



Rooted and growing in the light of God's love.

THE WEST VIRGINIA INSTITUTE FOR SPIRITUALITY

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NEWS FROM WVIS

2023 #3

Message from our Executive Director

Sister Carole A. Riley, CDP, Ph.D.



Dear Spiritual Companions:

Chant instills in us an inner gesture of listening and response. Chant is useless from a pragmatic point of view, yet chant celebrates and gives glory to God. Listening to chant purposefully adds meaning. Listening to chant helps us to be in the *now* - the only time we have to be present, to be perfect, to be free, to be holy.

Daily living challenges us to 'awaken' to the NOW, to listen with our inner ears. WVIS offers a chant to punctuate our centering prayer practice for 20 minutes on ZOOM at 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. The community of believers gathers as a witness to T. S. Eliot's *you are the music while the music lasts*. The community experiences the fullness of sound, the Sacred Silence.

I encourage you to attend our Centering prayer practice and to read, *Music of Silence*, by David Steindl-Rast and Sharon Lebell to see how to 'be here now' and how to listen to the sacred natural rhythms of the hours of each day so as to assist us with living fully the daily hours and practicing 'being a chant' that instills listening in ourselves and others.

As the September shadows lengthen, I want to listen to the stillness that the autumn season invites. I hope to chant with you in our centering circle...just try it! Email wviscr@aol.com if you wish to be added to the centering prayer distribution list

Be blessed in every way, and let's be a blessing to everyone we meet.

Sister Carole Riley CDP

Sister Carole Riley, CDP

Executive Director

Visit the WVIS website (www.wvis.org) to learn more about spiritual direction, retreat options, and upcoming programs.

Message from our Board President

Rev. David S. Lake

Pastor, First United Methodist Church
Waynesburg, PA
dslake2000@gmail.com



Ask God to Speak So That We May Listen

I have been learning how to operate my new hearing aids and the phone app that controls them. Without my hearing aids my hearing drops off 40 percent. When they are adjusted correctly it is wonderful to hear all the sounds of life around me! Plus, I have the added benefit of hearing and understanding the conversations around me.

I am reminded of the calling of Samuel. He missed and misunderstood God's calling in the night. Finally, under guidance Samuel replied, "Speak, for your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:10). What adjustments need to be made to fully listen and hear God's voice? It is my hope and prayer we will all say, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Rev. David S Lake

CELEBRATING THE WVIS 25TH ANNIVERSARY



WVIS is preparing to celebrate its 25th Anniversary beginning December 2023, and you're invited. Below is a list of all the events (both Zoom and in-person) that are currently being planned. We hope you'll join us in this celebration and participate as you are able. *(Note: All times listed are Eastern)*

December 28, 2023 (Zoom)

Kick-off celebration – 7:00 – 8:00 pm

PowerPoint of photo memories followed by the chance for individuals to share a story.

January – December 2024

Blog Posts/Memories for Website

Throughout the 25th Anniversary year, we will share photos and memories in our "News" posts on the website.

April 13, 2024.

Prayer /House Re-dedication – 2:00 – 4:00 pm

This in-person event will include a Reception/Open House to re-dedicate the house and an ecumenical prayer service/ceremony. Please email Sister Carole at wviscr@aol.com to let her know you'd like to attend.

September 26, 2024 (Zoom)

Prayer Service for Feast Day – 7:00 – 8:00 pm

The WVIS Retreat house is named for Saint Marie Victoire Therese Couderc. We hope you will join us for this prayer service on her feast day.

November 2, 2024 (Zoom)

All Souls and Our Saints – 7:00 – 8:00 pm

There have been so many individuals who have played an important role in the history of WVIS. This special prayer service will honor those individuals who have passed.

December 31, 2024 (Zoom)

New Year's Eve Prayer Service – TBD

Join us for a special prayer service to celebrate and close out the Anniversary Year.

Join us as we Celebrate

Do you have a photo? A story? Please share it with us!

Emails, and photos should be sent to sally@sayyes2yourlife.org

Listening to the Heart of God

As this is the last issue on the theme of “Listening,” I felt compelled to pray with part of Psalm 85 from Nan C. Merrill’s Psalms for Praying.

“Listen, O people, in the silent chapel of your heart; and the Beloved will speak of peace to you, to the hidden saints, to all who turn their hearts to Love. Surely new life is at hand for those who reverence Love; O, that harmony might dwell among the nations.”

This prayer is particularly applicable at this time with wars around the world, shootings, polarization in our country, and war in the hearts of people struggling with daily living. For the most part, “in the silent chapel of my heart,” peace has been with me as I minister in this place of God called WVIS. It’s with the people I live and work with, the retreatants, those who come to the door, and the local churches in which I minister.

Now, as the Beloved of my heart asks me to spend time away, I carry this peace with me in gratitude for all the love and experiences I have received. I’ll be back soon!!



Sr. Mary Irene Sorber, SCC, MA is the Retreat House Hospitality Manager and a WVIS Associate Spiritual Director Intern.

Spiritual Nurturer for Presbyterian Women of the Shenandoah Presbytery

The Presbyterian Women are committed to providing information about justice and peace and ministry as part of our mission and community-building work. We desire to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church. On April 15th, in Harrisonburg, VA, the Presbyterian Women’s Coordinating Team of the Shenandoah of Virginia Presbytery, held their annual meeting. At that time, I proposed a change of title for an elected board position from *Worship Leader* to that of *Spiritual Nurturer*.

The proposal included that, as Spiritual Nurturer, one is given the responsibility to provide a safe place for members to center themselves in God’s love, to help others to say and sort through the integration of spiritual values into the activities and events of their daily lives, and to share information to promote spiritual growth. Additionally, other responsibilities of the Spiritual Nurturer are to encourage and promote fellowship among members of the Presbytery Women, lead opening and closing devotion for gatherings, and acknowledge birthdays, illness, death, or other occasions with appropriate cards, phone calls, or other forms of communication.

I was honored to be elected to the role of Spiritual Nurturer for the Presbyterian Woman Coordinating team for the Shenandoah Presbytery and will serve through 2024. In this role, I look forward to helping individuals find a safe place to share stories, life experiences and to deepen their relationship with God.



Paula F. Osborne is an Associate Spiritual Director and Associate Ministry Director affiliated with WVIS. Berkeley Springs, WV.

Reflections and Happenings

Be Still and Know

Be Still and Know is the title of a collection of reflections and prayers to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the West Virginia Institute for Spirituality (WVIS).

“Be Still and know that I am God!” is the entire verse taken from Psalm 46:10 from which this title was adapted. This verse was translated and published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. It also appears on the WVIS website.

The authors who contribute one-page reflections for this publication are from all walks of life, both locally and nationally. Each author’s reflection will be a prayerful reaction to a specific verse in Psalm 46 and will serve as a guide for “contemplative silence into action,” which forms the cornerstone for some of the many programs offered by WVIS.

WVIS is an interfaith, four seasons retreat house located on Virginia Street near the West Virginia State Capitol Building in Charleston, West Virginia.



WVIS Reflections and
Prayer Ministry,
Co-editors Bob Harrison
and Susie Pace



***A Well-Watered Garden. In-person Retreat
Durham, North Carolina (September 8 - 10)***

Out of the Mouths of a Thousand Birds

Keeping with our theme of "Listening," Meredith Witten offers this poem by 14th-century Persian poet, Hafiz

*Listen—listen more carefully to what is around
you, right now.*

*In my world, there are the bells from the clanks
of the morning milk drums,*

*and a wagon wheel outside my window just hit
a bump which turned into an ecstatic chorus
of the Beloved's Name.*

*There is the Prayer Call, rising up like the sun
out of the mouths of a thousand birds.*

*There is an astonishing vastness of movement and life
emanating sound and light from my folded hands, and
my even quieter simple being and heart.*

*My dear, is it true that your mind is sometimes
like a battering ram, running all through the city
shouting so madly inside and out about the ten
thousand things that do not matter?*

*Hafiz, too, for many years beat his head in
youth and thought himself at a great distance,
far from and armistice with God.*

*But that is why this scarred old pilgrim has
become such a sweet rare vintage who weeps
and sings for you.*

*That is why Hafiz will forever in his verse play
his cymbal and call to you.*

*O listen—listen more carefully to what is inside
of you right now.*

*In my world, all that remains is the wondrous call
to dance and prayer rising up like a
thousand suns ... out of the mouth of a
single bird.*

Meredith Witten, WVIS Associate
Spiritual Director, Durham, NC



Leave a legacy that will help others by contributing to WVIS through The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation. You can donate online by going to The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation (tgkvf.org) and donate to the WVIS Endowment Fund or mail your donation to WVIS Fund, c/o The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation, P.O. Box 3041, Charleston WV 25331. Contact Michelle Foster, at 304-346-3634 for more information.

WVIS Wish List Items

WVIS receives many gifts on our "needs" list each month. Thank you in advance for your generosity. We currently have needs for:

1. Laundry detergent and dryer sheets
2. Dinner napkins and other paper products
3. Copy paper and/or Specialty Paper
4. Waffle/Pancake mix and syrup
5. Monetary donations for Recovery Program directees
6. Freezable main dishes and desserts for 8 people
7. Monetary donations for electric bill
8. Kitchen towels and sponges
9. Monetary donations for lawn care, chapel carpet replacement, Little Flower room carpet replacement
10. AAA batteries

Most of these items are available on Amazon and can be shipped directly to WVIS.

Local Volunteers Needed for on-site work on Mondays

Do you have an area of expertise that might benefit WVIS? We would love to have you volunteer with us. Contact Sister Carole Riley at wwiscr@aol.com

Creation Cares...

Little things you can do to make a big difference!

Stop...and Ponder the Immensity of God's Love

We give thanks for God's abundant love as we wind down our summer activities and entertain thoughts of harvest and plenty. Below is a meditative video on St. Ignatius of Loyola's *Contemplation on the Love of God*. "This contemplation is the concluding meditation of the Spiritual Exercises (Spiritual Exercises, 231–237). It presents a God who loves without limit and who invites us to make a generous response of love in return."

<https://youtu.be/meYf3BIYGbw>

"Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others...the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us."

*-Pope Francis in Laudato Si:
On Care for Our Common Home #159*



*Creation Cares is offered by Donna Becher,
WVIS Associate Spiritual Director*

Visit our website at www.wvis.org

Earthly Accidents Make Us Responsible

Before Easter I was trying to keep up with all the demands of the season when I decided to take a quick walk along the river. During that walk, I passed an elderly woman with a walker. I greeted her and I wanted to keep walking, but she eagerly responded and proceeded to engage me in a conversation.

She told me how good it was to meet someone who wasn't on their phone or wearing headphones. People around her talked on devices but never talked to each other. She envied those people because they were connected to others; she was so isolated. We spoke briefly and I soon hurried away. But something didn't feel right and I thought of a line from Fr. Ron Rolheiser's book *The Passion and the Cross*: "*Pure earthly accidents often make us responsible for what is divine, and they conscript us to our real work – helping Simon of Cyrene carry the cross of Jesus.*"

I walked back and again encountered the woman. I spent some time chatting and listening to her story. It was then, I made a commitment to take my walks so I could assist her in carrying the cross of her isolation through compassionate conversation.

*Doreen Bloos is a WVIS
Spiritual Director Intern, from
St. Albert, Alberta, Canada.*



In a Time to Remember

How would I describe my experience of the 19th Annotation retreat? I'd say "remembering." Not a nostalgic remembering, but remembering when you are posed to forget and it's important to remember. Remembering that pulls all the memories, moments, values, and truths into the present and shores you up, roots you in, and moves you forward. Like a couple remembering together how they fell in love, what they learned from each other, what they've been through and shared – the good, the joyful, as well as the challenging even crushing times.

This kind of remembering is what the 19th Annotation retreat offered me. A remembering together with God our love story that shores me up, roots me in, and deepens my faithfulness to this first enduring love of my life that empowers me to love others in the same way.

*Cindy Boland is an Associate Spiritual
Director Intern, Aliquippa, PA*



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