

Formed by the Spirit

The Newsletter of the Southwark
Diocesan Spiritual Formation Group

Opportunities, events, resources and articles
on prayer and spirituality

Issue 26: October 2015



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When your household sits down for a meal, if you are wise you will first sit down yourself. Then you will be able to serve them easily and happily. In your charity to your neighbor remember that your nearest neighbor is yourself [John of Forde, born c 1150]

Prayer for healing

This course will explore pastoral, theological and practical issues related to prayer for healing. For example: What does it mean to be 'whole'? How do we respond to potentially vulnerable people with respect and sensitivity? What expectations do we have of God when we pray? This course may be helpful for prayer ministry teams or churches planning initiatives related to healing.

Mondays, October 12th and 19th, 10.30am to 1pm in Trinity House.

Led by Hilary Fife and Chris Chapman

Prayer of the Heart:

An introduction to Christian Meditation

Tuesdays November 10th and 17th, 10.30am to 1pm in Trinity House

Christian Meditation is a way of contemplative prayer, prayer of the heart without words or images. It is a very early form of Christian prayer used by the desert fathers and mothers and recovered by Fr. John Main, a Benedictine monk, in the last century. We shall be hearing about its origins, its way of creating community and, most importantly, practising it ourselves. Led by Eileen McDade. Eileen McDade has been meditating for about 12 years and looks after a group at Westminster Cathedral as well as being the coordinator for NW London. She is co-founder of Silence in the City and gives regular introductory courses and quiet days.

A Glimpse beyond the Veil:

Praying with Icons

Tuesdays February 2nd and 9th, 10.30am to 1pm in Trinity House
Led by Sister Magdalen Lawler SND
An opportunity to understand icons and their origins more fully in order to be able to use them as an aid to prayer. This is NOT in icon painting course. We will take a closer, more reflective look at some well-known icons and discover the truths they reveal.

To book for the above contact Chris Chapman, 020 7939 9474

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org

Parenting and Spirituality

Light in the Chaos

at St Mildred's Addiscombe CR0 7EB.

Saturday 31st October 10am-1pm



Having small children can turn not only your house upside-down, but your whole world, including your relationship with God and the church. *Light in the Chaos* aims to explore some of the blessings and challenges small children bring to your spiritual life, to resource and encourage you.

Inclusive worship, prayer spaces, workshops for parents, children's activities and resources will be available.

You will be able to choose from these workshops:

- **God Talk** - what we can learn from talking with children about God.
- **Stillness in the chaos** - a chance to have a moment of quiet meditation.
- **Where does the light go when you turn off the switch?** Exploring how children's observations help us understand the deeper truths about our faith.
- **A way to live amidst the chaos** - Developing a work, rest, play and prayer balance that is sustainable and realistic.

Prior booking is essential. For more details and a booking form contact Chris Chapman,

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org

020 7939 9474

SAGE

Southwark Spirituality and Age Group

The gift of years

*A retreat day for people
in the second half of life*



Saturday November 3rd, 10.30am to 3.30pm
in the Chapter Room, Southwark Cathedral
Led by Sr. Magdalen Lawler SND and Chris
Chapman

Beginning with Rembrandt's portrait of the
Presentation in the Temple we will use
artwork, poetry and scripture to explore how
we can be alive to meet and respond to
Christ's presence within the complexity of
our lives.

Suggested donation £15

To book contact

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org

020 7939 9474

Adventuring

*4 Advent reflections for groups or
individuals in the second half of life*

These 4 reflections look back at biblical
figures who took up the adventure of
responding to the work of God in their lives.
All were well on in years. Perhaps they
thought that the time for new beginnings
had passed them by. The reality was that
their greatest adventures lay ahead of
them.

Week one: **Abraham and Sarah:**
Time for new adventure

Week two: **Moses:** *Time for letting go*

Week three: **Job:** *Time to meet mystery*

Week four: **Simeon and Anna:**
Time to wait with hope

Soon to be available at

<http://www.southwark.anglican.org/resources/>

or contact Chris Chapman

Where the Spirit Leads

*A Short Refresher Course
in Spiritual Direction*



This short course gives the opportunity to
explore afresh what is at the heart of the
ministry of spiritual direction. We welcome
existing spiritual directors and those who
trained as spiritual directors in the past but
are not currently active in this role.

Wednesday 4th November

What spiritual direction is... and what it isn't

Wednesday 11th November

Approaches to spiritual direction.

Wednesday 18th November

Listening to the Spirit

Wednesday 25th November

Meeting issues and challenges

All sessions 1pm to 3pm in Trinity House,
London SE1 1HW

To find out more or to register please
contact Chris Chapman 020 7939 9474,
chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org



Wychcroft quiet days and retreats

Wychcroft is the Diocesan retreat and training centre near Bletchingley Surrey.

Waiting on God

An Advent quiet day



Thursday 3rd December, 10am to 4pm,
Waiting for an answer, waiting for clarity
about the path ahead... waiting for God.
Using insights from the bible, from poetry
and from the writings of Simone Weil this day
will give the space to wait and work with
purpose for the coming of the Saviour.

Led by Chris Chapman

Cost including lunch: £26.50

Listening to the song of the heart -

A Retreat for Lent



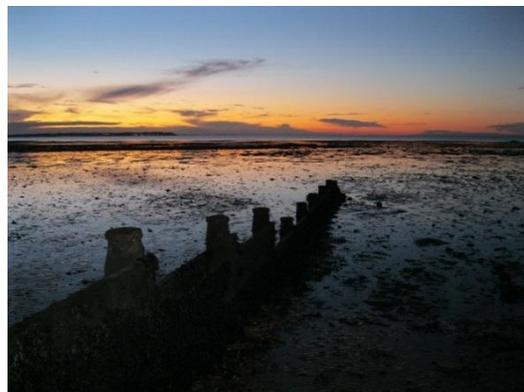
Friday 12th to Sunday 14th February 2016

Lent is a time for turning to God and
discovering afresh the life-giving Spirit in the
depths of our being. We are often too busy
and driven to listen to this song of the heart.
This weekend will give prayerful space to
know more of who we are in God and what
this means for the future direction of our
lives. Cost: £125

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org
02079399474

Diocesan Prayer and Spirituality Day Awakening: Meeting the risen Jesus in daily life

Saturday April 16th 2016, 10am to 4pm
in Southwark Cathedral



Awakening will help us bring together past,
present and future within the flow of the
Spirit's work in our lives. We will re-view
our past, seeing afresh the footprints of God
within our experience. We will recognise
anew how Jesus walks with us now and calls
us by name. We will listen for how the Spirit
draws us to respond as we turn to the days
to come

The main speaker will be Margaret Silf,
author of numerous books on deepening
prayer and Christian discipleship, including
Landmarks, and most recently *Sacred in the
City: Seeing the Spiritual in the Everyday*.
The day will close with a reflection led by
Bishop Christopher

A wide variety of workshops will be on offer
on topics such as making pilgrimage, listening
to the Spirit in daily life, praying with the
bible, the healing of our past and Christian
meditation.

There will be a variety of creative prayer
spaces and a marketplace of resources for
individuals and churches.

For more details or to book your place
contact Chris Chapman,

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org
020 7939 9474

Events at the London Spirituality Centre

Lombard Street, London EC3V 9EA

Tel: 020 7621 1391

info@spiritualitycentre.org

<http://www.spiritualitycentre.org>

Exploring Christian Spirituality

Led by Antonia Lynn and John-Francis Friendship

Starts November 23rd 2015, 19 sessions over two terms Monday afternoons 2 - 4.45pm).

The Course is open to people of all traditions, those of other faith groups, and any who are interested in exploring the theme of Christian Spirituality.

This Course is intended to be experiential rather than academic – to complement personal journeys in spiritual *All bookings made by 5pm on the 9th October will receive £50 off the normal cost of £350*

Other workshops & upcoming events:

Open Soul Space –

October 12th, 5:45 - 7:30pm

Praying with the Whole of Our Being -

October 31st, 11 - 4pm.

Developing Direction: Noticing the

Unnoticed - November 6th, 11 - 4pm

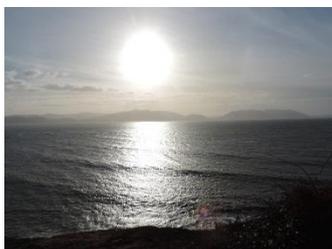
Spiritual Direction Network Day - November 21st, 11 - 3pm

Open Space Retreat Day - November 28th, 10 - 5pm

Events at The Meditatio Centre

St Marks Myddelton Sq

London EC1R 1XX



Spiritual Growth:

6 week course with Liz Watson

From Wednesday 14th October, 6.30 - 9pm

Touched by Ocean

Poetry, Prayer and Being Wrong

Revd Canon Mark Oakley

Saturday October 10th, 10am to 4.30pm

Revolutionary Communion: Chasing Merton

Saturday 24th October, 10am to 4.30pm

Zen Practice:

Life beyond literature or philosophy

Robert Kennedy S.J.

Wednesday 28th October, 6.30pm to 9pm

For details of these and other events and to book please contact The Meditatio Centre 020 7278 2070 E. meditatio@wccm.org

Events offered by the Sisters of St Andrew

99 Belmont Hill, SE13 5DY T: 0208 852 1662

welcome@sisters-of-st-andrew.com

www.sisters-of-st-andrew.com

Individually Guided Retreat

You are precious and honoured to my eyes

Friday 30th October to Sunday 1st November

A Silent Retreat Week-end to discover a taste of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius led by the Sisters of St Andrew

Suggested donation: £80 - £120 (Self Catering) £110-£125 (full board)

Advent Quiet Morning

**They shall beat their swords
Into ploughshares**



Saturday 5th December 2015

led by Sister Regula Hug

Arrivals 10 am for 10.30 to 4 pm

Suggested donation: £15 - £25

or

Monday 7th December 2015

Arrival 10 am) for 10.30 start finishing 1 pm

Suggested donation: £10 - £20

Advent Quiet Evening

with a Biblical Introduction, followed by an hour of silence and concluding with prayer together

Wednesday 16th December 7.30 to 9 pm

Everybody welcome. No booking required.

Silence, Mystery and Love

I met these three words in an article, quietly sitting beside one another, waiting to catch my attention. The words were familiar enough but what stopped me was seeing them together. They were like puzzle pieces that make a picture only when you recognise how they are shaped for one another.

Silence for me is not absence of noise, or absence of anything: it is an attitude of attentiveness towards presence. On most days I stand by our small garden pond for a while and gaze into the waters. I grew up by ponds so they draw me to be awake to their life. I see a beetle scurrying from the depths to the surface...a dragonfly resting on a green stem...the shape of leaf and flower is scattered by sunlight across the water. The silence of patient waiting opens us to life in all its intricacy, variety and beauty. There is a silence in really giving attention to a child as she tells a story or you share crayons in the colouring of a picture. Silence in prayer is openness to God-with- us. Every space is crowded with presence if only we turn to meet it.

Being attentive in this way is the characteristic of love. God is Love, always present to us and for us. Love is a way of relationship; it is what happens when we stop seeing another as solely existing to meet our needs. To really know another we have to let go of our agendas towards them. Then we become open to see the other and to receive whatever it is they choose to share with us. Love is a receptive and humble silence that allows the other to be – a silence that is warm, welcoming and attentive. The life of God is expressed in giving and receiving, and not in grasping and imposing. In the Rule of Saint Benedict silence underpins the life of the community, But silence in this sense is not only the absence of words; it is an attitude of willingness to undertake the work of renunciation whereby we make room for one another and for God rather than fill the space with our words, wants, fears and grievances.

The attentiveness of silence and the generosity of love are recognitions of mystery. At some point 'I' stop and the other begins...creation begins...God begins. The 'I' must stop to allow the other to come near. And the other is always surprising, beyond the limits we might want to impose. The pond in our garden is a living, evolving reality, new every morning. The person we have formed a fixed opinion of will break out of that box. The story we have built up over time about who we are and how our life will unfold will one day fall apart, since in God we are more than we now know. The reality of mystery collides uncomfortably with our need to control. But mystery holds a gift if we dare to meet it. We are drawn out of ourselves, beyond the orbit of our self-absorption, into the freedom of love. Love will work all things towards a good we may not yet be able to see. The mystery is God-with-us and each day asks us to move with this Love in and through 'what is', whether or not this is the reality we wanted or planned for.

'Silence, mystery and love': They begin as words, but become a path to walk by, and a way to be found by Life.

Tools for prayer

Resting in the Goodness of God

Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day is the rest we take between two deep breaths; or the turning inward in prayer for five short minutes. [Etty Hillesum]

Three ways we are invited to rest:

1. To make our relationship with God the resting place for our life. Jesus says

Come to me all you who are weary and heavily laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light. [Matthew 11]

Here, 'rest' is more than a break from the labour of work, it is a remembering of who we belong to, where we are cared for and who it is who sustains us and brings about our growth.

This resting place remains available for us even when there is too much to do or life is bringing challenges our way that seem overwhelming. This is the spirit of the 23rd psalm:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...

He restores my soul...

I fear no evil for you are with me...

I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Breathe in the words of the psalm...you are in the Lord's house...here you can rest

2. To rest from labour. Rest as re-creation.

This way of rest is more than the exhausted collapse into sleep after too much mental or physical work. Many of us lurch from work to a rest that is no real rest because it is our spirit that is worn out. We need recreation – or re-creation, and the path to this may well involve play. Leaving aside 'oughts' and 'shoulds' we choose to do whatever enlivens us...walking, working in a garden, playing music, a night out with friends, dancing lessons...whatever works for you! To play in this way is also a prayer if we see it as a welcoming of God's Spirit in our inner spirit – taking delight in life and allowing God to take delight in us. We meet the Lord and are refreshed by him. It is necessity, not luxury but it will only happen if we allow it to.

3. To rest in God the responsibility we carry, the people we care for, and those situations beyond our managing or understanding.

We care and it is good that we do so. But we also let go that which we carry. We have to beware closing our grip upon the things we feel responsible for. We hold them but with open hands. It is God who gives us what it is we can do in the day that lies before us; what is beyond this is not ours to cling on to.

Physical actions can help us let go internally:

- We light a candle for those we care for and leave them in God's care
- At the end of the day we open our closed hands, releasing that which we have held too tightly through the hours that have gone before.
- We pray the Night Prayer of Common Worship, also called 'Compline', and let the words help us place ourselves and those we care for within the deeper care of God

Resting in this way as the day draws to a close helps the physical rest of our sleep bring about deeper refreshment.

Time to have fun

The Christianity many of us grew up with was not big on laughs. My childhood parish priest seemed determined to make sure we were suitably miserable. Fun was equated with self-indulgence – all too likely to carry us away into the path of sin. The eleventh commandment was *'Thou shalt not laugh, nor enjoy thyself'*.

The hangover of that upbringing is that I have sometimes struggled to allow myself to enjoy life. The notion that God is a spoiler is not one I adhere to rationally but somewhere inside that image of God must linger. And yet when I remember some of the moments of deep fun that I have known I see how they abound with love, friendship, wonder, energy, and liberation: and as I put themselves back into those times I sense the presence, joy and life of God.

- Sledging down the snow covered slopes of Greenwich Park while the ambulances circled below
- Playing foot ball with my nephews in a muddy field
- Losing myself in working with clay and not minding too much what shape I came up with
- Making music with a group using my three and a half chords on a guitar
- Going swimming on the spur of the moment with my sister in West Wales
- Being thrown around at a barn dance without really having much clue what steps I was supposed to be making.

What moments do you remember?

Fun can have its downsides. Making fun of another at their expense is destructive. Thrill seeking can be addictive and self-centred. But these are perversions of what is essentially good and of God.

It is through fun that we lose our self-consciousness and allow ourselves to run free.

Walls of polite distance or even hostility between people evaporate in shared laughter.

Bonds of friendship are forged.

We stop taking ourselves too seriously – as if everything depended on our performance

We discover that we are creative after all – and all we needed was the opportunity and the courage to dare to express ourselves.

We delight in life, in the company of those with us and are completely held in the moment, putting aside our fears and preoccupations.

These are good moments, God moments.

In our churches and within our neighbourhoods,
in our tired lives, and amidst our difficulties
it is time to have fun!