



# DEPTH SOUNDINGS

*The Anchorage:*  
*A Contemplative Community for All*  
*Come away...*

Encouragement, Inspiration and News from The Anchorage

February 2022

## “Comfort and Joy”

### “The Phrase that ‘Sparkles’”

By Starla Revels

When thinking of a phrase or word that “Sparkles” as a theme for the Christmas season, “Comfort and Joy” is it for me. It is also a popular secular theme for the season. Participating in Anchorage events over the years has helped me learn how to live with intentional awareness of the “Divine Center” as described by Thomas Kelly in his book *A Testament of Devotion* (the most recent Anchorage book study). Whether I’m practicing Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina or praying for the word or phrase for the year, the use of these “mantras” help to keep me connected to the Holy Spirit’s river of living life force flowing through me and around me and through and around others and creation. I find praying for a theme of the season, the word or phrase while reading scripture or the word of focus for the year is helpful for me to live with simultaneous awareness of the presence of God.

Seeing, hearing or thinking of the phrase “Comfort and Joy” as a theme for the Christmas season reminds me that it is time to start reading my Advent Devotional, participating in Advent church programs, preparing my heart and home for the coming of Jesus. This phrase reminds me to keep aware, alive, awake, and attentive to what God is doing in and around me. The word that I chose for the year 2021 was

Joy, so this phrase also reminds me of how every day of 2021, I journaled about the joy found in each day and how focusing on the joy of the day brought comfort to even the worst of days. Focusing on the joy moments in each day add or change perspective which allow light to illuminate the darkness. I remember when learning to drive that my car moved toward my focus, so I quickly learned to focus on where I wanted to go not what felt like was encroaching in upon me. The byproduct of a year focused on joy was comfort/peace. Looking back

through my 2021 joy journal, I am astounded at the creative ways God showed up with His fruit of joy.

This phrase is also from one of the oldest most popular Christmas Hymns “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen.” This hymn was inspired by Luke 2 and is a simple tune filled with hope. Singing the words, listening to the simple tune, and realizing how long Christians have praised God with this hymn, I find myself feeling connected to the body of saints throughout time who have joined their voices and lifted their hearts in praise to Jesus as Lord.

When a word or phrase “sparkles”, I ask God, why this word or phrase, here and now? Well, the answer for “Comfort and Joy” came on November 22<sup>nd</sup> when I awoke to the news that Sunday, November 21<sup>st</sup> five people were killed and dozens injured when a SUV drove into two groups of dancers in the Wisconsin Christmas Parade. “Comfort and Joy” was the theme of the parade. The horror of seeing the trauma is something that can’t be unseen. I knew that the phrase “Comfort and Joy” which had so much positive connotation before was now a mantra reminding me of the need for intercession. When I think of the phrase “Comfort

and Joy”, I feel God is inviting me to intercede for those in deep grief that lost loved ones, those that are wounded still in need of healing, those that are fighting for justice, those that are connected to the one who caused this senseless terror at a joyous community event.

Thank you for the power and privilege of prayer Lord. This year may the sparkle in “Comfort and Joy” be a reminder to pray. (*Her prayer followed this – and you may find her prayer on page 4.*)



*anchor  
deep*

## “Looking for Red Birds?”

By Catherine Powell

Continuing with our annual theme “Comfort and Joy,” may I recommend the book by Paula D’Arcy titled *The Gift of the Red Bird?* It’s her poignant true story after she was in a car accident that took the lives of both her husband and daughter. It moved me greatly when I read it years ago and have appreciated the gifts of creatures, including red birds, who have graced me with their presence when I needed it. These times are ripe for such gifts. May I encourage you to look for them? They seem to appear just when needed. It is not a coincidence. This year we have experienced the loss of some dear friends; you may have too? I found Christmas stamps with red birds on them for the envelopes of cards or letters to their widows. Notice the picture of a red bird on the cover as a reminder of God’s comfort that can be ours even in the toughest times. May it give you a smile.

Let me recommend another book *Hope in Times of Fear* by Timothy Keller, written last year, after he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. It bases our hope on the solid fact of the resurrection, such a foundation of bedrock!

The articles included here are from lovers of God, who have lived through challenging times and found God’s comfort and joy IN them. That may be our greatest hope: that God is WITH us. One comment about the cover article: When I thanked Starla for her prayer, she said it was mostly from the Book of Common Prayer. So natural for her to move into prayer. It’s a beautiful thing.

## “Comfort and Joy...Just a Slogan?”

By Peggy Dulaney

As we have just come through another Christmas season, I noticed the phrase “comfort and joy” used a lot this year. Maybe it is because during these pandemic times, we are all needing some comfort and joy. What I noticed, though, was that *things* that seemed to be so often associated with the idea of comfort and joy. I even saw a gift card that had a picture of an angel and the words “comfort and joy” on the card. Can the things we buy with a gift card bring comfort and joy? Maybe...briefly, maybe a sort of comfort.

You might have seen the TV commercial with lots of happy, dancing people amid packages and Christmas lights singing about Joy, Comfort and Peace. Then I realized that the first letters of those words were the same as the name of the store they advertised. What slick advertising! Talk about subliminal (or maybe not so subtle) messaging. I guess shopping there was supposed to give joy, comfort, and peace.

What is the source of *true and lasting* comfort and joy? In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Paul points us to “the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” He goes on to say “through Christ, our comfort overflows.” Isn’t that just like our amazing God? Not just a little comfort, but comfort that overflows! Comfort that we have enough to spare...to share with those around us who are also in need.

So, we get our comfort from God, but what about that joy? Too often people confuse joy with happiness. Maybe we expect that God will fix all our problems. But what about when God doesn’t fix the situations that trouble us? I read once that sometimes God calms the storm and other times, God calms God’s child in the storm. Can we still experience joy in the midst of troubles? Yes, we can. At one of the lowest points in my life, when I was in physical pain and grieving, I felt God’s presence so strongly that I could not contain the joy of that experience. My situation did not change, but God gave me comfort, joy and peace.

My hope is that this year, all of us in The Anchorage community will seek God’s presence and allow God to fill us with comfort and joy so that we can be bearers of these gifts to the world around us. *(Thanks to Peggy Dulaney for this article and for her past service as a Servant Leader many times with The Anchorage. She is a retired mental health nurse who has been very involved in promoting understanding and decreasing stigma surrounding mental illness for many years. She is a United Methodist and a certified Faith Community Nurse. She and her husband recently moved to Cary, NC.)*



## The Anchorage

### Vision

*A contemplative community to encourage all people everywhere to live in a mutual love relationship with God.*

### 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 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.*

### Core Focus

*Encouraging a love relationship with our Triune God, especially in contemplative community.*

**“through Christ,  
our comfort  
overflows”**

### Servant Leaders

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### Staff

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# “Joy Comes in the Morning”

By Angie Gage

When I think of comfort and joy, the words from the prophet Isaiah come to mind, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me....to comfort all who mourn...to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.” I know this promise to be true and I can testify to the strength, comfort, and joy that Jesus has given me when the storms of life have left my spirit faint and my heart heavy with grief. One particularly long and stormy season was in 2019. In a 6-month period, our family endured job loss, a mental health crisis, the pain of addiction, struggling relationships, and extreme marital strain. These hardships were overwhelming and way too much to process let alone overcome on our own. We needed a force greater than the storm to bring us the peace and healing our hearts longed for.

One sobering moment in the height of the crisis was when a police officer, a total stranger to our family, told us we were in a battle against good and evil and now was the time to get on our knees and pray! We had prayed many sincere prayers, but this time we knew without a doubt, God’s power was what we needed most. I remember circling up as a family, holding hands and crying out to God for help. He was our only hope. We needed a rescue, a savior, and a light in the darkness. It wasn’t overnight but as the days and weeks that passed, in the midst of the storm and the darkness, Jesus, the Bright and Morning Star, began to shine brightly. I believe it is true, the darker the night the brighter the star. Moment by moment, grace came in simple, surprising, and tangible ways. These glimmers of light gave us just enough guidance to take one step forward at a time, knowing we were being led and held by the good shepherd.

Every day, we received a new mercy that sustained, strengthened, guided, and gave us hope. I’ve always heard it said, “God shows up in most unexpected ways,” and he did just that! A friend would text a timely scripture that spoke right into our situation or a card would show up in the mail with a word of encouragement and a scripture promise from someone who had no idea what was going on in our lives. Our counselor would offer a wise word to help us gain a new perspective, just when we needed it. There were also tangible ways God provided manna from heaven. My husband was unemployed with no salary for over a year, and we only had a few months of savings in the bank. Yet somehow God provided money when we needed it the most. Over and over, a check would come unexpectedly from a past investment at just the exact time we needed to pay a bill, or a consulting job opportunity would come right when money got scarce. Miraculously, there was always enough to cover our bills.

The list of ways God provided goes on and on. I can’t make this stuff up. God’s comfort and joy was like manna from heaven showing up at just the right time to sustain us. I recently wrote in my journal God gives and gives and gives and he delights in giving more. This I know to be true! Re-counting the Lord’s goodness, his comfort, and his joy brings me to tears, even now, when I think back to that very hard year and remember the Lord’s faithfulness. Even though the next few years would be difficult as the world faced a pandemic and suffering ensued all around us, we continued to experience the hand of God redeeming, restoring, healing, blessing, and making all things new in our family. The pandemic brought all our kids under one roof where we ate meals together, played games, laughed, cried, and healed. God even brought two puppies into the mix that have been a part of his healing mercies. Just a week ago, we welcomed our first grandchild, Evy Joy, into this world! When I see her precious face, I smile and cry tears of gratitude because God knew all along the blessings that awaited us when we were in the midst of the dark valley. God’s promise is true, “our weeping would remain for a night, but joy would come in the morning.” Praise be to God! (Note: Angie is leading a Desert Day)

*“the darker the night, the brighter the stars”*



## Upcoming Events

### **Desert Days: First Fridays, even months, Theme is “Comfort and Joy” 9:30 – 2:30**

Reflection in silence with God and others. Lunch conversation. Varied content by leader.

**Feb. 4** (led by Angie Gage)

**Apr. 1** (led by Matt Rollins)

**June 3** (led by Jonathan Jones)

**Fee: \$40** (\$30 if BYO lunch)

**Location: Gower Estates, Greenville, SC**

### **Lenten Book Study. An**

*Explorer’s Guide to Julian of Norwich* by Veronica Mary Rolf.

**6 Tuesdays: 3/8 – 4/12, 10:30 – 12 or 6:30 – 8pm.**

**Fee: \$80** (all 6 sessions, does not include \$15 book)

**Location: Gower Estates**

Led by: Catherine

### **“Ignatian Retreats” on**

**Zoom. 3, 5 or 7-days, to fit your time frame.** You would need to have relatively quiet space for this daily: 45 min.

for Spiritual Direction either in person or on Zoom, about 1 hour for solitude prayer, at 3 different times.

**Fee:**

**3-day (4 sessions), \$150,**

**5-day (6 sessions), \$195,**

**7-day (8 sessions), \$250.**

Led by: Catherine.

**Spiritual Direction**, meeting one-on-one monthly for an hour, is a prayerful time to reflect with another about your relationship with God, a listening together for God. Spiritual direction can be a coming home to your deepest heart, your truest self.

With: Catherine

**Fee: \$60** if doable otherwise we will find an amount that is. First session is always free.

**“Friend Raiser”** in April, probably on Zoom - date TBD.

**If \$10 is all you can pay, then that’s all you pay!**



# The Anchorage

A Contemplative  
Community for All

P.O. Box 9091  
Greenville, SC 29604

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*"We know that all things work together  
for good for those who love God, who  
are called according to his purpose."  
Rom. 8:28 (NRSV)*

## “Starla’s Prayer”

Almighty God, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer. We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer. For deliverance from all danger, violence, oppression, and degradation, let us pray to the Lord, Lord, have mercy. Defend us, deliver us, and in thy compassion protect us, O Lord, by thy grace. Lord, have mercy. We pray for people that govern and hold authority that there may be justice and peace. For our enemies and those who wish us harm, we pray to you, O Lord.

O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help especially those effected by this heinous act of evil at Wisconsin's Comfort and Joy Parade; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen

*(Thanks to Starla Revels for her article and for her support and past service as a Servant Leader with The Anchorage. She currently is CFO for a charitable foundation and an investment holdings company. She is involved with Daughters of the King and the Order of St. Luke at Church of the Good Shepherd Episcopal in Greer, SC. She has served in Kairos prison ministry for over 20 years. She serves on the board of Alabaster House, a women's recovery house. She enjoys hiking with her husband and dog, contemplative retreats, spending time with grandchildren and traveling.)*

*(Thanks to Angie Gage for her article and for her service as a Servant Leader with The Anchorage. She has recently relocated to Greenville, SC. She enjoys offering spiritual direction, facilitating small listening groups, teaching Bible studies, hiking, walking her dog, and forming new friendships. Angie is married to Rob. They have four children, a beautiful daughter-in-law and a new granddaughter, Eva Joy! Her greatest joy and passion are bringing the hope and encouragement of Christ to others.)*

## Financial Status

as of January 14, 2022

(Our Fiscal Year is July 1 – June 30)

Total FY gifts budgeted	\$ 26,600
Total received	\$ 12,016
<b>Amount needed</b>	<b>\$14,584</b>

Total FY income budgeted	\$ 41,320
Total received	\$ 17,750
<b>Amount needed</b>	<b>\$23,570</b>

Both gifts and program income are down, but not really a surprise. We're SO grateful for you who pray, give, and participate!

**THANK YOU!**

We're trying the Desert Days in person as well as our annual Beach Retreat this month. Please pray that all will be well.

Our Spring Friend/Fund Raiser will again be on Zoom since it is best for those out of town. Please join us – it is a joy to be with you, even if it is just on Zoom.

We give all the glory to God with grateful hearts for those who listened for God's leading about how much to give.

**All gifts are fully tax-deductible as The Anchorage is a 501c3 non-profit ministry.**

(Use our convenient online PayPal donation/registration.)