



# Contemplative Times

The Centering Prayer Newsletter  
of Contemplative Outreach

*Oakland - East Bay Chapter*

## Letter from the Co-Coordinator

February 2009  
Volume 7, Issue 1

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*Contemplative Times*  
Contemplative Outreach, LTD.  
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Are you looking for a really high quality dinner out, with good company, entertainment, and all for less than you would pay at those other places? These days, who isn't? We have an invitation for you to our COOEB Community Building Dinner in April. See page 3 for the details. (There's more about the Chef on our new website, described below.) Come, and enjoy!

We have a great new resource and means of communication for Centering Prayer in our area. Marty Badgett and Bill McLennan have created for us a website that will serve not only the East Bay, but also San Francisco and all of Northern California. The website is at [contemplativeoutreach-norcal.org](http://contemplativeoutreach-norcal.org), or [conout-norcal.org](http://conout-norcal.org) for short. You can enter either of these in the address line of your browser. There are many wonderful things on the site already, and more will be coming—information on activities and retreats, help locating a prayer support group, and so on. The site looks beautiful. Check it out.

One item on the site is newsletters. In other words, you can find this newsletter on [conout-norcal.org](http://conout-norcal.org). Rather than emailing the newsletter as previously planned, we will use the website as the usual means of making it available. We know some of you want to receive a printed copy, and that will still be done. **See page 5 of this issue.** *This is important, as we will mail a printed copy only to those who request it.* We are suggesting a donation to cover costs, but as with the donation at a Day of Prayer, this one is suggested but not required.

There are many roads up a mountain, and there are many paths to contemplation, many styles of contemplative prayer practice. In 1975 an English Benedictine monk, Fr. John Main, established the first Christian Meditation Centre. That movement has grown about the world, just as the Centering Prayer movement has. Our Annual Conference last fall featured Fr. Laurence Freeman, the successor to Fr. Main as Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation. He's an excellent speaker, and a fine teacher of the spiritual journey. Try to listen to the CDs of the presentations he and Fr. Thomas Keating gave, including their dialogue presentation. As the theme of the conference put it, part of our intention is to foster "Oneness: Unity in Contemplation."

This seems like a very nuts-and-bolts newsletter. Maybe that's because I'm learning a new computer while putting it together. I've had many reminders to "deliberately dismantle the emotional programming of the false self." But God is active in all things, and with His help this issue is getting out. I wish you a blessed Lent, and good centering.

John Neville

**Centering Prayer Groups  
in the East Bay**

and their contact persons to call for meeting times, directions, etc.  
All without exception are welcome to our prayer groups.

**All Saints Church, Hayward**  
Melanie Smith: 510-537-6563  
Francis Tanjuatco: 650-678-7739

**Christ Church, Alameda**  
Claudia Lewey: 510-769-1759

**Christ the King Church, Pleasant Hill**  
(Day and evening groups)  
Jodi Runyon (day group): 925-939-0859  
Jeanne Pletz: 925-837-6971  
Pat Stevens: 925-945-1623

**Corpus Christi Church, Fremont**  
Kathy Lyons: 510-793-3672  
Ron Taylor: 510-490-1279

**Our Lady of the Rosary Church, Union City**  
Gene Aciniaga: 510-471-9496

**St. Alban Church, Albany**  
Judy Ellisen: 510-237-6961

**St. Augustine Church, Oakland**  
Jim Gilman: 510-419-0740

**St. Elizabeth Seton Church, Pleasanton**  
Art Crosetti: 925-462-2721

**St. Perpetua Church, Lafayette**  
Helen McKennon: 925-977-1872  
Carol Weyer: 925-932-1845  
Joanne Elgaaen: 925-284-5608

**St. Theresa Church, Oakland**  
(Day group):  
Dolores Vasquez 510-530-4081  
(Evening group):  
Jeanne Lovi: 510-547-2505  
John Neville: 510-655-2796  
Betty Wharton: 510-531-6124

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH  
OAKLAND-EAST BAY

*LENTEN DAY OF PRAYER*

**SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2009**

**10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.**

*We will gather in silence. First sit about 10:10 am.*

**Christ the King Church, Pleasant Hill**

Enter the side entrance of the Ministry Center  
(See directions below)

There will be several centering prayer sits.

We will listen to presentations on a

**Lenten Theme,**

And there will be time for sharing and discussion.

*Lunch will be in silence, if in the room.*

*Conversation outside will be optional.*

Bring a brown bag lunch                      Snacks and beverages provided

**RSVP** requested (it makes planning more convenient)  
but not required

RSVP Jeanne Pletz 925-837-6971

**Suggested donation \$20.00**

**No one turned away for lack of funds**

Directions to the Ministry Center at Christ the King Church in Pleasant Hill.

The church is at the corner of Gregory Lane and Brandon Road.

On **680 northbound**, take the Contra Costa Blvd. exit. After crossing over the freeway, continue about a third of a mile to a left turn onto Gregory Lane.

On **680 southbound**, take the Gregory Lane exit and continue straight on Gregory Lane.

**Once on Gregory Lane**, go one mile to a left turn onto Brandon Road. Then after the church take the first driveway to the right. The ministry center will be on your left. There is parking there and also further along the driveway.

*Days of Prayer will sometimes be in the Oakland-Hayward area, sometimes in the Walnut Creek-I 680 area, but it will not be a rigid alternation. If your group would like to host one, please let us know.*

## East Bay Contemplative Outreach Community Building Dinner



**Date:** Sunday, April 26, 2009  
**Time:** 5:00 – 8:00 pm  
**Where:** St Marks Episcopal Church, Berkeley  
 (2<sup>nd</sup> floor Parish Hall)  
**Cost:** \$30/Person in advance / \$35 at the door  
**Parking:** Free in the garage (handicap accessible)

Our first East Bay Contemplative Outreach community dinner will be held to support our growing together in Christ and to build relationships between our Centering Prayer groups. The evening will be a wonderful experience including: time for socializing, a gourmet meal provided by a wonderful bay area chef, Elka Gilmore, entertainment by our friends from Christ the King group; and of course desert to send us home satiated! Social hour will begin at 5:00 pm with a no-host bar, followed by dinner at 6:00 pm.

Our meal will be fresh, seasonal and vegetarian, with wine included, and served family style.

Chef Elka is donating her time to delight our palates! Elka made her debut in the culinary world at the age of eleven, washing dishes at a French restaurant in Austin, Texas. She has been working restaurants ever since, more than 35 years including one of her own in San Francisco known as Elka. In the summer 2008, Elka cooked for an advanced Centering Prayer retreat at St. Benedicts, Snowmass CO.

Location and Parking: St Marks, 2300 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94704

Parking in the garage is free for the evening. Use the entrance from the corner of Ellsworth and Durant. To enter the building, use the door through the garage, there will be someone there to guide you.

To RSVP and take advantage of early registration (now through April 18<sup>th</sup>), visit our new website to register at: [WWW.CONTEMPLATIVEOUTREACH-NORCAL.ORG](http://WWW.CONTEMPLATIVEOUTREACH-NORCAL.ORG). Alternatively, tear off the following and include with your registration. Please make your checks to: COOEB

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 Mail to: Helen McKennon, 408 Timberline Ct., Pleasant Hill CA 94523

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## WELCOMING PRAYER WORKSHOP

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2009 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

St. Mary's Parish, Hofmann Center 219 Bean Avenue, Los Gatos, CA 95030

The practice of letting go – and allowing God into the ordinary, and sometimes challenging, moments of our life.

This workshop will introduce participants to the method of the Welcoming Prayer and provide an opportunity to practice. The Welcoming Prayer helps us to let go of emotions, feelings, and thoughts that control us. It is intended for use in daily life to complement Centering Prayer or other contemplative prayer practices.

### Facilitator: Cherry Haisten

M.A. in Spirituality, Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry;

Commissioned Presenter by Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.

Suggested donation of \$25, includes box lunch. To confirm your attendance, call

Colleen at 408-354-4061, ext 125 or email her at [cpacheco@stmaryslg.org](mailto:cpacheco@stmaryslg.org)

Internationally known spiritual teacher and writer, and founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque

### Richard Rohr OFM

will speak on

### “Contemplation & Action in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**Sunday, February 22, 2009**

**1:30 to 4:30 pm**

St. Ignatius Church, University of San Francisco

650 Parker Ave., corner of Parker & Fulton

Suggested donation \$25 in advance or \$35 at the door

University and High School students free with student/school ID

To pre-register send check payable to “Contemplative Outreach of SF” to Mary Wyman, Event Coordinator, 202 Roosevelt Way, San Francisco, CA 94114

for more information email [mary.wyman@yahoo.com](mailto:mary.wyman@yahoo.com)

Proceeds to benefit Contemplative Outreach Prison Ministry in northern California prisons.

**AS PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED---**

The COOEB Newsletter is changing its distribution method. (Printed copies by mail will remain an option—see below.) But the change is not the one we announced. What’s new and unforeseen is the website for Contemplative Outreach in Northern California. So here’s how it will work.

**Method 1:** The Co-Coordinator’s Letter describes the new website at [contemplativeoutreach-norcal.org](http://contemplativeoutreach-norcal.org) (or [conout-norcal.org](http://conout-norcal.org) for short). On the homepage of the site there is a heading for newsletters. Click there, then on the relevant newsletter.

Since you may not want to hover over the website waiting for the next newsletter, we will set up a system for sending you an email alert, if you wish. At the bottom of this page there is a coupon. Fill in your name and email address, check “Send email announcement for newsletter” and return it to the address indicated.

**Method 2:** If you wish to continue getting a print copy of the newsletter, we will happily send you one. However, as explained in the last newsletter, printing and mailing costs have become notable. So, we are suggesting an annual donation of \$5 for the printed and mailed edition. If that cost exceeds your budget, please donate whatever does fit.

For the print version, please fill in your name and address on the coupon below, check “Send a printed copy of newsletter” and return it with your donation. **NOTE: If you want the printed version mailed to you, you must request it.** The **ordinary** method of distribution will be the **website**.

Perhaps you have some other special request about receiving the newsletter. Please use the coupon to tell us about that, and we will try to meet your need.

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COOEB NEWSLETTER DELIVERY METHOD—COMMUNICATION OF PREFERENCE

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

City/St/Zip\_\_\_\_\_

Email address\_\_\_\_\_ Phone\_\_\_\_\_

Please send an email announcement of a new newsletter issue.

Please send a printed copy of the newsletter by mail. Donation included. (\$5 per year suggested)

Special concerns or comments\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Return to: COOEB—John Neville 5409 Thomas Ave., Oakland, CA 94618

Two Passages from Fr. John Main, Founder of Christian Meditation

There is more about John Main and the World Community for Christian Meditation at www.wccm.org.

As modern people we are often not secure in our self-confidence. Perhaps the primary cause of our confusion and alienation is that we have lost the support of a common faith in our essential goodness, reasonableness and inner integrity, indeed of any common faith at all. Where we find our community, our community of thought, and of feeling (and find it or concoct it we must) is much more likely to be in self-recrimination and prophecies of doom; or in protest, which is usually a protestation against and seldom a witness for. Now this is perhaps a part of our fallen nature that we have to live with, namely, that much common sympathy between people is built upon this negative base of sharing the same fears and the same prejudices. But it is possible to enjoy a deeper, more positive fraternity which is rooted in a common awareness of the potential of the human spirit, rather than the limitations of human life. It is the specifically Christian task to sink the roots of this awareness deep into our understanding of ourselves and our world.

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It is only in accepting silence that we can come to know our own spirit. We are often deeply threatened by silence—the growing terror of nothing to think about—and we all have to face this fear when we begin to meditate. First, we must confront with some shame the chaotic din of a mind ravaged by so much exposure to trivia and distraction. Persevering through this in fidelity to the mantra, we then encounter a darker level of consciousness, of repressed fears and anxieties. The radical simplicity of the mantra clears this too. But our first inclination is always to retreat from the dawn of self-knowledge. In entering upon these first two levels we risk being bruised. But in entering into the next, into our own silence, we risk everything, for we risk our very being. ‘So I said to my soul, “Be still.”’ The stillness of mind and body to which the mantra guides us is a preparation for entering this silence, and for our progression through the spheres of silence to see with wonder the light of our own spirit, and know that light as something beyond our spirit and yet the source of it. This is a pilgrimage through our spheres of silence that we undertake in faith, putting our entire trust in what is only a dim apprehension of the authentic, the real, yet confident in doing so because it is authentic. In saying the mantra we lay down our life for the sake of Him we have not yet seen

From Word Into Silence

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED