



# CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH ONTARIO

SILENCE SOLITUDE SOLIDARITY SERVICE

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OUR NEWSLETTER



SUMMER 2017 – N°8

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## A Word from the Editor

We trust that you are enjoying a relaxed, peaceful summer. Please accept our apology for being so late in issuing this Newsletter. Our intentions have been good but the reality is that all of us on the Contemplative Outreach Ontario (COO) team have been extremely busy this year. So, we can only plead “better late than never!”

Reorganization of COO began right after Carolyn’s death, nearly two and a half years ago, and is still on-going. The Servant Leadership Team has been fleshed out and now includes two people for each of our three regions, bringing the Team membership to six people, as follows: Southwestern: Marlene Kelly-Kolotylo and Kevin Steeper; Eastern: H el ene Goulet and Gregor Sneddon; Central: Shelley McVea and yours truly.

The three regions are fully active and indeed are flourishing, as will be abundantly seen in the Regional Spotlights.

Another on-going reorganization involves the COO website. Our aim is to update the site and make it available via such social media as FaceBook. Contemplative Outreach Canada is also in the process of revising its website. We might actually join forces for this operation, but no decision has yet been taken.

COO is planning a Presenters’ Training at St. John the Divine Convent in Toronto August 11-13, 2017. Representatives from

all three regions will be participating. We need to increase our pool of commissioned presenters. Ten participants have registered.

The COO 2016 conference is now behind us and was a great success. We are already looking forward to COO 2019. This event is being planned for the spring of that year; however, we have not yet worked out all the details concerning the date and venue. At this point, we are looking at places in the Central Region and a date shortly after the Victoria Day holiday in May. We’ll provide all relevant details as soon as we know them ourselves. Stay tuned!

As you can see, we have been anything but idle! Enjoy the rest of the summer. For once, it’s hard to complain about the heat. Get a good rest, pray for peace... and, as always, don’t forget to share the road! Your life may depend on it!

*Marie-No elle Maillard*

## Theological Principles

We recognize and maintain a spiritual relationship with St. Benedict’s Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado. (Principle 15)

We recognize that any good accomplished by Contemplative Outreach is the work of the Holy Spirit. (Principle 16)

## IN THIS ISSUE

*Regional Spotlights: Southwestern, Central, Eastern*

*Seeds Sown*

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### Regional Spotlights

#### *SOUTHWESTERN*

Summer has arrived in this beautiful area of the Province of Ontario! It is a beautiful and sunny day as I am writing this article for Contemplative Outreach Ontario. The Centering Prayer groups are winding down this time of year and looking forward to a more leisurely pace, vacation time spent with family and friends, and the renewal that seems to be part of the summer months for many of us.

At our meeting with the Service Team members and the facilitators, which was held in Chatham on May 16, 2017, we reviewed each of the events and activities of the past year. After evaluation, we made the decision to continue with the following throughout 2017-2018.

#### **Introductory Workshops:**

- October 14, 2017 at Our Lady of the Atonement, Windsor
- October 21, 2017 at St. Michael's Anglican Church, London
- Fall 2017 in Leamington (plans will be finalized later)

**Advent Reflection Day:** Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina: November 25, 2017 at St. Mark's Anglican Church, Windsor

**United in Prayer Day:** March 10, 2018 at St. Mark's Anglican Church, Windsor

**Centering Prayer Weekend Retreat:** May 4 to 6, 2018 at Holy Family Retreat Center, Oxley.

As many of you are aware, over the past year the Leadership Team of the Southwestern Ontario Chapter of Contemplative Outreach (SWOCCO) has been seeking to recruit a new coordinator for this region.

In 2005, Rose-Marie McIsaac (RIP) asked me to assume the responsibilities of coordinator and to work with her and Father Joe Quinn to grow Centering Prayer in this area. The Holy Spirit has been working in the midst of our network almost imperceptibly at times, and so deeply and powerfully at other times. Last May, at the Ontario Conference of Contemplative Outreach called "Second Wind," the decision was made to invite the coordinators of the three regions of Ontario to form a Contemplative Outreach Ontario Service Team for a period of two years. I accepted the invitation and also made the decision to resign as coordinator of SWOCCO, effective June 30, 2017.

I am pleased that Rev. Kevin Steeper, M.Div., M.Ed., M.A., Dipl. Spir. Dir., who is Minister at Lakeshore United Church in Goderich, has agreed to take on the role of coordinator for the Southwestern Ontario Chapter of Contemplative Outreach. The Service Team and Facilitators were unanimous in supporting him for the position of coordinator, effective June 30, 2017.

Kevin will be receiving the necessary papers from Claire Eng of CO International. These will confirm his position as coordinator of SWOCCO, effective June 30, 2017.

As a very brief introduction to Kevin for those of you who may not know him, we met Kevin when he was pastor in London, Ontario some ten or eleven years ago. He wanted to introduce Centering Prayer to his congregation, and arranged for Rose-Marie and me to conduct an Introductory Workshop for his congregation. Out of that experience, a Centering Prayer group was formed. Recently he has transferred to

Lakeshore United Church in Goderich. The group in London continues to function well with established members and a new facilitator.

Kevin is very committed to Centering Prayer as a way of life and to sharing the gift of Centering Prayer with others. He has been very generous in his support of Centering Prayer in our area and has been on the Service Team for five years. Kevin meets the prerequisites for coordinator as suggested in the CO Resource Manual and is well qualified for the position. I'm sure you will be hearing from him in future Newsletters.

Kevin Steeper's address is 56 North St., Goderich, ON, N7A 2T4. His phone number is 519 524-2103, and his email address is [kevin@lakeshoreuc.org](mailto:kevin@lakeshoreuc.org).

In closing, I would like to thank each and every person for your part in SWOCCO and in the larger network. It has been a joy to meet you, to pray with you and to share so many different experiences together. It has been a very interesting and rewarding experience for me, both as coordinator and personally. I have had many meaningful opportunities to share the gift of Centering Prayer and to enjoy being a part of the network with you; and I am also thankful for so many occasions for personal and spiritual development in my retirement. I felt surrounded with support and friendship from those practicing Centering Prayer, from the leaders of Contemplative Outreach locally, as well as internationally – especially Susan Komis, Bonnie Shimizu, Claire Eng (we started SWOCCO together) – and the many colleagues I was fortunate to work with and learn from along the way. I am very grateful for the grace-filled experiences over the years and I look forward to supporting and contributing to Contemplative Outreach in a different capacity now. Thank you so much for your prayers, challenges, help, generosity, and support over the years. Without you and the grace of God, it would have been impossible. God bless.

*“Now there are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” 1 Corinthians 12: 4-7*

Marlene Kelly-Kolotylo

## CENTRAL

The Contemplative Outreach Central Ontario (COCO) Servant Leadership Team met on January 28 and April 22, 2017, and a third meeting is planned for August 26. I'm pleased to report that we now have two very committed new members: Rev. Stuart Pike (Burlington) and Sue Woollard (Brampton). It's great to have increased our number so that we can better serve our ever-expanding COCO community. As you'll see in *Seeds Sown*, on page 5, there are now four new groups; these are located in Oshawa, Port Hope, Port Perry and Toronto (downtown).

Given the fact that, at least for now, the Newsletter is published only twice a year, we felt the need to have another channel of communication – a bit less formal – that would serve the COCO community and could be ready in less time than the COO Newsletter. That is why we decided, back in January, to issue a “COCO News Flash” roughly every two months. Thus far, we have published it in February, April and June-July 2017.

Also, in order to deepen the connection between our groups, Marilyn Brandon, who is in charge of the facilitator training for COCO, had a brain wave earlier this year, suggesting that we interview each facilitator and present a “group feature” every month or so. The Markdale Group was the first one featured, followed by the St. John's group (in the East end of Toronto), the Markham-Unionville group in Scarborough and the St. Catharines group.

The Niagara region, under the skilled stewardship of Brenda Coleman, is particularly active. For future Newsletters, one member, Jennifer Pothier, has agreed to be the "Niagara Reporter." In the meantime, I am pleased to report that in that region, there was a Christmas potluck, a full Day of Reflection in March and a "planning-closing" potluck before an Introductory Workshop in July 2017.

Talking of Introductory Workshops, there was also one in Oshawa in February 2017. A third one is planned in Lindsay this fall.

Last fall in Toronto we met Nestor de Armas, who is in charge of the facilitator training for Contemplative Outreach Limited in the United States. Nestor asked whether we would like to pilot a facilitator training program that will eventually be made available online. We accepted enthusiastically, and Marilyn Brandon and Mary Catherine Doyle did an outstanding job organizing this event in July; 12 people attended. To be continued...

### *Upcoming Events in Central Ontario*

**Annual Summer Potluck Dinner, Saturday, August 26, 2017, from 5:30 p.m.**  
As in previous years, Marie-Noëlle will host this tradition in her home and/or garden, 302 Pacific Avenue, Toronto, 416 769-6278 (logos302@sympatico.ca). Details on how to participate will be circulated separately. Or just call or send an email.

**Introduction to Centering Prayer Saturday, November 18, 2017**  
This workshop is organized by the Sisters of St. John the Divine (SSJD) at 233 Cummer Avenue, Toronto. The presenters will be Elyse Strathy and Johnson Ling.

You can download the registration form from their website ([www.ssjd.ca](http://www.ssjd.ca)), print it, fill it out and mail it in (to SSJD) with your payment. For more information, contact directly the SSJD Guest House at 416 226-

2201, extension 305.

Still in infancy, we plan a retreat in Toronto on the Welcoming Prayer, with Mary Dwyer. We'll keep you posted.

Marie-Noëlle Maillard, Coordinator

### **EASTERN**

*What we gather in contemplation, we give out in love. Meister Eckhart*

Since the last update, the highlight of the COEO (Contemplative Outreach Eastern Ontario) calendar was our Annual Lenten retreat: a three-day immersion into Silence. The tradition has been to invite an outside presenter, usually someone from the Contemplative Outreach community in the States. Last year, Rev. Gregor Sneddon (founder of COEO and past coordinator) was the presenter. This year, we had a deep sense that a retreat on silence could emerge, once again, from within our own community of prayer.

Overwhelmingly, the response in the feedback was a resounding confirmation of this and gratitude for the opportunity to listen to and serve the Silence, "to live and move and have our being" in the Silence. We heard in our feedback and hear often enough that folks want a chance to practice. And to practice with others is deeply encouraging and supportive for when we are back home and on our own.

The Leadership Team met in June to look ahead at the 2017-18 season of COEO.

We are happy to have a new member join us – Rev. Mary Ellen Berry. We have both registered for the Presenters Training weekend this August and most likely will present an Introduction to CP workshop as one of our first Pilgrim's Way days early in the autumn. Hélène Goulet (a Leadership

Team member and liaison with CP Western Quebec) will be our mentor.

An Advent Day is always well received. This will be followed with the planning for our 2018 Lenten retreat – perhaps a Centering Prayer Intensive? Stay tuned!

Indeed, I say with deep appreciation and admiration that this small CO servant group is abundantly blessed in the company of one another, in prayer, in conversation, in planning on behalf of those in this neck of the woods for whom Centering Prayer is elemental to daily life. Thanks be to God in Whom we live and move and have our being.

Please check out our website [www.coeo.community](http://www.coeo.community) and “like us” on Facebook!

Susan Kehoe, Coordinator

### Seeds Sown

Oshawa, Central Ontario. Christ Church Anglican, Yvonne Jensen, [y\\_jensen@hotmail.com](mailto:y_jensen@hotmail.com)

Port Hope, Central Ontario. St. Mark’s Anglican Church, Thursday afternoon, Rev. Randy Murray, [office@stmarksporthope.ca](mailto:office@stmarksporthope.ca)

Port Perry, Central Ontario. Every second Thursday, Larry Corrigan, [larrycorrigan@sympatico.ca](mailto:larrycorrigan@sympatico.ca)

Toronto Downtown, Central Ontario. Our Lady of Lourdes, Friday morning, Elyse Strathy, [strathy@sympatico.ca](mailto:strathy@sympatico.ca)

## Thomas Merton on Listening

Think of it, all that speech, pouring down, selling nothing, judging nobody . . . What a thing it is to sit absolutely alone, in the forest, at night, cherished by this wonderful, intelligible, perfectly innocent speech, the most comforting speech in the world, the talk that rain makes by itself all over the ridges . . . Nobody started it, nobody is going to stop it. It will talk as long as it wants, this rain. As long as it talks I am going to listen.

## Readers’ Comments and Contribution

Wherever you are in Ontario, if you want to share something with other members of COO, such as a reading or a book or give us the name of a speaker you appreciate, or contribute to *Our Newsletter* in any way, please contact the editor.

So, don’t hesitate to communicate with us, whenever you have the inclination to do so. We value your opinion. Many thanks. Merci beaucoup.

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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. Or if you don’t want to receive them anymore, please advise the editor.