

Tend Your Awakening Heart with Us.



Awakening Hearts Cultivating Wisdom Revealing the Sacred

November 2020

Words from our Director...On Contemplative Dialogue

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



Seeking God is the third movement of contemplative dialogue. It is related to one of the [Five Ordinary Movements](#), Cycling of Spirals. To Seek God is to gain a sense of oneself and of others in relation to the Whole, to "the more," to Mystery. Seeking God addresses big questions such as, to what or who am I called? Within what larger purpose is my own vocation situated? What is my full potential and what does the healing and wholeness of the cosmos look like? In the work of life-span development, Seeking God has to do with balancing inner and outer authority, learning to see the gray in-between the black and white, living into the power of potential. Spiritually, Seeking God, is marked by both a deepening and a widening of consciousness. The journey is alive, dynamic, and wired toward transformation.

The spiritual life is full of opportunities for Seeking God. *Discernment* is a spiritual habit related to Seeking God. In order to practice discernment, we listen deeply to at least three voices--our own grounded voice, the voices we hear when we open to others, and the voice of the One who harmonizes and reconciles all sound. Discernment involves two basic steps: the first is deep listening and the second is authentic response. In discernment, ideally, we enter into a dance of all three contemplative postures--spaciousness, suppleness, and surrender. Spaciousness helps us to tune into our own voice; suppleness prompts us to find the flow of others' voices, including God's; and surrender evokes a willingness to respond in whatever mode is most life-giving.

The Cycling of Spirals movement is marked by dynamism. Because the Cycling of Spirals carries both the Up and Down movement and the Back and Forth movement within it, we see both alternation and simultaneity working in one ongoing process. When the tension of opposites is momentarily resolved, the "next level" of the Cycling of Spirals expands up or down into the new, third-thing. The power of the third force that opens up space between the space of two things is what contributes to transformation, vitality, the power of Life seeking form and finding fullness. Simply recall the relief you feel when you suddenly find an alternate driving route somewhere in between the two directions of where you thought you were headed and where you were when you were lost. To Seek God is take the path of dynamism that leads to Wholeness.

Even though Seeking God is a constant, ongoing process, it is harder to see and feel in the midst of daily life. The fruits of the "third way" are often seen in hind sight rather than in the moment, though we can discipline ourselves to look for the patterns that mark the transformative path. This phase of contemplative dialogue roughly parallels the experience of Illumination in the classic Christian model of the spiritual life. Seeking-God moments are often marked by a sense of "ah-hah" and insight. Many mystics describe these moments as gifts of light. Seeking God is the place of practical wisdom. We discern the way forward, toward healing and wholeness, by choosing the best patterns laid down by those who have gone before us. The voice of Seeking God in the process of contemplative dialogue is a collective one. Such a voice, in our times, is especially needed.

Specific practices to support Seeking God include: journaling, [intercessory prayer](#), learning something new, creative arts, and chanting the psalms.

Reflection questions for Seeking God:

- Where do my passions consistently lead me?
- What do the patterns of my shadow-work teach me about the path to healing and wholeness?
- What practices do I commit to in order to learn to recognize "the voice beyond" my own small worldview?

A chant to support Seeking God: [Take, O Take Me as I Am](#)

An exercise to practice Seeking God : [An Exercise in Spaciousness, Suppleness, Surrender](#)

I invite you to offer your attention to Seeking God over the next few weeks. Find a few outlets for expressing your collective voice; seek out people and places that offer space for healing and wholeness.

Christine Lina Munger

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

 **EHoP** invites you.

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.

[Holy Wisdom, Mother of God](#)

Offered by The Rev. Matthew Wright

Zoom sessions:

Friday, November 20: Evening Session, 6:30-8:00

Saturday, November 21: Morning Session, 10:00-11:30 and Afternoon Session 2:00-3:30

Join us for a Friday evening and Saturday Zoom retreat as we prepare for the season of Advent. We'll be exploring devotion to the Divine Feminine in the Jewish and Christian traditions, particularly under the guises of Sophia, or Holy Wisdom, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Drawing on the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, the mysticism of Thomas Merton, Holy Scripture, and the writings of early saints, we'll discover Mary as a face of fierce compassion and as the God-birthing dimension of our own souls.

[Rev. Matthew Wright is an Episcopal priest, writer, and retreat leader working to renew the Christian Wisdom tradition in a wider interspiritual context. He serves as priest-in-charge at St. Gregory's Episcopal Church in Woodstock, NY and is a teacher for Northeast Wisdom and The Contemplative Society, nonprofits rooted in the teaching lineage of Cynthia Bourgeault. Matthew is also a decade-long student of the Mevlevi Sufi tradition under the guidance of Shaikh Kabir and Camille Helminski.](#)



He lives with his wife, Yanick, alongside the brothers of Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, NY.

[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, the Executive Committee of the EHoP Board made the difficult decision to terminate the House Manager position. While EHoP remains stable financially, it became evident this fall that sustaining the House Manager position would not be a prudent management of current resources, especially during these unprecedented times during the pandemic when rental and programming income have decreased. The decision to terminate the House Manager position is part of a larger, multi-step plan set in place to sustain EHoP well into the future beyond the pandemic. While we are confident that EHoP will continue its mission and vision well into the future, the immediate time period called for this difficult decision.

Therefore, it is with a heart of gratitude that we acknowledge the hard work and gracious spirit with which Patricia Benson offered service to the EHoP for nearly four years. During her tenure, Patricia was responsible for helping EHoP to recover and then thrive from a decrease to an increase in rental opportunities. Patricia also set in place a number of tracking systems which allow us to manage this transition with better ease than previously possible. Patricia's thorough thinking about projects, her faithfulness to executing the best options, her capacity to attract renters, her ability to respond to urgent and unexpected issues, and her passion for justice and hospitality are all qualities which helped to sustain the EHoP.

We recognize that this is a difficult time to face a huge disruption such as the loss of a job. We support Patricia and are confident that the Holy Spirit continues to guide her through this time of transition. If you wish to connect with Patricia, or have ideas about possible employment, her email contact information is: deaconpbenson@gmail.com

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. Welcome BVC!
- Retreats for the entirety of 2020 will not take place onsite; alternatively, an online option will be available.
- [Monday weekly contemplative sits](#) (Minneapolis) are once again on hold due to the inability to meet outside.
- [Thursday weekly contemplative sits](#) (Saint Paul) are determined on a weekly basis.
- Monday night ChiKung in Collegeville is also finished for the fall season.

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](#).

[Contemplation: the Education and Training of the Mystic](#) by Evelyn Underhill

[The Five-fold Contemplative Path](#) by Evelyn Underhill

[The Prayer of the Heart](#) by the Anonymous Author of the Way of a Pilgrim

[Will, Spirit, and Surrender](#) by Gerald May

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.

