

THE LIGHTHOUSE APRIL 2011



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Held in the Mystery of Grace

This article is both an invitation to those who are considering becoming new Spiritual Direction Committee members, and a thank you for the privilege of serving as this year's SDC/Board Liaison member. It's always a bittersweet time when we pass the batons at the AGM, a time to look back, remember, and acknowledge the gifts these experiences have given us.

This article is also an attempt to describe experientially the spiritual aspect of how we are held or supported during our times of growth. Being a member of the SDC is an opportunity for growth, and thus requires the same holding that any growth process demands. The entire SDC team is held in the arms of Spirit, and each individual member is held in this container into which Grace enters. It is here that the team can potentially create and grow, both individually, and as a sacred unit.

Let me tell you about our last meeting. We began, after some brief personal sharing, with hands held, and a prayer sent to Spirit. Each meeting includes acknowledging those who are absent, and the simple prayer words come from those called at the time by Spirit to express them. The words and speakers differ each time, but the essence never changes – the request that we surrender to become instruments of Spirit to plan and offer to the community planned themes and services for the highest good of all.

Business comes first, before we move into a more creative state. At the last meeting, I presented the request from the Board that we each write a paragraph that expressed what our experience had been as SDC members over the past year.

These paragraphs will be collated, and a report given at the AGM. Someone volunteered to collate as Spirit guided her -a part of the process of this SDC. There is no leader in this team, and we each volunteer for various tasks, taking turns as Spirit guides us.

We then moved into the more creative part of our process. Thoughts usually have been perking and brewing during the month between meetings, and from this bubbling pool of thoughts, someone throws an idea into the circle. The first

The Lighthouse April 2011

A Newsletter for Friends of the Church The Church of Truth - Community of Conscious Living

We are a spiritual community supporting each other in exploring our personal journeys regardless of spiritual path or belief.

Our community is comprised of a rich field of individual and collective energies that is ever changing and evolving.

While we are accepting of diverse expressions of belief, we recognize the interconnectedness of all things and the power of love and appreciation. We hold reverence for all life.

We welcome those who wish to share their journey with us through their insights, reflections, experience and creative self-expression.

We are open to inspiration and recognize that our openness to others' ideas may enhance our own awareness and expansion.

We meet our basic human need to socialize, bond, cooperate, celebrate and have fun, in a warm-hearted way, through a variety of events and activities.

We acknowledge our opportunity to be agents of change in the world and we encourage and support service to others through individual and group activity.

We share our sacred space with the larger community.

With gratitude, we live thoughtfully on the Earth with kindness and compassion for all.

We welcome you.

Sunday Service - 11 am

Working for you - Your Board of Directors

President	Esther Hart	250-294-6416
Past President	Brian Martin	778-430-1872
Vice President/SDC Liaison	Carol Douglas	
Treasurer/Outside Maintenance	Jan Falkowski	250-370-9192
Secretary	Genevieve Eden	
Rentals	Tracy Koebel	250-857-8185
Inside Maintenance	Lorna Rennie	250-361-2079

Your Spiritual Directions Committee Members are:

Cedona Holly	250-642-1060
Nikki Menard	250-537-9380
Marvelous Trudeau	
Deborah Hawkey	250-813-1747
Paul Monfette	778-430-2430

Community Care Liaison – Lorna Rennie 361-2079

Newsletter—Deborah Hawkey Email dbhawkey@gmail.com

Newsletter Submissions welcomed by the 21st. of each month

Linda Chan <http://cotvictoria.ca>

Rev. Joan Hopper Pastoral Care for free consultation call 250-384-3637

Sunday Service Schedule for April 2011

April Theme: Held in the Mystery of Grace

April 3

Speaker - Shirley Alphonse
Moderator – Marvelous Trudeau
Meditator – Shirley Alphonse

April 10

Awakening to the Great Song
Speaker – Michael Stillwater
Moderator – Brian Martin
Meditator – Michael Stillwater

April 17

Who Holds You?
Moderator – Pat Miller
Meditator - Joe Carlson
Speakers – Panel
Laurence Beal, Deborah Hawkey, Marie Logan

April 24

Hoppy Easter Service
Opening To the Mystery
Created by Trish Coleman
The 11th Hour Choir conducted by Brian Martin

First Nations Ceremony for World Healing with Shirley Alphonse

We are very privileged to have Shirley Alphonse with us to facilitate most of this morning's Service. She is the "Spiritual Leader" of the Tsouke Nation in Sooke. She will offer her prayer in the language of Hul-gah-me-num. Shirley will drum for us and give a special cedar blessing to all those who wish to receive this blessing. We will sit in meditation and prayer for each person as well as the Planet during this extraordinary Service for this extraordinary time of planetary change. Shirley was born in Cowichan and has lived in Sooke for 29 years.

thought that came involved the words support and being held. We dovetailed thoughts about the metaphorical meaning of Easter, including how, and by whom, Christ was energetically and spiritually held and supported when he was on the cross and in the tomb. This in turn gave way to wonderings about how we have been held and supported during our most challenging, potent growth times. We shared personal stories, and piggy backed experiences and thoughts – all being heard, accepted, and added to the mix. And then, IT happened! We came to the “Aha” moment, when we realized that what we were trying to name was not really describable, but ineffable. It was the Mystery called Grace. And so the theme for the month presented itself to us – “Held in the Mystery of Grace”. We went on from there to follow the same creative process to develop themes for the individual weeks, and gradually moved back into more concrete thinking and planning, as members volunteered to be the co-coordinators, and various community members and guest speakers came to mind as potential meditators, speakers, panel members and moderators.

As we came to the planning of the Easter Service and celebration, the mood and thoughts lightened. Trish Coleman agreed on the spot, when phoned, to organize the service and the celebration with the help of other members. Thank you dear Trish!! Next, Light entered in the shape of Humour, and the theme “Held by the Easter Bunny/ Hoppy Easter” entered the circle. We ended the meeting, 3 hours after we started, holding hands once again, giving gratitude for this process and this team.

I'd like to end this article by sharing the paragraph I wrote of my personal experience this year:

Learning to identify and navigate the waters of the SDC Liaison responsibilities was the name of the game for me this year. Learning to function as a team member, with a dual role of being both a Board and a SDC member, while participating in a leaderless, "leader in every chair" group, has been for me demanding, yet invaluable Spiritual work. From the beginning 6-hour marathon meeting, as we jumped into the deeper waters of getting to know each other to begin creating a safe group container, opportunities emerged to challenge me and create opportunities for growth. There were times when there were troubled waters, within and without, and times when we soared with Spirit's energy, as we experienced the awe, joy and gratitude of being a separate, yet synchronized part of Co-creation. I believe we learned how to begin to embody Co-creation - an amazing gift! Imagine the privilege of sitting safely in a field of energy where free flowing ideas from all members of a team to which you belong emerge, are welcomed and surrendered over and over into an ever increasing melting pot that contains them all. Here, they are held in loving arms, and gently swirl until Grace enters, and they coalesce into an "Aha " moment.

This is how your monthly and weekly themes have come into being - a process that is The Way of Co-creation. Thank you for the multiple opportunities, challenges and gifts this year has afforded me - I feel so blessed.

Carol Douglas, SDC/Board Liaison



**Easter /Spring /Celebration of Life Renewed
April 24th at 11am
Opening to the Mystery**

Charles de Lint a wonderful Canadian Author wrote,

"I do believe in an everyday sort of magic—the inexplicable connectedness we sometimes experience with places, people, works of art and the like; the eerie appropriateness of moments of synchronicity; the whispered voice, the hidden presence, when we think we're alone."

Today's service arose out of experiencing an 'aha' moment in the Spiritual Direction Committee and the SDC sharing with me the privilege of bringing a sense of that Mystery to this service.

It will be in the music, in the rituals, in the words spoken, and unspoken. It will be in sharing with each other and feeling the sacredness of this very special space and time. It will happen as we are filled with grace and love and we have a sense of the presence of Spirit

Love Trish

It will be focused on the Mystery of our Natural and Spiritual Worlds.

Charles de Lint writes,

"Let me give you some advice: Try to approach things without preconceived ideas, without supposing you already know everything there is to know about them. Get that trick down and you'll be surprised at what's really all around you."

Easter, like the spring season it graces, is associated with birth, renewal and fertility.

It can't be denied that this in itself is an amazing Mystery.

In Christian circles Easter marks the [Resurrection](#) of Jesus three days after his [Crucifixion](#). It is the most important and most joyous holiday on the Christian calendar. As in many other religious celebrations it fits into other observances of the Natural World that were already being celebrated. Easter then, coincided with celebrations of not only the Jewish Passover but also the very welcome coming of Spring especially in northern climes. After a cold dark winter it was truly a time of celebration and hope.

Please join us for this celebratory experience on the Mystery of Grace

If you would like to join us for a Vegetarian POT LUCK Luncheon afterwards please let us know if you possibly can.

Cedona Holly and Linda Chan are planning the menu and a list to sign up will be available. Please let them know what you wish to bring. Organic is awesome. All offerings gratefully received!

Helpers will be needed for set up, clean up and kitchen duty. Join the family for our different and wonderful Easter Celebration.

LAST CALL



Will it be One Scotch, One Bourbon and One Beer as John Lee Hooker sang or perhaps One More for My Baby and One More for the Road as old Blue Eyes sang? Either way, this is the last call for nominations for the Board and the SDC prior to the AGM. Not that serving on either of these committees drives you to drink, but it could if only the same few people step forward each year. So, yes, we are looking for new blood to inject some new life and inspiration into our Community of Conscious Living. There are guidelines available to view outlining the duties and responsibilities of each position so belly up to the bar and order up your favourite libation. Oh, and did I mention, there's a free lunch at the end of the year!

Brian Martin, Chair of the Nominations Committee

How to Gain Insight

Insight is soul vision. People who are interested in growth, meditation or spirituality often seek insight so that their goals and aspirations can be fulfilled. But seldom do people know how to get those insights. For example, they go into meditation where they may have been taught to receive insight, but without doing the preparatory work to receive insights. Or, they might try to gain insight by thinking.

Insight is an activity of soul that manifests in the personality, so an environment has to be created in which the insight can arise.

The following four steps are the basic procedures for gaining insight and being creative:

1. Every new process or birthing in life, which is what creativity really is, requires a focused purpose. There must be a kind of intensity of purpose that you want to pursue or fulfill. You therefore must have some passion about the issue or area of life for which you are seeking insight. You must really care about the issue, and be genuinely

interested in it. Your attention must be absorbed by it so that you can focus on it and not be distracted by lesser interests. In terms of developing soul consciousness, you must have a deep, sincere desire to make this a priority in your life.

2. If any particular skills are required to understand, appreciate or express the insight, then those skills must be developed. If there are any materials required, then those materials must be assembled. If there is knowledge required, then that knowledge must be gained. If you are pursuing soul consciousness you need knowledge about soul and higher mind, and you need experience at a higher mind level as well as at the buddhic level. True knowledge is based on experience, but the knowledge can lead into the experience of the more abstract levels.

On a personality level experience precedes understanding. But on a soul level understanding typically prepares one for experiences at that level.

3. Once we have acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and materials, and still feel very dedicated to the pursuit, the amassed energy of it will begin to take over. We must allow it to do so, and we take a subservient role toward it. This is a gestation period, a time when we allow the soul or the universal wisdom to dominate our mind and brain.

Thinking does not create insight. So at this stage we don't work at thinking to create, but become receptive long enough so that insight can unfold as revelation in the brain. Insight usually occurs when thought is suspended, or at least it pushes thought out of the way. An insight contains a lot of information. It is a type of wholeness, but appears

suddenly. Thought is needed only afterwards to unravel it or apply it.

4. The final stage is manifestation of the insight into some practical or concrete application. The insight will likely be 'larger' than our ability to manifest it with a high degree of accuracy or perfection. The more knowledge and skill we have the better our expression of it.

Insight must lead to change and creative expression. Otherwise we betray its purpose and block ourselves from further insights.

Andrew Schneider
Submitted by Deborah Hawkey

Oneness Wednesdays in April.....



Resilience: Surviving and Thriving in Challenging Circumstances with Michael Tacon and Chris Bullock of the Well Foundation

April 6, 13, 20 + 27, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Each session will involve dyads and group sharing, meditation and other exercises in a circle format; It will be in an atmosphere of mutually supportive exploration.

Personal Resilience: An exploration – Wednesday, April 6

Resilience is our ability to recover from setbacks, both major and minor, to embrace change and to soften, rather than fight. This week, we will explore how resilience plays out in our lives, especially in these times of profound change. Through writing exercises and group sharing, we will identify our own style and level of personal resilience, and examine the childhood experiences and personal and cultural stories that have both inhibited and aided our personal resilience. Finally, we will explore together possibilities of transforming ourselves to meet the challenges of the future.

Relational Resilience: From conflict to connection – Wednesday, April 13

How we relate with ourselves, with each other, and with the world at large — greatly influences our ability to handle major difficulties in a resilient way. This week, we will identify obstacles to collaborative relationship and communication styles which do not serve our deepest relational needs. We will then look at how different communication models (such as non-violent communication) can dramatically improve our relationships and end this week by looking at how all the areas of relational resilience come together as a powerful antidote to the negative effects of profound societal change.

Spiritual Resilience: Living “Inter-Being” – Wednesday, April 20

Our belief systems and our relationship with the Sacred have a strong connection with our ability to cope with dramatic events that profoundly change our lives. How we make sense of what happens to us directly affects our ability to respond effectively. If we over-identify with our individuality — our separateness — we cut off any possibility of adequate connection to the whole, the bigger picture, and the sense of significance and meaning that can flow from that perspective. How do we overcome the illusion of separateness? We will use some periods of meditation and shared reflections to explore this question and for each of us to discern what works best for us as ways of anchoring us to the realm of the Sacred, in whatever way we understand that term.

Resilience: Integration and Moving Forward – Wednesday, April 27

What does a resilient way of living look like as we chart a course ahead that includes a healthy mix of inner coherence, relational efficacy and spiritual attunement? Through some guided meditation and dialogue, we will imagine together what our resilient way forward can look like. In this way, we can identify what we need to do to prepare ourselves for the Great Turning.

Bios:

Michael Tacon: Michael is strongly committed to finding ways to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world in a positive and constructive way through his work as the Program Director for the [Well Foundation](#), the Treasurer of the [Centre for Earth and Spirit](#), his role in the [Sooke Transition Initiative](#), and his work as a facilitator with the [Pachamama Alliance](#). He sees the issues of resilience and sustainability as being key factors in the renewal of our civilization.

Chris Bullock: Chris is particularly interested in the psychological, emotional and spiritual dimensions of resilience and sustainability, and tries to develop this focus in his work as Secretary-Treasurer of the [Well Foundation](#), coordinator of the [Heart and Soul working group](#) in [Transition Victoria](#), student of [Non-Violent Communication](#), and facilitator in the [Pachamama Alliance’s “Awakening the Dreamer” program](#), which he would like to learn to bring to children.

Everyone is Welcome!

Drop – In to Oneness Wednesdays (Attend one or more sessions)

Date: Wednesdays, April 6, 13, 20 + 27

Time: 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Location: Church of Truth, Community of Conscious Living, 111 Superior Street

Cost: Free or by donation

Information: Linda at (250) 380-6383 or <http://cotvictoria.ca>

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

April 27 Cynthia Pattison



Events and Services

Many of the members of the Church of Truth – Community of Conscious Living provide valuable services that may be of interest to the rest of the community.

Some people also like to know what is happening at the church. This is provided for **information purposes only** and are **not church endorsed**.

1. For a list of members and the service they provide—[click here](#)
2. For a list of events that are being put on by our members—[click here](#)
3. For a calendar of the events scheduled for the month at the church— [click here](#)

To be included in list 1 or 2, please go the appropriate document to check the format and provide the appropriate information to Esther at esther@eatherhart.com