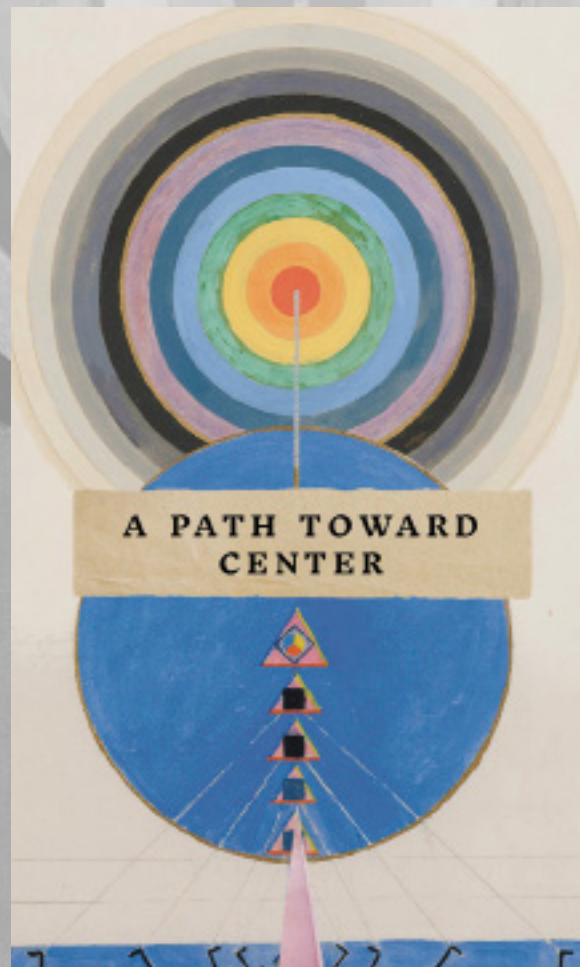


November 2020  
Volume 32  
Number 11



# THE MARK

A Publication of The Church of Conscious Harmony ❖ A Contemplative Christian Community



A PATH TOWARD  
CENTER

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# THIS TOO SHALL PASS

BY PETER HAAS

Ms. Deborah, our church Children's Director, also known as The Church Lady, has a good thing going each Sunday during our 10 a.m. worship service. I hope you and your children or grandchildren are receiving the wise, practical, fun and meaningful teaching and storytelling she shares each Sunday. If not, please tune in!

Recently, following one of Ms. Deborah's talks she handed me a gift bag. It was small with a zipper. I opened the black velvet bag and to my surprise discovered a special ring! The ring had a locket, and when I opened the locket chamber there was a tiny rolled up paper scroll, about the size of a sunflower seed. I unraveled the paper scroll and read the message:

*This too shall pass.*

At first, I laughed because I had

recently told Ms. Deborah that I was going through a time in my life where I had never been happier. But as I thought about it more deeply, I realized that the message wasn't about anything specific. Rather, it was a reminder that the safest place to be is in the right here, right now – because holding onto the past is futile and trying to change or avoid change is nearly impossible. I'm holding the ring as a reminder of just that.

I am writing this article for *The Mark* in early October. By the time this edition is published, and you are reading it, most likely we will have journeyed through our 2020 election. I mention that because Deborah's message is timely: whatever we may be experiencing as a nation, whatever your feelings and opinions about the cultural and

national situation, *this too shall pass*. And *we too shall pass*. In fact, in 100 years from this moment, most likely everyone who is alive right now will no longer be alive. *This too shall pass*. If that is the case, if everything is *passing*, perhaps we might not let it also be so *pressing*.

By pressing, I mean letting yourself get identified. Why get pressed into it or let it get pressed into you? One of the ways I find help in not getting identified is that I remember the wisdom that everything is passing. *This too shall pass*. I will pass.

In the early monastic tradition, the desert fathers and mothers spoke of this as the wisdom of remembering your death. In the Sufi tradition, the phrase is "die before you die." There is something very humbling about remembering

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our death. It centers us in humility, and a kind of bright soberness that keeps us centered and grounded, awake, connected to the vertical, and capable of being present in the midst of dynamics we might otherwise be undone by.

The twice-daily practice of Centering Prayer is an ideal way of implementing this wisdom in our daily lives. In the silence, we learn how to let go of the moment, and our sense of control over our life. This is the initial process of dying before we die – of releasing, consenting, surrendering, knowing this thought, this moment, this event, this sensation, this feeling, this mood, *this life will pass*.

My hope and prayer is that our contemplative community of daily spiritual practice grounded in the meditative tradition of Centering

Prayer can help bear witness to the passing nature of things – and as such, demonstrate a high quality of freedom from any given moment of time, expression of culture, or the various swings that propel many in-between disappointment and elation.

In these unique days, I wish for myself and for our community to be marked by a bright, joyful sobriety that knows that while everything is passing, the Center is enduring and will always hold us, in this life.

The first day in November is also the time of year many people celebrate All Saints' Day. It is a sacred time of the fading light in the Northern Hemisphere, as we move toward the Winter Solstice. This year, our community will remember four of our beloved spiritual fathers and mothers, all of whom died

within about a month of each other: Brother Wayne Teasdale died October 20th. Father Thomas Keating died October 25th. G. I. Gurdjieff died October 29th. Mother Bernadette Roberts died November 27th.

We invite you to participate in a sacred candlelit evening of Gurdjieff music and selected readings from each of these beloved teacher's writings. We will broadcast from the sanctuary and gather virtually on Zoom at 6 p.m. on Sunday, November 1st.

In Ms. Deborah's story, she told that the King received a ring from a holy person. Perhaps we will receive a special message through the silence and readings from our beloved teachers. They too will help us remember: *This too shall pass.* 🕯️



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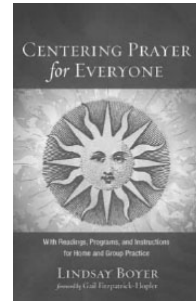
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## BOOK LOOK



Lindsay Boyer's new book *Centering Prayer for Everyone* is a helpful contribution to the living tradition that continues to evolve in the lineage of Fr. Thomas Keating.

One of the benefits of this book is how it seamlessly integrates Centering Prayer and *Lectio Divina*, and deepens our understanding of the role the sacred breath and sacred glance can play in addition to the sacred word.

If you are looking for a fresh take on the method of Centering Prayer, here is a new voice with a graced wisdom, especially useful for practicing together with others in community – virtual or in person.

## GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIAN LIFE, GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

Fr. Thomas Keating, in his seminal work *Open Mind, Open Heart*, lists 42 principles underlying the Christian spiritual journey.

Fr. Keating asks that these principles be read according to the method of *Lectio Divina*.

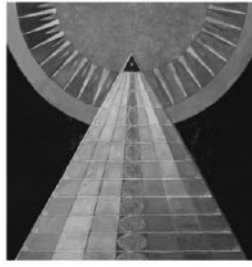
One principle appears in these pages each month.

### GUIDELINE 34

Chastity enhances and expands the power to love.

It perceives the sacredness of everything that is.

As a consequence, one respects the dignity of other persons and cannot use them merely for one's own fulfillment.



THE WAY  
*Draws Us Deeper*  
2020

# A REFLECTION ON THE JOURNEY SCHOOL

## A SCHOOL OF TRANSFORMATIVE SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY & PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH OF CONSCIOUS HARMONY

In this month of Thanksgiving, let's pause and give thanks for how The Journey School is serving our community of individuals who wish to more deeply recognize, receive and respond to God as the center of their lives.

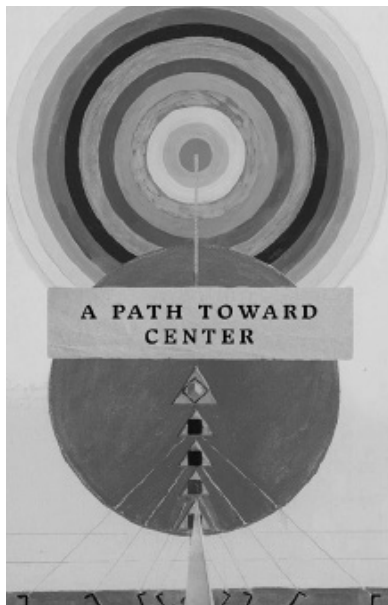
Last January, we introduced The Journey School as a spiritual resource that provides structure, teaching and support for conscious participation in the spiritual journey deeper into God's love. All were invited to participate at any level in the key offerings of The Journey School:

- An annual curriculum delivered via weekly emails
- A live class that explores the ideas and practices for the week
- A weekly Journey Group meeting for small group sharing

This year's curriculum relates to our 2020 theme *The Way Draws Us Deeper*. The Thursday evening class includes time in Lectio Divina, group sharing about the week's homework and the curriculum teachings. Being part of a spiritual family, listening to and encouraging each other in discussions of how we engage with the Work in our daily lives is a nurturing part of a spiritual community.

In addition, many accepted a special invitation to become an Oblate of The Church of Conscious Harmony. Participation as an Oblate is for those who fully participate in The Journey School and vow to live The Oblate *Rule of Life*, which consists of practices involving twice-daily Centering Prayer, reading Scripture, studying the Work, conscious exercise, celebrating the Eucharist, receiving spiritual direction from the minister, serving at the church, attending Centering Prayer and Oblate retreats, and tithing.

By reflecting on this remarkable journey, we prepare for the annual invitations that are forthcoming in 2021. We celebrate and give thanks to all of the individuals who said yes to consciously participate in this transformational spiritual journey into Christ. ☉



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*I am the way, the truth and the life. John 14:6*

## ANNUAL AIM: THE WAY DRAWS US DEEPER

### A PATH TOWARD CENTER: MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

BY Leslie Vieau

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We are called  
to a deeper humility,  
which in turn calls  
for a greater trust and an  
all-encompassing love of God.  
In a sense, the bottom and the top  
meet or collapse into one another.  
Humility and boundless confidence  
in God's infinite mercy merge,  
and the ongoing journey becomes  
whatever God wants it to be.

Thomas Keating, *Intimacy with God*

The Word of Truth  
is a living word, and works within  
anyone who has tasted it,  
even if he does not think of it at all.

Knowing this,  
one must think well  
before taking the *track*  
which leads to the *Way*.

But for [one] who has already  
started this journey, all hesitation  
must be banished. ...

[The] *Way* is a one-way road.

Boris Mouravieff, *Gnosis I*

*The word of God is living and effective,  
sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even  
between soul and spirit ...  
and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.*

Hebrews 4:12

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As a young child I loved going  
to Sunday school. Even though the  
rest of my family did not attend  
church very often, I had my dad  
drop me off there. I loved the stories  
of Jesus and hearing the message to  
love one another. At home there was  
lots of arguing and fighting amongst  
us four siblings. I remember being  
scolded and disciplined, but not  
being taught to be kind. I grew  
up in a middle-class home in a  
suburb of Minneapolis, with the  
secret of my mother's alcohol and  
prescription drug addictions and  
my serious and seemingly perfect  
father. In high school, I was blessed

with an "intervention" – a pure gift  
from above. My mom had become  
increasingly irrational and one day  
I broke down and cried through  
my English class. My teacher took  
the entire class time to listen to  
me in the hallway. I suddenly saw  
for the first time that she was ill  
and needed help, not for me to  
continue to fight with her logically.  
All he did was listen to me, but  
his care opened my heart enough  
for compassion to awaken within.

Through college and afterward,  
I was involved with artistic  
friends and had no connection  
to any spiritual group. I lived in

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Minneapolis, worked as a horse riding instructor/trainer, and began a yoga practice. Miraculously, I came upon and read the book *Remember Be Here Now* by Ram Dass, and felt as though my world had been cracked open and flipped around. This was another welcome intervention—a gift of Grace through higher emotional and intellectual centers. I began to read from many spiritual teachers and traditions, feeding the side of knowledge and contemplating the Way.

I met my first husband. We each believed we were spiritual beings. We had moved to the wonderful central Texas hill country around Lake Buchanan and lived in very rustic conditions. We were blessed with a beautiful daughter. I spent so much time in nature. I was raising dairy goats, teaching horse riding and cleaning houses for income. This period of living very simply was deeply nurturing to me. I felt God all around me and through me, and that the Mother Earth would always love and care for me no matter what I had or did. I am grateful for this period, despite the tumultuousness of my marriage. I remember saying to my husband that I didn't know if I was a Christian or not. He said, "We are living in the Dispensation of the Christ." I had never heard this before and pondered it for many years until I arrived at the Church of Conscious Harmony.

After leaving my marriage, I spent about four years getting on my feet in Austin. I was deeply involved as a participant, volunteer, and staff member for Insight Seminars. Through this organization, whose first seminar was "The Awakening Heart," I discovered tools to use to look within and be more honest with myself and others. I traveled to California one weekend per month for a year enrolled in the University of Santa Monica Spiritual Psychology program. My wish was for conscious awakening by learning, working on myself, healing old wounds, being of service and evolving.

I married again and we were blessed with another beautiful daughter. With my husband's encouragement, I joined Dell Computer and enjoyed a successful fourteen-year career there in sales. During this time, we attended the Unity Church in south Austin (Tim and Barbara Cook had already departed). I liked Unity because in my mind they didn't "worship" Jesus, but just learned from Him.

Once again, the ongoing journey became whatever God wants it to be. My church going fell off during a three-year obsession with competing in triathlons, followed by ten years of competitive retriever training with my Labradors. But the connection with God through nature was ever-present. In all of the physical activity and "doing," I was finally able to observe how

being busy has been an escape for being in touch with my feelings and emotions, and see the wonder of finally experiencing these emotions within my body. Who knew!

"We are called to a deeper humility, which in turn calls for a greater trust and an all-encompassing love of God ..." Thomas Keating

When I saw that alcohol came before God, I faced my hereditary and progressive addiction, chose a date to quit drinking, and remain sober thanks to the Twelve Steps and "praying my ass off." Eventually, I faced the truth that my "perfect" life: home, career, and marriage was a lie. I had left Dell to pursue my calling as a teacher and after years of marriage counseling, it was time to move on. My husband and I explored different churches together during this time of heartbreak. We attended the Church of Conscious Harmony one Sunday. The grounds and the chanting captured my heart. The next Sunday a friend asked me to coffee after church. I never stopped coming and we never stopped going for that coffee!

I attended every class that was offered. I had time and prioritized God in my life. When I first attended the Thursday night "Work of Inner Christianity" class, I hated it. I hated the language. I was angry that after all the personal growth work and therapy that I had done I had to now start over. And yet

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here I was after a second divorce. Learning about recurrence scared me enough to keep coming, keep reading, and keep listening. It took a long time for me to feel a tremor in my solar plexus during Centering Prayer and realize “Oh, that’s a feeling! That’s anxiety!” Longer still for me to hear a voice in my head and realize it’s just an ‘I’ commenting about your relationships. Wow, how fascinating! Slowly the beauty of the Work grew inside me. I am still in awe of this Work, which calls us to observe ourselves always without criticism, know that these parts of ourselves are not our true selves and affirm who we really are as children of God, placed here by God, with the capacity to grow.

I participated in choir, the Glorious Impossible play, Centering Prayer retreats, and our beloved Seva program. I created wonderful relationships with so many people at church, most of whom I have no idea what they do for their living. We are together to share God Devotion as the center of our lives in a monastery without walls. As a child who loved the stories about Jesus, I have been most happy to learn that these stories are true and alive within me! We call this leg of our Church the Work of Inner Christianity; to me it is the Work of *Living* Christianity. Every day I can observe many of the characters from the Scriptures as I’s or parts of my personality. How

wonderful to know that each of us has the potential, and the purpose of evolving *as* Christ. It is as Jesus said, “These things that I do and greater you will do.” (John 14:12)

Over time my relationship with the Eucharist has deepened and changed. As a Moving Center person who avoided feelings, this ritual has become a primary three-centered experience for me. As I hear the words that Jesus actually said, and then I can do this thing, and remember – I feel the presence of Christ all through my heart and my body. This is such a miracle and a blessing!

One night driving home after church I was chanting “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Allelu, alleluia.” I wondered, “What if I could seek first the kingdom of God?” This truth thundered down through my heart and my body; another divine intervention from the Circle of Conscious Humanity that remains with me.

Two years ago, I was living in paradise on five acres in south Austin with my daughter, son-in-law, two granddaughters, and his parents and sister with our dogs, cats, and 30 chickens. My son-in-law was diagnosed with a chronic condition and began to explore alternative climates to live. After a year of discernment, they decided to move to Colorado Springs. I was

devastated at the thought of leaving the Church of Conscious Harmony – the center of my life! After much prayer and visiting the cold clear air of the Front Range of the Rockies, I received a clear three-centered message that “Yes, I’ll be going.” It was heart wrenching, and yet I have loved living here from the first day.

God is everywhere! I found a Centering Prayer group, and monthly half-day retreats at a nearby Benedictine monastery. I found a Presbyterian church like the one I grew up in, so that I could participate weekly in the Eucharist. I stayed with The Journey program. The Journey School, including my Spiritual Journey Group, has been astounding to me in the depth and clarity of the lessons and the sharing. Participating in Thursday night classes on Zoom is amazing compared to listening afterwards. I feel so connected and blessed and alive with learning and evolving as a loving being of Light for the sake of our community, our planet, and all of humanity. All my life I have wondered “What’s really going on?” Here we are learning it. I accept. Being able to attend CCH on Zoom, and to participate in Eucharist with my beloved Conscious Harmony community brings immense joy. We are One! We are together. Grateful love to all and everything. ☸



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*My Father is still working, and I also am working.* John 5:17

# LIVING THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY IN DAILY LIFE

## INTERNAL CONSIDERING BY NATHAN JONES

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**Work Idea:** The Work of Inner Christianity speaks of two contrasting concepts: External and Internal Considering. Here we will discuss Internal Considering. External considering is the attempt to put yourself in the other person's position. In this Work, we aim to always attempt to Externally Consider and endeavor to stop Internal Considering. Internal considering is always being concerned with yourself. *Always being identified with yourself.* Internal considering involves thinking others should be different. You are operating from the perspective that you are right, and they are wrong. It is the feeling that they owe you something, the feeling they are indebted to you, the feeling that the other person should change. We tell ourselves we are upset and offended with the other person. Over time these feelings build up like plaque in the arteries. This is also called *making accounts*. We begin to piece together unpleasant memories of the other

person – the way they stand, the sound of their voice, we rehearse the things we will say to bring them down a notch. Internal considering additionally involves ruminating on how people are refusing to treat you properly, or value your input enough, or being polite enough, or laughing hard enough at your subtle humor. All of these actions make up Internal Considering.

**Work Source:** “Sometimes I think that one of the things that helps us most in regard to internally considering is the constant thinking and constant reminding of ourselves that we and others are mechanical. ... You are a machine and always act mechanically. You are just as difficult for other people as you think other people are for you. Everyone has a different kind of rudeness, but you must remember that you also have your own form of rudeness, open or concealed. Then again, there is another closely connected thought that may help when one observes that one is

internally considering and that is that we keep on imagining that people are doing things intentionally to us when they are not at all, and they in their turn think we are doing things intentionally to them. Therefore, we have to endure one another's unpleasant manifestations and realize how we are machines at present. The one thing we must struggle with is forming long unchecked trains of internal considering, trains of pitiful thoughts because they will drag us down and make us ill eventually. A pleasant independence is quite different from rudeness of self-pity. A dislike of arguing is a good sign also. It is just the same as when you wish to say something to someone that is not very easy and so instead of saying it rudely or arguing you say it in a certain indirect and pleasant way and also include yourself as having the same fault.” *Commentaries*, p. 749

**Application:** Observe your own Internal Considering. It tends to

stand out when it is a long, endless internal monologue about another person or situation. Remember, *this too shall pass*. Pay attention to what it is saying and remember it. You may recognize it. You may have seen yourself having these same thoughts before (a version of what the Work refers to as *taking a picture of yourself*). They tend to be old, worn out thoughts that have been used to describe all sorts of various people in your life. Same exact thoughts about different people, which is a curious thing if you think about it. Moreover remember, if you continue to think that people do not see how remarkable you are, you are Internally Considering.

**Further Resource:** Consider the Lord's Prayer. Particularly ponder the phrase, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive others." Could this be a different way of saying internally consider never, externally consider always. Perhaps it just doesn't sound quite as pretty. ☉

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## 2020 ANNUAL COMMUNITY READING

*THE MONK WITHIN*  
BY BEVERLY LANZETTA

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# KEEPING OUR EYE ON THE MARK

BY SANDRA ELY



This month's theme "A Path Towards Center" draws me to a profound symbol that deserves more attention. This symbol is visible to you right now as you are reading this newsletter. It's the transforming symbol that we use to represent The Church of Conscious Harmony. Sometimes, it's called "the eye of God." We call it "The Mark" because it helps us keep our aim, just as a target provides the mark for an archer. When we miss the mark, we miss the true meaning and purpose of our lives.

Symbols can touch our souls. As Tim Cook wrote, "A symbol is a visible manifestation of an invisible quality, presence or truth. ... Symbols have the power to shape our minds, allowing them to conceive of invisible realities and truths; that at their truest cannot even be put into words." He continues, "Signs point to things. Symbols impress upon us. We don't have to think, only look – the potency is so simple."

Together, let's take a good look at The Mark on the front cover and feel into its meaning, its mystery. Take time.

Notice the three parts. The outer circle represents the Absolute, the source and sustainer of everything in existence. The triangle within refers to the Trinity through which everything is both created and sustained. The inner circle refers to all and every unique individual entity, including you and me, with God always at the empty center. When I hit the mark, so to speak, I feel myself in God and God in me, through the mystery of the Trinity in the center. Observing from the empty center, I feel into the here and now, as the dynamic Trinity connects to the expansion of God. In both directions, I see Oneness.

What this profound symbol is saying so eloquently yet wordlessly is the very essence of Jesus' prayer to the Father: *that they may all be one, as You, Father, are in me and I in You, may they also be one in us.* (John 17:21)

There is more to be revealed about The Mark, but for now let's simply take another good, slow look and just be. ☉

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# CELEBRATE ALL SAINTS' DAY WITH SACRED MUSIC & WISDOM

We invite you to participate in a sacred candlelit evening  
of Gurdjieff music with selected readings  
from four beloved spiritual teachers  
whose writings continue to draw us deeper on the Way.  
These spiritual fathers and mothers  
all died within weeks of each other:

Brother Wayne Teasdale died October 20, 2004

Fr. Thomas Keating died October 25, 2018

G. I. Gurdjieff died October 29, 1949

Mother Bernadette Roberts died November 27, 2017

We are broadcasting from the sanctuary  
at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 1st, All Saints' Day,  
using the same online room as Sunday and Wednesday worship services.

Please check the Special Events page at  
[consciouharmony.org](http://consciouharmony.org) for more detail.

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## NOVEMBER SERMON SERIES

November 1	Community Reading Discussion: Compassion & <i>The Monk Within</i>
November 8	Evolving the Lord's Prayer, Part 1
November 15	Evolving the Lord's Prayer, Part 2
November 22	Evolving the Lord's Prayer, Part 3
November 29	The First Sunday of Advent: Dreams of Christmas

## NOVEMBER CALENDAR

For more details, visit  
[consciouharmony.org](http://consciouharmony.org) or call 512-347-9673

### SPECIAL EVENTS

#### Sacred Music & Readings

Nov 1 6pm  
See details at left

#### Online Centering Prayer Retreat

Nov 14 9am-3pm  
Please preregister.

#### Courtyard Communion

Schedule for you/your family:  
[minister@consciouharmony.org](mailto:minister@consciouharmony.org)

### MONTHLY

#### Caritas Donations

To continue our long standing partnership,  
please consider making a donation of food or  
money directly to [caritasofaustin.org](http://caritasofaustin.org)

#### \*Godly Play Parade of Parables

Nov 14 1pm

### WEEKLY

#### Sundays

\*Centering Prayer & Lectio Divina 8-9am

\*Intercessory Prayer 9am

†Worship Service 10-11:30am

†Teen Program 10-11:30am

\*\*Youth Program 1pm

#### Wednesdays

†Contemplative Worship Service 6:30-7:15pm

\*Minister's Book Study 7:30-8:25pm

#### Thursdays

\*The Journey School Class 7-8:30pm

#### Fridays

\*Mystics of the Christian Tradition 12:30-1:15pm

#### Saturdays

\*Scriptorium 11am

\*Compline 9-9:15pm

### DAILY

\*Centering Prayer Service 7-7:35am

\*Please join these services via Zoom video  
conferencing. Contact the website for instructions.

\*\*All our youth are invited to participate. Contact  
[youthdir@consciouharmony.org](mailto:youthdir@consciouharmony.org) for Zoom code.

† Sign up online to attend in person or view online  
using a homepage link at [consciouharmony.org](http://consciouharmony.org)

Recordings of services are available online at  
[www.consciouharmony.org](http://www.consciouharmony.org)



THE CHURCH of CONSCIOUS HARMONY

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*You know the time;  
it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep.  
For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed;  
the night is advanced, the day is at hand.  
Let us then off throw the works of darkness  
and put on the armor of light.  
... Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Romans 13:11-12, 14*

## ADVENT

The season of Advent is the time  
of the original religious instinct.  
Never will we experience our primeval homesick  
yearning for God  
more actively and alertly than in this season.  
... Advent is the season of the God-seeker.  
The original longing within every human heart  
is a great impulse toward the hidden and distant God,  
a longing to wander in that far-off,  
forgotten homeland of the soul.  
... May God help us to wake up to ourselves and in doing so,  
to move from ourselves toward Him.

Alfred Delp, *Advent of the Heart,  
Seasonal Sermons and Prison Writings*