



SHALEM
INSTITUTE FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

OUR ONGOING HOPE

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REPORT
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Write Down The Vision

Margaret Benefiel, Executive Director

Our Ongoing Hope

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And then God answered: "Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. This vision-message is a witness pointing to what's coming. It aches for the coming—it can hardly wait! And it doesn't lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It's on its way. It will come right on time.

- **Habakkuk 2:2-3 The Message (MSG)**

As I look back on the past year at Shalem, I am amazed by the Spirit's movement in our midst. During the past year, the board approved in November Vision 2025: Our Ongoing Hope. Growing from many conversations in focus groups with the wider Shalem community over 18 months, honed and prayerfully discerned by the Vision Coalition in consultation with the Shalem board and staff, polished through bumps in the road, Vision 2025 emerged with a vision statement, guiding principles, and focus areas.

We wrote down the vision we were given, as God exhorts in the passage above from the prophet Habakkuk. This vision aches for the coming, as Habakkuk says. It can hardly wait! So, what is this vision and how is it coming into being at Shalem?

First, I'll share a bit about our process and then I'll talk about the content of Vision 2025 and its manifestation so far.

Perhaps you have been part of a conversation in your faith community, or at Shalem, for that matter, where some say, "We can't presume to write down a vision for the future. We don't know what God will do. We need to be open and listening, one day at a time. God guided the Israelites with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

They didn't know in advance where they would be going. It's only in this humble, vulnerable position that we can truly be led by God." Others respond, "We need a direction. 'Without a vision, the people perish.' We need to have a plan that will guide our decisions for the next few years. Otherwise, we will go around in circles. Having a vision keeps us focused on what God wants to do in and through us." Maybe these conflicting voices even vie for dominance within your own heart.

Deep wisdom resides in both of these perspectives. Yes, we need to be open and vulnerable, listening to God moment by moment. We don't know what God will do, and if we get too focused on our own plans, we will miss God. At the same time, any human community needs a sense of purpose and direction. At Shalem, even the annual budget process manifests our values and sense of direction. We need a vision.

Shalem wrestles with these different perspectives in any visioning process, and we continue to wrestle with them now as we live into the vision.



We sought and seek to incorporate the wisdom of both, believing that 1) as we listened to God in the midst of the Shalem community through our many listening circles, we could articulate where we discerned God was inviting us to go in the next few years, and 2) we could hold it all lightly, knowing that circumstances change in the world around us (we had just endured a pandemic, for heaven's sake!). We would need to stay open-hearted and vulnerable, listening for God's guidance moment by moment as we lived into the vision. A vision doesn't provide a road map that is set in stone, which we then execute by our own strength. On the contrary, a vision shows us a road that we walk with God, and God guides us and sustains us through the unexpected twists and turns that we encounter when we move from the 30,000-foot level of the map to the ground level that we walk. And God works in our hearts to transform us in those moments when things don't go as we expected and we experience disappointment, confusion, and fear. We will turn to God again and again over the next couple of years as we walk the road and encounter the unexpected.

Furthermore, how many of you have been part of a visioning process or strategic planning process in which a beautiful vision or plan was designed, only to have the finished product, the fruit of your labors, sit on a shelf collecting dust?

We resolved not to allow this to happen with Vision 2025. "This vision aches for the coming," says Habakkuk. "It can hardly wait!" We want to do our part, like midwives, to help birth not only the words but also the manifestation of the vision. From the beginning of the process, we sought to faithfully attend to where the Spirit was leading us. And once the vision emerged, we knew that the God who gave it to us would not leave us alone, but would continue to walk with us as the Spirit brought it to fulfillment. Faithfulness to the process, we believed, implied faithfulness to what emerged from it. Since November, we have continued to walk by faith as we live into the vision.

We spend time at staff meetings, board meetings, committee meetings, Shalem Society Leadership Team meetings, and program staff team meetings lifting up the vision and reflecting on how it is and will be manifested in our midst. We have articulated specific goals connected to each part of the vision, and a timeline for accomplishing them.

Second, the content. I'd like to highlight a few areas of focus. (For the full text of Vision 2025, including the Vision, Guiding Principles, and Focus Areas, see [Vision 2025: Our Ongoing Hope](#), at the end of this annual report.)

One of our focus areas, "Belonging," states:

"Belonging is the manifestation of God's union with all things. When we are radically inclusive, we embrace the Loving Essence of each individual. A sense of belonging for each of us follows as we are part of something larger than ourselves while honoring who we are and who we want to be."

We seek to be radically inclusive at Shalem because God is radically inclusive. God created diversity in our world and invites us to joyfully experience diversity. When we consider Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Shalem, we want to do the work because it is God's work. We want to let go of ways we have narrowed our understanding of contemplation, ways we have seen only part of God's creation. Good progress has been made on this front this past year. There is more diversity on our board and in program leadership and among program participants. Westina Matthews and Fay Acker, Shalem board members, have nurtured and expanded the Shalem Contemplatives of Color network. Westina also took the lead on editing *Soul Food*, a book that expands our understanding of contemplation, in celebration of Shalem's 50th anniversary. On the program front, the "Transforming Community" program revised its structure and content to be more inclusive, as did the "Crossing the Threshold," "Clergy," and "Soul of Leadership" programs.

And there is still more to do. We plan to do a thorough assessment of all our programs, so that they can be more welcoming and inclusive. We plan to assess Shalem's organizational structures and processes, to make them more inclusive. We go forward with the belief that inclusivity is joyful. The more we welcome all, the more joy and delightful surprise there will be in our Shalem community. When those who have been marginalized come into the center, Shalem will be enriched. When those of us who have been in the majority and in the center come to see structures and processes of oppression within Shalem and how we, too, have been limited by them, we will let go of them, and we will experience more freedom and joy.

Please pray for us as we continue this important journey.

Another of our focus areas, "Capacity Building," states:

"Capacity building is not a one-time effort to improve short-term effectiveness; it is the intentional and continuous imagining of what is needed for Shalem to grow to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, and organizational maturity so that we may more effectively and faithfully live our mission into the future."

In the past few years, Shalem's overall program enrollment has increased by 50%. This is good news! Because of the increased scholarship funding made available through the Wider World Initiative, to which so many in the Shalem community generously donated, and because of the ease of accessibility of programs on Zoom, many more people have been served by Shalem. At the same time, because of this increase, Shalem's staff and infrastructure have been stretched very thin. Capacity building is about catching up with our enrollment growth by providing adequate infrastructure to support this growth. We don't want a database and office computers that are held together by chewing gum and rubber bands. We don't want our staff to burn out.

So we have made a plan to improve our infrastructure, both in staffing and in technology, so that we are "right-sized," so that we can be an organization in which staff can thrive and our database and office equipment can be used with ease and effectiveness.

A third focus area, "Sustainability," states:

"Sustainability occurs when we attract and effectively use enough and the right kind of resources to achieve our long-term goals. Sustainability invites us to prayerfully consider the whys and ways we invite, receive, and utilize our resources."

We are on a good path toward financial sustainability, which is necessary for the capacity building described above. I'm delighted to report that we exceeded our fundraising goal this past year. Because of the generosity of the Shalem community, we were able to take the first steps toward our goals in capacity building. For this, we are deeply grateful.

As we move into the future, we know there is still more to do. And while both our program enrollment and annual giving have increased, if we are to fully support our program growth, our annual giving will need to continue to increase. Some of our new participants who represent the growth in enrollment may feel called to join the ranks of Shalem's faithful donors. Some of Shalem's faithful donors may feel called to give more to support the growth and development of Shalem at this important time. And some who have been touched by Shalem over the years and who haven't yet given financially may feel called to be part of Shalem's future by becoming financial supporters. Please pray about your part in this.

As we move into Vision 2025, I covet your prayers. I am deeply grateful to be on this contemplative journey with you all.

Forward In Love

Jackson Droney, Director of Operations

Our Ongoing Hope

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Early in my spiritual journey, I wrestled with a critical question. How do I really know God's leading versus my own ego? I had learned in psychology classes how strong the ego can be and how easy it is for us to rationalize our behavior, justify our self-involved tendencies, and ignore critical feedback. History is littered with narcissists who claim to be acting on their certainty of God's invitation. It seemed arrogant for me to imagine that God was guiding me in some direction. I was reluctant to claim God's activity in my life. And, what if I – a very flawed human being – got it wrong?

At the same time, I believed – and still do – in the power of prayer. I believe that God cares about creation, including me, and that God is at work bringing wholeness to the world. If I could believe these big notions in the abstract, how could I ignore their implications for me personally?

I came to see, after many years of spiritual direction, that refusing to acknowledge God's activity – to bury my head in the sand out of fear of my own limitations – is just as problematic as misinterpreting the ego for God. I've come to understand that the wholeness that God longs for is a love of God, self, and neighbor. To love God means to take God seriously as being active in my life and in the life of the world. To love myself means to admit the ways my ego can get the best of me, and to live into the gifts God has given me. And to love my neighbor is, to paraphrase Richard Rohr, to remember that my life is not about me. Just as God is present and active in the world, I am invited to be the same for the sake of myself and others.

Looking back, I can see that some of my fear about conflating God with my ego was really a struggle with learning how to love myself. I realized that I have and will fail others, just as others have and will fail me. But I can also now affirm that I have and will do good unto others, just as others have and will do good unto me. All of me is held in the embrace of the Holy One, and that is what frees me from paralyzing self-doubt and insecurity. It can sound so simple, so obvious. But to live out of this awareness was and continues to be life-changing for me.

The contemplative path is, in many ways, about bringing healthy love of God, self, and neighbor into proper balance and fullness. Shalem's mission to nurture contemplative living and leadership involves supporting and nurturing this kind of active and present love, for us and those we serve. What might this mean for Shalem as we mark our 50th anniversary and in the context of Vision 2025?



Love of God. As an organization, Shalem is blessed that it does not revolve around a single founder or teacher, however much we respect Tilden Edwards. Similarly, we're blessed that we don't center a particular spiritual practice. While silent prayer is part of almost every Shalem gathering or program, we aren't bound to it, and we acknowledge there are many ways to pray contemplatively. Still, we can succumb to the inertia of past ways, habits, and routines. If we're not careful, routinizing a particular way of doing things can become more important than the intention that led to that tradition in the first place. Shalem's openness to an expansive understanding of the contemplative path is a true gift, and it requires leadership – at all levels – to be mindful and discerning of how to keep the Holy One first, not a particular prayer practice or way of doing things.

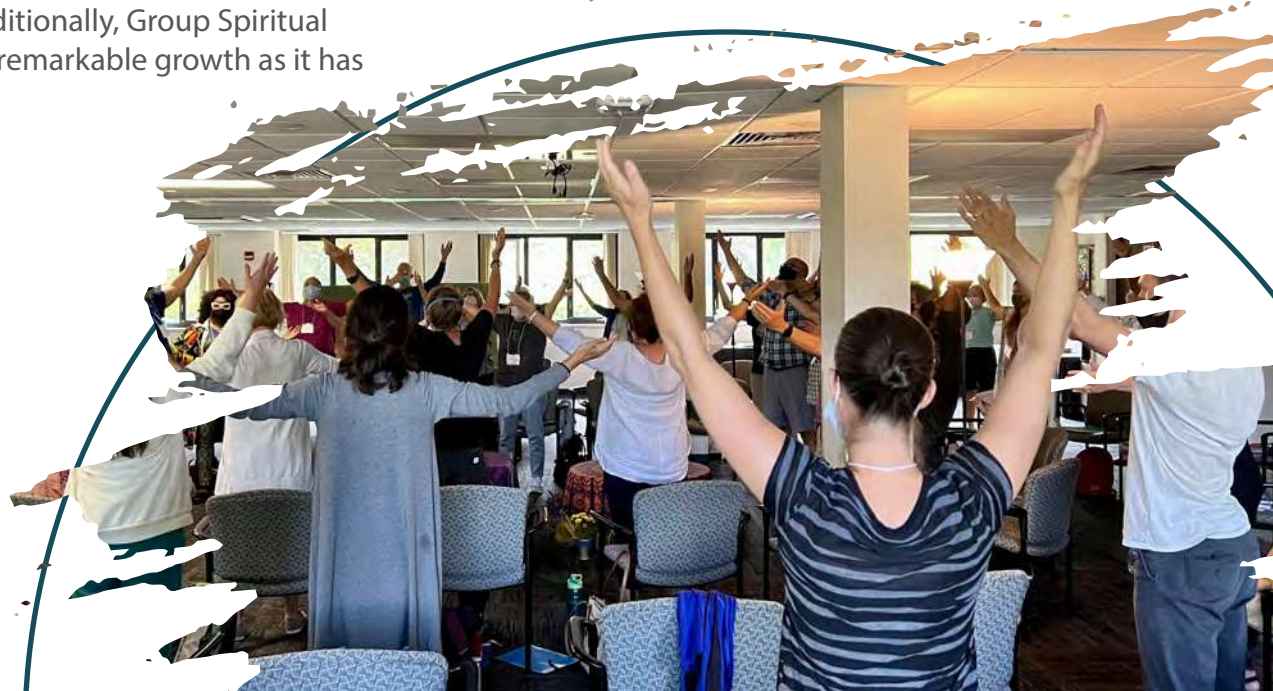
Love of Self. Shalem is special to us, and we want our mission to reach and transform the lives of others as it has ours. One of the five focus areas of Vision 2025 is Capacity Building. This involves having sufficient financial resources to support the necessary staff, technology, and systems that allow us to fulfill our mission in this season of Shalem's life.

Since 2020 we have added a new long-term program (Heart Longings), redeveloped longstanding ones (Transforming Community, formerly GLP; Clergy; Soul of Leadership; and Crossing the Threshold, formerly YALLI), and added two new pilgrimages (Camino and Walking the Ramparts). Additionally, Group Spiritual Direction has seen remarkable growth as it has moved online.

This growth is an encouraging sign that Shalem's mission remains vital to the world and was a driving force behind the discernment of Vision 2025. That same growth has also stressed our existing systems and staffing model. Several longtime staff members have retired in recent years. The importance of effective and easy to use technology has risen with the pandemic and the expectations of younger generations. The loss of institutional memory combined with the introduction of new technologies requires the development of consistent systematized processes, which in turn require more staff time to develop and implement.

These needed administrative changes will support Shalem's mission and organizational health for years to come, opening more possibilities for more people to experience what Shalem offers.

Love of Neighbor. Vision 2025 calls on us to become a "dynamic and inclusive community." Our fifth guiding principle reminds us to "challenge injustice, dismantle systems of inequity, and pursue reconciliation." Further, we aim to foster a sense of belonging for each participant and member of the Shalem community. These intentions invite us to consider how we truly love one another. While giving to others can be an expression of love, so can yielding and making more room. For an institution that focuses on teaching others, it can be humbling to step back, follow the lead of others, and learn how we've fallen short and how we can do better at loving all our neighbors.



As a predominantly white organization, Shalem continues to learn and grow in its understanding of implicit bias and structural racism. The ways we operate, the assumptions behind our behaviors and decisions, and even how we define “contemplative” can all contribute to perpetuating racial and other identity-based inequities. The staff-board retreat this year focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The book *Soul Food*, that I co-edited with Margaret Benefiel and Westina Matthews, gathered essays from members of the Shalem community to provide a resource on contemplative spirituality and issues of identity. The Contemplatives of Color/BIPOC Advisory Council has developed a list of curricular resources by non-white authors to support our programs. There is much work yet to do. And through this work and growth, born out of love of each other, we can become more whole.

As we go forward in love, may we continue to trust that the Holy One is with us and continues to reveal the way.



Learning from Birds

Laura Neal, Shalem Board Member

Our Ongoing Hope

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Cardinals' yellow beaks
centered on bulls-eye black
and red faces.

No one complaining
boys are more colorful
than the girls.

Flying and flitting with
sparrows and chickadees
all equally share feeder,
bath and branches.

No discrimination.
No pecking disorder.
More than co-existing,
thriving and happy
in abundance.

Each bears a unique
gift; special songs
only they can sing.
In the celebration
of difference, a tapestry,
a harmony fills creation
with what can be.



For and With

Dawn Peck, Former Shalem Board Member

"Silence is crucial for being-with, without domination or subjection. It is the first dwelling for coexisting in difference. It is, or creates, a place where we finally can listen to the other."¹

Inherent in every Shalem program is silence – a grounded stillness before the Divine. We learn that stillness, this groundedness-in-God, may be experienced even without external silence. Many drawn to Shalem programs come seeking stillness, consciously or unconsciously. I first attended a Shalem program in 2007, the Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups and Retreats (LCPGR) program. I did not understand why I was drawn to this program, though it was clearly a response to the Divine moving within my life. Over inner resistance, I arrived at the opening circle, surveyed the circle of perhaps thirty faces, and fought the urge to get up and run away (so many people). Then the Shalem Bell rang. Instant, communal depth of deep, listening silence. I never wanted that silence to end.

This silence was not an empty, artificial silence. This silence was pervaded by Presence, Divine Presence. Somehow, in the ways of our loving God, everyone present that day perceived a deep, open, and welcoming Presence.

Pondering stillness and the ways in which we flee from it or toward it by virtue of our own daily routines and meanderings, I am reminded of the word Umwelt. This German word re-surfaced for me in a book about fireflies. The author introduced me to biologist Jakob von Uexküll, who, in 1934, pointed out that "different creatures, even those living side by side in the same habitat, don't uniformly share one experience of the external world. Instead, the world each creature perceives – its Umwelt – is created by its unique sensory system."² Von Uexküll recommended a technique to use when entering unfamiliar worlds: "...we must first blow a soap bubble around each creature to represent its own world, filled with perceptions which it alone knows. When we ourselves then step into one of these bubbles... a new world comes into being."³

We humans frequently assume that others share our Umwelt. Apparent in today's world, however, is the fact that we do not perceive reality identically. How do we get to the truth of reality and allow space for others who sense a different truth?

We do not live in isolation. Isolation is an illusion. We are part of this natural world. We do not stand over and above it or separate from it. We are creatures of this world. We are influenced and formed by the natural world and everything within it, including every human with whom we cross paths. Each of us is also an ongoing influence on everything within the natural world.

The Shalem community, in its new Vision 2025, affirms and celebrates the power of Love to transform. This experiential reality continues to be witnessed in every Shalem program: "Responding to Divine Initiative, we allow the Divine to lead us into shared practices of sacred stillness, deep listening, open-heartedness, and prayer."⁴



In the spaces of stillness and deep listening that Shalem offers, hope for our world surfaces. Within these safe spaces, our hearts are invited to continue to open – perhaps break open. We experience ongoing transformation by Love as we join hearts with those whose Umwelt is different than ours, those whose lived reality is different than ours. In these spaces, we might be able to imagine a transparent soap bubble around another person, as von Uexküll recommends we do while exploring the natural world. We might take a step into someone else's Umwelt. We might invite others to step into ours. As we are transformed by Love in this way, as we join another in their Umwelt, a new world does indeed begin to evolve. Such imagination may morph into radical inclusion of "other" and result in prophetic action.

Creation is ongoing. We are a part of creation.

In addition to offering programs for others, Shalem offers programs with others. Staff and participants alike are opening their hearts to the transforming power of love.

May we always continue to open our hearts for transformation by and in the Great Love; herein lies hope for our world.

¹ This Sacred Life: Humanity's Place in a Wounded World by Norman Wirzba, p 82. Quoted from Through Vegetal Being: Two Philosophical Perspectives by Irigary and Marder, p 50

² Silent Sparks: The Wondrous World of Fireflies by Sara Lewis, p 63

³ Ibid, quote by von Uexküll

⁴ Guiding Principles from Shalem's Vision 2025



She Weeps: Leaning into the Spiritual Guidance Program

AY Bryant, Co-Director of Heart Longings Program

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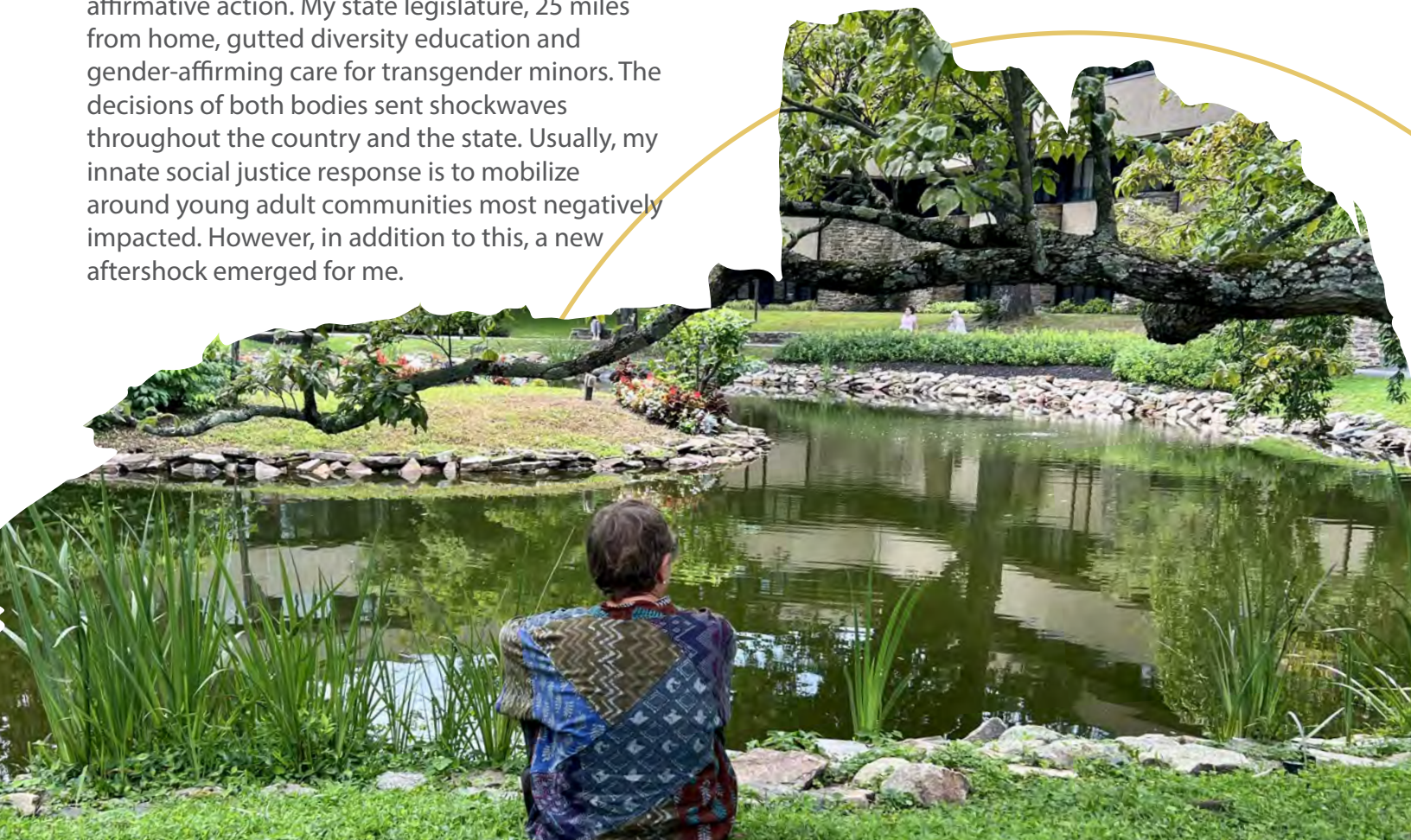
John 11:32b-35: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept.

I am a new associate of the Spiritual Guidance Program (SGP), class of 2024, completing the first at-home phase. This time next week, I will be attending my first residency. Recently I traveled for my first mini-retreat, a perfect balance of fellowship, rest, silence, and pool time. Little did I know that this was the Divinely ordained calm before the storm.

Returning home, my calm unraveled due to painful national and statewide judicial and legislative decisions. These decisions effectively walked back social justice gains over the past few decades. The Supreme Court — located 2.3 miles from Shalem — struck down race-conscious affirmative action. My state legislature, 25 miles from home, gutted diversity education and gender-affirming care for transgender minors. The decisions of both bodies sent shockwaves throughout the country and the state. Usually, my innate social justice response is to mobilize around young adult communities most negatively impacted. However, in addition to this, a new aftershock emerged for me.

Hidden beneath my river of agitation and activism was my groundwater. It was murky with grueling exhaustion and grief. My thoughts turned to my future directees and their experiences. How might Shalem’s SGP program prepare me to sit with them and myself in a sacred space? How will I be steadied and readied for the call to companion with those holding intersecting identities of activism and faith? Or identities of Thurman’s disinheritance and faith? A disconcerting mystery.

With guidance from my director, I was invited first into my own experience. I wept. My tears created room for the Holy Spirit to move. Beyond the weeping, my heart was opening. Suddenly an image of a puzzle appeared in my “mind’s eye.” Working puzzles is a favorite pastime. But I resisted the image when I first saw it. Then I remembered an early SGP reading on the practice of Visio Divina. Spirit wanted me there, with the image, softly holding my gaze. There was something God wanted me to see.



Ahh, this is the puzzle that minoritized communities are given to put together. As I continued to look, I saw that as a member of intersecting minoritized communities, we have inherited a 1000-piece puzzle to assemble. Communities of power hold the box top with the completed picture. They have the majority of the pieces needed to assemble the whole. My box comes with 150 random pieces. I also saw my ancestors calling me to assist others with this incomplete puzzle and its impact on their lived experiences. For every judicial and legislative setback, puzzle pieces are swept off the table, crashing to the floor.

As the image slowly receded, I learned more about the calling on my SGP training. There will need to be an exploration of how these setbacks impact my communities' relational connection or disconnection from the Divine. Where may we weep, moan, and rest safely? What is Spirit guiding us to do and not do? As an emerging companion, who are some of my cultural contemplative ancestors, and elders, and what are some practices that lead minoritized contemplatives into wholeness? I look toward these explorations.

Thus, before I become too overwhelmed with all there is to explore, I will again return to my heart and remember the wisdom from my meeting with my spiritual director. Gently she offered, "Know that when you weep and see visions, you are not alone. God, Jesus, and the Spirit weep and see alongside you."



A Prayer for Shalem: A Prayer for Wholeness

Scott Rohr, Shalem Board Member

Blessed are you
Who gather in reverence,
And humbly open your hearts to sacred
silence
You will hear my voice –
An intimate whisper,
A lament to injustice,
Resounding like the singing bowl
Reverberating in solidarity and union
With all that is.

Blessed are you
Who toil in service,
And lose yourself for my purpose
I will build my house in you.
Into this sanctuary many will be invited
And you will share
Rest and renewal,
Insight and inspiration
The door will always be open
And the light shining.

Blessed are you
Who hold the pain and suffering of the world,
And carry the broken, wounded, and diminished
In Love.
You are anointed with Christ
For the sake of the world.
Together, we will plant a new garden
And its fruit will nourish seekers
For generations and generations.

Blessed are you
That give thanks and breathe gratitude –
With every breath, Simple Presence.
You are my living icon.
Your life is my prayer for the world
Through you I will be recognized
In everyone and everything.

Listen and know...
There are only two things that matter –
I love you
And nothing else matters.



A Bridge to Hope

Kathleen Richard, Shalem Board Member

Our Ongoing Hope

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Humans are made for community and connection and so it shouldn't come as a surprise when we feel lost and bereft without them. Shalem's Vision 2025 recognizes the deep need to gather and respond as a community to the invitation of the Divine to stillness, listening and prayer. And in community to honor the unique spiritual path and journey of each one.

Given my own longing for community and connection, the Heart Longings program drew me in with its promise to provide space to explore with others more of those longings. This is my third program with Shalem. I've gained so much from each program, yet this time, the experience seemed deeper and more alive. The design of the program lent itself to sitting with the critical concerns of our world. Each seminar made it easy to do the head and spirit work that the topics require of us so we can be in touch with the most fundamental parts of our soul; to explore what speaks to us, what seems true to us, what breaks open in us. All this work was set in the context of a community learning to listen deeply to itself and to each other.

As promised the program was designed with community in mind. Pertinent topical seminars were held once a month for eight months. Although I embraced every seminar, I found myself particularly drawn to the sessions on creativity and our deep connection to the earth. There was a good balance of content and practical exercises where we could work with the material both individually as well as in small groups. For example, although I'm not a poet or writer, the tools and material provided helped me to express myself in new and creative ways – yes, even like a poet. And the small groups allowed for sharing what was created in a safe and loving environment. There was deep kinship in these sessions with the other participants.

During the time in between seminars, we met in small groups and had a chance to practice listening and discernment. It is always amazing how quickly you come to trust and appreciate the people you meet in these programs. A deep connection was created in our small group that we are continuing even though the program has ended.

There was great good in this program and it helped me see what makes Shalem so special and so effective in all that it does. It's the people! The people who come, as I did, to learn to be our best selves. The people who helped us to listen with generosity, healthy curiosity and above all kindness. We let go of our expertise and knowing and learned something new and shimmering in the stillness. We responded together to the invitation for more from the Divine. We left the program changed, more alive; deeply connected to each other, the natural world, and the Holy One.

Shalem's Vision 2025 is grounded in the hard reality that we live in a broken and hurting world that requires action, not sentiments. There is an active spirit in the dream of being an inclusive, open-hearted space for all while facing the reality of the divisiveness in which we live. During the Heart Longings program, I was encouraged to take "a long, loving look at the real" (Walter Burghardt). This generous expression of being transparent and open is centered in being the beloved of God, who sees all the tragedies and beauty of the "real." This offers an honest, yet hopeful way for all of us to show up in our deeply divided world. It bridges hard truths with hope, centered in the One who loves us. It is this bridge that Shalem's Vision is building for anyone who comes.



Leaning into Love

Lisa Senuta, Former Shalem Board Member

Our Ongoing Hope

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My first Shalem circle was in the 2014 class of Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups and Retreats. Gathering with a large group of strangers for the first residency, I was surprised that when the opening bell sounded, I immediately felt fully and deeply at home.

It is unusual to feel at home with complete strangers. However, I have learned that this is common within the Shalem community. Our mutual longing for the Spirit creates friendships across all sorts of differences and even divisions. Friendships that, as the great Sufi mystic Jelaluddin Rumi described in his poetry, reveal to us the true and divine Friend in the face of everything created.

Whether in a Shalem class, serving on the board, or joining an online Simple Presence gathering, when the bell rings and we lean back together into grounded being, we become awake to a communion that is shared across our diverse experiences, knowledge, cultures, beliefs, and personalities. Through the Shalem circle our illusions that our personal reality is all there is, disappear into oneness.

I like how Tilden Edwards put it in his book, Embracing the Call to Spiritual Depth, "When contemplative awareness is inspired by the holy breath of God's Spirit reverberating in our spirits, scales fall from our eyes, and we are empowered to be more discerning and freer vessels of the creative Love that has moved us. That Love helps to shape our individual and communal future, relentlessly rising up again and again amid the narrowing counterforces in and around us that God's Spirit mysteriously allows and invites to conversion."

When these scales fall from our eyes, clarity is possible; a spiritual clarity that invites us to respond to that which is essentially true with our gifts and vital energy for the healing of all that is broken in us and others. And that is why when I am with a Shalem group I am interiorly sitting on the edge of my seat to learn what is going on within the others in the circle. How they will respond to Love is absolutely thrilling to behold.

Toward the end of all Shalem courses, we are given opportunities to share how our studies and training have awakened new ideas for contemplative leadership back in our neighborhoods and communities. In those moments, the wide diversity of callings, nudges, and desires to respond to the Spirit with our lives is stunning. One person in my class started a spiritual arts group on her farm, another was compelled to bring meditation to prisons, another designed contemplative classes for a local seminary, and another used dancing to reveal the loving nature at the heart of being.

The program directors and board of Shalem are nurturing a new vision for the future of Shalem, that will include efforts to be more intentionally diverse and inclusive. And by saying 'yes' to this invitation, we will see even more clearly the incredible fecundity of the Spirit.

Each of our spiritual paths carries our uniqueness into the circle, and as we each listen for the bell, lean back into stillness, and deepen in trust together, it is thrilling to glimpse the Spiritual re-creation through our willing hearts for the healing of the world.



“With Holy Awe, we will practice cultivating gratitude, curiosity, joy, and delight, celebrating the power of Love to transform.” – **from Shalem’s Vision 2025: Our Ongoing Hope; Guiding Principles**

If you’ve been on a Zoom call with me, you may have noticed a silver, sequenced wood block of the word JOY in the background. It sits behind me on the bookshelf as a silent but unsubtle witness to my “Life Word.” Joy is an intrinsic part of who we are, and Joy is an energy and gift I am called to bring to the world. If you visit our home, you will be greeted with Joy! Our home is full of various artistic representations of the word – some purchased by me, others given to me as gifts. Even our front door has a brass banner of JOY.

As I reflect on this past year of Board leadership with Shalem, part of the legacy I hope to leave is Joyful Leadership. I am grateful that in Vision 2025, the commitment to cultivating Joy (along with gratitude, curiosity, and delight) is named as one of our Guiding Principles. We do this amid the mystery of Holy Awe. Joy is emerging from that deep place of the Spirit residing in us.

Wayne Dyer reminds us that joy is our natural state.¹ We don’t need to search for it; we have it already. We just need to give ourselves the space to orient towards it.

Why Joyful Leadership? Is Joy an important quality of Leadership, or am I just a Pollyanna?

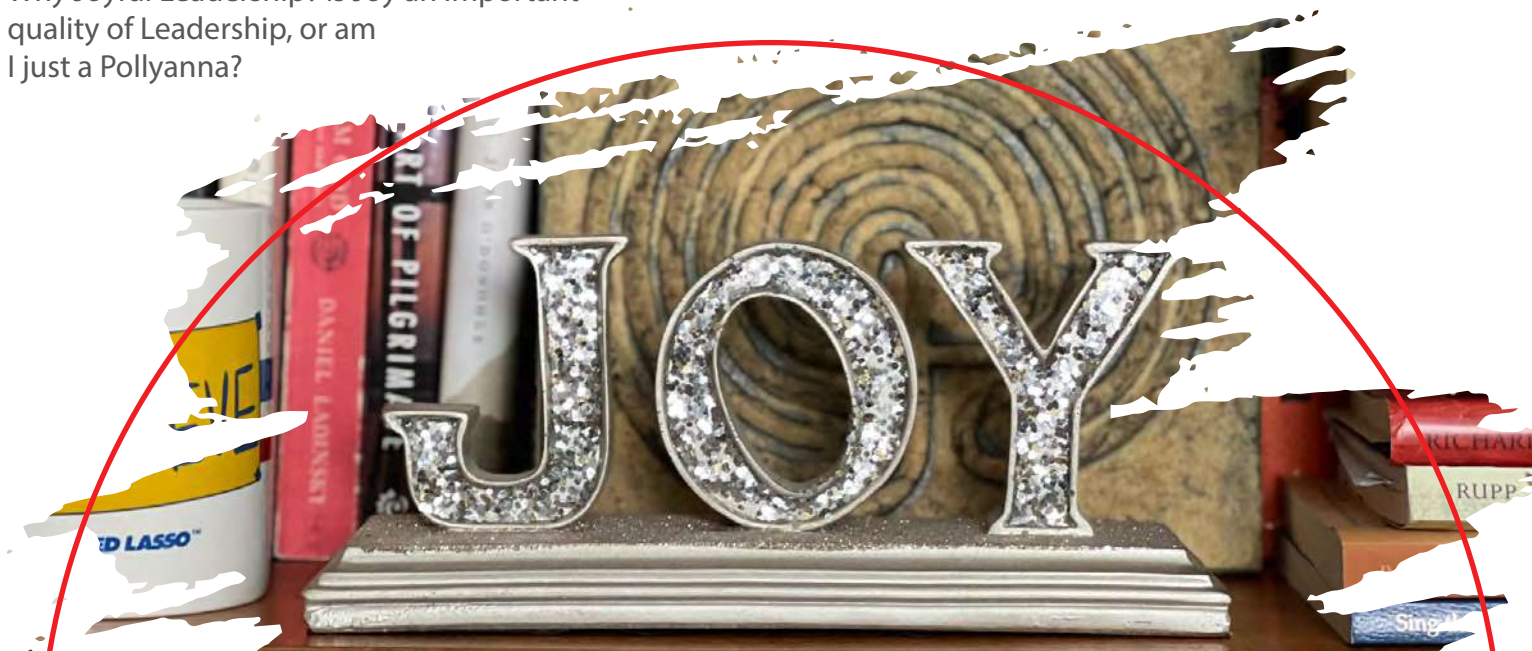
Is it naïve to be joyful in these troubled times? Here are some takeaways.

First, Joy is Faithful

As a Christian, I recognize the presence of Joy throughout scripture. As people of faith, we understand the difference between happiness and joy. Happiness is external, often dependent on situations, events or other people. As our external circumstances change, so might our level of happiness. Joy, on the other hand, is a deeply spiritual quality whose home is from that place we know as our “spiritual heart.”

Sandra Brown writes: “Joy is almost a mystery, isn’t it? It’s a spiritual quality that is internal...When stuff, people, and the problems they bring fall away there is a stillness. Only in that stillness can we ever find the joy that resides inside of us, dependent on nothing external in order to exist.”²

Joyful leadership supports our understanding of the importance of our contemplative practices. When I sit in silence, centering myself in the Presence of the Holy, I experience the stillness from which joy arises. As we begin our board gatherings together in silence, we invite the worries of the day to fall away and open our hearts to joy.



Second, Joy is Generative

When we tap into and nurture the parts of our leadership that bring us energy, that bring us alive, we connect to our core purpose. My desire as board president, as encouraged by our Executive Director, is to do what delights me in my role to support and facilitate our board, and to help others find what delights them. Together, we, as a healthy organism, can connect to Shalem's core purpose and bring it to life. That in turn generates more energy in others to see what Shalem offers. Continuing to do what brings us alive invites us to "dance" with the Holy Spirit and listen for how we can continue as co-creators with God. As we cultivate joyful leaders, we become "joy generators."

Third, Joy Develops Resilience

When I consider how many years Shalem has existed offering the nurturing of contemplative life and leadership as its mission, I believe the founders knew the resilience that comes from Joy. When I have encountered the challenges of my board presidency, what has sustained me is the spiritual resilience I have found by returning to Joy. My joy in leadership comes when I witness the power of discerning together, the discovery of a "third way," an offering of a deeply felt prayer for our work.

My joy strengthens me when I know with prayer and faithfulness that we are living into God's purpose for Shalem – that the groundwork of our founders has paved the way for us today and prepares the way for the future of Shalem. With joy and tenacity and courage and boldness. And with Love.

I hope I am remembered for joy in my leadership. And I pray that our collective deep joy continues to be faithful, generative and results in our continued resilience. May we fulfill God's prayer for Shalem to bring Holy Joy to our thirsty world.

For you shall go out in joy,
and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Isaiah 55:12

¹Wayne W. Dyer, "Choose Your Natural State," *Heal Your Life* (October 28, 2010),
<https://www.healyourlife.com/choose-your-natural-state>

²Sandra L. Brown, "Joy Versus Happiness," *Psychology Today* (December 18, 2012),
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/pathological-relationships/201212/joy-vs-happiness>



When Nothing Is Left

Gene Foehl, Treasurer, Shalem Board

When nothing is left;

Peel the onion;

Years of building coarseness;

Melt away with tender new growth;

With the last petal;

The real work begins.



Burning Brighter

Phillip Stephens, Director of Nurturing the Call: Spiritual Guidance Program

"The flame of life burns brighter when touched by the breath of the Spirit. The more we are open to the presence of the sacred in our lives, the more we find energy to do those things we only now imagine. Inspiration is not just an idea, but a movement, a tipping point towards creativity. It is what we believe opens our hearts and minds to discover new ways to share our lives with others. Spirituality is an exchange. Through it we receive the strength of the Spirit so that we may give our love more deeply. Burn bright in faith today, for with the Spirit all things are possible."

(Ladder to the Light by Bishop and Choctaw Elder, Steven Charleston; p. 22)

The staff and associates of Shalem's Spiritual Guidance Program have been living into Steven Charleston's invitation throughout the past year. Grounded within the contemplative tradition, we continually open to the changeless love surrounding us, face into the inevitable reality of change, and humbly embrace inevitable imperfection. We recently received the following feedback from one of our associates:

"The... residency invited me to be more spacious and open to new ways of seeing. During this year's opening circle, my prayer word was clarity. The invitation to clarity requires transparency. It is an invitation to remove all the blinders so that I can see clearly. To shut down all the other noises so that I can hear the voice of the Beloved intently. To let go of the old thinking patterns and beliefs that I am clinging onto so that I can receive a renewed one openly. I would like to believe that these prayers were answered during this... residency. I notice the shift in my perspective on areas where I was once rigid, particularly in the opening of my posture to receive teachings from other faith traditions. I notice a shift in the way I face myself and talk to myself; there is more tenderness to my areas of weaknesses. This open, available, and receptive posture is what I would like to carry out into the world."

(SGP Associate Class of 2023)

Given our increasingly multicultural and interspiritual landscape, there is a growing awareness that individual spiritual journeys are integral parts of corporate spiritual journeys and vice versa. Acknowledging our current social, economic, and spiritual developments, Shalem's Spiritual Guidance Program seeks to nurture the delicate dance between individual and corporate spiritual formation as associates live more fully into their practice of spiritual companioning.





Thus, on November 11, 2022, we were delighted to celebrate the Shalem Board's ratification of Vision 2025: Our Ongoing Hope as a core document, dare I say a Rule of Life, for our program. Inspired by Vision 2025, we share the following initial invitations from the Spirit for the transformation of our common life:

- All staff of SGP are expected to participate in ongoing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Development [DEIB].
- The Staff are intentionally exploring expansive experiences and understandings of the Contemplative Path across spiritual and cultural traditions and their ramifications for Contemplative Pedagogy.
- Revision of the Spiritual Guidance Program Curriculum & Bibliography is ongoing.
- Intentional consideration is given to DEIB in relation to staff and class demographics.

What a freeing experience it is to live in the unfolding reality of our individual and corporate imperfection, experiencing it as a gift of the Spirit, an opportunity to learn and grow! We look for the next wave, catch it, and ride it to shore. Dwelling within the embrace of such creative energy, we seek to:

"...treat one another with a gentle touch, a hand of grace and comfort, for none of us knows what tomorrow may bring, and none of us is immune from what we least expect. All we know for certain is that our time to love is far too brief. The least we can do is provide a safe space for one another along the road of life, a place of understanding and support. We have that gift to offer, that quiet blessing to share, giving to others what we may need one day ourselves, a shelter from the storm."

(Steven Charleston – Facebook Post; Nov. 11, 2022)

Painting Brown in the Sky: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Shalem

Westina Matthews with Fay Acker, Board Members and Co-Chairs, Shalem Contemplatives of Color/BIPOC Advisory Committee

Many years ago, I taught at a private elementary school that served students with dyslexia and related language-based learning differences. One of my favorite students was Ulysses, a towheaded boy who was slight of build with bright blue eyes. Ulysses was always happy and seemed to have an easy way about him. As the children learned to spell, we would draw the letter in the air and then they would write it on paper. The tip of his tongue poking out from the corner of his lips, Ulysses would carefully print his name “sessylU” and then look up at me with the greatest smile of satisfaction.

On this particular day, I had decided that the entire class would help paint a mural for the back-classroom wall. There was the vegetation team, the sky team, and the animal and bird team. Ulysses wanted to work on the sky. Smocks on, paint brushes in hands, the class got busy.

Suddenly, I heard agitated voices arising from the sky team, complaining that Ulysses was painting the sky brown. Now, everyone knew the sky was blue! Why was he painting his section brown? Ulysses just shrugged his shoulders and kept on painting, ignoring the complaints.

Several weeks later during a home visit, Ulysses’ mother greeted me at the door and invited me into their home. Barefoot and dressed in a long flowing cotton dress, she ushered me back to a room where I saw an enormous unfinished canvas that was a beautiful spectrum of shades and hues.

Squinting her eyes, she asked me, “So what do you think? I’m still working it out, but I like it!”

Ah ha, mystery solved! Ulysses’ mother was an abstract artist. And so, for Ulysses, putting some brown paint in the sky seemed perfectly okay to him. Today, when I think about Shalem’s courageous work undertaken in diversity, equity and inclusion, I often remember little Ulysses.

Shalem has engaged in a kind of corporate confession that there are “things done and left undone” that has encouraged the organization to set new goals. Over the past two years, the Shalem Program Committee focused on the issue of diversity, equity, and inclusion through several initiatives, including: meeting with the Program Directors of all long-term programs; surveying over 100 self-identified Contemplatives of Color/BIPOC Shalem graduates; and reporting to the Board these initiatives with recommended next steps.

In 2023, the Shalem board reconsidered its program committee structure, ensuring that the board acts as a Committee of the Whole to discuss and address race and justice issues throughout the entire organization (i.e., curriculum, communications, recruitment, etc.), committing to the following goals:



1) Shalem is attentive to the transparency, integrity, and accountability of its interactions with its internal and external constituents, including its relationships within the larger global, diverse community.

2) Shalem is committed to valuing diversity and communicates publicly its stance on diversity, equity and inclusion.

3) Board, Staff, Program Directors, and Participants will represent the breadth of racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender identities.

4) Shalem is committed to programming, communications and publications that invite and represent the diversity of this country and the world.

Shalem appreciates that its staff, board, program leaders, and program participants do not always share a common language and understanding of racism, white supremacy, colonialism and dominant/subaltern group dynamics and relations, along with the ways they affect internal dialogue and assumptions, interpersonal relationships, organizational systems, and social structures. While the unevenness in understanding likely has many causes, the Shalem board and staff are sure that offering intentional spaces to engage in learning together is one way to build a shared understanding and vocabulary. As this learning takes place, it is intended that there will be an intersectional approach to understanding how racism, colonialism, and white supremacy interact with sexism, homophobia, and classism.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging incorporate all of the elements that make individuals unique from one another, and while there are infinite differences in humans, most of us subconsciously define diversity by gender, race, and age; and narrow the focus to retention and recruitment. For this endeavor, we are committed to thinking expansively as we plan for the Shalem of the future, the Shalem that is becoming.

Our vision for Shalem is that in 2025, Shalem will be a dynamic and inclusive community,

empowered by the Spirit, where seekers engage in transformation of themselves, their communities, and the world through spiritual growth, deep connection, and courageous action. Included in our Guiding Principles is our commitment to a beloved community in which we affirm that “we will face our fears and act with compassion and courage to challenge injustice, dismantle systems of inequity, and pursue reconciliation.”

Creating a space for belonging – not just welcoming – is one of the five Focus Areas in our Vision 2025. At Shalem, often one may hear, “we’re seeking to live the contemplative life” or “we are contemplatives.” Reflecting on the “we” is Shalem’s on-going commitment to be radically inclusive as we embrace the Loving Essence of each individual.

The long-term goals are: making Shalem’s commitment to racial and social justice more explicit; engaging new diverse communities for recruitment of participants; increase hiring of diverse staff and Program Directors; an on-going evaluation of resources for programs; and active engagement with/listening to diverse graduates.

In short, this is how we will be known “that we belong to the truth.”

Priorities include: publication of a book on contemplative living and leading; updating the Contemplatives of Color/BIPOC directory; convening periodically Contemplatives of Color/BIPOC Shalem graduates; increased percentage of Contemplatives of Color/BIPOC as participants in the leadership of long-term programs; increased percentage of Contemplatives of Color/BIPOC as program leaders; updated resources for the reading lists for the long-term programs to include resources written or composed by Contemplatives of Color/BIPOC authors; and increased number of people of color on the board.

This is an ambitious agenda, and it will require additional resources in both funding and staffing. And Shalem is firmly committed to making room for the Ulysseses of the world who choose to paint brown in the sky to bring new life and new colors to Shalem.

Annual Fund Donors

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We gratefully acknowledge all of those who made a donation to Shalem's Annual Fund from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. If we received your gift after June 30, you will be listed in next year's annual report.

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Shalem's Long-Time Donors

Shalem's ministry has been sustained by many individual donors, especially those who have given faithfully for 10 years or more. Some of our FY2023 Annual Fund Donors have supported Shalem over many years, not just FY2023. We'd like to highlight their faithfulness by including them below with deep gratitude.

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Those individuals who support Shalem's ministry through a monthly donation.

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Grants

Center for Action and
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Imago Dei Fund

The Shalem Fund

Ann Barry Estate

Make a gift today at donate.shalem.org



Volunteers and In-Kind Donations

We are grateful to the many individuals who give of their time or donate travel and other expenses to support Shalem's ministry. This year we are especially thankful for:

- Shalem's Board of Directors, who donated their time and talent in many different ways throughout the year.
- Shalem's non-board committee members: Susie Dillon, Amy Dills-Moore, and Mark Goodwin, who served Shalem through their committee work.
- Susie Dillon for her dedication and hard work with Development.
- Winston Charles, Anita Davidson, Susie Dillon, Susan Etherton, Westina Matthews, and Ostein Truitt who put in the enormous effort to plan the events celebrating Shalem's 50th anniversary.
- Susan Etherton, Margaret Benefiel, and Buck Cochran whose photographs grace these pages, our website, our monthly eNews, our Facebook page and other places.
- Patience Robbins for her leadership of the weekly Prayers for the World and for others who have provided their leadership this year: Mary Becker, Nancy Corson Carter, Dana Greene, Dirkje Legerstee, Kimberly McOmber, and Christina Williams.
- Rod Dugliss, Scotty Landis, and Liz Morris, for coordinating the prayer leaders for Prayers for Hope & Healing and the following leaders: Leideke Bulders, Anita Davidson, Nancy Flinchbaugh, Katy Gaughan, Emily Meyer, Kevin Omi, Robbie Pinter, Celpha Sands, Jeanie Sweeney, and Nan Weir.
- Those who provided leadership, hosted, and/or facilitated the daily Simple Presence and Qigong gatherings: Simple Presence Coordinating Team: Fereshteh Hale, Nan Weir, Anita Davidson. Zoom Hosts: Linda Bryant, Anita Davidson, David Jadlocki, Francis Miller, Nan Weir. Qigong Leadership: Rich Plant (via video). Simple Presence Facilitators: David Andrews, Katie Archibald-Woodward, Wendy Brown, Linda Bryant, Winston Charles, Anita Davidson, Tricia DeBeer, Diane DeSieno, Denise Diaab, Amy Duncan, Steve Duncan, Gene Foehl, Suzanne Foehl, Elizabeth Foster, Tom Frost, Christina Graber Neufeld, Sonya Green, Fereshteh Hale, David Jadlocki, Kathy Kohl, Geja Laan, Shirley Larson, Peg Marose, Francis Miller, Leigh Ann Min, Lauren Morton, Mary Pat Mulligan, Sally Nettles, Bill Parker, Anne Peacock, Dawn Peck, David Robinson, Scott Rohr, Robin Seiler, Keaton Shenk, John Titus, Ostein Truitt, and Nan Weir.
- Those who planned the Midwest Region's Advent Silent Retreat: Anita Davidson, Liz Kuhn, and Nan Weir.
- Planning the Advent Retreat Day: Winston Charles.
- Mentors and group facilitators for Crossing the Threshold: Carol Crumley, Amy Duncan, Marlin Good, Cynthia Insko, Al Keeney, Bruce Lugn, Leonard McMahon, Sarah Sealand, and Patti Snyder
- Those who helped to lead the Shalem Contemplatives of Color/BIPOC: Fay Acker, Trey Campbell III, Natalie Cone, Susan Gaeta, Bo Karen Lee, Westina Matthews, Leonard McMahon, Lydia Mercado, Marion Osleyo, and Ostein Truitt
- Those who keep in contact with, and hold in prayer, recent program participants: Spiritual Guidance Program: Eleanor Abarno, Cindi Bryant, Camille Cappiello, Susan Etherton, Rheghan Hyypio, Renee Regacho-Anaclerio, Velma Rice, Heather Strang, and Jeanie Sweeney. Transforming Community Program: Roxane Chlachula, Diane DeSieno, Nick Gilbert, Alan Krema, Cathy Lemley, Judy Walsh-Mellet, Diane Mitchell, Jen Porter, Sue Czarnetzky, Lynn Perkins, John Pollock, Kim Prothro, Debbie Scott, Sue Spotts, and Jane Williams.
- Those who have shared their original reflections with us through a blog or eNews article: Tom Adams, David Andrews, Mary van Balen, Margaret Benefiel, Bryan Berghoef, Savannah Kate Coffey, Lorie Conway, Anita Davidson, Claire Dodd, Jackson Droney, Tilden Edwards, Susan Etherton, Westina Matthews, Christina Miller, Laura Neal, Kathie Nycklemoe, Kevin Omi, Patience Robbins, Lisa Senuta, Morgan Stafford, Phillip Stephens, Ostein Truitt, Christina Williams, and Sarah Willie-LeBreton.

Shekinah Society Reflections: Planned Giving with Shalem

Susie Dillon, Shekinah Society Member

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At some point every day now, I think about the circle of life and about my own death. Between now and that transition, I will gradually separate from my loved ones, my possessions, and my body. Such thoughts are new, springing from the elevated number I now acknowledge to be my age – 76 – rather than from any known imminent cause.

I spent much of the last three years caring for an older sister as she passively declined into deadly depression, unwilling to take even minimal care of herself, and saw how quickly we can effectively die while still conscious, breathing, and willful. I learned what such deterioration means to our loved ones and committed to taking care of my end-of-life business while I'm still able to, out of my devotion to my dear son and daughter.

I made a will with my husband in the mid-90s, which included Shalem in the list of beneficiaries. I wrote that bequest without thinking, the same way I included my kids and siblings. Shalem was like an extension of my family – beloved, inspiring, aggravating, fun, challenging, embedded in my heart and mind. I knew, from Shalem's contemplative teachings, that my relationships there were a reflection of my relationship with God, and I learned to love both the Shalem humans and God more deeply by seeing their connection. So it was natural to immediately name Shalem when the lawyer asked if I wanted to include any charities in my will, without thinking further about a bequest's deeper meaning.

The years following that period surprised me with some unexpected and frightening losses that required me to grow or shrivel. Through that, Shalem was my reliable friend, walking those dark paths with me and holding the flashlight just far enough ahead to keep me going.



Eventually I came out of the woods and into "green pastures, beside the still waters," and I gradually began to breathe, rest, and laugh again. In this new territory of deep trust, serenity, gratitude, and unaccustomed humility, Shalem still represented the Beloved One who led and nourished me since my first wail in the maternity ward, so long ago.

In the last few years, I've been "getting things in order," as elder-advisors euphemistically call preparing for death. In updating my will, I of course kept Shalem as a beneficiary, but this time, did so with more self-awareness than before. After all, I worked for fifteen years as a fundraiser for an international peace organization, sometimes speaking with donors about their legacy. Now all those conversations applied to me.



My bequest is my final chance to express my deep gratitude, respect, and love for my dear friend Shalem. I want to say, even after I die, "Thank you for standing by me in the hardest times, for celebrating with me my greatest joys, for letting me hear God's comforting whispers through your sacred silence, for never chastising me when I kept making so many bone-headed mistakes, for teaching me to gaze, not raze, to grieve and breathe."

The words in my legal document are stiff and formal, but my heart's meaning is not. I assume my children will know, as they receive their money and possessions from my estate, that my love and appreciation for them is meant to live on. And I trust that Shalem will receive my final gift as an after-death loving greeting, and will use it to guide someone else's search for a loving God.

Making a Bequest to Shalem

When you make your estate plans, we hope you will consider a gift to Shalem. We have been richly blessed by those who have remembered Shalem in their estate plans, as Susie Dillon has done. In celebration of Shalem's 50-year anniversary in 2023, we have a goal of expanding our Shekinah Society membership to 50+ members. These gifts greatly assist Shalem's ministry in the world and are a special way for a donor's care to extend into the future. Please let us know if you have included a gift to Shalem in your estate plans. We'd like thank you and welcome you as a Shekinah Society member!

SHALEM'S SHEKINAH SOCIETY

The Shekinah Society is for those individuals who have put Shalem in their estate plans. We give for this special support and care for Shalem's future.

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Margaret Bullitt-Jonas
Jean Crawford
John Denham
Rosemary Dickerson
Susan Dillon
Tilden Edwards
Susan & Jon Etherton
Alan Evans
Judith Favor
Anne Findlay-Chamberlain
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Linda M. Kapurch
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Nan Weir
Emily Wilmer
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Make a gift today at donate.shalem.org

Statements of Financial Position and Activities

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The Condensed Financial Statements shown below were derived from the audited financial statements of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, Inc. for the year ended June 30, 2023 and the reviewed financial statements June 30, 2022. These condensed statements do not include all disclosures normally included in financial statements prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. The complete financial statements, including statements of functional expenses, cash flows, footnote disclosures and the report of our independent accountants, Dunham, Aukamp & Rhodes, PLC, are available for review upon request.

Condensed Statement of Financial Position as of June 30, 2023 and 2022

ASSETS	2023	2022
Current assets	\$1,301,463	\$1,356,741
Investments	2,048,608	1,806,856
Fixed assets	22,184	4,056
Contributions		
Receivable (L/T)	20,225	19,013
Right of use asset	81,866	
Other assets	<u>13,530</u>	<u>13,795</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$3,487,876</u>	<u>\$3,200,461</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current liabilities	\$164,600	\$154,682
Long term liabilities	<u>44,795</u>	<u>—</u>
Total liabilities	209,395	154,682
Net assets		
Unrestricted	2,276,939	1,970,218
Temporarily restricted	1,001,542	1,075,561
Total net assets	<u>3,278,481</u>	<u>3,045,779</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	<u>\$3,487,876</u>	<u>\$3,200,461</u>

Condensed Statement of Activities for Years Ended June 30, 2023 and 2022

REVENUE & SUPPORT	2023	2022
Programs, contractual work and publications	\$617,853	\$731,464
Contributions	491,326	526,356
Other income	880	6,072
Investment income/ (losses)	<u>184,688</u>	<u>(261,510)</u>
TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT	<u>\$1,294,747</u>	<u>\$1,002,382</u>

EXPENSES

Programs, including allocated staff compensation	\$690,035	\$706,972
Administration:		
Staff compensation & benefits	100,898	119,559
Rent and other	101,549	99,002
Fundraising expenses	<u>169,563</u>	<u>201,272</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$1,062,045</u>	<u>\$1,126,805</u>

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1226 Vermont Avenue, NW
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shalem.org
E-mail: info@shalem.org

Shalem Staff 22-23

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Director of Operations & Online Learning

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Kerri Saucer (July 2022 - April 2023)

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Founder & Senior Fellow

Tilden H. Edwards, Jr.

Vision 2025: Our Ongoing Hope

Imagining the future and mindful of the challenges of our times, Shalem is grateful to commence its next chapter embracing opportunities for renewed vision and vitality.

Our faithful work continues with eyes and hearts open to see the greater impact Shalem might have on our hurting world. Our grief and response to the pandemic, racial injustice, political unrest, and the climate crisis has drawn us again to the ancient longing for wholeness and oneness in the Spirit.

With a greater number of people participating in Shalem programs, a new awareness of necessary organizational changes has surfaced. To sense the movement of the Spirit, a Vision Coalition was created and invited to listen to our broad community. Deep prayer and active listening led to drafting a Vision Statement, Guiding Principles and Focus Areas to guide us as we respond to God's lifegiving activity: this is Vision 2025.

As Vision 2025 propels us into this next chapter, we invite you to imagine the power and possibility of our collective contemplative discernment and compassion. We invite your bold prayers and courageous hope.

Mission Statement: To nurture contemplative living and leadership

Vision Statement: In 2025, Shalem will be a dynamic and inclusive community, empowered by the Spirit, where seekers engage in transformation of themselves, their communities, and the world through spiritual growth, deep connection, and courageous action.

Guiding Principles:

- Responding to Divine Initiative, we allow the Divine to lead us into shared practices of sacred stillness, deep listening, open-heartedness, and prayer.
- With Holy Awe, we will practice cultivating gratitude, curiosity, joy, and delight, celebrating the power of Love to transform.
- We acknowledge the uniqueness of each spiritual path and welcome the creative possibilities our gifts and experience bring to Shalem and the world.
- Grounded in the Christian contemplative tradition, we will celebrate the diversity of all contemplative traditions and lift up the voices beyond historically dominant ones.
- As beloved community, we will face our fears and act with compassion and courage to challenge injustice, dismantle systems of inequity, and pursue reconciliation.
- We affirm Sacred Abundance within and around us and will seek to act with generosity and trustworthiness as we steward our resources - human, natural and financial.

Vision 2025: Our Ongoing Hope

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Focus Areas:

Contemplative Grounding

Contemplative grounding is our expression of the Great Love at the center of all things. As we continue to be drawn to the edge of God's longing, we are invited to a fresh articulation of that expression. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Belonging

Belonging is the manifestation of God's union with all things. When we are radically inclusive, we embrace the Loving Essence of each individual. A sense of belonging for each of us follows as we are part of something larger than ourselves while honoring who we are and who we want to be. (John 17:21-23)

Capacity Building

Capacity building is not a one-time effort to improve short-term effectiveness; it is the intentional and continuous imagining of what is needed for Shalem to grow to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, and organizational maturity so that we may more effectively and faithfully live our mission into the future. (Luke 14:28-30, Jeremiah 29:11-13)

Sustainability

Sustainability occurs when we attract and effectively use enough and the right kind of resources to achieve our long-term goals. Sustainability invites us to prayerfully consider the whys and ways we invite, receive, and utilize our resources. (1 Peter 4:10)

Generating

Generating is action fueled by courage, confidence, and hope. Embracing mystery, we seek to discover new ways of expressing the contemplative Christian tradition beyond the usual exchange of information. (Jeremiah 6:16)





Contemplative Life & Leadership

Shalem's in-depth programs and pilgrimages provide contemplative grounding and the support of a praying community for all aspects of life, whether it be your career, ministry, or personal spiritual practice.

Heart Longings: An Invitation to the Contemplative Path

Eight-month program that invites you to ground in a place of calm and love with the support of community through retreats, monthly gatherings, small group time and spiritual direction.

Nurturing the Call: Spiritual Guidance Program

Nurturing the Call offers in-depth support for the ministry of one-on-one spiritual direction.

Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Spiritual Groups & Retreats

Transforming Community is designed to equip, encourage and support those called to lead spiritual groups and retreats.

Going Deeper: Clergy Spiritual Life & Leadership

Going Deeper offers support for the spiritual heart of clergy of all denominations and addresses the stressful challenges of a life devoted to pastoral ministry.

The Soul of Leadership

Eighteen-month program for contemplative leadership that helps leaders integrate spiritual heart practices with leadership realities in order to more truly embody their vocational path.

Crossing the Threshold: Contemplative Foundations for Emerging Leaders

Crossing the Threshold is for those who are between the ages of 25-40 and seek a deeper spiritual foundation for their lives.

Pilgrimages

In the Footsteps of St. Francis & St. Clare:
A Pilgrimage to Assisi
April 16 – 26, 2024, Italy

An Anchor for the Soul: Iona Pilgrimage
June 1-8, 2024

On the Camino: Remember, Release and Reimagine
July 17 - 26 2024, Spain



Release of New Shalem Book

Soul Food: Nourishing Essays on Contemplative Living and Leadership

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Shalem Institute, this collection of experiential and academic essays offers modern contemplative reflections from new and renowned voices in spiritual leadership. This commemorative anthology features essays written by Shalem graduates, as well as current and former board members and program directors.

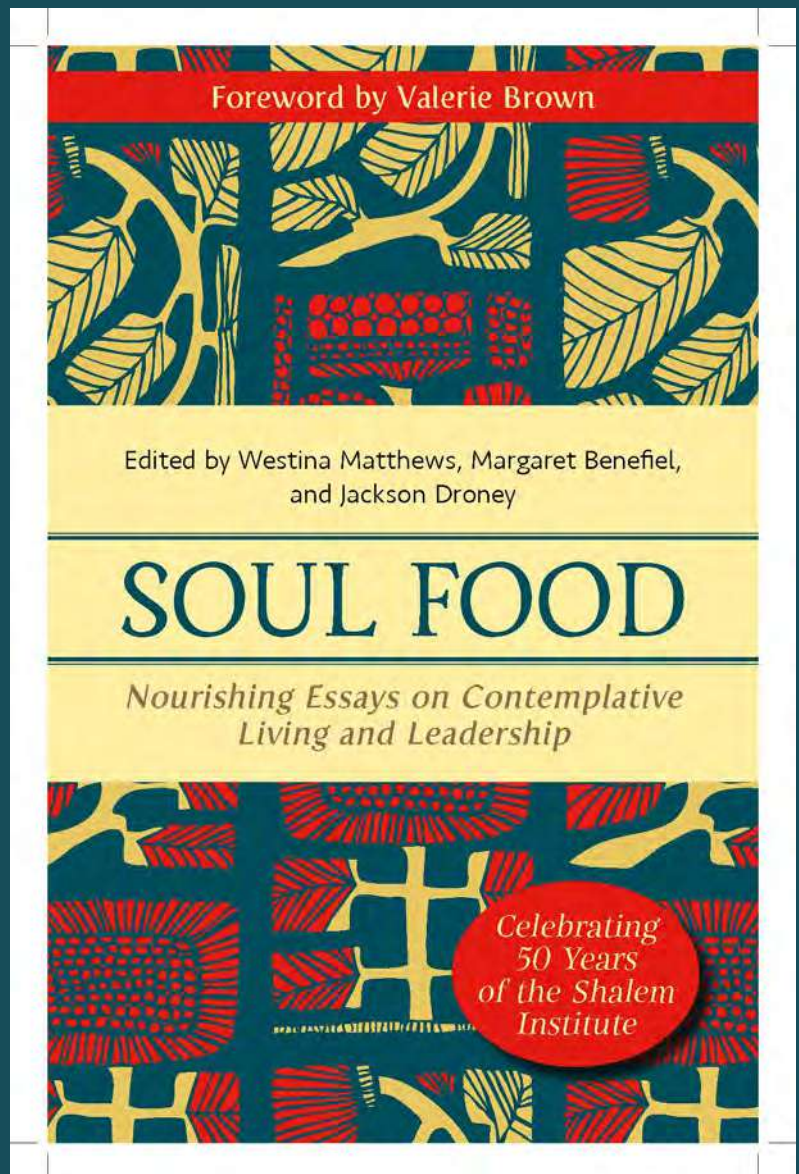
Co-edited by Shalem graduate and board member Westina Matthews, Shalem's Executive Director Margaret Benefiel, and Jackson Droney, Shalem's Director of Operations and Online Learning, **Soul Food** takes an inclusive and contemporary approach to contemplative living and leadership.

Order your copy today.

www.churchpublishing.org/soulfood

"An illuminating addition to any spiritual library, **Soul Food** is a testament to the Institute's rich history and commitment to transformative spiritual growth."

Fr. Richard Rohr, author of **Falling Upward** and founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation



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