



CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH ONTARIO

SILENCE SOLITUDE SOLIDARITY SERVICE

OUR NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2016 - N°7

A Word from the Editor

Indeed, the “Second Wind” of the May Conference in Niagara Falls is blowing and Contemplative Outreach is on the rising curve in the three Ontario regions. Some reorganization is taking place. People have come forward to volunteer. New groups are emerging. Contemplative Outreach is alive and well and living in Ontario. Our next event at that level will be in 2019 — never too early to talk about it — we are already looking for a venue. So, mark your calendars for COO 2019, most probably in the Spring.

In between, there will be an important conference in Denver, CO, in September 2017. It’s significant because it will be the first conference after the retirement of Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler, Father Carl Arico, Susan Komis and Mary Howard, four stalwarts of Contemplative Outreach. There is now a Governing Board and we think that it would be great to send a strong contingent from Ontario to show our support to our fellow CP practitioners south of the border. (See Upcoming Events on page 2).

COO is now putting into place a Scholarship Fund. Details of how it works will follow in due course.

As we are communities united in faith and in prayer, we would like to let you know that Shirley Tilden, from both Southwestern and Central regions (Amherstburg and Oakville), who attended COO 2016,

suffered a brain aneurism the very next day after the Conference. She has been fighting for her life ever since. Let’s keep Shirley in our prayers.

May the spirit of Christmas fill you with joy and, as St. Paul said “Grace to you and peace from God our Father.” (Romans 1.7) Have a Blessed and Happy New Year!

Marie-Noëlle Maillard
logos302@sympatico.ca

Theological Principles

We foster a spirit of unity, generosity and utmost charity in all our relationships. (Principle 13)

Following the teaching of Jesus, we exercise leadership through an attitude of humility, listening and service. (Principle 14)

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Upcoming Events

*** Annual Conference (U.S.),
September 21-24, 2017**
Denver International Airport
Denver, Colorado
Mark your calendars!
Registration will open mid-May 2017

This conference will provide an opportunity for listening, open discussion and planning for the future as we continue, with a new Governing Board, to experience a time of transition for Contemplative Outreach, after the retirement of Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler, Father Carl Arico, Susan Komis and Mary Howard. We would like the three regions of Ontario be represented and plan to have partial subsidies available.

*** A Training for commissioned presenters** is being organized under the leadership of Marlene Kelly-Kolotylo, Yvonne Parent and Johnson Ling. Details to follow in due course. If you would like to be a commissioned presenter, please contact Marlene at kolkel@sympatico.ca.

Regional Spotlights

SOUTHWESTERN

Contemplative Outreach Southwestern Ontario (SWOCCO) has had a very busy fall this year. After a summer break for most of the Centering Prayer groups, we resumed our regular meetings in September. It was a happy re-union for all!

* In September we held an Introductory Workshop at Elmwood Presbyterian Church in London. Jan Evans, the facilitator, writes: "On September 24, 2016, the Centering Prayer group that meets at Elmwood Presbyterian Church in London hosted an Introductory Workshop. The Southwest regional team provided

facilitation for the day. We were thrilled with the response we got – 32 people attended the workshop and a number of others had to cancel last minute. The participants came from across London and surrounding counties. I was thrilled to see a wide representation of faith backgrounds – Anglican, Presbyterian, United, Evangelical, Amish, Baptist, Catholic and "Nones," as well as seeing a 30-80 year old age range. I heard many enthusiastic responses following the day. People loved the presentations and enjoyed the opportunity to practice silent prayer in community.

There were 15 people who indicated they are interested in attending follow-up sessions or forming a Centering Prayer group in their church. We are still in the process of figuring out how that might be coordinated and supported. Clearly, there is a deep hunger in the hearts of many people in this region to understand and experience contemplative prayer. May we continue the work of feeding the hungry!!"

* On the October 15-16 weekend, Debbie Wilson-Safa, SWOCCO facilitator formation volunteer, writes: "SWOCCO was well represented at the Facilitator Formation workshop held in Toronto, by Janet Barraco (Kingsville), Jim and Pearl Clarke (Chatham), Herm Van Ryn and Lynn Prentice (London), and Debbie Wilson-Safa (Leamington).

It was a privilege to be in the company of others who make Centering Prayer a part of their daily spiritual discipline and to share in their journeys. We were blessed to have Nestor de Armas and Bob Mischke (from the United States) lead us over the two days as they enlightened us with their wisdom, stories and humour. The time together felt much like an intimate gathering with good friends sitting around the dining table. The level and depth of sharing was so grace-filled and fuelled by the presence of Holy Spirit. Janet has this to add to our time together, 'I felt very welcomed by all of them... like having our

own family that truly like our presence. It was a good bonding experience for our Ontario groups.'

The knowledge, tools and support that we left with are truly a valuable resource to enrich each of our lives and our practice of Centering Prayer. This will manifest in us how we relate and share with others in our groups, and with all those we connect with in our daily lives as we learn to listen at a deeper level of understanding. Through our roles as servant-leaders we must continue to model by example, by being present, respectful and open to the Spirit."

* On October 18, 2016 we had our fall meetings of both the Facilitators and of the Service Team which were held in Chatham. We welcomed two new members from London to the facilitators group: Norm Hobbs and Don Irvine.

The highlights included :

- Reports from events since our last meeting followed by sharing and discussion by the group.
- The decision to launch our own SWOCCO website. Debbie Wilson-Safa would be responsible for its launching as soon as possible. If you have an interest in helping with this task, please feel free to contact her.
- Marlene Kelly-Kolotylo announced her resignation as coordinator of SWOCCO effective June 30, 2017.

At the "Second Wind" Conference in Niagara Falls, it was decided that the three regions of Ontario form Contemplative Outreach Ontario to better coordinate the services to respond to the common needs of the three regions. The three coordinators were asked to take on that task. After a time of discernment, I feel at this stage of my life, it is necessary to resign as coordinator of SWOCCO. It is also time to allow new energy and abilities to flourish in the network with the privilege and opportunity of giving back to the network.

* On October 22, 2016, an Introductory Workshop was held at St. John's Anglican Church in Leamington with 21 people in attendance. The follow-up sessions are planned for those who are interested in knowing more. We expect these sessions will be completed at the end of November and that a new Centering Prayer group will be formed in Leamington.

* In the week of November 13, Marlene and Father Joe sent a letter to each member of the SWOCCO network through the facilitator of each group. It included a request to reflect on the importance of the gift of Centering Prayer in the lives of each of us and to discern in our hearts whether we are being called to share the gift at this time in our lives in a leadership role such as coordinator or as a servant-leader in some capacity in the near future for a term of three years. We were invited to join in prayer for this intention the first week of Advent (November 27 to December 3) in our Centering Prayer in private and in our group meetings. Submission of names of those who are feeling called is requested by December 15, 2017.

The future **Events** planned for 2016-2017 include:

***Advent Day of Reflection** on December 3, 2016 (changed from November 26) and will be held in a new location: St. Mark-by-the-Lake Anglican Church, 150 Mark Avenue, Windsor, ON.

***The Lenten Day of Reflection** on February 27, 2017

***United in Prayer Day:** March 18, 2017

***Weekend Centering Prayer Retreat:** May 5-7, 2017 at Holy Family Retreat Centre in Oxley.

For more information about these events, please contact Marlene at kolkel@sympatico.ca

What a privilege and blessing and gift it is to be a member of "a spiritual community

of individuals and small faith groups committed to renewing the contemplative dimension of the Gospel in every day life.”

Marlene Kelly-Kolotylo, coordinator
kolkel@sympatico.ca

CENTRAL

The Central Region is still reorganizing after the huge vacuum left by the passing of Carolyn two years ago this Christmas, then of Peter Donovan in August 2015. The new Servant Leadership Team is in place and has six members (in alphabetical order): Marilyn Brandon, Mary Catherine Doyle, Johnson Ling, Marie-Noëlle Maillard, Janet Sidey and Sue Woollard, the latest addition to the team.

The summer brought with it our Annual Potluck on Saturday, August 20, 2016. Same place, same garden... although we had to stay inside because of the heat!

This year, the tradition expanded to Beeton as the Near North decided to have a Potluck Lunch a week later, on Saturday, August 27. This was a first! Here is how one participant, Steve Parrotte, described it: “The Beeton Group hosted this get-together, and special thanks to Marilyn Brandon for opening her home on a perfect late-summer day. Sitting in a circle, shaded by old trees, we sipped ice-cold lemonade and shared our thoughts and personal experiences. Often, we take each other at face value, never realizing what fascinating ‘back stories’ we have and that no two journeys are alike. We were born in places like England, Ireland, France, New York and Canada, and our travels took us to such varied places as New Zealand, Africa and the Arctic Circle. We re-discovered that we are all open-ended books and all our journeys are unique. What circuitous routes we took to arrive here in Beeton, at this house, in this yard, at this extraordinary time, and what a blessing it was. The meeting was concluded with a Centering sit and we left hoping there may be many happy returns of this special day.”

Then we put all our energy into preparing a very special Facilitators Formation Weekend (two levels) on October 15-16, 2016 with Nestor de Armas, a member of the Contemplative Outreach Facilitator Formation Leadership Team, and his friend Bob Mischke, both from the United States. Over the two days, we had 24 attendees, including six from the Southwestern region. Level 1 aimed at empowering facilitators to provide basic skills training locally to new members. Level 2 was to explore two topics in greater depth, namely Soul-friending and Twelve Principles of Spiritual Leadership. It was extremely inspiring and enriching.

On November 19, 2016, Elyse Strathy, a commissioned presenter, gave a half-a-day Introduction to Centering Prayer at St. Hilary’s Anglican Church in Mississauga (QEW and Hurontario).

We are now looking forward to the first half of 2017 and have two events lined up.

*** United in Prayer Day: Saturday, March 18, 2017**

Venue: TBA

In 2017, the United in Prayer Day will commemorate 25 years in the Contemplative Outreach community worldwide. This is a day of silent prayer in which we celebrate silence as a source of relationship with our Creator and with all creation. We usually present a DVD (prepared by Contemplative Outreach Butler for the event) for spiritual enrichment. More information will follow in due course.

*** A Weekend Centering Prayer Retreat May 5-7, 2017**

with Gregor Sneddon

Venue: Sisterhood of St. John the Divine
233 Cummer Avenue
North York, ON

* There will also be an Introductory Workshop on **Saturday, November 18, 2017** at the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine. Details will appear in the next

Newsletter, but if you are interested, you can mark your calendars already.

WANTED

A resource person to take care of our circulating books, DVDs and CDs. Please contact the editor. A big thank you in advance.

Don't forget that the **Bethany Retreat Center, Frenchville, Pennsylvania, USA**, offers retreats year round. Visit their website at www.bethanyretreatcenter.org for further information. Please make arrangements for any retreat directly with the Bethany Retreat Center as indicated on their website.

A car-pooling could be organized if several people decide to go to the same retreat. The editor will act as a contact person for those interested in a possible car-pooling. Please email logos302@sympatico.ca if you are looking for a ride or if you can take passengers in your vehicle. Bethany is within driving distance of Toronto (about five hours).

Marie-Noëlle Maillard, coordinator
logos302@sympatico.ca

EASTERN

What we gather in contemplation we give out in love.

Meister Eckhart

On behalf of the leadership team in Eastern Ontario, I am happy to update you on our last year.

Since last year, our small team of contemplative volunteers have shuffled around roles and tasks, most particularly, Rev. Gregor Sneddon, founder and coordinator of COEO for the past 16 years. He has carefully passed on the "burning coal" of this precious work to me. I will pray each day to continue the good and necessary work of "all things contemplative."

Gregor remains our wisdom advisor and will continue to be involved with many aspects of our various offerings. We have and will offer a number of our retreat days at his new parish of St. Matthew's in the Glebe (editor's note: in Ottawa). We are most grateful for his enthusiasm, care and hard work of nurturing this chapter of CO.

Deacon Christine Jannasch, who has been registrar and treasurer for many years, gives with delight the task of registrar to Hélène Goulet. Hélène continues as bridge and link to the Québec-Outaouais branch. John Zegers, an Elder among us, leads a CP group in downtown Ottawa. We are recipients of his presence whenever he is able to be with us on retreat or at meetings. Susan Lewis, looks after communications and in particular the website!! www.coeo.community. We have, with much hard work on her part, duly moved into the 21st century — a steep learning curve for some (mainly me, SK).

And last but not least, Tim Kehoe is "jack of all trades," offering music and liturgy, teaching, guiding retreats and generally keeping us in tune with best practices in governance, minute taking and overall organization.

Upcoming Events

* We returned this past Autumn with our fourth edition of **Pilgrim's Way**, a series of enrichment retreat days, offered at St. Luke's, St. Matthew's in Ottawa and Christ Church in Aylmer, Québec. Two Introductory days were given. A retreat day on October 29 on *Holy Listening* was postponed and will be offered in the Spring 2017.

* December 3, 2016: an **Advent Guided Silent day** – *Resting in the Mercy of God*.

* And on January 28, 2017: **Mystics in Action**. Each Pilgrim's Way day has a thematic focus, and within those themes the day is held in silence, with periods of

Centering prayer, short teachings, liturgy, open time to reflect, walk or rest. Usually, 9:30 am-4:00 pm. \$30. Bring a bag lunch, refreshments provided.

To register or more information, check our website.

*** Silent Centering Prayer Lenten Retreat:**

Listening to Silence

A three-day immersion into Silence

March 9-12, 2017

The Galilee Center, Arnprior ON.

www.galileecentre.com

with the Leadership Team of
Contemplative Outreach Eastern Ontario

The cost of the retreat is \$350.00 per person single occupancy (\$300.00 per person, double occupancy) with a deposit of \$150.00 due February 1, 2017. Please check our website www.COEO.community or call our registrar, Hélène, at 613-728-1242. Registration for the Lenten retreat has been around 30 participants in recent years, and this year we expect a full house once again. Consider registering sooner than later.

Susan Kehoe, coordinator
smkehoe@rogers.com

Changes

Please note the new address for Kathy Murtha: kathymurpha83@gmail.com

St. Isaac of Syria (VIth century) On The Work of the Spirit

A person is deemed worthy of constant prayer once he has become a dwelling-place of the Spirit. For, unless someone has received the gift of the Comforter, in all certainty he will not be able to accomplish this constant prayer in quiet. But once the Spirit dwells in someone, as the Apostle says, the Spirit never ceases but prays continuously: then whether he sleeps or wakes, prayer is never absent from that person's soul.

If he eats or drinks, goes to sleep or is active; yes, even if he is sunk in deep sleep, the sweet fragrance of prayer effortlessly breathes in his heart. Then he is in the possession of prayer that knows no limit. For at all times, even when he is outwardly still, prayer constantly ministers within him secretly.

The silence of the serene is prayer, as one of those clothed in Christ says, for their thoughts are divine stirrings. The stirring of a pure mind constitutes still utterances, by means of which such people sing in a hidden way to the hidden God.

In *The Joy of the Saints*

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Wherever you are in Ontario, if you want to share something with other members of COO, such as a reading or a book, or contribute to *Our Newsletter* in any way, please contact the editor. Many thanks. Merci beaucoup.

This newsletter is being sent to all facilitators. Facilitators, please forward this Newsletter, in turn, to all members of your groups. Group members, please, feel free to forward it to interested friends. If for any reason you wish to receive future Newsletters directly, please contact the editor. Conversely, if you don't want to receive them anymore, advise the editor too.