



PATHWAYS

spirit vibes

insights, events
and inspiration
for the spiritual
journey

OCT
2024

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PATHWAYS
A CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Autumn and Impermanence

By Joyce Rupp

Autumn draws me into a reflective embrace. The misty air, the golden leaves, the noisy call of geese winging their way southward, all these lead me inward. I relish autumn's quiet way of doing this. At the same time, I resist autumn. Mainly because it pokes "death" in my face everywhere I turn. I don't want to let go of summer's warmth and energizing green. I resist the inherent message of impermanence reflected in this season. Autumn leaves sailing to the ground speak of an innate vulnerability that is part of everyone's life.

Letting go is absolutely essential in order for change to occur. All the major spiritual teachings hold this belief – we can't grow unless we let go. So, who of us passionately desires relinquishment? Not me. This call to love what is but not cling to it has been a longtime challenge. Every autumn I turn and face the big question: how to cherish who and what I have but to hold these gifts freely, with open hands and heart. I think I am getting better at it but I still sense some latent resistance.

If we want to be spiritually transformed it is essential to include letting go as part of our journey. Each autumn I now seek inspiration from those dying leaves gathering in ever deeper layers on the ground. As the trees let go of what enabled them to sip of the nourishing rays of summer sun, their falling leaves will eventually become a rich humus to nourish spring's greening growth. If I stay open to the inner and outer changes that naturally arise, (if I dance more and drag my feet less about impermanence), my life can be a nourishing source for personal and world transformation. I hope the same for you.

Joyce Rupp is well known for her work as a writer, international retreat leader, and conference speaker. She has received awards in the spirituality books category from the Catholic Press Association.





Personal Reflections

Testimonies received from recent PATHWAYS attendees:

Praying for the World (June 2024)

"Praying for the World at the Keeling-Puri Peace Plaza opened my heart and mind to the needs of many countries in the world. By referring to the handout created by Deacon Laura, we walked on our own to the various flags and learned about specific issues these countries face. At each stop, we offered our prayers for their concerns. This PATHWAYS offering gave me a global perspective, which is so important at this time."

— Anna Borchers, CLC member and PATHWAYS leader



Earth Church: A Creation Morning (September 2024)

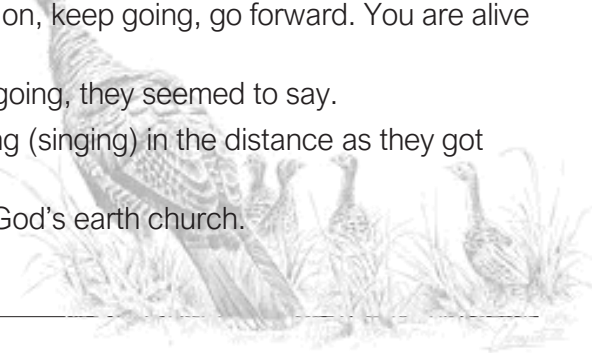
I walked past the sacred oak whose arms reached out to hold me. I leaned my head on her trunk, allowing the embrace. I walked through the pine forest and felt the needle path soft and comforting under my feet. I smelled the fragrant pine trees as they created an arch over my head. I walked to the stream and watched its constant push, flowing over rocks and even boulders. The stream seemed to say, "Move on, keep going, go forward. You are alive like me."

Yes, there boulders, eddies and fallen trees blocking the path. Just keep going, they seemed to say.

Walking back to the house, the choir appeared—a flock of turkeys gobbling (singing) in the distance as they got closer and closer.

Aha! I was struck by the awareness that I was in church—God's church, God's earth church.

— a reflection from Pastor Carol Soderholm



Mary: Love Forever Being Born



The creator of this icon is Kelly Latimore, and it is titled, "Mary: Love Forever Being Born." As we continue to embrace the holy dark and expansive spaces in our lives, we invite you to read and meditate on the following poem by Sr. Ilia Delio which inspired the icon's creation:

"What do the stars say?

The light that meets our eyes after millions of years summons us to look beyond.

The dark that hovers over us is filled with light.

That underneath the appearance of the stable heavens is the bubbling energy of the universe.

We are forming, forming, forming and nothing can stop us.

There is a palpable power of attraction, pulling us toward we-no-not-where.

Love alone is the guide of the universe and the whole universe is in the human heart.

Tend to the heart and the power of love will name itself as God."

Love. The universe is being born over and over. Dying and expanding. In life there is inevitably death. Yet, in death there is always new life.

seekthepath.org



OCT 7: PET BLESSING

Join us for a special service that will celebrate the wonders of God's creation and remember how God's creatures — of all sizes, shapes, and species — bless our lives. We'll be reminded how His creatures are essential to the environment that sustains all living things as we share a blessing on our pets and commit ourselves to caring for their wellbeing in the world. Bring your furry friends (and not so furry ones) or a picture of your pet and meet us at 5:30 pm on the labyrinth at Christ Lutheran.

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NOV 9: WORLD DRUMMING WORKSHOP

With a focus on African and Native American drumming, our drum circle will examine the imagery and symbolism of creation used in these respective cultures and traditions. At this immersive workshop, each participant will have the opportunity to choose their own symbols to build and decorate their personal hand drum to take home. While all supplies will be provided, please bring a hammer.



Gather with us from 9:30-11:30 am at Christ Lutheran. Cost is \$15 per person or \$25 per family. Sign up is requested to ensure adequate materials are available. A unique learning experience for all ages. Register at seekthepath.org.

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DEC 21: LONGEST NIGHT/BLUE CHRISTMAS

For those who have experienced loss, the joy of the holiday season can often feel elusive and out of reach. Sometimes we need a place amidst the twinkle lights and holiday hustle and bustle for prayer, reflection, and remembrance. On the day with the longest night, join us for a worship service that acknowledges the grief and loss you may feel, offers prayers for the world and one another, and helps us draw near to God. Reflective music and spiritual practices that help us center ourselves will be part of the service.

All are welcome to Christ Lutheran at 4:30 pm for this time of hope and healing.



DEC 29: HEALING SERVICE

Join us for a brief time of prayer, laying on of hands, and anointing on Sunday, December 29 as we seek to find wholeness in Christ. This service will be offered at approximately 10:30 am in the choir loft area of the Christ Lutheran sanctuary.

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.

November 7 / Gratitude & Mindfulness
December 5 / Visio Divina

upcoming offerings

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

Spirit Vibes is a quarterly newsletter created for those seeking inspiration in their spiritual walk and pathways to deeper relationships with humanity, creation, and the Divine. We hope you find this tool helpful; send your feedback or suggestions to pathways@makingChristknown.org. Let's journey!



PATHWAYS TEAM

(L-R) Bill Blackburn, Lee Blackburn,
Jan Hedrick, Jenny Campbell,
Kris Campbell, Anna Borchers,
Deacon Laura Gorton, Karen Glavin, *Chair*

2024 schedule



Spiritual Practices
NOVEMBER 7 / DECEMBER 5
(first Thursday of every month)



Pet Blessing
OCTOBER 7



World Drumming Workshop
NOVEMBER 9



Longest Night/Blue Christmas
DECEMBER 21



Healing Service
DECEMBER 29

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