

November 2017  
Volume 29  
Number 11



# THE MARK

A Publication of The Church of Conscious Harmony ❖ A Contemplative Christian Community



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# EXPERIENCING GOD DEEPER THAN WORDS

BY TIM COOK

As I entered our sanctuary a few weeks ago, I felt enveloped in the powerful experience of sacred silence, the deep communal experience of the presence of God that our community of practice has learned to embody, appreciate and bear. Looking back on the decades of effort that led up to that moment led me to reflect on how it came to be like it is now. It began with a graceful touch of God, in what now seems long ago and far away.

In 1968, I was living in Toronto, a pharmaceutical rep by day and a drunken member of a rugby club on nights and weekends. I was chronically depressed, hopeless and without direction. The Vietnam war, riots in our cities, assassinations, racial oppression and the nearly unbelievable reality that our government had lied to its people had shattered the last of my cub scout idealism. I felt no purpose to life and was without hope.

One day a fellow rep and I were having lunch and he gave me a book, *The Wisdom of Insecurity*, by Allen Watts. Later, while reading it, I had an astonishing experience. My mind and my heart opened like clouds

parting; and quite suddenly, I felt a shining ray of loving reality flood my entire being. To say that it was dramatic would be the understatement of all time. I felt different, I saw different, I was happy all over. I had never felt happy before, and the difference was as clear as night and day. I was suddenly, gloriously alive.

My friends in the rugby club weren't much interested in my sudden, new experience. So I had no one to share it with, but I loved seeing the ways in which my behavior changed. I became surprisingly friendly, spoke to strangers and picked up hitch hikers. The world looked beautiful and so did its people; but after about three weeks of this graceful intrusion of divine light into my inner darkness, it faded and eventually disappeared from my experience. But inside, I remained changed forever. My present experience at The Church of Conscious Harmony reveals that I would never, ever forget that ecstasy. I had received an indelible experiential imprint on my soul of how good a human being can feel and that imprint would never go away. It became all that I ever wanted.

My outer life pretty much reverted to the habitual round of dreading my job by day and partying by night. That went on for another seven years and when it all finally fell apart, my inner world felt more depressed, desperate, alone and debt-ridden than ever. The stories of my rescue from inner and outer darkness have been shared in other places, so I'll just cut to the chase. The liberating feeling came back. The experience of God came back. Joy, freedom and love came back and this time I was ready to follow and do whatever was necessary to sustain my end of God's offer. I began to live my days centered around the presence and action of God. I got up at 5 a.m., did 30 minutes of yoga, 30 minutes of meditation and an hour of study. Then I showered, ate breakfast and drove through Denver traffic chanting or doing my 14 daily affirmative prayers. The evenings were filled with more study, meditation and early to bed. The conscious experience of God's presence remained constant. It was so precious that it became all I was interested in. That experience of God was the whole of my life. I had known only too well what

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the “outer world” felt like and there was no way I was ever going to let go of this beautiful life in God. It was like oxygen to me. I needed it like I need each breath.

When Barbara and I met, she joined me in my urban monk lifestyle and we felt blessed to be able to share our love of the life of spirit and to grow deeper and deeper together in our experience of God. We continued this way of living as we served three churches, hoping in each one to ignite the fire of spirit and to share in a community of friends that had found the same love of daily practice that we had. We wanted to be part of a spiritual community. But there were no models for such a community and we were not yet mature enough in our own practice to sufficiently communicate that desire or its extraordinary value to our church friends. So we just had church, very successful church. Folks loved the ideas, our services were enthusiastically packed, and our friends loved coming to church once or twice a week. It was all very “feel-good,” but we were hungry to share more. We wanted a community of shared practice like we had experienced in ashrams and having weekly church couldn’t deliver it. So, we quit being ministers and joined the community of an Eastern

spiritual master where we learned mind-expanding truths and grew deeper in our love of the sacred silence. But eventually the cult-like ways became more than an overlook-able inconvenience and we left.

Then a friend gave me a book that completely changed my life. *The Path to No-Self* by Bernadette Roberts stimulated another astonishing, major shift in our consciousness. We began to understand Christianity in a new, profound way and our lives went deeper. Eventually Bernadette suggested, “Your friends are in Austin. You need to start something down there.” So we thought, “What the heck, let’s give it try.”

Prayerfully guided, I sat down in my office in Overland Park, Kansas and wrote out the mission statement for the kind of community in which we wished to practice. It still guides us today. Then we made a flier that we sent to many of the friends we had gone to church with in Austin. It offered to share a five-year experiment in Christian community and outlined the daily practices that members would commit to. Twenty-four people signed up to live those practices, which remain the stable foundation for our experientially God-centered community of urban monks in this monastery without

walls. We raised enough money to move us to Austin from Kansas and had about three months of rent on the house that would serve as our home and first church.

That’s when the miracles began to show us all that God, not human beings, were building our church. Those 24 friends began to grow spiritually as we practiced the Work of Inner Christianity together. Then came Fr. Thomas Keating and Centering Prayer, and we began to experience God as more than words and ideas, but as direct unmediated experience of the Divine Presence. More and more people caught on and began to practice. And here we are today on our beautiful campus and graceful sanctuary, stable in our deep core of love of God in silence and a community of friends in Christ, who understand and value daily practice.

It wasn’t too long before the unusual nature of our community was noticed and appreciated by spiritual teachers. Robin Amis, the director of the Praxis Research Institute and author of, *A Different Christianity*, commented, “For several years it has been clear to me that Austin’s Church of Conscious Harmony is one of the rare churches in the Western world that makes genuine efforts to recover and then live by the healing truths that gave early

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Christianity its strength but have since been generally forgotten.”

Brother Wayne Teasdale, who authored *The Mystic Heart* and *A Monk in the World* and who was a beloved friend and participant in our community life wrote, “The Church of Conscious Harmony is a community of seekers who take very seriously their spiritual life both individually and in common. This ecclesial community is a brilliant example, or model, of what every church should be. It is a light for the future. It is wise, holy, deeply conscious, in touch with the Divine Source, and so able to live harmoniously with everyone else. It deserves enthusiastic support and study by other communities.”

Since the time Robin and Brother Wayne made those

observations we have hosted several other pastors and leaders who came to see what God has done at our church. One of them who came about 10 years ago was a Protestant minister who was called to serve at a neighboring church. He caught on to the teachings immediately and began to practice the Work of Inner Christianity, Centering Prayer and daily practice. As our friendship grew, he commented one day, “I work over there but I go to church over here.” I felt immediately blessed to find a pastoral colleague and we began to spend more and deeper time together. Eventually our Board of Trustees and I clearly realized that Rev. Dr. Peter Haas was God’s next gift to this ongoing miracle, The Church of Conscious Harmony.

Peter’s lifetime of devotion to

the experiential practice of God’s presence, his spiritual leadership and deep knowledge of the Tradition are so exactly fitted to our community’s deeper growth that it’s clear that no human being is planning any of this. Our collective hunger for meaning and our devotion to practice and silence have created a field of attraction that draws ever-more good to our church.

Peter’s new book has been picked up by a major publisher and should be in print early next year. It was inspired by our church and Peter’s own experience in it. The title tells it all, *Contemplative Church, How Meditative Prayer & Monastic Practices Can Help Pastors and Congregations Flourish & Recover Forgotten Treasures Lost in the Five-Hundred Year Shadow of the Reformation*. The introduction to Peter’s book was written by Fr. Thomas Keating, the afterwards were written by Sr. Ilia Delio and Fr. Cyprian Consiglio, the Pryor of New Camaldoli Hermitage. The book invites pastors to come to Austin and see what God has done and is continuing to do in the Church of Conscious Harmony, a Contemplative Christian Community. We are a community of urban monks in our monastery without walls, founded firmly on our shared daily practice and our common hunger for more than words and ideas about God. We hunger together for experience and God feeds us. 

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## GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIAN LIFE, GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

Fr. Thomas Keating, in his seminal work  
*Open Mind, Open Heart,*

lists 42 principles underlying the Christian spiritual journey.

Fr. Keating asks that these principles be read according to the method of Lectio Divina.

One principle will appear in these pages each month.

### 40<sup>TH</sup> GUIDELINE

Human effort depends on grace even as it invites it. Whatever degree of divine union we may reach bears no proportion to our effort. It is the sheer gift of divine love.

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# IN GRATITUDE

BY BARBARA COOK

These past six months seem to have been on hyper-drive and going ever faster. On New Year's Day, we'll all be entering new octaves in our lives, both as individuals and as The Church of Conscious Harmony. The Church will enter its new octave in Christ through the ministry of our friend Peter Haas, who will be spiritually guiding and growing with you.

As the end of our octave with the Church is approaching, Tim and I have been flooded with gratitude for what our search for a deeper relationship with God has yielded. We initially wondered ... were there others that longed for transformation in Christ? Were there Christians who wanted to make God the center of their lives and not just a Sunday visit? What would that look like? That's how our monastery without walls began to form. We wanted to be with others who would make daily spiritual practice and prayer their life choice, as we had been doing for over 10 years. So we said yes and decided to try a five year experiment in Christian community. Bit-by-bit we met other hungry souls who were willing to say yes with us, to jump into God, in faith. Together, we received more Grace than we could have ever imagined. We are so grateful!

Daily meditation was one of our basic practices in the early days of

our community. Within the first six months, we miraculously discovered Fr. Thomas Keating and he came to teach us in our first Centering Prayer introduction. Even though I had a decade of daily meditation experience, I felt the difference right away. It was clear that this was prayerful relationship with God and it was very personal. We feel such gratitude for that gift and the life-long friendships we've had with Contemplative Outreach, Fr. Thomas, and many other beloved friends, world-wide, who are also traveling on the contemplative Christian path of transformation into Christ.

We are grateful for the rule of stability that our minister roles have put us under in holding the center for our community. In founding a community that was committed to the spiritual growth of each individual and to the growth of the community itself, Tim came up with this lovely prayer that sort of sums it up, "Thank you God for holding us together in your love while we grow." The whole process has always felt so right. Growth is, of course, a mystery that never looks like you think it will. We are grateful for our commitment to the community. It's been a fertile seedbed for our growth.

We are grateful too for the rule of obedience that holds us under a



## THE CHURCH of CONSCIOUS HARMONY

A CONTEMPLATIVE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

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higher order of laws. The Work of Inner Christianity teaches that we must willingly come under more laws so that we may be brought to live under fewer laws. What a blessing it's been to have the opportunity to live under the inner authority of a rule of life. The shared challenge and intention of that way of living empowers each of us to live not just for ourselves, but also for contributing to the ever-growing depth of the community. Being responsible for sharing in a greater good helps us stay focused.

How can we ever be grateful enough for the living Christian witness of Bernadette Roberts? She has shown us the way of no-self, the way that takes us fully into the right-now Christ. And how can we ever say our thanks to Fr. Thomas who opened us to the contemplative dimension of the Gospel, taught us the transformative practice of

Centering Prayer, inspired our participation in silent retreats and gifted us with his extraordinary example of humble self-giving? And most recently Sr. Ilia Delio, who enlarges our vision to see through all the dualistic boundaries in our consciousness. Her affirmation of our contemplative work helps us see that we're participating in the great evolutionary work of human development as we move toward the cosmic Christ Omega and are fed by the grace that is flowing here toward our transformation. We are grateful.

I will close with something our brother monk, Abbott Joseph Boyle at St. Benedict's Monastery, shared for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Contemplative Outreach. He said, "We are grateful for all that we've been given, and we say yes to what is to come." Let's enter deeper into the mystery together as we all enter into this new octave of our growth in Christ. ☸

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## THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY

The Work says our level of being attracts our life. ... An octave may end both in regard to external circumstances, to conditions of life, and also in connection with other people. ... However, in the Work there are octaves that never finish in regard to relationship. Temporary friends are one thing, but Work friends are a different thing. In this connection I must remind you of a saying in the Work that life divides, but the Work unites.

Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, page 1760. You're invited to attend the *Work of Inner Christianity* classes held Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. at CCH.

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## CCH BOOKSTORE

### Suggested Titles for November



*Living Time*  
by Maurice Nicoll



*A Thousand Mornings*  
Poems by Mary Oliver



*I Asked for Wonder*  
by Abraham Joshua Heschel



*The Little Book of Holy Gratitude*  
by Fr. Frederick Faber

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Bookstore and Library Hours  
Open Monday-Friday 9 am-4 pm  
Sunday 9:30-10 am & 11:30 am-noon



*I find joy in Your testimonies ... Glory to God forever!* Psalm 119:14

## ANNUAL AIM: COMMUNION

### THANKFULNESS FOR THE GIFT OF LIFE

BY ANNA VU-WALLACE

How it behooves Man to be glad  
since God *is* in Being.  
How it behooves Man to be glad  
since he *is* in Being.  
How it behooves Man to be glad  
for the Being of his neighbors.

This is an expression,  
or rather an explosion,  
of sheer joy because there is Being.  
It is a song to pure existence,  
an existence that we share  
with all that there is. ...

This joy permeates  
human consciousness and,  
in and through it,  
pervades the whole universe.

This joy is a dimension  
of the real before any thought about  
optimism or pessimism. ...

Joy is a fundamental  
religious category.  
It belongs to the Ultimate.

Raimon Panikkar,  
*The Rhythm of Being*

Just to be is a blessing.  
Just to live is holy.

Abraham Joshua Heschel,  
*I Asked for Wonder*

“There are no other options. You have to have surgery.” These words have been uttered by me to the thousands of patients I have served over the last two and half decades. This time, I was the recipient of these words. Fear and anxiety for the future overcame me. What does this mean? How long can I get off work? What will my recovery look like? Cancer? What if it is not contained? Awakened by shock, I was suddenly fully conscious of all those I had served. I remembered their tears and expressions of fear. My initial reaction was to bargain with my physician. With my feet fully on the ground and letting go of thoughts, still in a thin patient gown, I sat in the examining room and felt into my emotions. Surprisingly, I didn’t just feel into my own but those of

my patients. I knew this was the start of something wonderful. It was an opportunity of a lifetime – to truly experience understanding and compassion for those I serve, and to welcome and consent to God’s presence in this journey.

Afflicted with certain knowledge of medicine, I knew what the path of treatment looked like from a physician’s point of view, but not as a patient. I went for a pre-operative evaluation two days before my surgery. Dressed in surgical scrubs and ready to go to work after my evaluation, I found the waiting room packed full of people. As the first hour rolled by, I was getting more impatient. Do they not know who I am? I have been practicing here for 15 years! I have a hospital full of people to see today! Indignant, I checked in at the front desk only to be told,

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“Doctor, we are moving as fast as we can.” Frustrated, I sat back down. This time, I started to notice the others in the waiting room. There was an elderly man across from me whose left leg was unable to bend. Sitting down for him was difficult. He moved with great pain with a walker. A fellow patient asked him how long he had been waiting. He replied with a smile, “As long as it takes.” To my right, there was a young woman who had no hair and tattoo markings for radiation treatment on her scalp. Pale and fragile, she leaned her head on her mother, vomit bag in hand. As I scanned the room, my impatience faded. Within the second hour of waiting, my number was called. Why patients are called by numbers?

On the day of my surgery, I checked in; this time, I was called early. Greeted by smiles of nurses who worked with me on a daily basis, I felt comfortable initially. The room was cold as I undressed and put on a thin hospital gown. I was given warm blankets to wrap around me. I experienced more blood tests, cold intravenous fluids started flowing into me, more waiting. On the gurney, I felt completely vulnerable. Going to the bathroom down the hall with an IV pole attached was difficult, especially trying to keep the gown from exposing my

bare back, mooning all those who walked by. A fellow physician, an anesthesiologist, came to meet me, discussing all the potential complications including death. I was wheeled towards the operating room. With a brief breath in, I felt fear and remembered my patients’ fears. I am no longer in control of anything. An oxygen mask was placed over my face. Taking a deep breath, I let go. Fear left. Suddenly, I was flying in the clouds. All around me were beautiful white clouds, peaceful and joyful.

As quickly as I was in the clouds, I fell back into my body, into the familiarity of the recovery room. There were voices around me and hands to position me onto a hospital bed from the gurney. A wave of pain came over me. As the pain subsided, waves of nausea hit. I felt my body, all of me. As a physician, I had complete control of that recovery room. As the patient now, I was utterly helpless. Nothing was in my control, not even my body.

In my room, hooked to an IV pole and a urine catheter, I could not move on my own. The catheter, I was told, had to be in place for 24 hours because in rebuilding the pelvic floor, there was a chance that I may not be able to urinate on my own. Exhausted from surgery and blood loss, my recovery in the hospital was anything but

restful. I was interrupted from sleep every two hours for blood pressure checks, wound dressing checks, pain assessments and blood draws. Do blood tests really need to be drawn at 4 a.m.? I knew why—when physicians, like me, want results by the time they see patients. It was for our convenience, not the patients. Note to self: Order blood tests at 9 a.m. After determining rest and recovery could not be obtained in the hospital, I asked to be discharged early.

As a physician, once I discharge a patient I had always assumed all was well. As a patient, once home, my recovery had just begun. Pain escalated with the slightest of movement. My appetite remained poor with anticipation of lingering nausea. Every moment of being awake appeared to be a struggle. Walking was difficult due to pain and vertigo. At the height of my discomfort, I attempted to get up to get a cup of coffee. Suddenly, vertigo caused a fall. I lay on the floor of my kitchen and started to mimic a backstroke to get to the couch. Realizing how ridiculous I must look, I started to laugh. Dr. David Hawkins says in *Letting Go: The Pathway of Surrender*, “A thought is a ‘thing.’ It has energy and form. The mind with its thoughts and feelings controls the body; therefore, to heal the body, thoughts and feelings need to be

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changed. What is held in mind tends to express itself through the body. The body is not the real self ... there is a self-healing power *within* that is activated by continual surrender.” Lying on the floor, I surrendered the fight against my pain and vertigo. I felt into the body’s experience, allowing all the symptoms to surface. Quietly, I let go. I was just beginning to understand that I am not a human being having a spiritual experience. I am a spiritual being having a human experience.

As I continued to heal, I was able to understand and externally consider for those I serve on a much deeper and intimate level. What I did not expect was the unraveling of who I am to reveal what I am.

Confined at home brought on significant realization that was previously unobserved. Before surgery, my daily life was busy and highly interactive. There was rarely a free moment other than my daily escape to the chapel for Centering Prayer. In confinement, I realized how much these interactions influenced me and reinforced a false sense of self—especially significant identification with the role of a physician. In solitude, the buffers unraveled, exposing the lies.

The personality was not necessary in solitude. At first, I felt lost and empty. Who am I? In this solitude, the question of “Who am

I?” quietly transformed into “What am I?” as I let go.

During this time of obligatory physical confinement, I sat in silence observing the fluttering of butterflies, wasps and dragonflies drinking from the pool, the bright green foliage that appeared on the trees, the feel of the spring breeze on my face. The most excitement I had was rescuing a caterpillar, fallen from the large oak tree onto the hot deck. I placed him onto the nearby Hibiscus tree where he stayed with me throughout my confinement. I watched his movement and marveled at the patterns on his back. I breathed in the beauty of my surroundings on my recliner. I fell in love with the simplicity of this life that could only be experienced at this pace. Emptiness was replaced by serene joy. I felt into I am. I experienced a *knowing* that is difficult to describe.

“No one knows the true nature of self as long as he is living it, or is it. The true nature of self can be disclosed only when it falls away and becomes known in retrospect, by its absence or what was. As it turns out, self is first and foremost an unconscious experience and only secondarily a conscious experience. ... With the falling away of self, it becomes possible to get an overview of this passage along with its major milestones.” Bernadette Roberts, *What Is Self*.

I have been given this very

human experience, to let go, to feel into others, to experience God in the most amazing ordinariness of this life. Letting go allowed the awareness of Christ, the Wholeness that binds us all. Bernadette Roberts’ words brought wisdom and comfort. She would be one of my teachers accompanying me on this journey, as would David Hawkins and Ilia Delio and so many others. Words best to conclude would be theirs.

“The life of the world is your life, and your life belongs to the whole of life. Stop trying to preserve yourself; lose yourself in something more than yourself because you have the power to christify life, to help unify it, to raise it to a new level of ultrahumanity. Live to the point of tears and don’t be saddened by sin, misunderstanding, weakness, and hate. ... Catholicity is the word that best describes nature’s craving for unity, the intrinsic capacity of being for wholeness.” Ilia Delio, *Making All Things New*

“So, life events are opportunities to grow, expand, experience and develop. In some cases, it seems in retrospect that there was actually this unconscious purpose behind the event, as though our unconscious knew that something important had to be learned and, painful as it was, it was the only way it could be brought into experience.” David Hawkins, *Letting Go: The Pathway of Surrender* 

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# WELCOME PETER HAAS

## NEW MINISTER OF THE CHURCH OF CONSCIOUS HARMONY

BY THE CCH BOARD OF TRUSTEES

In early 2014, Tim and Barbara announced that they would be retiring in January 2018. Later that year, the Board spent several months creating a role description for the new Minister that contained three parts: pastoral responsibilities, administrative responsibilities and the Being attributes for a new minister. We knew the first two would be relatively straightforward to fulfill, and the last would be more difficult.

Fast forward several years, and the Holy Spirit has delivered Peter Traben Haas to us as the fulfillment of our wish and prayers. Rather than enumerating Peter's credentials, we want to share the Being attributes of the role description as they affirm who Peter is *to us*. After numerous individual interviews and a joint session with Peter and the Board, we voted unanimously to invite Peter to be our new minister for the next phase of our evolution. With that, the Board extends a warm and heart-filled welcome to Peter. Opportunities for the community to do likewise will be announced soon.

### BEING ATTRIBUTES OF THE NEW MINISTER OF CCH

1. Minister supports the Purposes of The Church of Conscious Harmony (CCH) as stated in the bylaws of the Church.

2. Minister supports the Beliefs of the Church(see next page)

3. Daily spiritual practice is integral to the transformational process. As such, the Minister leads by example, following key elements of the rule of life that members of The Tenth Man School agree to, namely:

Twice daily Centering Prayer practice

Daily reading of Scripture

Daily reading of the Work of Inner Christianity

Tithing

4. One of the unique attributes of CCH is that it is a community of practice. We believe that our relationship with God permeates all aspects of our life, and that all of life is fodder for the transformational process. Because daily spiritual practice is integral to this transformational process, this is a message and theme that the Minister returns to again and again. CCH is not

a Sunday-only community, but makes demands on its members to live an integrated life in Christ.

5. Minister attends a 10-day retreat (as a retreatant) annually, at a minimum.

6. Minister has a working knowledge of the teachings and practices of the contemplative Christian tradition, as presented by Fr. Thomas Keating and others.

7. Minister has a history of engagement with a meditation practice.

8. Minister has familiarity (or becomes familiar) with the teachings and practices of the esoteric Christian Fourth Way known as The Work of Inner Christianity, as presented by Maurice Nicoll, G. I. Gurdjieff and others.

9. A charism of CCH is that it is a teaching church. People are drawn to CCH for the teaching and community support required to grow on the spiritual journey. Thus, the Minister has a personal attraction to learning and synthesis, and is comfortable in a teaching / leading / inquiring role focused on personal transformation (rather than on issues of morality, dogma, etc.).

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## IMPORTANT TRANSITION DATES

October 22 – Online ticketing for succession celebration

November 1 – Peter Haas begins as interim minister

November 19 – Special community meeting after the Sunday service:  
Q&A with Tim, Barbara, Peter, Michael & Donald

January 6 – Succession celebration 6-10pm at One World Theater (advance ticketing required - limited number of tickets available - see website)

January 7 – Peter assumes role of Minister from Tim during 10 a.m. service

### BELIEFS OF THE CHURCH

-God is all in all. God is eternally revealing as the Trinity – Transcendent Father, Omnipresent Son and Immanent Holy Spirit active within us as the Divine Indwelling.

-The Omnipresent incarnated as Christ, took flesh in Mary and became the historical man Jesus. Although manifested at a moment in history, Christ remains eternally present in every human being – past, present and to come. We are all one in the Body of Christ.

-We are created in the image and likeness of God. Our basic nature is absolute good.

-Humanity is asleep to its divine essence and called to awaken.

-Daily spiritual practice, self-knowledge and surrender to God form a path of access for those who wish to awaken.

-Transformation into Christ, unity with the Living God and participation in the evolution of all creation is possible in this life. Indeed, it is the aim and purpose of every human life.

-Transformation is only possible

through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.

-We open ourselves to transforming grace through our consent in Centering Prayer, the Eucharist, the Word and spiritual community.

-The Eucharist is an ongoing manifestation of Christ. In the Eucharist, we are united in Christ, which we believe is fully present under the symbols of bread and wine. Through Christ, we are united in God with the whole of creation.

-The Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Christ Jesus reveal forever our eternal life. In Christ, death has been overcome.

-The Ascension is Christ's cosmic return to the center of all creation. The mystery of this Presence permeates all creation. Even material creation has become divine.

-God is Love. Love is eternally present. We are called to participate in the dynamism of this love, for God, for one another and for all creation.

-Love bears all.

-Love never fails. ☉

## NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Visit [consciousharmony.org](http://consciousharmony.org)  
for a complete listing of events

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Half-Day Centering Prayer Retreat  
Nov 11 12:30-5 pm  
\$15 Bring a brown bag lunch.  
No need to pre-register.

Thanksgiving Potluck  
Nov 23 Doors open at noon. Dinner is served at 2pm. Bring your own place setting: plate, silverware, water/wine glass. Sign up on 11/5 on the kitchen door; list the dish(es) you are bringing and whether you can help set-up or clean-up.

### MONTHLY

1st Sundays  
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

Gurdjieff Music  
Nov 21 7:30-8:30 pm

### WEEKLY

Sundays  
Lectio Divina 8-9 am  
Worship Service 10-11:30 am  
Youth Program 10-11:30 am  
Fellowship 11:30 am

Wednesdays  
Prayer Circle 10:15-11 am  
Contemplative Lunch noon-1 pm  
Contemplative Communion Service 6-7 pm  
Yoga 7:30 pm-8:30 pm \$10

Thursdays 7:30-9 pm  
Work of Inner Christianity Class

Fridays 7:30-8:45 pm  
Devotional Service

### DAILY

Mondays-Fridays 7-7:35 am  
Centering Prayer Service in Theosis Chapel

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Recordings of services are available  
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## THE GIFT OF LIFE

None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself.  
For if we live, we live for the Lord,  
And if we die, we die for the Lord;  
so, then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Romans 14:7-8

Identifying with something prevents us  
from becoming what God is, which is everything.  
In letting go of all our over-identifications,  
we start to realize who we really are –  
manifestations of the Eternal Word of God or of Christ.  
As Paul puts it, 'I live now not I, but Christ lives in me.'  
In other words, who I really am is becoming  
more and more the movement of the Spirit  
within me – not the *I am* of myself,  
but the great *I Am* of God.

Thomas Keating, *Heartfulness:  
Transformation in Christ*

