



spirit vibes

insights, events
and inspiration
for the spiritual
journey

JAN
2024

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PATHWAYS

A CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

What are Spiritual Practices?

Adapted from an article by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat

Spiritual practices have always been at the heart and soul of the world's religions and today's less organized spirituality movements. They help us discover our deepest values, address our longing to connect with the divine, and propel us on the journey to wholeness.

Spiritual practices help deepen our relationships with the sacred and the world around us. Practices help us connect to God or the divine. They enable us to become actively engaged with our inner or "true" self — the depth of our being. They expand the breadth of our experiences, encouraging us to relate to other people and the whole creation.

"We are what we practice," Jewish writer Avram Davis observed. "If we become angry a lot, then essentially we are practicing anger. And we get quite good at it. Conversely, if we practice being joyful, then a joyful person is what we become." We practice all kinds of things all the time, but the decision to do spiritual practices is intentional. These activities have meaning and purpose, and they influence how we live our lives.

Practices are usually very concrete and practical. Sometimes before we can act, however, we may need to clarify our values and beliefs. Asking and living with questions is a kind of practice. Most practices can easily be done in daily life.

Spiritual practices don't need to be hard. They reward presence, not effort. Don't expect to overcome all weaknesses and fix all problems. Indeed, difficulties are to be expected and can be used as aids on your journey.

Practice is a process which can change over time. You may make a commitment to do a specific activity for years or you may get what you need by practicing it for a season.

Additionally, practices do not have to be complicated. Consider how many of the ritual exercises of the world's religions are simple: lighting a candle, eating a piece of bread, bowing. Naming, remembering, watching, identifying, imagining, questioning — these are honored elements of the spiritual life. The best practices for you will arise naturally out of your ordinary activities as you reframe and redirect them toward new depth and breadth.

Spiritual practices are specific activities (done) to deepen your relationships with the sacred and the world around you.

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- Spiritual Practices
- Hymn Workshop
- Card Making (Easter)
- Enneagram

- Healing Services
- Creation Care/Earth Awareness
- Praying for the world

- Pet Blessing
- Journeying Workshop
- Longest Night/Blue Christmas

2024 **PATHWAYS**
A CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL
seekthepath.org

Refrigerator Magnets: 2024 Style

Back by popular demand, PATHWAYS 2024 magnets are here and ready to adorn your fridge. It's an easy way to keep track of the available offerings this year — truly something for all ages. Did we mention that the 2024 schedule includes even more offerings than last year? Pick up your magnet at the next PATHWAYS event, or stop in to Christ Lutheran Church and get one while they last.

Spiritual Practices

(aka "First Thursdays")

The roots of The Tree of Ancient Spiritual Practices symbolize the two intentions that are the foundation of all contemplative practices: cultivating awareness and developing a stronger connection to God.

The branches represent different groupings of practices. For example, Stillness Practices focus on quieting the mind and body in order to develop calmness and focus.

Creative practices come in many different forms (i.e. prayers, visualizations, chanting) but share the common intent of generating thoughts and feelings of devotion and compassion, rather than calming and quieting the mind.

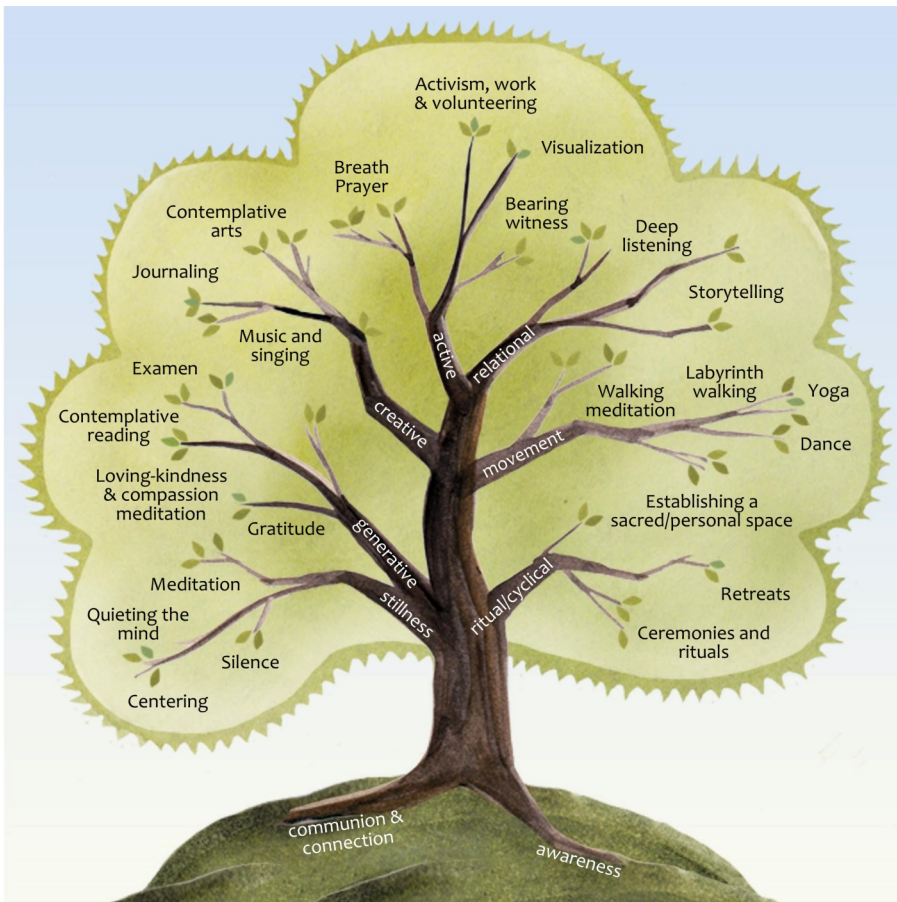
As Brian McLaren writes in his book, *Finding Our Way Again*:

"Spiritual practices can help reshape us for a more intentional, attentive and perceptive way of living. Spiritual practices are ways of becoming awake and staying awake to God."

Practices are for those who feel the need for change, growth, development, and learning. They develop discipleship.

The "ancient" way is about joining God in the spending of every day.

Join us on the first Thursday of the month at 10 am as PATHWAYS introduces us to many of these ancient spiritual practices. We will "rediscover" our faith as a way of life, not simply a belief system.



Personal Reflections



Testimonies received from recent PATHWAYS attendees:

Healing Through Ink (November 2023)

"I enjoyed the workshop *Healing Through Ink* because ink tells a story and opens conversations between people. Usually they are life changing events and can be therapeutic when the event is traumatic."

– Lori Murphy, CLC member



Chanting Workshop (December 2023)

"I never really knew anything about chanting before, but it was nothing like I imagined it would be. I didn't realize it was more like singing and that you learned a lot about musical notes in chanting. I guess I pictured it to be like what the monks do when you see it in a movie. It was beautiful!"

– Maureen Trommels



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upcoming offerings

FEB 3: HYMN WORKSHOP

Do you know some of the stories behind the creation of hymns? Many were composed out of great emotion, often sadness or despair. Yet these hymns speak of great hope. Join PATHWAYS and Pastor Jaci McNeal for a Hymn Workshop on Saturday, February 3 from 9:30 am to 12 pm and learn about the history of several hymns. Rev. Jaci will bring her guitar and sing some of these old favorites. There will even be a sing-a-long!

\$15 registration fee. Sign up at seekthepath.org.

Since 2006, Pastor McNeal has served as lead pastor at Faith Wesleyan Church, Rockford, IL.



FEB 17: MAKING EASTER CARDS

Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent, falls on February 14 this year, leading to Easter Sunday on March 31. To help prepare for this special season, CLC's Judith Loudin will lead our second card making workshop from 10 am to 12 pm. Attendees will create their own beautiful, handmade cards to take home. All supplies will be provided, and no art talent is needed. Seats are limited to the first 15 registrants.

\$15 registration fee to help cover materials. Register at seekthepath.org. Grab a friend for a fun Saturday morning!

ENNEAGRAM

a two-part workshop

MAR 9 & MAY 4

Healthy communication is at the heart of every strong relationship. Utilizing the enneagram, we will access tools and insights to help us better understand our own personality tendencies and those of others in order to improve our communication methods.

Michelle Oberwise Lacock leads this two-part workshop. Part 1 consists of a Zoom gathering on March 9 from 10-11:30 am. Part 2 is an in-person event at CLC on May 4 from 9 am-3 pm. \$50 registration fee covers both sessions.

Watch for more details soon and registration at seekthepath.org.



Baptismal Cards

One CLC ministry you don't often hear about is the sending of baptismal cards. Cards are sent as annual reminders of our baptism when we were marked with the cross and sealed by the Spirit, to celebrate that we are children of God.

Would you like to be a part of this ministry? All materials are provided. Please contact Deacon Laura Gorton at laura@makingchristknown.org, or call the church office to learn more.



2023 Snapshot

- PATHWAYS facilitated 24 offerings, including four offsite
- 332 people journeyed with us
- 33% of participants were outside the Christ Lutheran congregation (compared to 16% in 2022)

PATHWAYS


A CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

a ministry of Christ Lutheran Church



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 on Facebook, search:
Pathways: A Center for Spiritual Renewal

PATHWAYS TEAM

Karen Glavin, Chair
Pastor Carol Baumgartner, Bill Blackburn, Lee Blackburn,
Anna Borchers, Jenny Campbell, Kris Campbell,
Deacon Laura Gorton, Jan Hedrick

Spirit Vibes is a quarterly newsletter designed to inform, inspire, and publicize the ways in which **PATHWAYS: A Center for Spiritual Renewal** is working to deepen relationships with humanity, creation, and the Divine. We hope you find this tool helpful in your spiritual walk; send your feedback or suggestions to pathways@makingChristknown.org. Let's journey!

2024 schedule:



Spiritual Practices

JAN 4 / FEB 1 / MAR 7 / APR 4 / MAY 2 / JUN 6 / JUL 11 / AUG 1 / SEP 5 / OCT 3 / NOV 7 / DEC 5
(first Thursday of every month)



Hymn Workshop

FEBRUARY 3



Workshop: Making Easter Cards

FEBRUARY 17



Enneagram Workshop

two part offering
MARCH 9 & MAY 4



Healing Service

MARCH 17



Creation Centered Awareness

APRIL 27 & SEPTEMBER 21
locations TBA



Praying for the World

JUNE 29

Keeling-Puri Peace Plaza
Rockford, IL



Pet Blessing

OCTOBER 6



Drumming Workshop

NOVEMBER 9



Longest Night

DECEMBER 21

All events will be held at Christ Lutheran Church (Belvidere, IL) unless otherwise noted. Visit seekthepath.org for more details.