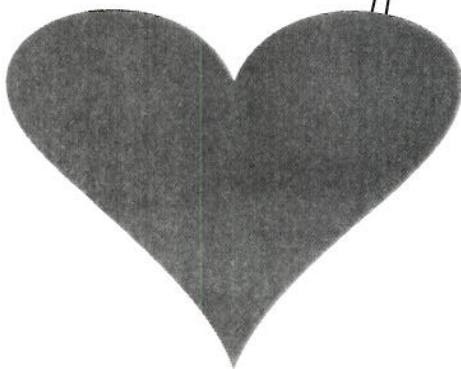




# The Anchorage

A Ministry of Spiritual Direction and Contemplative Retreats

May, 2006



Our response to God:  
**Desiring Christ**

DEPTH SOUNDINGS

# “Deeper Listening”

by Molly Wilkes

As I prepared to go to Mepkin Abbey as part of The Anchorage retreat, I began to anticipate more and more the opportunity for quietness and this special time with God. My heart seemed to be desiring intimacy with God and a time of increased awareness of God's love and presence.

Maybe you have had similar retreat experiences. How do you react when your heart is stirred to seek God and the communion such fellowship offers? A desire for God is but an invitation to respond to a God who is already reaching out to us, drawing us through love and grace.

Our simple honest love for God, our devotion, results in thanksgiving, in surrender, in trust. We are bidden to give ourselves to this divine mystery, yet deeply personal God who knows all about us and loves us totally and recklessly. Be grateful for the yearning that reminds you of the abundant loving God that seeks your companionship and love. There is never a time when God's thoughts are not on us seeking to bless and direct our lives.

I found at the Abbey that the more time I spent in contemplation, prayer and meditation, the more I desired fellowship with God. My prayers ceased to be requests and became just the awareness of God's abiding presence. Communion with God is the greater gift.

How easy it is in our busy world to let the world's agenda become more important to us than the matters of the soul. Yet it is through our “soulfulness” that we can deal with life's challenges.

In the Scripture we are told that God is eager to give us our heart's desire. I have come to believe our true heart's desire is communion and fellowship with our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. God wants to give us this peace and blessing.

When asked what the retreat meant to me, I responded, “bringing it all to Jesus.” As we open our hearts to Jesus we find in our surrender and trust how faithful and loving our Lord really is. We find that the One who knows us better than we know ourselves and loves us still, is able to help us move on in our lives with hope and joy.

*(Thanks to Molly for this article and for her participation with The Anchorage. She is a retired Methodist Pastor and serves as a Director with The Anchorage. She will be leading our Clergy Day in September.)*

## “Our Need? Volunteers!”

Some of you ask what we need – here is one important need! Besides your prayers which are always needed, we need your **volunteer** help. We are looking for 4 bright volunteers to begin this summer. Each volunteer will work about 3 hours a month, most likely on a Wednesday morning. There is a wide variety of things to do including: entering computer data, such as updating addresses, printing reports, helping with mail, putting folders together, printing name tags, arranging for program facilities and meals, running errands to the bank, post office, print shop, office supply or book store. It is important that you have a heart for the ministry. If you're interested please call for more details. Thanks for prayerfully considering this invitation.

## “Do You Need a Program Speaker?”

If your church or other group needs a program **speaker**, we would enjoy the opportunity to come tell you about The Anchorage or even better, to lead experiences of contemplative prayer or facilitate conversation about being in God's presence. We can work with you to design just the right format for your group – from weekend retreats to ongoing studies. Just call The Anchorage! (864) 297-5308 or email us at [cathie@theanchorage.org](mailto:cathie@theanchorage.org)



### Probable Events

July, 2006 – June, 2007

#### September

“**Spiritual Care Dinner for Caregivers**” led by Peggy Dulaney

**Book Study, *The Impact of God: Soundings from St. John of the Cross*** by Iain Matthew, study led by Cathie Powell

“**Clergy Retreat: Letting God Guide**” led by Molly Wilkes

#### October

“**Sailing Retreat**” on Lake Norman, NC led by Norma Lefler

“**Fall Guided Retreat**” Diakonia Center, led by Cathie Powell

#### November

“**Fall Quiet Day: with the 12 Steps**” led by David Tiede-Hottinger

#### December

“**Making Room in the Inn (X): Move Me Closer to the Lamb**” led by Cathie Powell

#### January

“**Epiphany Retreat: Honoring the Light**” led by Cathie Powell

“**Beach Retreat: Mary Magdalene**” led by Caroline Smith

“**Praying the Hours**” at the beach, led by Cathie Powell

#### February

“**The Aramaic Lord's Prayer Retreat**” led by Theresa Horton

#### March

“**Clergy Day: Our Emptying, Active God**” led by Jeff Rogers

“**Windows into the Soul Retreat**” led by Peggy Dulaney

“**Spring Guided Retreat**” Mepkin Abbey, led by Cathie Powell

#### April

“**Spring Quiet Day: Julian of Norwich**” led by Cathie Powell

**“My prayers ceased to be requests and became just the awareness of God's abiding presence.”**

# “Two Prongs: Letting Go and Desiring Christ”

by Cathie Powell

The theme for our entire year is “Our Response to God” and our first three responses were “Gratefulness”, “Yes” and “Letting go.” All of those are important – but they pale when compared with the response for this issue. “Loving God back” is the idea. Now it may seem late in the game to be mentioning this – our fourth response. Why not our first? Well, to be honest, this is where it fell for me. It flowed naturally from the last issue on letting go. And as I listen to others, loving God isn’t as much of a “no-brainer” as you might think. Part of it may be that we really don’t have a clue about how to do that... or at least in my years coming up in church it wasn’t something we talked about much, if at all. God’s love for us, yes... but our love for God?

**“How do you love God?  
How do you desire Christ?”**

You may have noticed that I called it “Desiring Christ” and I did that because of something I read years ago. The author suggested a 2-prong approach during contemplative prayer. One prong is the self-emptying, the letting go (which is the prong that gets all the press). The other prong is desiring Christ. The naming of these two resonates deeply in me. Perhaps it is

because of the way my prayer practice has evolved, enjoying quiet prayer, not so much as some thing to be done, as it is some One to be with in love.

Please don’t hear any prescribed way of loving God here – there is as much variety in HOW we love God as there are people. Being aware of God’s care and presence, here and now, and being intentionally present, available to God, as much as possible is the way God is showing me, inviting me. How about you? How do you love God? How do you desire Christ? However it is, my guess is that THAT is where you are most alive, most true, most in touch with and aware of the meaning of life. And I think this is why: The longer I live and learn, the more it seems essential that we realize that we are created creatures, created by our Creator, with a yearning for our Creator, who will nudge us, and prompt us, and move us – all our lives – toward the One for whom we yearn. We are made that way. Hard-wired.

If you’re like me, you might have taken the long way ‘round, learning that all our yearning, hunger, thirst is not satisfied by all the things we think we need, such as money, sex and power, which can manifest themselves in very subtle ways so that we don’t recognize them (i. e. certain friendships, even at church, children who make us proud, and always wanting just a little bit more) and none of them can scratch that itch. Yes, they can relieve it momentarily, but the relief is fleeting. The deepest yearning, the “what’s it all about, Alfie?” question that often comes in mid-life is only answered, no, better yet – only satisfied by God... by knowing God’s love. And even then our yearning continues but with a sweet taste to it.

Bernard of Clairvaux, (1090 – 1153) who shaped medieval monastic life and spirituality, both within the Cistercian Order and outside, said in his 84th Sermon on the Song of Songs, “It is my belief that even when God is found, there will be no halt to the seeking.” Quoting him again, “For when God loves, all (God) desires is to be loved in return. The sole purpose of (God’s) love is to be loved, in the knowledge that those who love (God) are made happy by their love of (God).” And lastly, “The reason for loving God.. is God; the measure of this love is to love without measure.” Intriguing words from over 800 years ago – and do they still speak to us today?

Our best wisdom is not wise enough to know HOW to love God. But we can take heart, for, at least in my experience, it seems that God wants to show us, and will, if we will but offer our “simple, contemplative presence” to God, open, available, for God. And how much more alive quiet prayer is when it is not just about letting go and emptying of the false self, to make room, but also intentional loving God, desiring Christ, with all that we are.

Next year our theme will be “Loving God” and each quarterly issue will offer some ponderings on this first and greatest commandment.



**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, 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 spiritual direction and contemplative retreats, 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.*

## **Directors & Staff**

*Jim Caprell, Chair  
Peggy Dulaney  
Cathie Powell, Ex. Dir.  
Sammy Reese  
Terri Reese  
David Tiede-Hottinger  
Chelsea Wakefield  
Holland Webb  
Molly Wilkes  
Dick McCormack, Staff  
Pam Shucker, Staff*

## **The Anchorage**

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www.theanchorage.org**



# The Anchorage

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P.O. Box 9091 ▪ Greenville, SC 29604

Return Service Requested

**“God is love.”**  
1 John 4:16

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## “Four Mornings Praying the Mist”

*(A Reflection of Me in the Mists)*

*by Duane Ashcraft*



{First Morning}  
The hurried lake mists  
Rushing away from me quick  
As harried people.

{Second Morning}  
The dancing lake mists  
Spinning on the lake surface  
As joyful people.

{Third Morning}  
The bowing lake mists  
Praying lifts them to the Lord  
As children of God.

{Fourth Morning}  
The peaceful lake mists  
Drifting in the Love of God  
Found my friend Jesus.

*(Thanks to Duane Ashcraft for this haiku and photo of the lake at the Diakonia Center and for his participation with The Anchorage. He is a computer programmer with Emdeon and he and his wife are active members of Aldersgate United Methodist Church.)*

### Financial Status as of May 15, 2006

(Fiscal year is  
July, '05 - June, '06)

Gifts Budgeted	\$33,000
Gifts Received	\$19,118
Balance	\$13,882
Total Budget	\$53,900
Total Received	\$46,968
Balance	\$ 6,932

### THANK YOU, DONORS!

You have blessed us this year! We realize there are great needs elsewhere in our world and are glad that you generous folks are doing your part to relieve the need. We continue to pray that God will provide funds to cover needs.

### THANK YOU PARTICIPANTS!

This is the first year that fees have outdone donations! You listened and responded to God's invitation to come away to 'soak a spell' in God.

### HELP!

Expenses go up with more participants, so we are in the red. It was the right thing to do to welcome those who could only pay \$5, and now we need over \$13K to break even by year-end: **(6/30) \$1 to \$1000 - it all helps!**

**THANKS!**