

Come Grow With Us

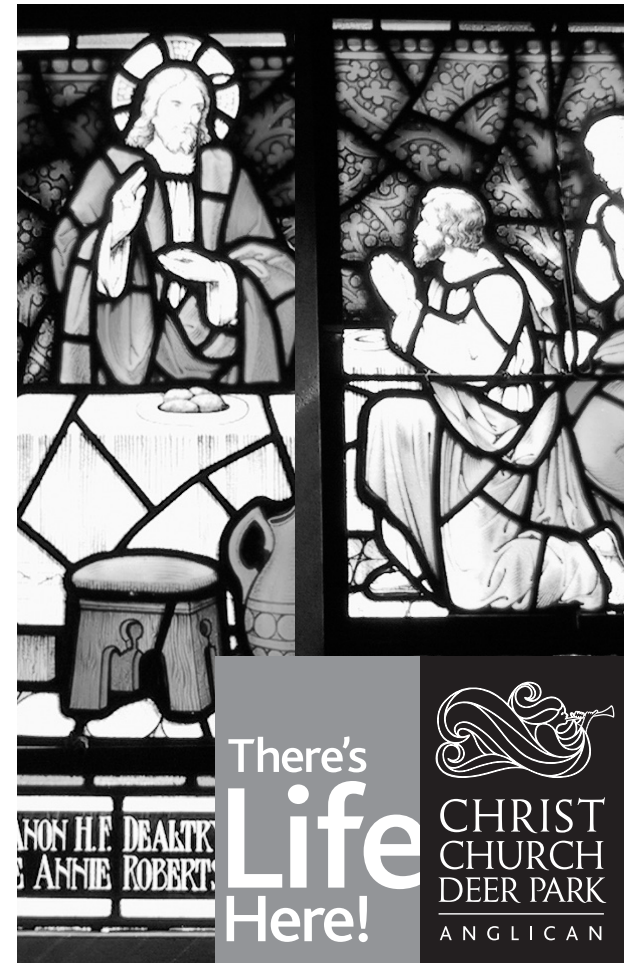
Christian meditation is about "abiding" in God – being still and centered enough to hear the "still small voice" of God's love for us, and to know the power of that love in our lives.

Each session will begin with a talk on Christian meditation: what it is, where it comes from, its origins in scripture and the monastic tradition, and "how to do it." The talk will be followed by time for questions and discussion, an opportunity to practice a form of Christian meditation, and de-briefing afterward. Handouts will be provided to encourage ongoing practice at home.

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Christian Meditation: How It Began and How You Can Do It



OCTOBER 17, 2007 • 7-9 pm

The Ancient Practice of Lectio Divina (sacred reading)

The tradition of Christian meditation is fourfold:

- it begins with *lectio* (reading of a small portion of scripture or another sacred text),
- continues with *meditatio* (ruminating on the words one has read),
- develops into *oratio* (expressing to God the feelings and desires that come from our *meditatio*) and
- culminates in *contemplatio* (contemplating or resting in the silence of God).

We will use music, art, and scripture to practice this 4-fold pattern.

OCTOBER 24, 2007 • 7-9 pm

The Practice of Centering Prayer

Centering prayer is a development of *lectio divina*, in which we let go of the sacred text and move more fully into the stage called *contemplatio*.

Centering prayer provides a path to self-understanding, spiritual growth, and healing. It is easy to do on one level, but takes courage, patience, and the support of community to develop a deeper practice.

Our practice of centering prayer will include several different approaches, in order to help people find the best way for each person.

THE PRESENTER



SISTER CONSTANCE JOANNA GEFVERT, SSJD

Sister Constance Joanna was born in Cleveland, Ohio. She received her undergraduate education at Cleveland State University and did her graduate studies at the University of Minnesota. After teaching English at Wayne State University (Detroit, MI) and Virginia Tech (Blacksburg), Sr.

Constance Joanna joined The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine in 1984. She made her life vows in 1991, and became a proud Canadian citizen in 1992.

During her time as a Sister of St. John the Divine, she has worked at St. John's Rehab Hospital in a number of capacities, including Vice President and Interim CEO. She has also served on the Hospital's Board of Directors, and the Foundation board. For eleven years she served as Rev. Mother of the Sisterhood.

She has had a call to priestly ministry for many years, but because of her leadership responsibilities at St. John's Rehab and at the Convent, she was unable to pursue it until she left office as Rev. Mother in April, 2005. She was ordained Deacon on May 6, 2007, and considers it an "amazing grace," considering her mature years. She will be serving a curacy at St. John's Convent, with a focus on pastoral ministry in the Guest House and in the Hospital next door. She also works as Director of Development for the Sisterhood.

Sr. Constance Joanna is an adjunct instructor at Wycliffe College. She teaches a course called "Rooted in God: Prayer as the Soil for Ministry," as well as a course on the Influence of the Rule of St. Benedict on Anglican Spirituality.

For relaxation, she likes to read good mysteries (and watch film versions), to walk, to listen to music, and to play piano (and a little organ). She currently serves as the Convent's amateur choir director, and loves helping the sisters learn new music. She also enjoys writing, and hopes to have more time for that in the coming years.

SPIRITUAL COMPANIONSHIP (SPIRITUAL DIRECTION)

I am the vine, you are the branches. . . . My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.

Many people feel a hunger to deepen their relationship with God and a desire for a companionship in their Christian journey. Who am I in my relationship with God? How do I pray? How do I live out my faith? What do I do when I feel I have fallen short?

These are some of the questions people may bring to spiritual companionship. Often called spiritual direction, this ministry is an ancient tradition within the Church. In today's individualistic and secularized western culture, more and more people are feeling a need for such companionship to help them satisfy that profound but unarticulated yearning for a deeper relationship with God that is so much a part of our humanity.

Spiritual companionship can be individual, and can also take place within a small group of people committed to sharing their faith journeys and supporting each other in those journeys. The real "director" in all spiritual companionship is the Holy Spirit; the companion is there to help the person to notice and respond to the activity of the Spirit in their lives.

If you are interested in knowing more about this spiritual practice, or in finding a spiritual companion, you may want to talk with Sr. Constance Joanna at St. John's Convent (416-226-2201 ext 316) or by e-mail at cj@ssjd.ca.

Hosted by the Learning Ministry

Chair: Michael Butler
Dr. Jennifer Harris
Susan Gross
Samantha Caravan
The Rev. Greg Carpenter
The Rev. Canon Dr. Judy Rois