

Contemplative Retreat

In the Season of Creation



October 5, 2024

Schedule

9:00	Arrival – tea/coffee and gathering
9:30	Morning Prayer
10:00	Discussion One: Love’s Braided Dance (OR walking with two left feet)
10:30	Free time (with optional self-guided activity)
11:30	Discussion Two: The world in the palm of your hand (OR the pesky question why is there something rather than nothing?)
12:00	Lunch
1:00	Free time (with optional self-guided activity)
3:00	Snacks
3:15	Discussion 3: Nature Never Spent (OR listening to your life)
4:00	Departures

Morning Prayer

Land Acknowledgment

As we gather, we wish to humbly acknowledge the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Songhees, Hul'qumi'num, and W̱SÁNEĆ people, who have been indigenous stewards of this land since time immemorial.

We give thanks for this land and all those who have stewarded it. And as we gather, we rcommit ourselves to prayerfully seek reconciliation, justice and healing, that we too might become stewards of this good land.

As we gather, we do so in the name of Christ: light of the world.

(a candle is lit)

Invocation

The God of heaven has made
his home on earth.

**Emmanuel is with us,
always on the way ahead of us.**

The highest of all creation
lives among the least.

**Christ journeys with the
rejected and welcomes the weary.**

The Spirit intercedes for us now
with sighs too deep for words.

Come, God of mystery, meet us in this time and place.

(adapted from Iona Abbey Worship Book)

Readings

Silence

Declaration of faith

To whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life,
and we have believed and have come to know
that You are the Holy One of God.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ,
King of endless glory.

Our hopes for today, offered as prayer

Canticle

Christ, as a light
illumine and guide me.

Christ, as a shield
overshadow me.

Christ under me;

Christ over me;

Christ beside me

on my left and my right.

This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;
in the mouth of each who speaks unto me.

This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

Christ as a light;

Christ as a shield;

Christ beside me

on my left and my right.

Let us Bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

"In Rain"

By Wendell Berry

1.

I go in under foliage
light with rain-light
in the hill's cleft,
and climb, my steps
silent as flight
on the wet leaves.
Where I go, stones
are wearing away
under the sky's flow.

2.

The path I follow
I can hardly see
it is so faintly trod
and overgrown.
At times, looking,
I fail to find it
among dark trunks, leaves
living and dead. And then
I am alone, the woods
shapeless around me.
I look away, my gaze
at rest among leaves,
and then I see the path
again, a dark way going
on through the light.

3.

In a mist of light
falling with the rain
I walk this ground
of which dead men
and women I have loved
are part, as they
are part of me. In earth,
in blood, in mind,
the dead and living
into each other pass,
as the living pass
in and out of loves
as stepping to a song.
The way I go is
marriage to this place,
grace beyond chance,
love's braided dance
covering the world.

4.

Marriages to marriages
are joined, husband and wife
are plighted to all
husbands and wives,
any life has all lives
for its delight.
Let the rain come,
the sun, and then the dark,
for I will rest
in an easy bed tonight.

“Invitation”

By Mary Oliver

Oh do you have time
to linger
for just a little while
out of your busy
and very important day
for the goldfinches
that have gathered
in a field of thistles
for a musical battle,
to see who can sing
the highest note,
or the lowest,
or the most expressive of
mirth,
or the most tender?

Their strong, blunt beaks
drink the air
as they strive
melodiously

not for your sake
and not for mine
and not for the sake of
winning
but for sheer delight and
gratitude –
believe us, they say,
it is a serious thing
just to be alive
on this fresh morning
in the broken world.

I beg of you,
do not walk by
without pausing
to attend to this
rather ridiculous
performance.
It could mean something.
It could mean everything.
It could be what Rilke meant,
when he wrote:
You must change your life.

Revelations of Julian of Norwich

“And in this [sight], he showed a little thing the quantity of a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand as it seemed to me, and it was as round as any ball. I looked therein with the eye of my understanding, and thought: “What may this be?” And it was answered generally thus: “It is all that is made.” I marveled how it might last, for it seemed to me it might suddenly have fallen into nought for its littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: “It lasteth and ever shall, because God loveth it. And so hath all things being by the love of God.”

“Quiet”

By Eugene Peterson

Our latest guest,
a common loon
arrived this winter
unannounced
and bringing gifts -
guests do that, bring gifts
filling heart and home
with beauty
wild
illusive
sleek
low in the water

This contemplative loon
is an icon
for living present
but detached
I rarely see him fly
but he can fly

This loon dives
dives deep
long and deep
no mere surface bird
he goes for the depths
And when he dives
I think he prays
searching deep waters
for what keeps him
and us
alive
Grace
and quiet
Buoyant with presence

“Listen to your Life”

By Frederick Beuchner

Listen to your life.

See it for the fathomless mystery that it is.

In the boredom and pain of it

no less than in the excitement

and gladness:

touch, taste,

smell your way

to the holy and hidden heart of it

because in the last analysis

all moments

are key moments,

and life itself

is grace.

“Wild Geese”

By Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.

You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

“God’s Grandeur”

By Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

