

## Tend Your Awakening Heart with Us.



## September 2020



### Words from our Director...On Contemplative Dialogue

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

**Grounding in Self** is the first movement of contemplative dialogue. It is related to one of the [Five Ordinary Movements](#), the Ups and Downs. To be grounded means to gain a sense of oneself, to become familiar with one's place in the universe. Groundedness addresses big questions such as, who am I? What is my place in the world? To what do I offer my life's work? In the work of life-span development, grounding has to do with forming an identity, bonding to people in a community, sensing oneself as part of something larger, connecting to the Great Mystery. Spiritually, grounding, as marked by conversion experiences, often has something to do with "waking up." Grounding also involves the ongoing process of awakening, of "staying woke."

The spiritual life is full of opportunities for grounding. *Gratitude* is a spiritual habit related to grounding. When we are grateful, we recognize the givenness of the gifts of life, and we participate in blessing when we honor that which we are grateful for. Gratitude helps us to see that we belong to and are blessed by Life. *Spaciousness* is a contemplative posture that supports grounding. Groundedness helps us to see the space we are taking up and how we hold it. When we slow down, when we take a deep breath, when we lift up our eyes and our hearts, we are better equipped to see where our feet hit the ground in any given moment, with the hope of connecting to others on the sacred ground all around us.

When we are grounded, we are holistic, aware of how we "show up" in what many spirituals teachers identify as our three centers, which include the mind, the heart, and the senses. When we are grounded, we are aware of, and act from, all three of these centers, rather than just one of them. Most of us have a preferred center, and a simple exercise in grounding is to bring our attention to the other centers when we recognize that we feel "off."

The Ups and Downs are a part of our ongoing journey in groundedness. Grounding is often marked by what Thomas Kelly refers to as alternation. Alternation has to do with our sense of experiencing Ups and Downs, ebbs and flows, on-moments and off-moments. For example, in the spiritual journey, it is common to experience the alternating sense of both the presence and the absence of God. In our daily lives, we have good days and bad

days. The invitation of groundedness is first to notice, then to become aware of, and finally, to choose a life-giving responses whenever we recognize that we are off-balance or single-centered. The opportunities to practice grounding are constant!

On the level of personal interactions which promote life-giving, contemplative dialogue, grounding oneself prepares us to engage others by fostering receptivity and openness, fruits of spaciousness. Whenever we tune in and receive awareness of our own work, our own place, our own mood, our own biases, our own identity, we rev up the engines of openness, which together with receptivity, equips us for the next movement of contemplative dialogue, openness to others.

Specific practices to support grounding include: doing a daily [Examen](#), taking a contemplative walk, participating in communal worship, offering gratitude, and listening deeply, to name just a few.

Reflection questions for grounding:

- What brings me joy? When have I held sorrow?
- What life activities help me to feel calm and gentle or alive and on-fire?
- When did I awaken to the Life of Spirit? Who or what taught me?

A chant to support grounding: [Hineini Chant with Introduction \(video\)](#) and [Hineini Chant Only \(no Intro, video\)](#) [Hineini Chant \(audio only\)](#)

An exercise to practice grounding: [Three Moments of Breath Meditation](#)

I invite you to offer your attention to grounding over the next few weeks. Find a friend and share together how groundedness expresses in your daily life and spiritual activity.

*Christina Luna 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.

5-5:30–time for tech and social connection

5:30-6:30–formal sitting period

6:30-6:45–short teaching

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

**Join Us.**

## Deepening Our Embrace: An Intermediate Yoga Online Experience

**Offered by Preeta Banerjee, Ph D**  
**Monday, September 14-Friday September 18**  
**Daily, 2-hour online morning sessions**

Together, we will venture into mysteries within us all as we ask "Who Am I?" Our time together will include presenter teaching, posture practice, time on your own, and opportunities for contemplative dialogue across traditions. As a next step of our enriching journey with Yoga, we will dive further into Sanatan Dharma, the age-old philosophy known as Hinduism. We will deepen each day by exploring one of the five layers (koshas) of the human experience that veil the *Atman*, or true Self. Exploring each layer brings the individual closer to oneness with the universe and the true Self.



Preeta Banerjee, Ph D is a spiritual companion who draws on a broad and deep range of experience, having spent 20 years in academia, coaching and consulting as an advocate, educator, researcher and author. She is a strong voice for combining spirituality, creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and social change. Her daily practice comes from yoga, Let Your Yoga Dance, meditation, as well as being an Ayurveda and a blackbelt Tae Kwon Do practitioner.

[Register](#)

## Contemplation with Art, Poetry and Music: A Hybrid Online/On-your-own Retreat Experience

**Offered by Susan Stabile**  
 Three pre-recorded sessions given **October 9, 14, 19** (view on your own in-between days)  
 Concluding online small group session **9:30 am-12 noon, Saturday, October 24**

While on virtual personal retreat, we will explore the use of visual art, poetry and music in our contemplative practice, considering both existing works and creating our own. Susan will offer three pre-recorded video sessions with teaching and guided meditations. While you can engage the videos on your own time and in the comfort of your own space, we will gather for an online simultaneous group meeting at the end of the three sessions in order to share insights with one another and hear questions and answers with Susan.

*Words from our teacher...*

We are intellectual beings and we love to use our minds. But underlying all religious traditions is an understanding that conversion is an experience of the heart, not an experience of the mind, an understanding that leads to an emphasis on the affective experience in prayer. That helps explain why we find music, art and poetry used in all prayer traditions. As long as humans have existed, they have turned to arts to express the inexpressible. Art and music are not simply objects, but an experience of opening to mystical awareness.



Susan Stabile is a Christian who spent many years practicing Buddhism. She is a spiritual director and retreat leader trained in the Ignatian tradition yet is at home with spiritual practices outside of that tradition. The author of the book, *Growing in Love and Wisdom: Tibetan Buddhist Sources for Christian Meditation* (OUP 2013) and of the blog, *Creo en Dios*, Susan is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the University of St. Thomas School of Law. She previously held the position of Director of the University of St. Thomas Office for Spirituality. Susan regularly offers talks and retreats on spirituality.

[Register](#)

## Programming Pivot

In the upcoming weeks, you will notice a number of announcements regarding opportunities for small groups and short-events sponsored by EHoP. In part, these new options are a response to the reality of the pandemic and our desire to connect with one another. Yet beyond the scope of these months, these options offer an additional layer of programming that we expect will build and sustain our communal life well into the future. More detailed descriptions about each of these offerings will come in the next few weeks.

If you are interested in serving as a facilitator for a small group, please contact Christine at [directorhouseprayer@csbsju.edu](mailto:directorhouseprayer@csbsju.edu) or 763-228-7537.

- Small group spiritual direction
- Small group lectio divina
- Small group book discussions
- Mystic-a-Month series
- Day-Long Prayer series
- Video series

## Be Grateful with Us.



Many thanks to our new EHoP teacher, Dan Wolpert for leading a group in our first-ever online, one-day retreat experience, The Five Wisdoms: A Maitri Retreat! Participants and facilitators alike were pleasantly delighted by our ability to deeply connect with one another and gain insights through the new medium of zoom. Whether you joined us, or not, it is worth checking out Dan's new book, [Creation's Wisdom: Spiritual Practice and Climate Change](#). It will be good to have Dan with us again when we are able to meet onsite.

## 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 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!
- Onsite retreats for the entirety of 2020 will not take place; alternatively, an online option will be available (yoga, arts, heart).
- Monday (Minneapolis) and Thursday (St. Paul) weekly contemplative sits in the Twin Cities are held in outdoors locations.
- Monday night ChiKung in Collegeville continues as an outdoor activity.
  - Common guidelines for outdoor gatherings include six-foot distancing, using facemasks, and bringing your own materials.

## Practice with Us.

This year, we began to offer "short teachings" on prayer after the weekly contemplative sit in Collegeville. These short-teachings engage both new and seasoned practitioners in 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](#).

[Emptines and Silence in Contemplation](#) by Thomas Moore

[The Soul](#) by Thomas Moore

[The Light Within-Alternation](#) by Thomas Kelly

[The Light Within-Simultaneity](#) by Thomas Kelly

## 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.

Thank you for Bill Brand for this month's chant: [I Rise with You](#)

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, we invite you to join us for weekly Contemplative Prayer in Collegeville (online) or outdoors in St. Paul and Minneapolis (in-person).

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" (Galations 4:19).

Donate

## Connect with Us.

