

Formed by the Spirit

The Newsletter of the Southwark Diocesan Spiritual Formation Group

Opportunities, events, resources and articles
on prayer and spirituality

Issue 14: September 2012



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What's On? Events, Courses, Opportunities

The Poem and the Prayer

Wednesdays: 7pm to 9pm
September 26th, October 10th & 24th
in Trinity House, London SE1 1HW
Led by Revd Tony Lucas, Chair of the SPIDIR
spiritual direction network

Across time poetry has been used to express the experience of the deepest mysteries of life and of God. This course will explore the relationship between poetry and prayer from the earliest Mesopotamian hymns and writings within the Old Testament through to the present day.

Suggested donation for the course: £10
To book or for information contact:
chris.chapman@southwark,anglican.org
020 7939 9474

A balm for all wounds

The spirituality of Ety Hillesum 1914 -1943



Thursday 18th and 25th October, 7pm to 9pm
in St. Matthew's House, Croydon CR0 1PE
Led by Chris Chapman, Spiritual Formation
Adviser

Ety Hillesum, a young Dutch woman of Jewish descent kept a diary describing her search to live life at depth amidst increasing Nazi persecution. These two evenings will unfold the relevance of her seeking for our own quest to be centred in God amidst the challenges life brings.

Suggested donation for the course: £10
To book or for information contact:
chris.chapman@southwark,anglican.org
020 7939 9474

Community of the Sisters of the Church

St Michael's Convent 56 Ham Common
Richmond TW10 7JH Tel: 020 8940 8711

Two Study Days

Expanding the Imagination

With The Revd Christopher Ramsay
Thursday 15th September 10-4pm

Aelred of Rievaulx and Friendship

With Sheila Grimwood
Thursday 20th October 10-4pm

Suggested donation £10 per day.
No need to book. Please bring a packed lunch, drinks provided. If you would like further information please contact Sr Catherine CSC at the above address.

Strike the Cloud

Understanding and practising the teaching of the Cloud of Unknowing



Led by Father Graeme Watson.

Tuesday November 13th and 20th
in Trinity House, London SE1 1HW
7pm to 8.30pm

These two evenings, based on Graeme Watson's recent book *Strike the Cloud*, will unfold the essential teaching of medieval spiritual classic *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Both evenings will also include a time of meditation.

Suggested donation for the course: £10
To book or for information contact:
chris.chapman@southwark,anglican.org
020 7939 9474

London Centre for Spirituality

Autumn 2012

The Spirituality of Jesus

Saturday 13th October 2012 11am – 4pm
Paul Stevens. £40

“Musiking the Mystery”

Saturday 19th October 2012 11am – 4pm
June Boyce-Tillman. £40

Celtic Advent:

Celebrate Advent through music, poetry and stories. Saturday 1st December 2012
11am – 4pm, June Boyce-Tillman & Kenneth Boyd Browne £40

“If Music be the Food of God’s Love”

Wednesday 5th December 2012 6.30 – 8.30pm, Lyndon van der Pump. £25

Sacred Spirals

Mondays once a month from September 2012 – April 2013 from 11am to 4pm.
Seven workshops on the Labyrinth, the Spiritual Exercises, Art etc
Antonia Lynn and Joan Burkitt-Gray. £150

London Spiritual Direction Network Day Refreshing a Rule of Life:

Balancing duty and freedom

A forum for those working in spiritual companionship in the Greater London area.
Saturday 17th November 11am – 4pm
Cally Hammond. £30

For details and to book for events in this column contact:

bookings@spiritualitycentre.org

020 7621 1391

www.spiritualitycentre.org

The London Centre for Spirituality
The Church of St Edmund the King!
Lombard Street
London EC3V 9EA

Seeds of Hope amidst Life’s Journey

A Quiet Morning

St. James Church, Riddlesdown, CR8 2DL

Saturday 15th September 10am-1.00pm

Leader: Jane Hoskins Cost: £6

To book or for further information about this morning please ring 01883 344 916 or email: j.hoskins233@btinternet.com

Quiet Mornings at St. Alphege, Southwark

King's Bench Street, Southwark,
London, SE1 0QZ

Saturday October 13th, 10am to 1pm

A Spiritual Harvest

Exploration of and thanksgiving for the gifts God gives to each one of us.

Led by Cynthia Jackson, Hon. Assistant Curate in the Parish of Wimbledon, and an experienced spiritual director.



Saturday November 3rd, 10am to 1pm

A Walk in the Dark

Learning to trust God when the light fades. A seasonal reflection on life and death in the here and now.

Led by Tamara Katzenbach
Tamara is a self-taught textile artist and a trained retreat leader.

It's helpful to have an idea of numbers attending. If you plan to come to any of these mornings please contact:

Chris Chapman, 020 7939 9474

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org

London Week of Peace
Candlelit chant
Wed Sept 19th 6.30 – 8 pm.



Held in the darkened, candlelit and evocative church of **Holy Innocents, on Selhurst Road, SE25** [nearest train station Norwood Junction - 3 minutes walk].

Multi-faith chants, poems and quotes with a special Peace focus. Time afterwards for quiet reflection in the church or refreshments in the hall.

The theme of this year's London Week of Peace is kindness in daily life.

Suggested donation for this event is £10 or £6 concessions. For further information or to book please contact Catherine@naturalvoice.net 07981 298 541

At Home in Love:

Julian of Norwich and the Journey to Self-Acceptance
11th October 2012, 7-9 p.m.

Venue: Westminster Cathedral

NB This is a change of date from 3rd October

Led by Fr. Robert Fruehwirth:

This is one of a series of talks on silent prayer and contemplative living in today's world organised by *Silence in the City*

Details at: www.silenceinthecity.org.uk/

Making Room for God:

The Spirituality of John of the Cross
Thursdays November 29th & December 6th
10.30am to 1pm in Trinity House, SE1 1HW
Led by Chris Chapman,
Diocesan Spiritual Formation Adviser

John of the Cross, a 16th century spiritual guide, taught how Christian life is a co-operation with the work of the Spirit. This course will explore how we make room for God within our prayer, our personal growth and our ministry

To book:

sue.maree@southwark.anglican.org

For details contact:

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org

Wychcroft Retreat Weekend

Fruit from the Tree of Christ's Passion

A prayerful preparation for Easter



Friday March 15th to
Sunday March 17th 2013

Led by Chris Chapman
and Jane Hoskins

Cost £116

For enquiries and to book contact:

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org

Tools for Prayer

Prayerful Knitting

By Sarah Goodwin

A Background

Many of us seem to be knitting these days. What is it about this ancient art that keeps people working through the knit 1 purl 1 repetition? Compassion and a love of knitting can combine into a prayerful ministry that reaches out to those in need of comfort and solace.

Historically many cultures and traditions use knitting as either a pastime or as a task to 'get done' before days end when creating necessary garments to be worn.

Knitting however can also be considered in a contemplative reflective and prayerful way. The repetitive movement of knitting is a way of quieting and refreshing us at the same time and can enrich and strengthen both the knitter and even perhaps the person who is being knitted for.

In American society today many churches have a 'Shawl Ministry' where either individuals or groups of knitters knit and pray into their work creating eventually a gift for someone who may need some comfort in their lives at that time.

"Knitting is the simplest and most ordinary of activities, yet somehow it mysteriously contains within itself the potential for expanding our conscious awareness"

This type of work is an old concept used by Tibetan Monks, native Americans and other cultures. It is a way of serving those less fortunate by the creation of a garment of beauty through prayer and love.

The clicking of needles helps slow our minds and provides the knitter with a sense of stillness in their sometimes chaotic lives.

By knitting in sets of three even the stitches can invoke a sense of the Trinity and the union of mind body and spirit.



Peace I leave with you,
my peace
I give to you;
Not as the world gives
Do I give to you.
Let not your hearts be troubled,
Neither let them be afraid.

John 14:27

Prayerful Knitting

How do I start?

"Experiencing your body and mind working together you may find yourself in a place where you can listen to God and may hear God"

Everyone responds differently through their acts of prayer. Find a comfortable and peaceful place to be.

Ponder the knitting wool, what it feels like. Think about the sheep it came from, the shepherd who tended them, the shearer who sheared them. Think of those who have come before, the many knitters through the ages who have also created.

Concentrate on one thing.

Perhaps begin by knitting a easy stitch (garter or stocking stitch). This will allow you to adopt a rhythm which you can pray into. For example:

Knit Lord, have mercy on us

Knit Christ, have mercy

Knit Lord have mercy

Some people find knitting whilst repeating a mantra fits their rhythm of knitting.

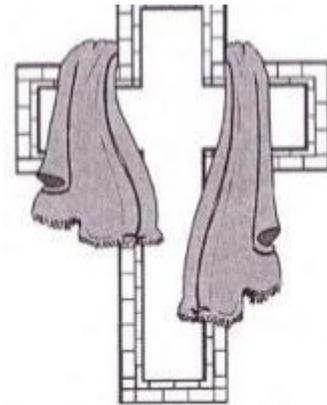
(similar to the use of prayer beads)

Maybe consider listening to music or sacred traditions such as Taize chants.

You may like to focus on a particular person you may be knitting for. Knit your prayers into your work or sing them! A favourite hymn would be a good place to start. Many blessings can be knitted into your work.

There is no hurry! Take the time to ponder, to reflect, to relax and be still.

If at any time you discover a friend or colleague shares a similar interest in knitting and prayer, then get together and share each others' thoughts and ideas. Who knows you may even start your very own shawl ministry at your church!



Further reading / information:

www.Ravelry.com You can find patterns for prayer shawls/ blankets and information on groups on this international knitting forum

Knitting into the Mystery

by Susan S. Jorgensen and Susan S. Izard
ISBN 978-8192-1967-1

The Prayer Shawl Companion

by Janet Bristow and V. A. Cole-Galo
ISBN 13 978-1-60085-003-5

Any questions please do email me:

Sarah@Theknitclub.co.uk

Tools for Prayer

Going through the motions

Sometimes people make an outward show of action without their heart being in it. They are 'going through the motions'. But before we dismiss the 'motions' in favour of the purity of the inner spirit it helps to remember that we are bodily people; physical actions can help make our spirit ready. This is certainly true when it come to prayer. Choosing a regular place, posture, and way of beginning and ending our prayer can provide a supportive framework for the building up of our openness to God.

Place: Making a particular room, or seat, or walking route a habitual place for prayer. Of course we can pray anywhere. But through repetition the mind and spirit begins to recognise that in entering *this* place I am setting myself to pray. Your 'place' might be your kitchen table at a quiet time of the day, a bench in a park where you walk your dog, your seat on the train on the way into work, or a corner of a room in your home that you set aside as a meeting point with God.

Greeting:

Words or gestures you use to acknowledge that you have entered God's presence. This might be the lighting of a candle, the bowing before a cross, or the saying of a particular prayer or a verse from one of the psalms. For example:

To you O Lord I lift up my soul.

Psalm 25.1

Regular usage helps us move more quickly into prayer. We understand we are here for this purpose and for no other.

Posture:

A physical way we set our bodies: sitting with hands open and resting on our laps, or, if walking, a slower, measured pace that begins to settle us down.

As these physical settings become familiar, our spirit begins to work in unison, helping us be relaxed, open and attentive.



Ending and moving on:

Just as we have greeted God at the beginning of prayer, so we choose a way of closing this time, whilst remaining open to God's presence and leading as we go about our day. Again this might be a physical action, words of prayer or a combination: blowing out the candle, bowing to a cross, or words from a psalm:

*'Make me know your ways, O Lord;
Teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth and teach me,
For you are the God of my salvation;
For you I wait all day long*

Psalm 25:4-5

Movement and stillness

Summer gives way to autumn. Spend some time today taking in the sights, sounds and essence of this season,

As we look out on a garden, a park or a tree-lined street we are aware that we capture it in a still moment, as if in a photograph. And yet everything is in movement: the season journeys on, and what we see today will take a different form tomorrow.

As we come before God in prayer we do so within a still moment. And yet around and within us everything is moving: events are unfolding; our thoughts and feelings turning this way and that way.

And what of God?

God is still, and still moving.

Summer gives way to autumn.

The sun slips lower in the sky.

Colours are intensified in the fresh morning air.

Berries ripen on wasteland and hedgerow.

Creation is still, and still moving.

Changing seasons of the earth and of the heart.

Times of sorrow and times of joy.

Moments of clarity and moments of confusion.

Times to begin again and times to let go.

Changing seasons of the earth and of the heart.

As we contemplate the changing seasons

of the earth and of our lives,

we also touch what is still.

God is ever creative in our lives

ever alongside, ever making new.

God's stillness is not that of the stone

but of the ever-flowing stream,

loving into being all that it touches

working its way into every furrow of our experience.

Still, and still moving.

What stillness is asked of us?

To continually seek God,

whatever the season.

To go on co-operating

with the work of Love in our lives

Then our stillness becomes the movement of the Spirit;

a channel for the river of life.

Building a Soul Shelter

I am in search of a haven, yet I must
build it for myself, stone by stone.

Everyone seeks a home, a refuge.

[Etty Hillesum]

In 1941 Etty Hillesum, a young Dutch woman of Jewish descent began keeping a diary as a way of focusing her desire to live a more centred and fruitful life. It was an accident of history that she began this spiritual search just as the Nazi occupation of Holland was taking firmer hold and life for Jews was becoming more restricted and uncertain.

We all seek meaning within a particular context. Hers happened to be the war and Nazi persecution. It concentrated her search but this is our search too: 'Who am I?' 'What is my life for?' 'Who is God and what does this mean for me?' 'How do I meet the challenges life throws at me?' 'How can I live more at depth rather than at the surface of things?'

Etty Hillesum came to realise that if she was to get anywhere she needed to build and maintain a 'soul shelter' – an inward space where she could rest in the presence of God and reflect on her experience. She adopted a variety of practices to help form and maintain this sacred space: daily meditation, the keeping of her journal, and contact with a mentor who kept her faithful to her search for an integrated and fruitful life.

Etty understood that this dwelling place of God within was the spring from which came her own capacity to live generously, without being ruled by self-absorption and fear. It was a transformational space where the most difficult of sorrows and anxieties could be received and remade, allowing what began as destructive to become creative. This shelter held the depths of who she was, for in its depths God was held, and she was held by God:

And that is how I feel, always and without cease: As if I were lying in your arms, O God, so protected and so sheltered and so steeped in eternity. As if every breath I take were filled with it, and as if my smallest acts and words had a deeper source and a deeper meaning.

What need have you and I of a soul shelter?
How will we build it and keep it?

It is a place within where, whatever is happening, we can remain at home with God. I

It is also a hospitable space where others can enter and find shelter.

This is space to 'be'.

This is also space to 'become', for here we are open to God who goes on creating us. There is room for all our experience to rest, joyful and troubling, resolved and unresolved.

The shelter is gift of God, and is also built by human hands. Our intent to be open to God is needed, as are regular practices that express that intent.

In being generous in giving God space within our daily rhythm of life we discover how generous God is in giving us room.

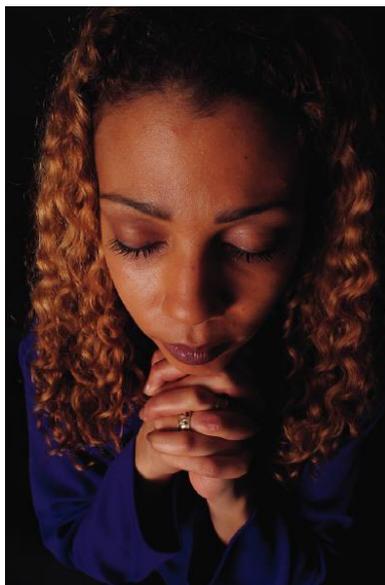
For Etty Hillesum meditation, reflective writing and the guidance of one she trusted helped form her soul shelter. The practices that build and maintain such space for us may not be identical, but we cannot take its presence for granted. It needs to be built 'stone by stone' and then cared for day by day.

Etty Hillesum wrote how she hoped to defend God's dwelling place inside her to the last; before anything and everything she knew this was essential. Only then was there room for other people, room for love, room to be 'Etty', room to house God.

A balm for all wounds- a two evening course exploring the spirituality of Etty Hillesum – takes place on October 18th and 25th at St. Matthew's House, Croydon. See page 2 for details

Etty Hillesum's letters and diaries are published by Persephone Books as: *An Interrupted Life: the Diaries and Letters of Etty Hillesum 1941-43.*

Teach us to Pray
*A range of resources and approaches
for deepening prayer within local congregations*



A] Tools for Prayer:

Short, simple guides to different ways of prayer for use by individuals or groups. Some are suitable for introducing within the context of a Sunday service.

B] What is prayer?

A brief introduction to the nature and purpose of prayer.

C] Teach us to pray

Models for introducing teaching & guidance on prayer within a local church / team / deanery.

1. A School for Prayer
2. Different ways of prayer within the Sunday service
3. 'Ways into Prayer' day
4. A monthly alternative worship
5. A retreat day / quiet day
6. Open for Prayer
7. Invitations to prayer within the church building and grounds
8. A parish prayer walk or pilgrimage

These resources can be found on the diocesan website at:

<http://www.southwark.anglican.org/prayer/prayer-spirituality>

