



spirit vibes

insights, events
and inspiration
for the spiritual
journey

APRIL
2024

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PATHWAYS

A CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Born for Joy

by Joyce Rupp

Lately I've been thinking about joy, partly because the Easter prayers are steeped with gladness as a natural response to the stories of Jesus' resurrection. Beneath these accounts lies a central reason for joy: the gift of divine presence did not die on the Cross. This Love remains with us.

In Iowa the springtime practically shouts with its intense beauty of vibrant blossoming. This season most always sings of loveliness. Everywhere nature dares one to sense anything except jubilation. In spite of these causes for gladness, some people's lives bear such ongoing burdens that neither faith in the Resurrection nor earth's springtime glory serve to automatically unearth their deeply buried joy.

On the other hand, I know people who retain their joy no matter how dismal and difficult their situation. Their lives contain more than average adversity but they manage to somehow retain a genuine joy. It's not that they deny their hardships. Rather, they do not



let these misfortunes conquer their ability to appreciate life. Within them a deep river of gladness flows on and on. Nothing stops or drains its movement. I think the secret to this lies in what Mary Oliver writes in her poem, "Mindful."

We learn from this excerpt of Oliver's poem that joy doesn't hang around without a little effort to keep it there. People with genuine joy deliberately find something, however small, that draws forth gratitude, pleasure, wonder, and love within each day.

Joy is not something to be forced. It is not a fake, paste-on-a-smile sort of thing. Joy comes when one is ready for it to rise. I agree with Mary Oliver. We are born for this. It is a matter of whether or not we are willing to slow down our rapid pace and change old habits of non-awareness. Each day now when I wake in the morning I whisper to my deeper self: "You were born for joy." (And so are you).

Mindful

(an excerpt)

by Mary Oliver

Every day
I see or hear
something
that more or less
kills me
with delight,
that leaves me
like a needle
in the haystack
of light.

It was what I was born for—
to look, to listen,
to lose myself
inside this soft world—
to instruct myself
over and over
in joy

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Personal Reflections

Testimonies received from recent PATHWAYS attendees:

Hymn Workshop (February 2024)

“Pastor Jaci McNeal presented a Hymn Workshop that was

interesting and educational. We sang several of our favorite hymns and learned what had inspired the composers. We were surprised to learn that some of the most beloved hymns we sing today were written in response to great tragedy and loss. To this day, these hymns give us hope and peace in times of trouble. We found this PATHWAYS session remarkable.”

– Jim & Colleen Hanson, CLC members



Making Easter Cards (March 2024)

“I really enjoyed making all of the Easter cards. Now I only have one problem: there are so many! How will I send out all of these pretty cards?”

– Ellie Mathiesen, CLC confirmation student

“I love spreading joy around. Well, I also love making crafts. I do not think it’s too many cards. Have a good day!” – Kate Mathiesen, CLC confirmation student



Enneagram Zoom Workshop (part one March 2024)

“The Enneagram is very intriguing. I am excited yet apprehensive to read the book and to understand myself better. I look forward to our May workshop.”

– Karen Glavin, CLC member

Spiritual Practices (aka “First Thursdays”)

Two intentions are at the foundation of all contemplative practices: cultivating awareness and developing a stronger connection to God.

Join PATHWAYS on the first Thursday of the month at 10 am as it introduces us to many of these ancient spiritual practices, through which we will “rediscover” our faith as a way of life, not simply a belief system. Each month a different practice will be emphasized.

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| May 2 | Sound & Silence |
| June 6 | Labyrinth Walk |
| July 11 | Lectio Divina |
| August 1 | Centering Prayer |

PATHWAYS Presents at CRE

It was a joy to once again present PATHWAYS at the Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) of the Northern Illinois Synod at Sauk Valley Community College on March 16. Deacon Laura Gorton and Karen Glavin, PATHWAYS chairperson, led a workshop and participated in a ministry fair. It was a well-attended event with new ministry connections made. Thanks to all who attended and stopped by.



upcoming offerings

APR 27: CREATION WALK

In recognition of Earth Day and to celebrate our Earthly sanctuary, PATHWAYS will host a *Creation Walk* on Saturday, April 27. Join us from 9:30-11:30 am at Severson Dells Nature Center, 8786 Montague Road, Rockford, for walking meditations, discussion and sharing led by Pastor Carol Soderholm. Pack a lunch and enjoy the park after our program. Freewill offering received; in case of inclement weather, we will gather in the classroom at Severson Dells. [Register online](#) or that day.



MAY 4: ENNEAGRAM WORKSHOP (part two)

Healthy communication is at the heart of every strong relationship. Utilizing the enneagram, we will access tools and insights to help us better understand our own personality tendencies and those of others in order to improve our communication methods.



Michelle Oberwise Lacock and Carol Lakota Eastin lead this two-part workshop. Our May 4 gathering (part two) is an in-person event at Christ Lutheran Church from 9 am to 3 pm. \$50 registration fee includes the Enneagram assessment, book, and lunch. Register at [seekthepath.org](#).

JUN 29: PRAYING FOR THE WORLD

Join us Saturday morning, June 29, 10 am at the Keeling-Puri Peace Plaza (Rockford, IL) as we join our hearts in prayer for the world. We'll learn about the challenges facing some of the countries whose flags are represented at the Plaza, and lift up prayers collectively for the nations. Rain location is Christ Lutheran Church, 425 Riverside Road, Belvidere, IL.



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What makes us human is not our mind
BUT OUR HEART,
Not our ability to think but our ability
TO LOVE.

—Henri Nouwen



Prayer Shawls

A well-deserved, huge shout out goes to Rebecca Stegmair and Jane Herrig for their fine work with our prayer shawl ministry. To comfort those in need and remind them of Christ's presence, handmade shawls are knitted, crocheted, stitched and/or tied, then blessed and presented to brothers and sisters during their health journey. Rebecca and Jane, you are a blessing to this ministry.

A recent testimonial from a recipient:

"I can't thank you enough for your prayers, encouragement and compassionate gifts of writings, books and the prayer shawl. It has been so moving and sustaining." — *Pastor Kari*

Additional volunteers are needed for this important ministry. Please contact Karen Glavin (kareneglavin@aol.com) for more details.

PATHWAYS

A CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

a ministry of Christ Lutheran Church



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 on Facebook, search:
Pathways: A Center for Spiritual Renewal

PATHWAYS TEAM

Karen Glavin, *Chair*
Bill Blackburn, Lee Blackburn, Anna Borchers,
Jenny Campbell, Kris Campbell,
Deacon Laura Gorton, Jan Hedrick

Spirit Vibes is a quarterly newsletter designed to inform, inspire, and publicize the ways in which **PATHWAYS: A Center for Spiritual Renewal** is working to deepen relationships with humanity, creation, and the Divine. We hope you find this tool helpful in your spiritual walk; send your feedback or suggestions to pathways@makingChristknown.org. Let's journey!

2024 schedule:



Spiritual Practices
APR 4 / MAY 2 / JUN 6 / JUL 11 / AUG 1 / SEP 5 / OCT 3 / NOV 7 / DEC 5
(first Thursday of every month)



Creation Walk
APRIL 27
Severson Dells Nature Center
Rockford, IL



Creation Centered Awareness
SEPTEMBER 21
Location TBA



Enneagram Workshop
MAY 4
Second of two part offering



Pet Blessing
OCTOBER 6



Praying for the World
JUNE 29
Keeling-Puri Peace Plaza
Rockford, IL



Drum Circle Spirit
NOVEMBER 9



Habitat for Humanity
JULY 13
Location TBA



Longest Night
DECEMBER 21

All events will be held at Christ Lutheran Church (Belvidere, IL) unless otherwise noted. Visit seekthepath.org for more details.