

Small Groups Initiative

Fall 2020

Al Fresco Dining – Chez Cole!

Hosted by Scott and Stephanie Cole



Food is sustenance, but it is SO much more. We have come to learn how it is central to family and social systems, and the communion that happens when folks come together to share a meal and wrestle with intentional conversation. How do we strengthen the fabric of community in these times? How do we reconcile the past with the present? What can we offer each other that nourishes and restores? We will begin answering these questions starting with sharing food in the outdoors on our rooftop deck (or appropriately distanced inside our apartment party room if the weather fails us :)

New Mama Support
Facilitator TBD

Calling new mamas! What a time to be caring for a new little life! The first two years postpartum are already a time of major transformation, changes to our bodies, identities, and manifestations of our spirit and gifts. Now we're navigating these big changes in the midst of a global pandemic and big, beautiful, necessary, messy societal upheaval. How are we getting by without our usual net of community or family support? How will we raise our children to be anti-racist? How can we celebrate the ways our babies ground us and bring us joy especially when things feel so intense? How do we nourish our spirits when we inevitably get depleted? This group is meant for moms with babies under a year old who are interested in building a community of support and care and exploring some of these questions together.

Fall Kayaking in the Twin Cities
Led by Pastor Doug Mork



Listening for Call: What do these times call us to do and be?

Weather permitting, we'll schedule four opportunities to kayak area waters and enjoy the fall colors. While paddling we'll have some informal conversation about living in these times. Do you feel any new winds of the Spirit in your life these days? How do we lean deeply into the challenges of our times while preserving our own health and sanity? What new things is the church called to become in these times?

Learning from the Germans: Race and the Memory of Evil
Led by Paul Hardt



Susan Neiman is an American-born Jew, who eventually ended up living in Berlin and is the Director of the Einstein Institute there. She is a highly respected observer of the German scene and did extensive research into the German nation's efforts to come to grips with this racist past. An excellent book, and very timely!

Activism + Art = ARTIVISM!
Led by Donna Goodlaxson



Whether you write, paint, make music, quilt or cook – you’re an artist! Let’s gather (over Zoom) and connect to explore the concept of “Art as Medicine” – as gleaned from Ricardo Levins Morales at an adult forum last year. We’ll be looking at art as healing for both maker and community. You may be actively making, need supportive encouragement or still finding your way. We’ll use a support group format – each person will get time to think and share without pressure to produce. Wherever you are on your artist journey, you’re welcome to join this group!

***Women, Earth and Creator Spirit* by Elizabeth Johnson**
Led by Roberta Shaw



For a few years, I have thought about gathering a small group to discuss this book by Catholic theologian Elizabeth Johnson. It is short enough (70 pages) but pithy enough for 4 good sessions. It is actually a transcription of a lecture which Johnson gave at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana. This bit from the preface summarizes her premise:

...that the exploitation of the earth, which has reached crisis proportions in our day, is intimately linked to the marginalization of women, and that both of these predicaments are intrinsically related to forgetting the Creator Spirit who pervades the world in the dance of life.

Nature Meditations
Led by Ann Schrooten



We'll explore some of the regional parks and nature areas in the Twin Cities area to allow creation to care for our spirits – on Fridays. This will be a time to re-connect safely outdoors with other human beings during Minnesota's beautiful fall season! Our walk begins with some informal conversation and a brief reflection, followed by a silent walk together. Time at the end for sharing observations and insights, and a prayer to close. We will travel on our own to some of these possible destinations:

<https://www.twincities.com/2015/08/14/take-a-hike-9-great-hiking-spots-in-the-twin-cities/>

Yoga/Guided Meditation for Renewal
Led by Gretchen Borgum



Are you looking for a way to clear away the mental clutter so that you can better connect with God, with yourself, and with others? Is your body in need of stress relief and rejuvenation? Yoga is a powerful tool which can help the mind, body and spirit. In this session, we will use yoga poses and breath work to help transform from the inside out. You will learn poses and breathwork that will help relax you and also poses and breathwork that will help energize you. We will use scripture in specific poses to help connect with God and clear out that which needs to be released as we become renewed in the presence of the Holy Spirit. If you have never done yoga, this session is for you. If you have done years of yoga, this session is for you. All levels can benefit from the power of linking movement and breath. We will start class with breathwork to get us focused, then have approximately 45 minutes of movement, and then end with guided imagery and prayer. Psalm 51:10 says "Create in me a clean heart oh God and renew a right spirit within me". Allow this session to help you in this process. Inhale ~ inspiration.....Exhale ~ the exclamation of spirit!

Gretchen Borgum currently works as a private yoga/pilates instructor in Sioux Falls, SD. She has been teaching yoga since the early 1990's and has taught yoga and pilates at yoga studios and health clubs across the United States. She also has taught yoga in the church setting at First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls since she helped develop their yoga program in 2013. Gretchen's main mission in teaching is to encourage people to get back into their bodies so that they can truly be present for the gift of life that God has given. Yoga initially was a tool that helped Gretchen deal with the loss of her sister who was 27 years old and niece who was 4 years old. Gretchen also teaches preschool music and chapel as well as directs the children's choir at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD. She loves being able to live her calling and share God's message of love, hope and peace through the gift of movement, breath and music.

Lectio Divina Group
(Group Facilitator TBD)

The Practice of Group Lectio Divina Lectio divina, or “holy reading,” is an ancient practice from the Christian tradition, dating from the early medieval era of prayerful study of Scripture in monasteries. Lectio divina is a slow, quiet, and thoughtful encounter with Scripture. Reading and responding to the biblical passage three times provides time and space for God’s Word to move from our lips, into our minds, and finally into our hearts. Based on the image of Jacob’s ladder, a twelfth century Carthusian monk named Guigo II described four steps of lectio divina: lectio (reading), meditatio (meditation), oratio (prayer), and contemplatio (contemplation). Through these four steps, God’s Word sinks deeper into our hearts and imagination.

<https://www.communitiesofcalling.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Lectio-Divina-Guide.pdf>

Visio Divina Group
(Group Facilitator TBD)

Visio Divina is a form of “divine seeing” in which we prayerfully invite God to speak to our hearts as we look at an image. Lectio Divina is a traditional way of reading a passage of scripture with the ear of the heart in which we invite the words of scripture to become very alive and touch our heart in spontaneous ways that lead us more deeply into relationship with God. Similarly, in Visio Divina we gaze at an image, present to it without any particular agenda, allowing it to speak to us in words or wordlessly with a divine voice.

As Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler puts it:

Visio Divina facilitates a relationship with an image or subject, patiently being with it, receptive in mind and heart, perhaps even in dialogue with it. In stillness, we allow the image to reach beyond the intellect and into the unconscious level of our being, a place that can't be accessed directly. In wonder, we are invited to look at every aspect of an image and ponder it as an encounter with God. It is a way of seeing an aspect of ourselves in God at the non-verbal, heart level. The canvas then becomes alive with personal meaning meant just for us. This is the same movement of the Spirit we can experience with Lectio Divina and Scripture.

<https://www.lindsayboyer.com/visio-divina-experience>

Spiritual Direction

Led by Scott and Melanie McRae

Spiritual Direction is a way of listening deeply to our lives, and to the ways that God is inviting us into a more abundant life. These offerings provide opportunities to meet with a spiritual director either individually or in a small group setting. There is no cost for these offerings, and they will be made available on a “first come, first served” basis:

Group Spiritual Direction is a dynamic process of spiritual exploration and growth with others. We often gain powerful insights into our own lives as we hear the struggles, possibilities, and celebrations of others. Sessions will include time for centering, individual conversations for each member with the spiritual director, and group reflection. Each group will be limited to five people. Here are details:

- There will be two groups forming, and each group will meet for three 90-minute sessions (group members are asked to commit to all three sessions)
- Group One: Fridays from 1:00 – 2:30, Oct. 16, 23 & 30
- Group Two: Wednesdays from 7:00 – 8:30 PM, Oct. 28, Nov. 4 & 11
- Groups will happen over Zoom (it works surprisingly well for spiritual direction groups!)
- They will be facilitated by Scott McRae

Scott McRae is also a Holy Trinity member and ELCA pastor who has been a spiritual director for 20 years. He’s also helped lead two spiritual direction training programs. He works with Fairview Health Services as a Clinical Pastoral Educator. His professional journey has taken him from parish and campus ministries, and into healthcare where he has served both in educational roles and as a Spiritual Care Department Director. Along with Melanie, he runs [Sojourners Institute](#), offering individual spiritual direction, spiritual direction training, and various workshops and programs on spiritual development and the Enneagram. They live in the Longfellow neighborhood with their three dogs, and love regular visits from their adult daughter.



Individual Spiritual Direction is a guided process to help you expand and enrich your spiritual life. The hour-long session is a conversation that is guided by your needs and interests. It is a time to explore the questions, concerns, hopes, and wonderings about your life and your faith. These confidential sessions are limited to one per-person, and can happen either over Zoom Conferencing or by phone. They will be led by Melanie McRae.

Melanie McRae is a Holy Trinity member and ELCA pastor who has been a spiritual director for 20 years. She works as Bereavement Counselor with Park Nicollet Methodist Hospice. Prior to working at Park Nicollet, Melanie worked as a chaplain in long term care and at Abbot Northwestern and Methodist Hospitals. She's also served in parish ministry for 12 years. She is a yoga teacher who specializes in working with older adults. And, she partners with Scott in [Sojourners Institute](#), offering spiritual direction, and various workshops and programs on spiritual development. They live in the Longfellow neighborhood with their three dogs, and love regular visits from their adult daughter.

