

Tend Your Awakening Heart with Us.



Awakening Hearts Cultivating Wisdom Revealing the Sacred

December 2020

Words from our Director...On Contemplative Dialogue

([click here](#) to view a chart that situates Contemplative Dialogue in a larger framework)



Facing Suffering is the fourth movement of contemplative dialogue. It is related to one of the [Five Ordinary Movements](#), Tension of a Web. To face suffering is to recognize one's own vulnerability in the pain of another, to realize that suffering is a great universalizer of human experience, to learn that deep faith often comes at the cost of getting to the other side of the shipwreck. Facing Suffering addresses big questions such as, why do bad things happen to so many innocent ones? Why do some people inflict so much pain on others? How are some people able to get through the terrible things that happen to them? What is the cost of the wisdom gained from the carving out of so much pain? In the work of life-span development, Facing Suffering often provokes the crises that propel possible growth and transformation, or complete devastation and havoc, and potentially prompts the capacity to befriend ambiguity and tension. Spiritually, Facing Suffering, is marked by learning to have faith in the larger patterns of human experience, i.e. death and resurrection, joy and sorrow, love and sacrifice. Facing Suffering is messy, illogical, intense, and a true school for learning the art of appreciating paradox.

The spiritual life is full of opportunities for Facing Suffering. *Stability* is a spiritual habit related to Facing Suffering. I like to use the example of the benefits of taking the same route for my daily walk to demonstrate how stability works. Over time, since I take the same path each day, I am able to recognize when the leaves begin to change their colors, if a tree has been disturbed, or if the waters are still or choppy on the lake today. The constancy of the same path and the familiarity of the fixtures of my walks affords me the wherewithall to face the inevitable changes, turmoil, and dulldrums found in real life. Because I can remember what "normal" looks like, I can deal graciously with shifts in the landscape.

Surrender is a contemplative posture that supports Facing Suffering. Facing Suffering asks us to be still long enough to really see how things are, torn apart and fragmented. To learn to let things be, especially in their brokenness, teaches us the wisdom of surrender. When we let go of how we think things should be or how we feel we want things to be, we equip ourselves to deal with things as they really are. Those who know complete surrender often report that on the other side of deep sorrow is intense joy. Surrender affords us glimpses into the vision and reality of Wholeness, where nothing, even intense pain or loss, is left out.

The movement of the Tension of a Web helps us to feel the intensity and constancy of the pressures found in our complex, daily lives. If the Cycling of Spirals found in the third movement of Seeking God was marked by both alternation and simultaneity, Facing Suffering and the Tension of a Web throw us right back face to face with the frustrating sense of alternation, of never quite claspng all that we want or living fully into who we can be. Paradoxically, the Tension of a Web can feel like a constant striving and output of effort, as well as like vacuum devoid of meaning and movement.

Specific practices to support Facing Suffering include: [Intercessory Prayer](#), small group circle experiences, rituals of lament and reconciliation, and somatic practices, to name just a few.

Reflection questions for Facing Suffering include:

- What breaks my heart?

- Where and with who can I find brave, sacred spaces to let my guard down and really be with my pain and grief?
- Where in my community or the world do I see suffering and oppression toward which I can authentically connect, reach out, and be changed?

A chant to support Grounding in Self: [Let Light In](#)

A chant to support Opening to Others: [Let Love In](#)

A chant to support Seeking God: [Turn and Return](#)

A chant to support Facing Suffering: [Surrender Still](#)

I invite you to offer your attention to Facing Suffering over the next few weeks. Certainly, as we near the end of a year marked by intense, worldwide suffering, we would all benefit from a powerful collective intention to Face Suffering and to hold the darkness very tenderly. May the Holy One hold us and guide us through these darkest nights of the year.

Christine Lina Munger

Director, Episcopal House of Prayer, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA



Pray with Us.

The Episcopal House of Prayer now hosts its weekly Wednesday night sit in Collegeville online, via zoom. Join us for all, or a part, of the session.

5-5:15 p.m.–time for tech and social connection

5:15-5:30–short teaching

5:30-6:30–formal sitting period

To join, [simply click here](#) or use this Meeting ID: 644 263 888

Join Us.

Spiritual Memoir: Where a Life Meets Mystery

Offered by Elizabeth Jarret Andrew

January 29 2021-Sunday January 31

Join Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew for a weekend introduction to the art and spiritual practice of writing memoir. What is memoir, and how is it different from autobiography? What makes memoir spiritual? How can the practice of writing memoir, either for an audience or for no audience, support spiritual growth? Using writing exercises and readings from master writers, we will get started with the basics. We will also discuss how to sustain spiritual memoir writing as an ongoing contemplative practice.

Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew is the author of the novel Hannah, Delivered, the spiritual memoir Swinging on the Garden Gate, a collection of personal essays, On the Threshold: Home, Hardwood, and Holiness, and two books on writing: Living Revision: A Writer's Craft as Spiritual Practice, winner of the silver Nautilus Award, and Writing the Sacred Journey: The Art and Practice of Spiritual Memoir. She works independently as a developmental writing coach and teaches through Wisdom Ways Center



for Spirituality. You can connect with Elizabeth at www.spiritualmemoir.com and www.elizabethjarrettandrew.com

Register

EHoP Short Sessions

[Mystic-a-Month series](#)

[Prayer series](#)

EHoP Circles

[Small Group Spiritual Direction](#)

[Small Group *Lectio Divina*](#)

[Small Group Book Discussions](#)

Be Grateful with Us.

In October we gathered for a morning online session after engaging three pre-recorded videos prepared by teacher Susan Stabile. The work of the Spirit through creative works such as music, poetry, and art gave the group much fodder for sharing and reflection.

In November, we gathered online again for three short-sessions in a single weekend to engage the teachings of Matthew Wright on the topic of Holy Wisdom and Mary as the Mother of God. As anticipated, the experience felt like an enlightening cup of warm soup to warm us up before the season of Advent.

Be safe with Us.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Episcopal House of Prayer continues to assess when we will open the House again and gather our community in person. In August, the Executive Committee updated the following:

- At the end of August, EHoP welcomed a cohort of the Benedictine Volunteer Corps into our space. The young men, who each offer a year of service to the broader community, will call EHoP home as they pray, live in community, and serve others. Welcome BVC!
- Retreats for the entirety of 2020 will not take place onsite; alternatively, an online option will be available.
- Rentals for personal retreats and events are on hold at least through April 2021.
- [Monday weekly contemplative sits](#) (Minneapolis) are on hold.
- [Thursday weekly contemplative sits](#) (Saint Paul) are on hold.
- Monday night ChiKung in Collegeville is on hold.

Practice with Us.

This year, we began to offer "short teachings" on prayer as part of the weekly contemplative sit in Collegeville. These short-teachings engage both new and seasoned practitioners in reflection about contemplative prayer. The session lasts fifteen minutes and includes three parts: 1) a short selection of text on prayer from the tradition, 2) short teaching on the text, 3) questions and opportunity for reflection regarding practice.

As the body of these short-teachings grow, the new teachings will be shared in this section of the newsletter. For a full listing of all the teachings, visit our website and navigate to the [Prayer Teaching Library page](#).

[Awakening in Life to Awaken Beyond Life](#) by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

[Meditation, Consciousness, Daily Life](#) by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

[Silence](#) by Gerald May

[The Sacred Word in Centering Prayer](#) by Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O.

Chant with Us.

Chant and sacred song are an important element of our weekly prayer and retreat experiences at the Episcopal House of Prayer. Over the years, a number of beloved and favorite chants have echoed in the oratory, even as new ones are heard for the first time. I invite all members of our community to consider either recording some of your favorite chants and/or listening to them when they are posted in the newsletters.

If you would like to listen to the entire set of chants, visit our website and navigate to the [Chant Library page](#).

Be with Us.

If you are seeking spiritual transformation and tending an awakening heart, we invite you to join us!

All are welcome!

[Visit our website](#)

Vision with Us.

Our **Mission** is to assist in the ongoing work of discerning God's voice, both within ourselves and in the world; provide guidance in the search for wisdom; teach all forms of contemplative prayer; offer training in the inner work of the spiritual life.

The **Vision** of the Episcopal House of Prayer is to be a contemplative ministry of spiritual transformation, grounded in the Christian tradition, in the practice of Benedictine hospitality, reaching out and welcoming all.

Support Us.

The Episcopal House of Prayer is a contemplative ministry grounded in the Christian tradition and held within a Benedictine container, with locations in Collegeville, Saint Paul, and Minneapolis, Minnesota. This ministry is dedicated to supporting individuals and groups as they seek to be "formed into Christ" (Galatians 4:19).

[Donate](#)

Connect with Us.

