

LED BY THE SPIRIT

JULY 2009 TO JUNE 2010



SHALEM
INSTITUTE FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

THIS ISSUE

This special Shalem issue was created to combine our traditional annual report with contemplative articles, photos and poetry—much like what was offered in our printed newsletter.

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LED BY THE SPIRIT

Leah Rampy

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.” —Isaiah 43:19

This passage from Isaiah is alive for me as I think about Shalem. It seems so very clear that the Spirit is breathing into the work of Shalem, fanning a longing in individual hearts for living prayerfully, moment-by-moment with God. And because the Spirit desires more than we can dream, we have been led on an amazing journey that is both beyond our imagination and our efforts.

As we look back to where we were 18 months ago, we might be forgiven for wondering how a full-time staff far fewer than before might do anything more than “hold the line.” It seemed that it might be difficult to continue all of our programmatic offerings and to expand to new locations and offer new programs. And yet—the board and staff also were given a vision of partnerships. Although it wasn’t clear what kind of partnerships, nor with whom, there was something about partnerships that clearly beckoned.

With the wisdom of hindsight, we see now how new partnerships have emerged to support contemplative living and leadership and to expand the reach of Shalem. These partnerships—some new and some expanding—are exciting and rich with possibility.

In Seoul, South Korea, an ecumenical group of clergy and lay leaders have been participating in Shalem programs in the United States and in Seoul and continue to bring contemplative grounding to their communities in South Korea. Throughout the U.S. and



in South Africa, nine teams of associate faculty have led Shalem’s Personal Spiritual Deepening Program in their communities. We are beginning our fifth School of Prayer in partnership with the Washington National Cathedral and our first in partnership with Howard University’s Rankin Chapel. And at the request of St. Rose of Lima Parish, we’ve offered a series on spiritual friendship. Also, we have just announced a new partnership with Lancaster Theological Seminary (LTS) to launch a new Master of Divinity program with a specialization in spiritual direction whereby participants will take coursework at LTS and also be part of Shalem’s long-established Spiritual Guidance Program.

We are excited by these possibilities. Because of these partnerships, programs that offer contemplative prayer and practices have emerged in new communities and reached new populations while offering rich learning for Shalem. And we notice a common theme: we did not originate these partnerships; indeed we didn’t even imagine them! Behold, the Spirit is doing a new thing!

This experience with partnerships has led us to notice some things about how the Spirit has worked with us. First, it’s been helpful that we began

by opening to where the Spirit might be inviting. Because we sensed that partnerships were a part of our call, we were more open to them when they emerged. Without that initial discernment process, we might have been slower to embrace partnerships when they came knocking at our door. Opening to what God might want to co-create, even when details were far from clear, has been a rich blessing.

Second, we have continued to set an intention to embrace our charism of radical trust. There were no clear blueprints for many of these partnerships. Always with the possibility for wonderful things came a potential “downside.” Sometimes we felt we were skating on thin ice. We chose to invite “experiments,” and when things didn’t work as we’d hoped, we counted it as important to our learning.

Third, and undergirding it all, we are very clear who is leading Shalem. Yes, we have a dedicated and knowledgeable board. Our staff is amazing and hard working. And some of us even have a role that seems to suggest leadership. We work well together and are a committed team. Yet individually and collectively, we are not the leaders of Shalem. The Spirit is the true leader of Shalem. No carefully crafted strategic plan, no hard working team, no well-honed operation could have created what the Spirit enabled during this past year.

We are humbled by and deeply grateful for being entrusted with this work. And we wait with open hearts, praying for radical trust, desiring spiritual discernment in all things, unable to fully imagine where the Spirit will be doing new things, making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland

Leah is Shalem’s Executive Director.

GOD WITH US

David Emery

Concretely and realistically, the life of prayer has been beckoning to me for a long time. A prayerful life is something I have always sought but didn't have the vocabulary or the deep foundation to allow. From growing up with a fundamentalist mother, in a Presbyterian Church, in a traditional Western context, to graduating from the Christian Academy in Japan, attending a bible institute and graduating from San Francisco Theological Seminary and Drew Theological School, the calculating, intellectual mind was well informed.

The contemplative life is different from what I have been schooled and raised to believe is so. The open, spacious, thankful heart that resides in all spaces of the mind and body gives a light yet deep, appreciative grounding to a mundane, common—now extraordinary—existence.

Shalem's program and staff offered a key to opening a real transformational way of seeing Christ in my soul. I remember first meeting them, and having to sit and listen for one of the very first presentations to an older gentleman sharing words of wisdom was far from appealing to me. Then

Jerry May opened his mouth, and the image of the cute older man charming the group melted away.

The words were simply this: God is with us completely and fully at all times, in all ways, in all places, and always, in all ways. I believe the way he so simply stated it was that we always have enough of God with/in us.

As if this weren't enough, he followed this profound truth with a simple exercise. He instructed each of us to face one other person and then in the silence be present with each other. He encouraged us to close our eyes and silently realize the presence of God, the other person and us for a few minutes. Then he instructed us to open our eyes and converse with the person with whom we were paired. What he shared and what became so powerful in this exercise weren't the words or the conversation that ensued but the realization that the words were insignificant yet part of us together. It didn't matter what we said or what we did at this point as long as we kept the realization, the openness, to God's presence with us as we shared with someone else about anything and in any way.



INTO THE WILDERNESS

by Trish Stefanik

I live in the mountain wilderness of West Virginia. I also love to spend time in the high desert of New Mexico. Both places of natural wonder open me to God. Confronted with the magnificence and starkness of the

landscape and the infinite variety of creation, I am compelled to stop, be still, listen, and see. In the face of Nature's simple presence anything I have in mind to say or do becomes insignificant and ineffectual. God has



This *Aha* realization from that first residency has continued with me: when we speak of God being with us, it is a literal, totally complete truth. Nothing more than simply this—God's presence is always "at hand."

God is fully, completely, totally here, whether I feel it, believe it, sense it, see it, or need it to be. God just is.

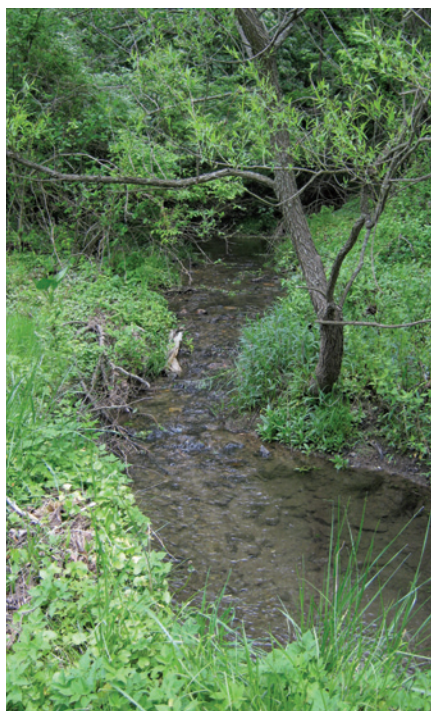
This is a clergy person's dream come true. This is a follower of God's dream come true. This is a spiritual pilgrim's wandering search fulfilled.

David is a graduate of Shalem's Clergy Spiritual Life and Leadership Program.

me where God wants me: filled with awe and gratitude. Little known to me in the moment, I am being energized with the love of God to infuse all my experiences in life. I am reinvigorated in the call to be faithful and true.

It is on the mountain and in the desert where I am inclined for Sabbath-keeping. It is there that I am reminded again and again of who I am at my core and my humble, precious place in God's world. There is not a lot of baggage any of us can take on a trek up a mountain or across the desert. It will eventually become too heavy or cumbersome, and we must leave it behind – the stuff of a lifetime of accumulation, external and internal. Mountain and desert experiences call us to lay bare any and all expectations and claims. We are called simply to receive God's grace. I have discovered that God's grace is revealed in many forms in the wild, whether they are moments of amazing beauty or incidents of sheer terror.

Beauty is all around me. It is in tiny wildflowers and towering trees, an intriguing diversity displayed in a vast spectrum of color, shape, pattern, and texture. The four seasons lend even



more splendor and mystery to reality with their particular expression in life's cycle. All of my senses are engaged as I encounter bloom and fruit, rock and clay, still and running water, light and shadow at play, clouds morphing into whatever I can imagine, seedlings stretching down into the dirt and up toward the sun, fanciful mushrooms and ferns and other living things growing where I thought it impossible, and leaf and limb swaying with the wind.

Then there is the incredible array of creatures from insect to bird to mammal and other kind. My ears perk up at the call of a cricket, tree frog, or coyote. My eyes delight in the graceful spring of a white-tailed deer. My heart flutters as a striking black and white magpie whirls in flight. I watch my step and crane my neck for all that moves underfoot, overhead, and around the bend.

All of my experiences with Nature have not been pleasant. There are the bug bites and stings, sunburn and rashes, thorns and thistles, stumbles on loosened rock, and seeing up close what I would rather not see, a snake, for instance. The most traumatic encounter I have had was with a rabid fox. I survived the attack and the shock, but the occurrence begs the question, Where was God in that? I took the opportunity later to imagine wrestling like Jacob with an angel to learn to trust God more deeply. A few months after the incident, I was taking Sabbath time in a different natural place and met another fox. This one leapt away immediately. I took the opportunity to again explore how my relationship with God could deepen. A

few more months later when I was on retreat in the desert and spied pointy ears and two eyes staring at me from a ravine, I was filled with fear as I imagined the desert's version of a rabid fox. I soon was relieved when this fox turned out to be the Abbey cat. I took the opportunity to smile at God as I would with an old friend.

With each new venture into the woods or canyon I do not know what to expect, and somehow that is good. I cannot be naïve about "the wild" in wilderness, but what it has to teach me about my self, God, and life is invaluable. Ultimately I realize that my nature is mysteriously connected to all creation. To be out of touch with that is to never fully understand what it means to be human as well as to miss an invitation to know God more intimately.

To be in communion with Nature helps me realize that there is something both beautiful and terrifying in me. And I must learn to make friends with that. To take the time to be in solitude and reflect prayerfully helps me to get in touch with God's love and to discern how I might respond. There is much I do not understand and will never know. But one thing has been emblazoned on my heart by Sabbath on the mountain and in the desert: *I am not alone. God is with me.* And God is with each one of us through all of life's experiences. That is something worth taking the time to recognize and to behold with gratitude.

Trish Stefanik, a graduate of Shalem's Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups and Retreats Program, is also part of the Rolling Ridge Study Retreat Community in West Virginia.



AN ANSWER TO PRAYER

Liz Ward

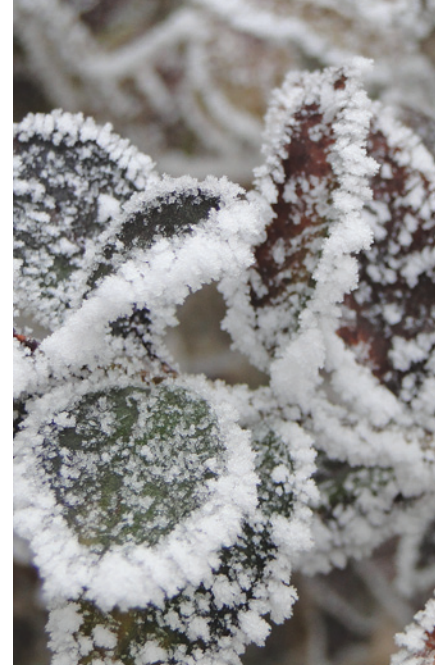
It felt like an answer to prayer. It felt like a gift of encouragement for the part of my heart that was aching. Who would have guessed that an afternoon at the New York Public Library and an unexpected and brief stay in Times Square on New Year's Eve would feel like an answer to prayer. But somehow it felt that way to me.

Let me begin with at least part of the heartache. I had been pondering the people applying for the Spiritual Guidance Program and was deeply touched by the beauty of their souls as revealed in their applications. I felt so blessed that the Spirit had brought such wonderful people to this ministry of holy listening and prayerful presence. People from a wide variety of backgrounds and denominations were being drawn to a contemplative approach to this ministry and all had willingly led lives of sacrifice and dedicated service to others. Several had served overseas as missionaries and several would be coming from overseas. The heartache came from reading the requests for scholarships. What most folks needed was not that much in the scale of some people's lives, but the large number of scholarships needed meant that we could not possibly reduce tuitions enough to meet their needs. I kept wishing there were some way I could connect this group of deserving souls with people of means so each could bless the other, but at that moment, I just felt sad and a bit stuck.

Carrying this in my heart, I came to New York to take my 89-year-old aunt home after a month in rehab following hip replacement surgery. Family from out of town were coming to New York for the day and we were planning to meet at the New York Public Library to see the exhibit on Judaism, Christianity,

and Islam that my nephew had helped create. As I entered the building, I passed through the security checks at the door and waited under the enormous Christmas tree for my family. The exhibit consisted of sacred scriptures and prayer books from all three monotheistic religions and highlighted the similarities as well as illustrated the differences between these three Abrahamic traditions. The tour guide expertly led our group of Christians, Muslims, and Jews to all the cases of illuminated manuscripts and sacred artifacts. There was something about this friendly group sharing the sacred from each others traditions that felt hopeful and exciting. On a more personal level, it was encouraging to see my brother and sister-in-law affirming the interfaith work of their far more liberal son.

Basking in the glow of familial love and appreciation, we wandered outside and decided to see if we could catch a glimpse of Times Square. We could see the bright lights, but the barricades were up and the police were consistently sending folks away. We continued to wander down the street when we were approached by a tall young man offering to give us the tickets needed to get through the barricade. We were hesitant at first, but decided to see what would happen, so we passed through to the open, largely empty street connecting us to Times Square. We thanked the unexpected stranger and went on down to the next set of barricades. After being turned away again, we decided to look for food before leaving the area. As we left the restaurant, we looked again to see what we could see. Just as we drew close to the barricades, the police decided to open them and let more people through. We were checked by



several police officers, but found ourselves, much to our surprise, standing in the midst of the happy, excited crowd gathered at Broadway between the loud and lively bands and the still to be dropped crystal ball.

Looking around at the seemingly endless river of folks shaking long blue balloons, wearing wild and crazy New Year's Eve hats and sporting flashing 2011 glasses, I felt a renewed sense of hope for our country and our world. It was as if folks somehow left their prejudices and resistances with their inappropriate parcels behind the long series of police barricades. There was a sense of friendly connection and openness to the other in the crowd that was warm and welcoming. There was a sense of joy and delight that was palpable. It was almost as if the laughing Jesus were here with us celebrating the goodness that is possible in joyful, openhearted community. There was a sense of happy anticipation about the future and the possibilities it might hold that was contagious. It was as if we all clearly belonged to something bigger and better together. It was as if the deep Oneness that underlies all of creation was, for this unique moment, made clearly visible, and we could revel in a sense of deeper, wider, warmer unity and connection. As we

walked back through the police barricades so I could return to the care of my aunt, I could feel the ache in my heart lighten even though nothing had tangibly changed in the circumstances causing the pain.

While this was only part of one day and in the scale of life only a small

moment in time, it freed something in me, at least for a while. On some level of my being it felt like a moment of truth about God's heart and God's yearning for creation. Despite the crazy veneer, New Year's Eve in Times Square felt like a time of holy revelation, of healing and hope, of promise and new life. It felt like a loving gift

that just unfolded as we lived in the moments of intention and attention of the afternoon and evening. It felt like an answer to a prayer I only partially knew I was praying. It felt like a moment of grace. Glory be, glory be.

Liz is the director of Shalem's Spiritual Guidance Program.



THE LIVING TREES

June M. Schulte

As the wind roared, I heard a long, awful cra-aaa-ack and looked out the window to behold a huge white pine lying prone along our driveway. A wind gust of about 65 mph had snapped it off four feet up its trunk! Then I noticed what appeared to be several other trees standing beside it at a precarious angle.

When our tree service came, we learned that the leaning trees were actually several huge limbs from the broken tree, which had become caught in mid-fall on neighboring trees, and we discovered to our dismay that two others—an old hickory and an even older spruce—had been irreparably damaged by the fallen limbs, so would also have to be removed.

After the work was done, we counted the rings in the stumps. Twenty-two for the hickory, twenty-seven for the spruce, and thirty-two years that the white pine had stood—the whole time that our children were growing up here. Now we looked out upon a changed landscape, our neighbor's house and yard more visible, and their old apple tree just beyond our yard. It happened on December first, and I'd been at home sick with laryngitis

all week. When I returned to work I learned that a coworker had lost more than 30 trees on her land, and in fact had watched many of them fall, like matchsticks, as the near hurricane force winds tore through and changed the county forever. A hillside on the other side of town had a swath that was completely flattened by a microburst.

My heart ached at the loss of so many trees. The white pines had been hit hardest in this storm, our second devastating windstorm of the year. The first, back in July, had completely uprooted huge trees in many towns. On an autumn woodland walk, I had photographed that first destruction, amazed to see our simple woods so altered. I felt both sorrow and awe at the power of nature. Now I was eager to get back into the woods and see what this new storm had wrought, secretly hoping that this time the trees had been spared.

It had snowed, highlighting the lights and darks, and was warm enough that the woods were heavy with snow mist. There is something about mist that feels like the Cloud of Unknowing to my soul. God was in the mist. I walked out into it, feeling uplifted. Large trees had



fallen across the path in some places. Amid the starkness of the white ground and the dark trees the only colour was the soft brown of the remaining beech leaves and the exposed blonde wood of the broken trees.

I sat down and asked myself, "How have you prayed about this?" Holding still in the mist, I noticed that there was no wind at all, not even a breeze. The ache in my heart had been pure prayer, a beseeching, an acknowledgment of loss and fear, a yearning after the strong trees that are no more, a yearning after wholeness and good,

growing, green life. Had I heard an answer to my yearning? As I waited, words came back to me from a Lenten retreat meditation, which a seeker I used to meet with offered a few years

ago. "Let go of all that is dead. Release what is no longer growing." The Word seemed to be to make peace with the changed landscapes of my life. I needed to receive what comes after. I could

feel the turning within, like morning stretching after a long sleep.

June is a graduate of Shalem's Spiritual Guidance Program.



A LESSON IN SURRENDER

Joan Maxwell

I first met Sarah* in the intensive care unit. I'm a hospital chaplain, and from time to time my duties include doing rounds in the ICU. I go from bed to bed, seeing how people are feeling, sometimes getting into a brief conversation, often being asked to offer prayer. But many of the patients are on ventilators—breathing tubes that make spoken conversation impossible. There are tricks you can use to substitute for the spoken word—eye blinks, lip movements, hand squeezes, foot wiggles, very occasionally a patient can write, once in a while you can use a letter board, where you and the patient laboriously spell out a few words, one letter at a time. I've learned to read faces pretty well under these circumstances, but often I can't make out what the patient is trying to tell me. I hate it when that happens, because the people are so vulnerable and their situation is often grave.

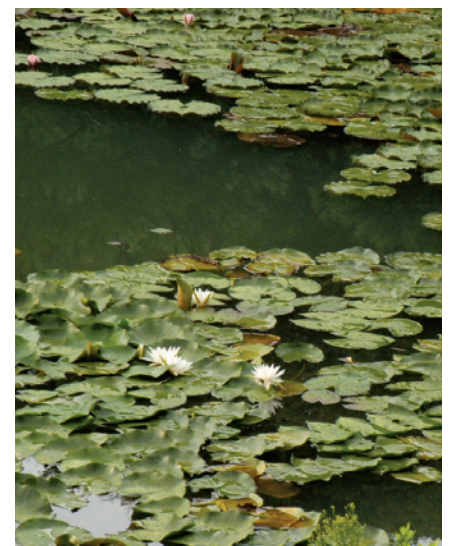
When a patient is on the vent, as Sarah was, I ask if they would like me to pray. Out of respect for their autonomy, I never pray out loud unless their wish for prayer is unambiguous. In Sarah's case, her slate blue eyes shined at me with urgency when I stood by her bedside. The life force seemed to radiate from her despite all the tubes and drugs and machines. But when I asked her if she wanted me to pray, she gave no indication, positive or negative. So I told

her that I wasn't going to pray since I couldn't tell if it was her wish for me to do so and I wanted to respect her wishes.

She was in the ICU for two weeks, and we had the same exchange, if it could be called that, every time I visited. One day, however, when I went in she was sitting up in bed, ventilator-free! We had a brief conversation, kept short because ICU conversations are supposed to be short and because she was still hoarse from the breathing tube. But I learned two things: Sarah was a non-practicing Jew, and she wanted me to keep visiting her.

In time she was moved out of the ICU to a regular bed, and over several weeks we did a lot of talking. Early on I asked her if she believed in God and she waved her hand dismissively—"I don't believe in any of that stuff." So we talked about her hopes for the future, the meaning of life, and how she was bearing up under her long hospitalization. She was in her late 60s and was suffering from a terrible infection, which necessitated a seemingly endless volley of powerful antibiotics, many with unpleasant side effects, and all to no avail. She endured it all with only occasional complaints. As her stay lengthened and her body weakened, her need to talk about ultimate things grew.

I was filled with admiration for her courage and resonated to her hunger. I



prayed for her in private, but of course respected her dismissal of "that stuff" and so never prayed out loud in her presence. But as time went by I felt a growing need to do that. It was a strange feeling, as if there were a prayer inside me wanting to push out into the world, a prayer that could only be expressed aloud by her bedside. Each time I saw her the pressure of the prayer grew stronger.

Finally one day I did something I have never done before. After we had been talking for a bit I said to her, "I wonder if by any chance you would be willing for me to pray for you out loud?" Her eyes widened in surprise. "You wouldn't have to pray yourself, you could just watch. It might be interesting," I added, knowing she was an intellectually curious person

and suspecting that an “interesting” experience might appeal to her. “You don’t have to agree, I won’t do anything without your permission, it’s entirely up to you.”

She shrugged and said, “Okay, if you want, go ahead.”

“Are you sure?” I was aware that my request was as much for my benefit as for hers, and worried that I was overstepping professional boundaries.

“Sure, it’s fine.”

So I prayed, enormously grateful to be able to let the pulsing prayer inside me come out, careful to respect her religious background, praying to “the Holy One” and not using any sectarian terminology. The prayer was short and simple, asking that Sarah be blessed, and asking that one day she might come to know the Holy One herself. When the prayer finished I opened my eyes and looked at her. She was watching me with mild curiosity. “How was that for you?” I asked.

She shrugged. I thanked her for letting me pray and the conversation moved elsewhere.

One terrible day when I went to her room she was lying flat and still in her bed—in a coma and doing very poorly. The next day was the same. But the third day she was sitting up again and waved urgently to me. “I’m so glad you came,” she said. “I’ve been wanting to talk with you.”

I took a seat. “Tell me,” I urged.

“Well,” she said, looking down, “I’m kind of embarrassed.” I raised my hands questioningly, asking myself what a desperately ill woman with over a month in the hospital could possibly have to

be ashamed about. After a moment she continued. “You know I was terribly sick the last couple of days. In the midst of it, when I lost all hope...I PRAYED,” she said in a rush. “I prayed. I begged for help. I didn’t believe but I didn’t have anywhere else to turn. So I prayed. And God answered me...” Tears ran down her cheeks, the first I had ever seen from her throughout all her suffering. Tears ran down mine as well. We sat quietly for several minutes, looking at one another, weeping silently in what seemed like a holy communion of souls.

“And now...?” I finally asked. “Is God with you now?”

“Yes,” she said, her hand on her chest, her fierce blue eyes shining. “God is here with me now.”

And from that day on, every time I visited her she told me that God was with her. A few times I asked her if she would like to pray with me, but she always refused. “Too personal,” she would say with a little secret smile. “But you can pray for me outside if you like.”

I wish I could say that Sarah got well and left the hospital dancing, but I can’t. She died. But before she died she was truly alive.

For me the take-away from this story has to do with surrender. Sarah totally surrendered herself into God’s hands. She opened her heart and God filled it. I wonder, can I do that before I am dying?

Joan Paddock Maxwell, M.T.S., is a palliative care chaplain and a graduate of Shalem’s Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats program.

**Sarah’s name and identifying details are changed to protect her privacy.*

AGING GRACEFULLY

Adela Rose

Lady with the cup
so smooth and pure—without
blemish
born into her space.

Then water—filling her cup
causing smooth parts to become
worn
generosity overflowing
rippled edges—turning green
a natural process for her material.

She doesn’t mind showing age
as her cup runs over
glowing beauty and peace—the
feeling there
love brimming over.



PARTNERSHIPS

Carole Crumley

I was innocently listening to the seminar leader in our clergy program and trying to follow the instructions. He was asking us to embody certain passages from scripture. I found it challenging to take in the words and then let my body find a posture that reflected the meaning of the passage. A little embarrassed by this exercise, I turned to face the wall rather than the other participants in the class. The leader began reading familiar words from the Gospel of Luke, *‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’* (LK 4: 16-21 NRSV)

In this text, Jesus is in his hometown synagogue, reading from the words of the prophet Isaiah, letting the words announce his calling. It is a passage near and dear to every clergy person’s heart. It is often read at ordination services, inviting the newly ordained to experience more deeply the consciousness of Christ. It is also an invitation to participate in this sacred mission and to pray for the anointing of God’s holy Spirit for one’s work in the world.

Remembering my own ordination, I let the words wash over me, surrounding me with the sense of God’s immediate presence, God’s anointing spirit. Then moving gently, I let my body stretch and open to embody and embrace the words.

Facing the wall while doing this, my gaze naturally included the nearest window. Outside there was a grove of trees—old, stately, beautiful, shading the gently sloping lawn. One of these trees

filled the frame of my window, its lush greenness offering respite from the summer heat to any wandering soul outside.

Then clear as a bell, I heard the tree announce its vocation, “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me...”

I was startled into attention.

“And has anointed me,” the tree seemed to continue, “to bring good news to the poor, release to the captive, recovery of sight to the blind, freedom from oppression...”

I sat down immediately, wondering about what I had just heard.

Let’s be clear. I believe that all of creation is God-soaked, filled with God’s energy and grace. Within that sacred landscape, trees have been important to me—climbing them as a young girl, picnicking under their shade, wondering about the nests in their branches, admiring their colors, blossoms and shapes in the changing seasons. There are many times that I’ve found comfort, healing, freedom and beauty in the company of trees.

However, it had never occurred to me to consider that trees might have a mission in the world that is ordained, commissioned, and anointed by God’s Spirit for a sacred work. In that moment, I had a surprising new sense of partnership, mutual respect and shared vocation with this part of God’s creation.

At Shalem, we have been exploring partnerships of many kinds, formal and informal—with our graduates, participants, and volunteers, with other



institutions, seminaries, and universities, with congregations and other spirituality programs near and far. This has been tremendously exciting as new and surprising collaborations have emerged.

Clearly we need partners to be about the profound work of spiritual deepening and nurture for contemplative living and leadership. In fact, we need as many partners as possible. In a recent meeting on partnerships at Shalem, Tilden Edwards reminded us that Shalem is “a tiny branch on God’s massive world tree.” There are many other branches on God’s world tree, and all are needed.

Now I am looking at tress and wondering what this might mean for partnerships. Their green is gone along with the steamy heat of summer. Yet the bony winter branches hold many future budding possibilities. I notice the winter light—thin, luminous, breathtaking and improbably beautiful. “There’s a certain slant of light, on winter afternoons” writes Emily Dickinson, “...when it comes, the landscape listens.”

Perhaps the first step in a partnership is simply to listen. I’m dedicating myself to that this winter.

Carole is Shalem’s Senior Program Director.



ENGAGING CONFLICT PRAYERFULLY

Ann Dean

*Christianity is a soul
of immense power
which bestows
beauty,
significance
and lightness
on whatever it is
you're already doing.*
—Teilhard de Chardin

When bringing a contemplative orientation to any subject, it is valuable to name our deepest intent. So in dealing with conflict as contemplative leaders it is important to say the intent is prayerfulness, not outcome. That is the contemplative posture of our being. Engaging conflict prayerfully is our first hope, not conflict resolution. This is a significant shift in the playing field of conflict.

We hope to move from problem solving with the grasping reactive mind to prayerful engagement with creative possibilities, open and surrendered to God. The main thing is the way—the prayerful, open way; the outcome is up to God.

Prayer and precarious come from the same Latin root, “to depend on grace.” Dependence connects to the idea that control is functional atheism. As contemplative leaders we are out of control in the land of Trust. That can feel so threatening, perhaps especially in leadership. Trust is fundamental in the contemplative arena, incorporating desire, willingness, surrender. Trust is the land of detachment. It is vulnerable and risky.

As challenging as it is, the contemplative way offers the ground for a new kind of freedom in conflict, for courage to make countercultural choices and for deepening a subversive mentality.

Paul’s words come to mind. *Be transformed by renewing of the mind in Christ Jesus, not conformed to the world.* That instruction inspires me to pray for deeper availability, individually and corporately. And in particular, I want to lift up three things:

God’s Timing—It is not my timing but God’s timing. In fact, “Not I” is a helpful mantra for me. I remember being slowed down in the forming of a new church by six months of prayer and discussion about the name. I learned the hard lesson Bonhoeffer wrote

about in *Life Together*: the necessity of loving the community more than my idea of the community. It was certainly valuable for the pastor to learn that at the start of forming a new community.

Expectancy—We need to loosen agendas or expectations; be open and willing to join God’s action; inside and outside, in ourselves and others. Jerry May’s first chapter in *Will and Spirit*, distinguishing willingness and willfulness, addresses this so well. It is really hard when you have a clear vision to not nail it down and to keep exploring how it might further unfold, especially when part of call is to keep lifting the vision, proclaiming it to the limit of what you see, and to be humble enough to know that limit may continue to move. We talk a lot about growing edges, but the growing might be about the edge receding or becoming foggy. Or I may be invited yet again to see that others have the clarity for the way through the fog.

Patience—Freedom from results is grounded in patience—a softness in self and for others that is good ground for grace to flow unimpeded, or less impeded.

What is deeper than conflict? It is that well of living water. “A spring overflowing its spring box,” Rumi said; a different source of knowing that he calls a “freshness in the center of the chest... preserved inside you.” Ah—there’s the promise! And therein lies hope.

Ann is the director of Shalem’s Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats Program.

A REFLECTION TO SUPPORT PRAYERFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH CONFLICT

- Think of a particular group conflict you are or were engaging. Describe the conflict in one sentence.
- What is your sense now of God’s hope in this situation?
- What conflict is/was within you?
- What ‘intensities’ (agenda, emotion, etc.) are obstacles to prayerfulness?
- What do you imagine the response would be to practicing or inviting silence?
- What question might open more space for God?
- What might deepen your prayerful engagement in this conflict?



VALUING THE LIVING MOMENT

by Tilden Edwards

The precocious comic strip character Calvin (in Bill Watterson's Calvin and Hobbes) once said that he doesn't like real experience because it's too hard to figure out, you never know what's going on, and you don't have any control over events. He said he preferred to have life filtered through television.

"That way you know events have been packaged for your convenience! I like a narrative imposed on life, so everything logically proceeds to a tidy conclusion! And if you don't like what's happening, 'click,' you change the channel and there's something different!"

Calvin's view reflects the dominant part of our psyche that T.S. Eliot was talking about when he said that human beings can stand only a little bit of truth. It is the part of us that presses for securing, clearly understood, controllable order. Much of the mass media caters to this side, because that's what most easily sells. Yet when I'm finished with an exposure to such media, something in me feels vaguely cheated and empty; it leaves my deep soul starved.

My deep soul, my spiritual heart, is not afraid of what the little boy Calvin called our "real experience." Staying with real experience is staying with what is given in the moment without rushing to take it over with our interpretive minds. Such staying-in-the-moment is an act of faith. It says that I can trust a larger Presence to be there, that it is not an empty moment needing to be filled by my preconceived ideas. It is a full-of-God moment needing my emptiness, my willingness not to bring anything but my desire for God to be God. Such an orientation frees me to dip into the moment's fullness with a sense of appreciation rather than dread, over-grasping, or restless boredom. I can feel the pregnancy in

the moment, something that is lovingly alive yet hidden, positively affecting me though I don't quite know how. To me, this is the essence of prayerfulness: a willingness to be given in trust, without precondition, to the Divine ever-present in the living moment.

From such givenness-in-the-moment, repeated hundreds of times a day, I know that I live into the happenings of daily life with a difference. Instead of sensing myself on my own, I sense myself as part of a larger divine reality incarnate in everything that is. In the moment of giving myself to that larger presence, something happens to my usual protectiveness and striving. These don't completely disappear, but they serve a different purpose. Instead of being heavy engines to support all I must do as I sense myself to be alone, on my own, they become what I think they were meant to be: functional facilitators for my living in the world as a divine off-spring. My protectiveness and striving become light, expedient friends, along with all my other ego functions. They then become useful in facilitating God's radiant life in and through me serving the ultimacy of boundless love rather than "bounded" self.

Indeed, our whole being is an expression of that divine love. Everything that we are and do is meant to be a reverberation of the divine bounty that plays us into being. But we don't find much support for this version of reality in daily life. We are pressed instead to treat ourselves as ultimate, the world as accident, and the moment as a vacuum to be quickly filled. This is why I find it so vital to intentionally lean back into God, trusting the divine Spirit to be flowing through everything, veiled in every thought, feeling,



image, and sound. So many times I have found that such leaning draws me into daily living with new freedom for compassion, joy, and whatever may be authentically called for. What is most given is subtle, a sense of greater confidence in God's involvement in whatever is happening, a feeling of freedom to appreciate God's Heart/Mind mysteriously at work and play in me and around me. I also often taste something of the radiance of the moment just as it is, full of God.

Since we find so little cultural support for such leaning into God in the moment, it can be helpful to give ourselves some protected times for intensive practice. That can be one of the values of a retreat or regular spiritual group. We also can give ourselves a little time each day for a longer "sitting" in the immediate, open presence. Where it's possible, we might also practice at times a modern kind of fast, a media fast: fasting from the sensory overload and contrivance of what comes to us from the pervasive presence of mass media. We can put away reading materials and turn off our television, computer, tape deck, and all other processing media. Then we can let ourselves be given to God amidst the unpackaged, uncontrolled "real experience" of the living moment.

When Calvin grows up, I hope he will come to love the beauty of the immediate moment in God's hands. Every-

thing of value flows from the moment that is given to God.

Tilden Edwards is Shalem's Founder and Senior Fellow. This article is reprinted from Shalem News, Summer 1995.



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Many thanks to the following Shalem Friends who contributed gifts to our Annual Fund between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010, a total of \$336,802 from 681 people. Those gifts received after June 30, 2010, will be listed in next year's annual report.



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STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION AND ACTIVITIES

The Condensed Financial Statements shown below were derived from the audited financial statements of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, Inc. These condensed statements do not include all disclosures normally included in financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Shalem's most recently filed 990 is available upon request.

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF JUNE 30, 2010 AND 2009

	2010	2009
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS	<u>\$85,094</u>	<u>\$90,476</u>
INVESTMENTS		
Temporarily restricted		
for facilities costs	-	-
Board designated	<u>496,675</u>	<u>469,861</u>
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	<u>496,675</u>	<u>469,861</u>
FIXED ASSETS	15,783	13,385
OTHER ASSETS		
Contributions receivable in		
future years	—	1,084
Other	<u>23,771</u>	<u>23,767</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>621,323</u>	<u>598,577</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>76,517</u>	<u>28,868</u>
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	453,205	\$389,499
Temporarily restricted	<u>91,601</u>	<u>180,210</u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS	<u>544,806</u>	<u>569,709</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	<u>\$621,323</u>	<u>\$598,577</u>

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2010 AND 2009

	2010	2009
REVENUE AND SUPPORT		
Programs, contractual work		
and publications	\$504,567	\$499,059
Contributions	410,370	323,332
Investment income (losses)	<u>66,261</u>	<u>(156,999)</u>
TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT	<u>981,198</u>	<u>665,392</u>
EXPENSES		
Programs, including allocated		
staff compensation	633,861	979,557
Administration:		
Staff compensation & benefits	50,443	80,743
Rent and other	289,315	171,719
Fundraising expenses	<u>32,482</u>	<u>93,275</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>1,006,101</u>	<u>1,325,294</u>
Total Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	(24,903)	(659,902)
NET ASSETS, Beginning of Year	569,709	1,229,611
NET ASSETS, End of Year	<u>\$544,806</u>	<u>\$569,709</u>

SHALEM LONG-TIME DONORS

The following list lifts up a special group of people, those who have given faithfully to Shalem for 20 years or more! We are deeply grateful for their long-time, prayerful partnership with Shalem—a partnership that has sustained Shalem's ministry and helped contemplative prayer and practices take root around the world.

30 YEARS AND MORE

Susan Dillon
June Dunn Davis
Tilden Edwards
Milo & Wendy Coerper
Sue Baczynski
Marlene & Milt Maier
Marilyn Derian
Sandra Wilson
Robert Duggan
Eleanor Merrick
John Denham
Jack & Claudia Upper
Barbara & David Osborne
Carol Lobell
Dolores Leckey
Monica Maxon
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Mary Louise O'Day
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Marilyn Charles & Reuben Simmons
Delcy Kuhlman
Alice Immler
Susan Murphy
Eva Martin

25-29 YEARS

Carolyn Irish
William & Grace Moremen
Carole Crumley
Erin Oliver-Neault
Celia Hahn
David Greer
Dana Greene
Maria Teresa Meyer

20-24 YEARS

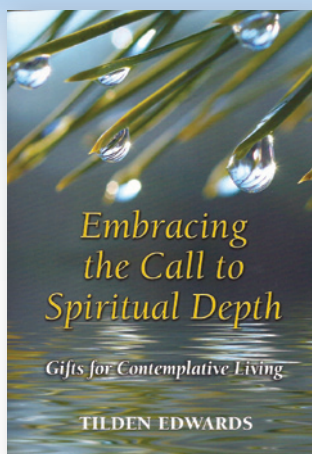
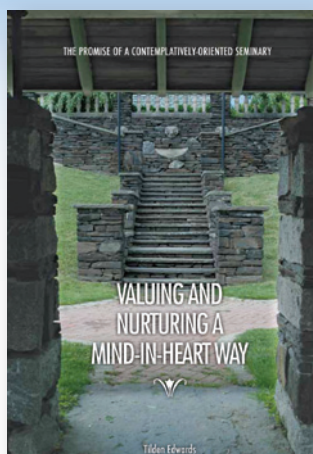
Anonymous
Jack Hutchings
Anne Fries
Mary Shaw May
Virginia Hayden
Clare Openshaw

SHALEM FUND DONORS

June Davis
Marie B. Edwards Estate

We make every effort to acknowledge each donor. If an error has been made, we sincerely apologize and ask that you let us know.

NEW BOOKS FROM SHALEM'S FOUNDER, TILDEN EDWARDS



GERALD G. MAY MEMORIAL FUND

Devon Allen
Margaret Bartel
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Larry Hastings
Catharine Kopac
Carroll Charles Moore
Grace Ogden

TO WALK IN BEAUTY: CHARLOTTE HARRINGTON MAXSON MOORE

Charlotte Harrington Maxson Moore (1916-2009) was a long-time participant in Shalem programs who graciously remembered Shalem in her will. At the news of her passing, those of us at Shalem remembered her as well.

Like the Navajos she worked and lived with, Charlotte walked in beauty. Her love of God and God's creation shone through her for all to see. And her time with the Navajos and with the Dakotas gave her glimpses, she later said, "of the wonder of learning gently to let God guide."

Charlotte was a graduate of Shalem's Spiritual Guidance Program and Shalem's Personal Spiritual Deepening Program. In fact, she was in the first class of the latter, a group that fondly called themselves the "Pilot Whales" and who, as she wrote, "experienced a growing awareness of the symbolism of the water as the enfolding Love of God—and that cleansing, healing tears, too, are a part of that sea."

Charlotte grew up in Homer, NY, but traveled to South Dakota after graduate work at Cornell University. It was there, teaching at St. Mary's School for Indian Girls, that she met her husband, Edward Moore, an Episcopal priest serving as a missionary on the Rosebud and later Pine Ridge Reservations. Although part of their married life was spent back in

New York, she and her husband eventually returned to work with the Navajo community in Arizona. Charlotte's creative teaching continued all of her life, including when she retired to Alhambra, CA, and she was also a spiritual advisor to countless individuals.

From California, Charlotte journeyed back for Shalem's summer retreat whenever she could, and part of one her summer retreat reflections is printed here.

We give great thanks for Charlotte's beautiful life and her loving gift to Shalem.



A very dry season had turned the thirsty meadows brown. We likened it to our own dry seasons when the reality of a loving God seemed remote. The aridity was, perhaps, God's tool for letting us take our rightful places as a part of rather than masters of creation. We were comforted by the knowledge that the roots of the grass were alive, awaiting the healing of the rain. Much as I missed the lush, green grass, the brown meadow took me back, in spirit, to the brown sea of waving grass on the Dakota prairie and, much later, to the high desert in Arizona where I spent seven years "walking in beauty" with the Navajos at Good Shepherd Mission.

The path of Shalem's summer retreat, strewn with spiritual gifts bestowed during my life among Native Americans, has left me singing with the Navajo: *You see, I am alive. You see, I stand in good relation to the earth. You see, I stand in good relation to the gods. You see, I stand in good relation to all that is beautiful. You see, I stand in good relation to you. You see, I am alive, I am alive.*

Charlotte Maxson Moore
Shalem News, Summer 1998

SHALEM'S SHEKINAH SOCIETY

We gratefully acknowledge the following members of the Shekinah Society who have put Shalem in their wills—

Margaret Bullitt-Jonas	Susan Dillon	Ann Kulp	Laurence Pagnoni	Jan Thurston
Merrill Carrington	Tilden Edwards	Kirby Lewis	Don & Alixe Park	Linda Toia
Carole Collins	Alan Evans	Brooke Morrigán	Paul Purta	Nan Weir
Jean Crawford	Judith Favor	K. Sheila Noyes	Lisa Richey	Emily Wilmer
John Denham	Doris Froelich	Mary-Louise O'Day	Betty Stoddard	Sandra Hay Wilson
Rosemary Dickerson	Joann Klink	Clare Openshaw	Joan Stogis	

MAKING A BEQUEST TO SHALEM

When making your estate plans, we hope you will consider a gift to Shalem. Over the past few years, we have been richly blessed by several bequests, some of them unexpected. Not only have they greatly assisted Shalem's mission and ministry, they are a very special way for the donor's care to extend into the future.

Also, please let us know if you have included a bequest to Shalem in your estate plans. We'd like to say thank you and welcome you as a member of our Shekinah Society.

SPECIAL THANKS

We are very grateful to **The F.I.S.H. Foundation** and their funding of scholarships for Shalem's residential and long-term extension programs in fiscal year 2010.

VOLUNTEERS & IN-KIND DONATIONS

While we greatly appreciate the monetary gifts from our community, we are also grateful for the many other ways our community gives to Shalem. In the past year, many have given of their time or have donated travel and program expenses.

- **Patrick Harris** and **Mel Shapcott**, of Cyberian Frontier, our web site managers.
- **Frank Toia, June Schulte, Ann Dean**, and **Leah Rampy**, whose photographs grace these pages and our web site.
- **Kristen May** and **Andrea Noel**, Shalem's amazing interns.
- **Sue Clark, Doris Froelich, James Finan** and **Clare Openshaw** who volunteered regularly in the Shalem office.
- Shalem's **Board of Directors**, who donated endless hours overseeing and enabling Shalem's work in the world.
- Shalem's non-Board **Committee members**, who gave so many hours (and ideas) over the year: **Franklin Adkinson, Tim Carrington, Amy Cole, Michael Cronin, Al Keeney, Margot Eyring**, and **Elizabeth Ward**.
- **Lisa Richey**, who created the incredible Cheap Therapy cards, just for Shalem.
- **Darlene Muschett**, who treated the Shalem staff to lunch.
- **Ellen & Michael Cronin** and **Sue Czarnetzky** who made the Gerald May Seminar reception happen.
- For all the many people who helped with Rose Mary Dougherty's book signing, especially **Jim & Lois Todhunter, Gordon Forbes, Mansfield Kaseman, Carey Creed** and **Jesse Palidofsky**.
- Other individuals who made in-kind contributions: Sue & John Clark, Sue Czarnetzky, Ann Dean, Jim Hall, Jane Milliken Hague, Joan & John Hatcher, Barbara Kane, Ann Kulp, Leslie Miller, Jean Noon, Phil Stone, Liz Tuckermanty, Dale Manty, Bob Brown, Margot Eyring, Gordon Forbes, Patience & Joe Robbins, Jayne Shontell, Bill Dietrich, Gordon Forbes, Tilden Edwards, Clare Openshaw, Al Keeney, Anne Wotring, Therese Taylor-Stinson, Trish Stefanik, Sharon Perry, Douglas Battenberg, Amy Cole, Nancy Eggert, Katy Gaughan, John Kadlecik, Don Krickbaum, Phillip Stephens, Jean Sweeney, Liz Ward



SHALEM IN THE ELECTRONIC AGE



Last year, as we moved most of our communications away from print, the Shalem e-News became our main way of sharing inspirational pieces and Shalem program news.

We are now on Facebook as well and are seeking to expand our online community even more through a sharing of prayer requests, inspiring quotes, photos and current Shalem news.

You can sign up anytime for the e-News or Facebook by going to our web site, www.shalem.org. Or go directly to our Facebook page at **www.facebook.com/shalem.institute**. If you are already on our e-News list, don't forget to let us know of any email address changes.

Once you have signed up yourself, you can easily help us spread the news from Shalem by simply clicking a button and sharing Shalem with friends!



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THE JOURNEY OF A TREE

Ellen Ratmeyer

Warmth flows through my veins
blushing my smooth bark,
forcing tiny nubs into
bright leaves
and soft blossoms.

I stretch my branches
welcoming friends
who come to rest in my shade.

My leaves are changing now,
golden yellows and deep reds
sparkle in the light.

In celebration,
I cast off leaves and acorns
as gifts.

A sudden coldness pushes
against me.
My branches creak and groan.
The arms of my friends no
longer reach me.

It is quiet now.
Even the birds are silent.
To guard against the loneliness
I come to feel
nothing.

Then, just for a moment
a bird rests lightly on my branch.
A feathery pine brushes
against my limbs.
Sunlight spills from the bright
blue bowl above me.

I am wrapped in a
forgotten warmth.
My roots pushing into the moist
earth, are eager to go
deeper.

SHALEM'S MISSION

To nurture contemplative living and leadership

SHALEM'S CORE VALUES

- Awareness that God is intimately present within and among us
- Reverence for the mystery of God's presence
- Desire for spiritual discernment in all things
- Radical willingness to trust God
- Respect for the unique spiritual path of each individual
- Recognition that contemplative living and leadership require spiritual support
- Commitment to action in the world arising from a contemplative orientation toward life

"Now is the moment we have, and all of life is contained in it."

—Rose Mary Dougherty

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