

CENTERING PRAYER AT ST. ANDREW'S

Perhaps you've wondered about the Centering Prayer group that meets in the sanctuary on Tuesdays. "What do they *do*?" you may ask yourself. For centuries in the early Christian church, contemplative prayer was not surrounded by mystery and was not thought of as an exclusive practice. Although you may not think that you have any experience with it, you are probably mistaken. If you have ever fallen silent (externally and internally!) at the sight of something beautiful, or felt the same sense of peace and "oneness" when playing music or washing the dishes, you have had a brief taste of contemplative prayer.

If you are interested in giving Centering Prayer a try, please consider coming on Tuesday. You can come a few minutes early (we start right at 11:00) and you will be given the very simple prayer guidelines. We sit in silence for two twenty-minute periods, with a brief walking meditation in between. For the last thirty minutes we read and discuss Cynthia Bourgeault's book, "Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening" (available on Kindle).

This is how Centering Prayer is described on the Contemplative Outreach website:

"Centering Prayer is a receptive, deep method of silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer, prayer in which we experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship.

Centering Prayer is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer. Rather, it adds depth of meaning to all prayer and facilitates the movement from more active modes of prayer — verbal, mental or affective prayer — into a receptive prayer of resting in God. Centering Prayer emphasizes prayer as a personal relationship with God and as a movement beyond conversation with Christ to communion with Him.

The source of Centering Prayer, as in all methods leading to contemplative prayer, is the Indwelling Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The focus of Centering Prayer is the deepening of our relationship with the living Christ. The effects of Centering Prayer are ecclesial, as the prayer tends to build communities of faith and bond the members together in mutual friendship and love."

If you have any questions please contact Erin Knox at eknox@gmail.com.