



The Anchorage
A Contemplative Ministry

DEPTH SOUNDINGS

Encouragement, Inspiration and News from The Anchorage

February 2011

Come away...



"(The LORD) said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire the sound of sheer silence.

When Elijah heard it..."

1 Kings 19: 11 - 13a (NRSV)



*anchor
deep*

SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

Search for New Executive Director for The Anchorage!

Please join us as we prayerfully listen for God's leading for just the right person to step in as Executive Director as Cathie steps aside to focus on her deepest sense of call, one-on-one spiritual direction, both in monthly sessions and directed retreats. She plans to step aside July 2011, but will stay on as needed through the transition. So far, the criteria are: to value and practice the Christian contemplative life and be middle age. More criteria may develop as we continue to listen in prayer.

If you sense God calling YOU, or someone you know, please be in touch. We know God is preparing someone even now.

“Could God Be Calling You to Silence and Solitude?”

By Cathie Powell

Continuing with our “contemplative ‘S’ words,” this third issue of the fiscal year combines two: Silence and Solitude. The words are often paired together though each has distinct properties. Both words need clarifying within the context of a contemplative life. Bill Dietrich says it so well in his article on the next page I’ll not try to clarify further here.

Let me recap our other ‘S’ words. Our issue on “Suffering” did not try to explain it as much as note that God is with us in it. “You never said it would be easy, you only said I’d never go alone,” are the words of a Cindy Owens & Kyle Matthews song. And “Surrender” seemed to follow naturally, at least for me, as when we suffer, it often brings us to a place of surrender, knowing we have come to the end of ourselves. The surrender is not with a white flag to the enemy – but to this One who knows us and loves us, our holy and gracious God. We surrender in order to let go of our tight grasp, to learn from God, to hear what God might have to say, to build our houses on the Rock rather than on sand. If we want to move deeper into that surrendered place with God, we often need to come away from the noise and the crowds (VERY counter-culture) so we might listen with the ears of our hearts.

Some folks are afraid of the silence, because then they can no longer escape from who they are... “No matter where you go, there you are” is a favorite 12-step saying. But with this One who knows us and loves us, we soon begin to see that we are welcome to be ourselves. We can be free of the trappings that so often seem necessary with others. Our

“we learn to hush our restless, busy selves and attend to what God might long to say to us.”

March 25 – 27 retreat at Montreat, in the western NC mountains is for anyone, but especially for those who are not used to much silence, maybe even a little afraid of it? Might the timing be just right for you?

In *Reaching Out*, Henri Nouwen invites the reader to move from loneliness to solitude, saying that while loneliness may feel like a desert, solitude is more like a garden. The desert image begins as a bleak place, with nothing to distract us from ourselves. Then as we grow in our love relationship with God, we begin to value the lack of distractions; we glimpse a sense that ‘less is more’ and that only when we have moved away from all that would entertain us, all that might hide us from our true selves, can we begin to see that we are truly loved just for who we are. It is then that solitude becomes a garden, as Howard Thurman writes in *The Inward Journey*, “There is the loneliness of those who walk with God until the path takes them out beyond all creeds and all faiths and they know the wholeness of communion and the bliss of finally being understood.” There is an ‘at home-ness.’ There are new buds just waiting to bloom.

Looking at the Elijah passage on the front, you notice that God was not in the noise, but in the sheer silence. And how about the next sentence? “And when Elijah heard it...” we do hear sheer silence, don’t we? You may be more familiar with another translation that says “a still, small voice” but sheer silence sounds more like God’s Presence to me... and the awe... as on a clear night when we are struck by how many stars there are. The bigness of God is palpable. Is God inviting you to a little more quiet?

These words from Wendy Wright in *The Essential Spirituality Handbook* reveal a benefit of silence. “Silence creates a clearing in our minds so that our hearing can
(Cont. on p. 4)



The Anchorage

Vision

For all people everywhere to see God more clearly, love God more dearly and follow God more nearly. For when just one person moves toward living out of that graced space, where we know we are loved, there is a ripple effect which is our best hope for the healing of our world. The Anchorage wants to contribute to that hope.

Mission

The Anchorage provides a setting in which women and men may come away to be with God, as revealed in Jesus the Christ; and to come to love more deeply, through contemplative retreats, book studies, and spiritual direction this God who loves us beyond measure.

Metaphor

A safe harbor in which to anchor deep in still waters as a respite from the wind and waves; where pilgrims may enjoy prayerful grace, honor the rhythm of Sabbath and open more fully to the mystery of God’s love.

Servant Leaders

Sharon Decker

John Hever

Janice Jennings

Carroll Page, Chair

Priscilla Pearce

Cathie Powell, Executive Director

Margaret Vincent, Office Manager

Susan Leaphart, Volunteer Coord.

Peggy Dulaney, Stewardship Chair

Camp Wynn, Treasurer

The Anchorage

125 Broadus Avenue

P.O. Box 9091

Greenville, SC 29604

(864) 252-LOVE (5683)

www.theanchorage.org

“Silence, Solitude, and Peacemaking”

By Bill Dietrich

“Know thyself” is ancient wisdom in many traditions. But we humans can be such artful dodgers, avoiding our true self which, scripture tells us, is made in God’s image. Perhaps our false selves, personas we can accumulate over our lifetime, create the internal chatter so we won’t see clearly what’s really going on inside. Moving targets are so much harder to see.

Yet that of God in us, what Quakers call the Inner Light (which early Quakers identified with the Light of Christ) always calls us home. We need only take the time to listen, not with our ears but our spiritual heart. For such deep listening we all need some silence and solitude in our lives. Silence in this sense is not simply the absence of sound, nor the absence of thought. What we mean here is the quieting of the mind’s compulsive, incessant chatter that distracts our heart. Such quieting leads to greater freedom and a willingness for what is real, for God. For this reason, spiritual practices, especially contemplative forms of prayer and meditation, can help. They slow us down, help us look inward and free us to see what is going on between us and God.

Silence is the language both of God and of our spiritual heart. In *Inviting Silence*, Gunilla Norris writes: “Within each of us there is a silence...We are afraid of it...and we long for it. When we experience that silence, we remember who we are.” In that remembering we begin to heal the internal struggle between how God calls us and what we think the world expects. Perhaps this is why we fear silence: we risk seeing that we’re living a shallow substitute for the life God envisions for us. In healing our internal strife we are also freed to become peacemakers in a world divided by the external strife of blind opinion and conflict.

Solitude is not about physical isolation: one can remain in a crowd yet be in solitude. Some have described spiritual community as existing, paradoxically, to protect the solitude of its members. But, to paraphrase Parker Palmer in *The Active Life*, solitude *dis-illusions* and *dis-locates* us, freeing us from the dictates of other people’s expectations, collective values, and an impersonal culture. It complements silence as an instrument of our wholeness in God.

“Such quieting leads to greater freedom and a willingness for what is real, for God.”

Silence and solitude practiced in community can be a powerful support for inward listening to the Spirit, like in groups gathered for contemplative prayer. Likewise early Quakers recognized the power and depth of communal silence in adopting their form of worship. In silence and solitude we claim our authenticity, our true identity as God’s children. That authenticity is our birthright and the world’s hope. It is peacemaking, within and without. It has never been more needed than now.

(Thanks to Bill Dietrich for this article and for serving as an Advisor for The Anchorage. He is a Quaker spiritual director, retreat leader and hospice volunteer in the Washington, D.C. area. He is former Executive Director and current adjunct program staff of The Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation.)

“Taste & See that the Lord is Good”

We will host our first “Annual Friend Raiser” on Saturday, April 30 for our donors! You may recall our similar evening, *From God’s Abundance*, three years ago! Yes, it has been three years, and then we asked you for a three-year pledge to cover several major initiatives including office space. The timing was way beyond our knowing. Who knew then that we were heading for an economic decline? Yet, those of you who pledged have been faithful to complete your pledges, now three years later. **Thank you** only begins to express the deep gratitude we feel especially since it became necessary that the Anchorage not be housed in my home while I was dealing with cancer. Only God knew.

Times are different now, and we hope that an Annual Friend Raiser in the spring will provide a lovely night out, and keep this counter-culture ministry in your prayers. Please let us know if you’d like to attend, and we will be in touch, especially you donors who live out of town. We want you to be here too! Kyle Matthews (and family) will provide our music!



Upcoming Events

Clergy Quiet Days, Feb. - May
First Fridays, 9:30 – 3:30,
varied leadership

Feb. 18 – 20, “Artists & Mystics (II)”
Snails Pace, Saluda, NC (FULL),
led by Ashlyn Mengel & Cathie Powell

March 10 – April 7, Lenten Book Study, Thurs. 6:30 – 8:30 pm,
The World Is My Cloister: Living from the Hermitage Within by John Michael Talbot, led by Cathie Powell

March 25 – 27, “The Greatest Silence You’ll Ever Hear”
Montreat, NC, led by Sharon Decker

April 8, Friday, 9:30 – 3:30
“Spring Quiet Day: Being Present to Presence”, led by Cathie Powell

April 11 - 15, Mon. – Fri.,
“Spring Directed 4-day Group Retreat” Mepkin Abbey, Moncks Corner, SC, led by Cathie Powell

May 19, Thursday, 6:30 – 8:30pm
“Spring Caregivers Dinner: Seeing God’s Love and Care”
First Baptist, Greenville, led by Peggy Dulaney

***July 24 – Aug. 1**, 7-day Directed Retreat, Jesuit Center, Wernersville, PA, led by Cathie Powell

October 10 – 14, Mon. – Fri.
“Fall Directed 4-day Group Retreat” Mepkin Abbey, Moncks Corner, SC, led by Cathie Powell

March 26 – 20, 2012, Mon. – Fri.
“Spring Directed 4-day Group Retreat” Mepkin Abbey, Moncks Corner, SC, led by Cathie Powell

Unless otherwise noted all events are held at The Anchorage.

* Not an Anchorage event; be in touch for registration information.

If \$10 is all you can pay, then that is all you pay! It’s not about the money.

To reserve your space, send \$10 payable to “The Anchorage.”



The Anchorage

A Contemplative Ministry

P.O. Box 9091

Greenville, SC 29604

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Greenville, SC
Permit No. 1070

Return Service Requested

*"For God alone my soul waits in silence,
For my hope is from him." psalm 62:5*

(Cont. from p. 2)

become acute. We learn to listen, we learn to wait, we learn to hush our restless, busy selves and attend to what God might long to say to us."

Sister Wendy Beckett says it well in *Meditations on Silence*, "There is nothing casual about silence. In its peace it is productive. It prepares us for whatever is to come. Our bodily eyes may (or may not) be shut, but the eyes of the spirit are wide open and watchful."

This Lent our weekly book study will use *The World Is My Cloister: Living from the Hermit Within*, by John Michael Talbot. In it he writes of his concern that some overachiever friends might awaken to the futility of all the activity and settle into depression. His response is: "at some point all of us begin to hear the faint but deep whisperings of the Spirit of God, calling us to something less that is in fact something much more." He reminds us that the Spirit drove Jesus to the desert for 40 days to prepare him for ministry, the place of deafening silence to hear the most profound word. If this desert time was essential for Jesus, might it be good for us too? Perhaps God is calling you to make time for silence and solitude in preparation for something beyond your wildest imagination. Is there a garden within you, just waiting to be found?



Financial Status as of January, 31, 2011

(Fiscal Year is July 10 – June 11)

Total gifts budgeted	\$ 54,680
Total received	<u>\$ 20,299</u>
Amount needed	\$ 34,381

Total income budgeted	\$ 89,700
Total received	<u>\$ 39,455</u>
Amount needed	\$ 50,245

Praising God for you, our awesome donors and participants!

From God's Abundance (2008-2011)

3-year Goal	\$153,700
Pledged:	<u>\$149,788</u>
Remaining:	\$ 3,912

There is still time to join our other pledgers! This 3-year Friend Raiser ends April, 2011.

Of the \$149,788 pledged, \$12,500 is still outstanding. Please pray for the faithful folks hoping to complete their pledge. We trust that all is from God's abundance and that as God leads, all needs will be met.

All gifts are fully tax-deductible.