our planet.

Not long after my church began to ordain women (by then I'd gone through five majors and numerable vocational choices, including teaching!), I had a second experience which—although I didn't realize it for many years—was also about oneness. I had begun to wonder, “Maybe I should think about ministry again.” I went to a New Year's Eve service and at this service in the Moravian church, we draw texts, by lot, which we are to hold on to and pray about for the whole year. There are many Biblical texts on slips of paper in a big bowl, and you put your hand in and pull one out. I drew *Luke 4*: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.”

I didn't tell anybody about that for a long time. And I kept reading it this way: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he is anointing me to preach good news.” “Okay,” I thought, “maybe I should be a preacher.” “Maybe I am going to be a preacher.” And I kept avoiding, “to the poor,” because of what I thought that might get me into—it was what I really didn't want to do. Good middle-class young woman, wanted to stay in her class. Did not want to be Dorothy Day on the streets of old New York.

But experiences kept coming that seemed to move me beyond oneness among Christians in the organized

Church, towards oneness among people. I saw that the divisions caused by economic class are among the greatest. After I came to the Minnesota Council of Churches fifteen years ago, I began to see that among the most powerful ways in which we live out our oneness in the Body of Christ—and also our oneness in interfaith cooperation—is through the work we do together on social justice issues. I have seen that effort for oneness at work in the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition and in the “Minnesota Without Poverty” movement. I have seen that mission in the report of the Legislative Commission to End Poverty.

Langdon Gilkey has said that the ecumenical worldview “assumes that love takes precedence over purity” . . . that “God will be honored less by the purity of our beliefs than by the visible truth of our love for each neighbor.” For me, this is profoundly true, marking where I now am on my journey.

One day when I was sixteen I was told that men could do some things and that women could do others. And I believed what my leadership told me. But possibilities were opened to me, and I have been drawn more and more into ecumenism. And along the way, the call to obligated public action has seemed to come from and to be deeply connected to the spirituality of our oneness and our relatedness. God has brought into existence a human family of great diversity. But it is a whole earth household, a single human family.

I carry with me the words of a simple but beautiful chant (written by the Rev. Dr. David Keller, the Founding Warden of The Episcopal House of Prayer in Colledgeville):

**“In the name of the Holy One,  
In the name of the Son,  
In the name of the Spirit,  
We are made one.”**

And the words of Jesus, **“I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty...a stranger...naked...Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”**

*The Rev. Peg Chamberlin, ordained in the Moravian Church in American-North, is the Executive Director of the Minnesota Council of Churches (which has 24 member judicatories with, 2,000 congregations, and 1.2 million constituents). Last November she was also installed as President of the National Council of Churches (36 member communions with 100,000 congregations, 45 million constituents). She has been the long-term leader of the ecumenical Holy Week Retreat at Ghost Ranch, in the high desert of New Mexico. She may be reached at: [pegchamberlin@mnchurches.org](mailto:pegchamberlin@mnchurches.org).*

**Do you know someone who might like to read  
*Thin Places?* (It's sent free to all who request it.)**

**Do you know of an up-coming “Opportunity” that  
might be of interest to others?**

**If ‘yes’ to either, please contact Kathy Fisher at:  
[kfisher@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:kfisher@wpc-mpls.org) or 612.332.3421**

### Presbyterian Clearwater Forest

Nestled amongst the countless lakes, golf courses and resorts in the Brainerd Lakes area is a sacred space set apart that far too few people know exists. **Clearwater Forest Christian Camp and Conference Center** rests along three and a half miles of undeveloped shoreline on Clearwater Lake and encompasses more than 1,000 acres of pristine wilderness. Spaces such as this are a rarity in the age of over-developed lakeshores and large acreages being split up or sold for development.

Groups and individuals from many denominations and faith expressions have found their way to Clearwater Forest. In addition to retreats and summer programs for children, you will find intergenerational events, family camps and a week-long Creative Arts Festival. Groups may also reserve space and plan their own program. Food service is available or you may cook your own food in the kitchen space provided in each lodge.

The signature structure at Clearwater Forest is Eagle Lodge, a nine bedroom stone lodge built in the 1920's as a summer home for a wealthy mining family. Two other stone homes and a stone barn and boat house were also constructed, all from stone excavated from the property. Miles of trails, a prayer labyrinth, a Hermitage cabin and many recreation opportunities can also be part of your experience.

Presbyterian Clearwater Forest, Deerwood, MN  
For information and a full listing of program and camp possibilities: visit [www.clearwaterforest.org](http://www.clearwaterforest.org) or call 218-678-2325.

Or join us for **Friends & Neighbors Day**  
**July 10, 2010 from 10:30 a.m.-7:00 p.m.:**

tour the property, enjoy a sailboat or pontoon ride, give sea kayaking or the high ropes course a try and enjoy live music, picnic meals, and a relaxing day with your family and friends.

### The Hermitage at Clearwater

Now in its fourth year, the Clearwater Hermitage is making real the hope with which it was created: offering a very special "sacred" space for solitude and prayer, for reflection and writing, for relaxation and renewal.

Deep in the woods, the Hermitage has a large picture window and a screened porch for nature watching. Inside you will find simple comforts, an extra-long bed, a comfortable chair, and a broad writing table. For your convenience there is electricity for lighting, a coffee maker, a microwave, and a small refrigerator. A propane fireplace provides warmth in cooler weather.

**The Hermitage is available at NO COST** to clergy and religious—of every denomination and faith tradition—

and to Christian Educators, Youth Directors and other church professionals and to all others at minimal cost.

This is a special place of peace, where one may heal the body and nourish the soul and restore the spirit:

**Available 7 days a week, year around**

To reserve the Hermitage, contact us at 218.678.2325.

### The Hermitage Experience

The hermitage experience is for many a step beyond a retreat, even a silent retreat. It is not "better" than a retreat, certainly not, but the silence is more complete and unbroken. Some who have never spent a day and a night, or more, in a hermitage setting may be apprehensive about what it will be like. But the men and women who have tried it—since the desert mothers and fathers in the earliest days of the Church—have found that the heart of the hermitage experience is the freedom to become quiet and still within . . . enabling one to enter more freely into the presence of God. Simplicity, silence and solitude create the environment for that freedom.

### Taizé Evening Prayer, in the New Monastery

Taizé Prayer uses simple chants based on the Scriptures and periods of silence to create an environment for encountering the mystery of God. This hour of quiet, gentle, communal prayer can dispel the burdens of the week and free one for the renewal of the weekend.

If you come, you will also be able to see the lovely new Chapel and Monastery facilities:

**Third Friday of each month, 7:00-8:00 p.m.**

Saint Paul's Monastery, in the Chapel

### Oneness

"In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race. . . . There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun!

Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one of them is in God's eyes. . . . If only they could all see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed . . . "

Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*

2675 Benet Road, St. Paul  
For information or directions: 651.777.7251.

### **Our Taizé Cross**

We have here in the Twin Cities one of two tall Crosses created by Brother Eric—the other one being in the Church of Reconciliation at Taizé in France, where it is used every Friday at Evening Prayers.

The Taizé Cross is available to any who ask to use it, traveling to worship services at St. Paul's Monastery, Luther Seminary, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Minnehaha Methodist and many other churches and spirituality centers throughout the region.

In so doing, it reflects and embodies the intentional ecumenism of the Taizé Community:  
For information or to reserve: 612.870.3610.

### **Peaceful Presence**

This is a time for silent prayer and meditation, in downtown St. Paul:

**First Wednesdays, each month, 10:30-11:00 a.m.**

Central Presbyterian Church  
500 Cedar Street, St. Paul (next door to MPR)  
For information: 651.224.4728 or office@cpkstpaul.org.

### **"We've stopped having 'church' every Sunday...**

Seeking to deepen *being* the church beyond *going* to church, we have created two "Sabbath Weekends" a month, gathering for worship on Saturday evenings and intentionally setting aside Sunday as a Day of Rest.

Saturday "Sabbath" services incorporate Taizé-style music, reflection on scripture, interactive elements, prayer, silence and art, and are followed by a shared meal. Sabbath Sundays are then dedicated to rest, family, and practices that nurture the soul and cultivate joy.

Since we began holding them, Saturday services have enriched our community, and they have been a blessing to visiting ministers and others who work on Sundays. My children look forward to our Sabbath Sundays, as our family sinks into a different rhythm, responding to each other and the world around us with more awareness and choice, and less obligation and rush.

These new rhythms and practices are deepening my own experience of worship, and my sense of God's presence in the ordinary. The Rev. Kara Root":

**Gatherings of Reflection & Renewal happen  
2nd & 4th Saturdays each month, beginning at 5 p.m.**

Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church  
1620 E 46th Street, Minneapolis  
To find out more about Sabbath Weekends visit:  
www.lakenokomisp.org.

### **Healing the Land: Renewing Pilgrims, Reconciling Peoples, Restoring Places**

This is the annual retreat/conference for 2010 of **The Community of Aidan & Hilda (US)**. To learn more about the Community, and for full retreat/conference details, visit [www.aidantrust.org](http://www.aidantrust.org):

**Friday, June 4, at 4 p.m.-Sun., June 6, at 11:30 a.m.**

Mt. Olivet Conference and Retreat Center  
7984 257th Street West, Farmington  
For information or registration: 507.302.9160 or paul@aidantrust.org or pauljohn@frontiernet.net.

### **Summer Institute in Spirituality & the Arts: "Explorations in Creativity, Worship, and Faith"**

Participants are offered an opportunity to explore the intersections of art and religion in their personal lives and faith communities. The various tracks available provide tools for spiritual growth, personal reflection, and congregational renewal.

Those who come will leave refreshed for their work in the world through creative encounters with leaders, each other, and the Holy:

**Tuesday-Friday, June 15-18, 9:00 a.m.-3:45 p.m.**

United Theological Seminary  
3000 Fifth Street Northwest, New Brighton

### **Remembering Brother Roger**

"This week we remember our Brother Roger. [Five] years ago, on 16 August 2005, he died right here, in this church, at Evening Prayer.

Brother Roger loved our times of prayer in this place. And in the evenings, he stayed a long time to listen to those who came to him.

You may not know that, when he was young, Brother Roger questioned the reality of God's love. Because of that, his whole life long he understood, from within, those who were undergoing doubts.

An intuition made it possible for him to find a way out of that difficult period. That intuition was this: without being able to understand everything about God, and the Gospel, it is possible to put into practice the little bit we have understood.

And that meant for him living the peace of Christ, moving towards reconciliation. Beginning first of all with just a few people, in community, and then welcoming as far as possible all those who were coming to the hill of Taizé. . . ."

Brother Alois, 14 August 2009  
The Church of Reconciliation, Taizé

For information or registration: 651.633.4311 or [www.unitedseminary.edu](http://www.unitedseminary.edu).

### Monthly Taizé Retreat

This retreat flows from our regular Third Friday Taizé Prayer, exploring more deeply one of the Benedictine values. This month's focus: "the music of silence":

**Friday, June 18, at 6:30 p.m.-Sat., June 19, at 10 a.m.**  
also:

### Centering Prayer and *Lectio Divina* Retreat

This retreat will deepen your experience with these two spiritual practices, offering times of profound silence and an opportunity to pray the Scriptures with other guests and the monastic community:

**Friday, July 30, at 7 p.m.-Wed., Aug. 4, at 1 p.m.**

The Benedictine Center, St. Paul's Monastery  
2675 Benet Road, St. Paul

For information or registration: 651.777.7251 or [www.stpaulsmonastery.org](http://www.stpaulsmonastery.org).

### 3 R's Retreat: Rest, Revive, Re-Create

Renew your spirit through guided meditation, prayer, nature, music and art. Rejuvenate physically through restorative yoga, dance, drumming, and body work. Join group creativities, or just relax and take your own soul's rest:

**Sunday, June 20, at 5 p.m.-Tues., June 22, at 2 p.m.**  
or **Wed., June 23, at 5 p.m.-Fri., June 25, at 2 p.m.**  
or **Both Sessions: Sunday-Friday, June 20-25**

also:

### Writing Journey, Sacred Journey: "Writing as a Spiritual Practice"

Spend a weekend exploring how writing well can become a spiritual commitment—to uncovering and witnessing the truth, to opening your heart to the reader, and to a creative engagement with the larger world.

Join in writing exercises, converse about the process, and study examples from master writers. Any level of experience:

**Friday, July 30, at 7 p.m.-Sun., Aug. 1, at 2 p.m.**  
and:

### 4th and 5th Step Retreat

Members of all 12-step programs are welcomed to this healing, contemplative environment, offering private time for reflection as well as thoughtful group discussion. Experienced facilitators will be at hand to support and listen to your 5th step. Confidentiality is a priority:

**Friday, Aug. 20, at 7 p.m.-Sun., Aug. 22, at 2 p.m.**

ARC Ecumenical Retreat Center, Stanchfield, MN  
For information or registration: 763.689.3540 or [www.arcretreat.org](http://www.arcretreat.org) or [arcretreat@hotmail.com](mailto:arcretreat@hotmail.com).

### The Practice of Sabbath

"Like a path through the forest, Sabbath creates a marker for ourselves so, if we are lost, we can find our way back to our center.

'Remember the Sabbath' means 'Remember that everything that you have received is a blessing. Remember to delight in your life, in the fruits of your labor. Remember to stop and offer thanks for the wonder of it.'  
Wayne Muller

Spend a day learning, practicing how to keep Sabbath in this culture, in this time, right here:

**Saturday, June 26, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.**

Sabbath House, 3228 Portland Ave. So., Minneapolis  
For information or registration: 320.632.2981 or [sabbathhouse@fslf.org](mailto:sabbathhouse@fslf.org) or [www.fslf.org](http://www.fslf.org).

### Directed Retreat

Spend time in prayer and silence, celebrating the Eucharist with the group. Included is an opportunity to meet one-to-one with a spiritual director each day. One Hermit Day of solitude is also arranged:

**Sunday, June 27, at 7 p.m.-Sat., July 3, at 3 p.m.**

Spirituality Center, Saint Benedict's Monastery,  
St. Joseph, MN

For information or registration: 320.363.7116 or [www.smb.osb.org/programs](http://www.smb.osb.org/programs) or [dmanuel@csbsju.edu](mailto:dmanuel@csbsju.edu).

### The Blessings of Jesus: Ancient Wisdom & The New Consciousness

These three retreats will be led by **J. Philip Newell** and **Ali Newell**, in the high desert of northern New Mexico, at Ghost Ranch, the long-time home of Georgia O'Keefe.

We live in the midst of a new consciousness, a growing awareness of the inter-relatedness of all things. Holiness is to be found in wholeness, not separation. The blessings of Jesus provide us with a new-ancient wisdom for today.

### "Mystery . . .

. . . is all around us, and we do not know it.  
But sometimes when we give it time and space,  
whether in deep peace or great anguish,  
it will come up behind us,  
or meet us face to face,  
or move within us,  
changing the way we see everything,  
and filling our hearts with joy  
and an upspringing of love  
that needs no direct object  
because everything is its object."

Mary Morrison, *Let Evening Come*

This retreat—which will use as its basic text the *Casa del Sol Blessings of Jesus*—will consist of prayer at the rising of the sun in Ghost Ranch's Agape Center courtyard, teaching and sharing in the mornings and evenings, and rest and silence in the afternoons:

**Monday to Sunday, July 5-11 or July 12-18 or July 19-25**  
also:

**Wisdom of the Desert, June 7-13,**

**High Desert Spiritual Quest, July 19-25**

Casa del Sol at Ghost Ranch, Abiquiu, NM

For information or registration for these five—or for many other—opportunities: [www.ghostranch.org](http://www.ghostranch.org) or 505.685.4333 or [registrar@ghostranch.org](mailto:registrar@ghostranch.org).

**Wisdom Ways Children's Spirituality** presents the 2nd Annual Peace Camp for girls and boys, ages 8-12  
**"Witnessing Identities through Story."**

Responding to many positive responses from our first Peace Camp, this is a week-long day camp in which children are able to explore and re-imagine ways to be every day peacemakers and create a vision for peace.

With musicians, artists, storytellers, spiritual guides, gardeners and other creative facilitators, children will engage one another and learn from ancient truths and wisdom:

**Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., July 12-16**

Wisdom Ways Center for Spirituality

1890 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul

For information or registration:

[wisdomways@csjstpaul.org](mailto:wisdomways@csjstpaul.org) or 651.696.2788 or [www.wisdomwayscenter.org](http://www.wisdomwayscenter.org).

**What actions can I take to more fully realize the power of the Spirit?**

"Jesus says, 'I am not asking you to believe my words. Look instead at my actions or the works that I do.'

Actions speak for themselves, whereas words we can argue about on a theoretical level. The longer I have tried to follow Jesus, the more I can really say that I no longer *believe* in Jesus. I *know* Jesus. I know him because I have taken his advice, taken his risks—and it always proves itself to be true!

Jesus is not telling us to believe unbelievable things, as if that would somehow please God. Much more he is saying to us, "try this, and you will see for yourself that it is true." But that initial trying is always a leap of faith into some kind of action or practice. . . .

**We do not think ourselves into a new way of living. We live ourselves into a new way of thinking."**

Richard Rohr, *Preparing for Christmas*

**How to Deal with a Prickly Porcupine**

Each of us often rubs shoulders with a porcupine, a difficult person whom we wish lived in Antarctica.

We will explore the two hands that heal us: the right hand that sets boundaries so we can care for ourselves and find inner peace. And the left hand that reaches out to create peace, without becoming another porcupine, who blames or tries to fix the other.

Led by Fr. Matt Linn:

**Friday, July 23, at 7 p.m.-Sunday, July 25, at 1 p.m.**

Christ the King Retreat Center, Buffalo, MN

For information or registration: 763.682.1394 or [www.kingshouse.com](http://www.kingshouse.com) or [christtheking@kingshouse.com](mailto:christtheking@kingshouse.com).

**A School of Contemplative Wisdom (Week 1)**

From time immemorial there have been wisdom schools to raise human consciousness, thereby transforming society. Concerned with life lived in the fullness of human being and consciousness, Wisdom has been transmitted across time as a treasury of theory and practice to teach us how to awaken.

Once again Lynn Bauman will be returning to work with a teacher new to us, David Stringer, poet, priest, writer, retreat leader and teacher. Poetics will be our topic this year, including modern nature poets of spirit as well as the unknown ancient mystic poet's, "Hymn of the Pearl."

If you are registering for our Wisdom Academy for the first time, we would recommend that you read **Cynthia Bourgeault's *The Wisdom Way of Knowing*** before attending either Week 1 or Week 2:

**Sunday to Saturday, July 18-24**

The Episcopal House of Prayer, Colledgeville, MN

For information or registration: 320.363.3293 or

[houseprayer@csbsju.edu](mailto:houseprayer@csbsju.edu) or [www.ehouseofprayer.org](http://www.ehouseofprayer.org).

also offered by The Episcopal House of Prayer,

**A School of Contemplative Wisdom (Week 2):**

**"Conscious Love: A Pilgrimage to Assisi"**

We will gather in the beautiful Umbrian Hill Province of Perugia—the home of Francis and Clare—to offer a unique Wisdom School.

Drawing upon the loving, spiritual energy of this place, our pilgrimage will include the feast days of St. Clare, St. Ruffino and the Assumption.

Morning meditation and wisdom classes will be combined with afternoon pilgrimages to holy sites, including spiritual practices and rites. Our work will be contemplative, rigorous, deeply reflective and personally engaging. Led by Cynthia Bourgeault, Ward Bauman and Susanne Olin:

**Friday to Friday, August 6-13**

For information or registration: 320.363.3293 or [houseprayer@csbsju.edu](mailto:houseprayer@csbsju.edu) or [www.ehouseofprayer.org](http://www.ehouseofprayer.org).

### Looking Ahead:

"I am at the Monastery of Christ in the Desert, Abiquiu, New Mexico. I was bombarded by impressions getting here yesterday. Sangre de Cristo Mountains, blue and snowy. But after Santa Fe, a marvelous long line of snowless, arid mountains. Clean long shapes, stretching for miles under pure light.

Mesas, full rivers, cottonwoods, sagebrush, high red cliffs, piñon pines. Most impressed of all by the miles of emptiness. Around the monastery, nothing. Perfect silence. Bright stars at night dimly light the guest room."

Thomas Merton, May 1968

### A Desert Pilgrimage: Santa Fe & Abiquiu, NM

Come join us in pilgrimage to experience the presence of God together in the desert and, thereby, to renew our spiritual lives and to engage the desert traditions in our Christian tradition—from the Bible, the Desert Mothers and Fathers of the early centuries, and more recent spiritual masters, such as Thomas Merton.

Come join us to build community among us, to enjoy the beauty of creation, to appreciate Benedictine spirituality and hospitality, to enjoy the paintings and vistas of Georgia O'Keefe, to experience the artistic environment of Santa Fe:

### Saturday to Saturday, October 16-23

Sponsored by Christos Center for Spiritual Formation  
For information or registration: [www.christoscenter.org](http://www.christoscenter.org)  
or [holtb@augzburg.org](mailto:holtb@augzburg.org).

### “. . . Forced to the ground . . .”

"A desire to kneel down sometimes pulses through my body, or rather it is as if my body has been meant and made for the act of kneeling. Sometimes, in moments of deep gratitude, kneeling down becomes an overwhelming urge, head deeply bowed, hands before my face. . . .

Last night, shortly before going to bed, I suddenly went down on my knees in the middle of this large room, between the steel chairs and the matting. Almost automatically. Forced to the ground by something stronger than myself. Some time ago I said to myself, "I am a kneeler in training." I was still embarrassed by this act, as intimate as gestures of love that cannot be put into words either except by a poet."

Etty Hillesum, *An Interrupted Life*

### *Einstein's God: Conversations about Science and the Human Spirit*, by Krista Tippett

Krista Tippett, of Minnesota and National Public Radio's "*Speaking of Faith*," draws upon ten years of conversations with thoughtful and articulate people for her second book. As she says with particular clarity in her thesis statement,

"To insist that science and religion speak the same language, or draw the same conclusions, is to miss the point of both of these pursuits of cohesive knowledge and underlying truth. To create a competition between them, in terms of relevance or rightness, is self-defeating. Both science and religion are set to animate the twenty-first century with new vigor. . . . This book is a conversational introduction to **an interplay between scientific and religious questions—not as argued, but as lived.**"

Her attention had been first captured years ago by Sir John Polkingborne, a Cambridge quantum physicist who also

"became a Cambridge theologian in midlife and has written eloquently about finding both science and religion necessary to interpret the '**rich, varied and surprising way the world actually is.**' I found his approach revelatory as I was cautiously finding my own way back to religion. As a physicist, Polkingborne sees a universe that is '**supple**' and '**subtle**'—**a mix of determinism and of freedom**—and this informs his imagination about the nature of God, what happens when we die, and what happens when he prays."

"Here, as in so many other realms of life, a wider lens of perspective can make all the difference," she writes. A "scientific puzzle that Einstein chewed on, the question of whether light is a particle or a wave, was resolved by a teacher of John Polkingborne, Paul Dirac, with the unexpected, seemingly illogical conclusion that it is *both*. And here's the key that made that discovery possible: how we ask our questions affects the answers we arrive at. **Light appears as a wave if you ask it 'a wavelike question' and it appears a particle if you ask it 'particle-like question.'** This is a template for understanding how contradictory explanations of reality can simultaneously be true."

"I wonder if Einstein would be as fascinated as I am at how science in our age is yielding measurable insights into the tools of the trade of the spiritual geniuses of the ages."

"Einstein came to understand his contemporary, Mahatma Gandhi, and other figures such as Jesus, Moses, St. Francis of Assisi, Buddha, as 'spiritual geniuses'—**geniuses in the art of living . . . more necessary to the sustenance of global human dignity, security and joy than the discovers of objective knowledge.**"

This is a book that doesn't seek to 'make a case' but which, instead, gathers conversations that explore and enrich **these two powerful ways of knowing.**

You might wish to consider looking into it for yourself.



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“Oneness . . .”  
“The Heartbeat of God . . .”

## AFTERWORDS: “*The Heartbeat of God*”

In the Gospel of John we read about an unnamed “beloved disciple.” That man, John tells us, is “the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper.” We never learn the name of “the one Jesus loved.”

The last lines of the Gospel of John focus on this mysterious disciple. The lingering image is of an enigmatic figure especially close to Jesus. The ancient Celtic Christians were drawn to John’s beloved disciple. They remember him as the one who leaned up against Jesus at the Last Supper and heard the heartbeat of God.

The vocation of those who follow Jesus is to hear the heartbeat of God, and then to live by its rhythm. When we sense the divine mystery pulsing through the world around us we enter what the old Celts called a “thin place.”

Christian faith has become too wordy, as if we could talk our way into faithfulness. John turns our attention toward a faith that begins by listening, a faith that longs to live in the passion of a heartbeat.

When was the last time you heard a heartbeat?

I remember hearing the rapid **whoosh—whoosh—whoosh** of our baby’s heart while still in the womb. The beat connects the child to the mother; it links them to the very heartbeat of God. That rhythm unites us to God and to the whole creation, all of which bears that same cadence of Oneness.

How do we hear the heartbeat of God? We begin by listening for it. We have to be still and wait for it.

Last summer at Ghost Ranch in northern New Mexico we spent an evening around a campfire. Into the silence around the fire came the sound of a Native American drum, steady and slow. The leader invited us to listen for the heartbeat of God.

Gradually I relaxed. I became quiet inside. I listened to the night, to the stars. I watched the fire and felt the air around me and sensed the beat of life in the earth. And that beat connected to my heart and to the hearts of those around me in the silence. That beat connected us to the heartbeat of God.

Faithful living needs time for quiet . . . to allow each of us to hear the heartbeat of God . . . and in that cadence, we will hear the heartbeat of every human being and the life of all creation, longing to be restored and made whole.

[The “Afterwords” for this issue was written by Timothy Hart-Andersen]