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Victoria, BC V8V 1T2
250-382-5412
<http://cotvictoria.ca>**

Preparing For Soul Work

Astrologically, the end of July and most of August is governed by the sun, and the archetypes of the lion and the king. The sun is a symbol of the heart, and there is a theme here of courage, of the courage to express whatever it is we need to express.

However, these archetypes have more than one side. The lion and the king are symbols of courage and wisdom, but are also symbols of the personality that wants to lead, to rule, to have the final say. Here, the personality comes in conflict with the soul, the part of us that receives messages from spirit and truly knows where we need to go. So preparing for soul work, re-orienting towards soul, involves transforming courage from a quality that serves ego into a quality that allows us to confront our wounds and find our authentic expression.

Submitted by Chris Bullock & Troi Leonard, SDC

Description of Services

August 2 - Eileen Curteis, a Sister of Saint Ann, is a Reiki Master teacher and practitioner, who has treated and taught thousands of people over the last twenty-three years. After the closure of Queenswood Retreat and Spirituality Centre where she had worked for seventeen years, Eileen carried on the legacy of the former centre by obtaining a fifteen year trademark for Queenswood School of Reiki. She then went on to establish, with the help of other dedicated women, Queenswood Holistic Healing and Spirituality Society. Preceding this, Sister Eileen was a teacher, principal and educator for twenty-seven years. Her greatest passion lies in her healing ministry and in the literary arts. She has authored twelve books to date and has become an accomplished poet, artist and writer, as well as being a producer of six CDs and three films.

The Lighthouse August 2015
A Newsletter for Friends of the Church

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 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.

Church of Truth – Community of Conscious Living
Sunday Service – 11:00 am

Working for You
Your Board of Directors

| | | |
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| President | Stephen Graves | 778-677-7597 |
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| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Don Morris | 250-580-2121 |
| Chris Bullock | 250-384-8241 |
| Colin Lee | 250-514-1270 |
| Marvelous Trudeau | 250-384-2563 |
| Troi Leonard | 250-532-3442 |
| Jack Hyatt | 250-592-1422 |

Rentals Esther Hart 250-896-5933

Newsletter lighthouse@cotvictoria.ca

SUNDAY SERVICE SCHEDULE

Theme: Preparing for Soul Work

August 2

Diving Into Self

Coordinator: Jack Hyatt
Moderator: Ella Brown
Meditation: Lynn Gordon
Speaker: Sister Eileen Curteis
Greeter: Lou Hammond

August 9

Gathering Courage

Coordinator: Troi Leonard
Moderator: Jennifer Sagar
Meditation: Marvelous Trudeau
Speaker: Brandy Gallagher
Greeter: Joanna Wilkinson

August 16

The Wounded Healer

Coordinator: Don Morris
Moderator: Hendrick DePagter
Meditation: Timber Wolf
Speaker: Frances Litman
Greeter: TBA

August 23

Expression Through the Arts

Coordinator: Chris Bullock
Moderator: Chris Bullock
Meditation: D. Joan Thomas
Speakers: Volunteer writers and other artists
Greeter: Elsie Poliquin

August 30

Community Service - "Soul Expression"

Coordinator: Marvelous Trudeau
Moderator: Lorna Rennie
Meditation: Valerie French
Greeter: Ella Brown

Continued from page 1

August 9 - Brandy Gallagher, over the years, has 'created the impossible' from being the originator of ECO Village to it now being a co-ownership.

She grew up in a commune which is now the Whistler Ski Resort; and has always been familiar and connected to the tribal history that is in all of us. ECO village is on Cowichan First Nations land so Brandy epitomizes 'All My Relations' profoundly.

O.U.R is the acronym for 'One United Resource'. What is fun and profound is that O.U.R. calls forth interdependence and inclusion. As soon as one says it, 'WE' appears and 'THEY' disappears!! It's WE; and Brandy has been tireless and committed to creating an entirely new zoning category that became a Zoning Law that is now borrowed across Canada and parts of the United States.

It all started with 'It's not legal' to creating a whole community environment. She says 'Our hearts yearn for community' 'The village mind is in our DNA' so she spent years addressing the Question: 'How about ME, Brandy, helping you make it legal so we can have ECO village?' She did that. For years she negotiated with lawyers, financiers, local government etc. and established a partnership that absolutely looked impossible!

O.U.R. ECO village in an intentional community that gives back 3 times more than what it gets. For example: 99% of the materials are re-cycled and filtered vegetable oil is used instead of gasoline. There are ever-expanding organic gardens and residential living on more than 25 acres of land. Every year, ~10,000 people take Permaculture courses, help build Cob Houses, garden, cook in the kitchen and on and on.

Community is expressed in the broadest sense by, for and through what Brandy has stood for over the years. With her heart and passion, she has brought ALL people together that ordinarily separate. With the risks she took, she changed the relationships amongst regulatory agencies and farmers. Social justice is her legacy that is being passed on to further generations.

August 16 Frances Litman is the candidate for the new Federal Green Party riding of Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke (formerly Esquimalt/Juan de Fuca). She has lived on Vancouver Island almost her entire life. Frances will address the topic from knowledge and her life experience.

She has been a successful small business owner for 25 years and is one of just a few Vancouver Island photographers that have received both Master and Craftsman of Photographic Arts designations (CPA and MPA) and print judging certification from the Professional Photographers Association of Canada (PPOC).

In 2008, she received the Order of Fellowship from the Professional Photographers Association of Canada, the highest designation possible. Frances has also taught at the Metchosin International Summer School of the Arts at Pearson College.

Prior to becoming a full-time professional photographer, Frances was the Special Sections Editor at the Times-Colonist daily newspaper where she enjoyed a 16-year career and was most recently a photographer/contributor to the Saturday House Beautiful section.

Frances is the founder of www.creativelyunitedfortheplanet.org, a popular all ages festival, and www.vancouverislandgreenscene.org, two non-profits committed to raising awareness of the benefits of a healthy environment so as to ensure Vancouver Island remains a sustainable place to live, work, eat and play.

August 23-The lines “an old man is just a tattered coat upon a stick/ unless soul clap its hands and sing...” come from W.B. Yeats’s poem “Sailing to Byzantium,” and one way soul sings is indeed through writing and all the other arts: music, dance, drama, the visual arts, and so on. What makes the arts such a good vehicle for expression of soul? Five presenters will focus on this question by either presenting/ commenting on work of their own, or presenting/commenting on work by other artists of particular significance to them.

INVITATION TO WRITERS AND OTHER ARTISTS for August 23.

The theme for the month of August is “Preparing for Soul Work” and the focus for the August 23 service is “Expression Through the Arts.” The message part of this service will be a panel of five presenters discussing their individual take on expressing soul through the arts. Ideally a presenter during his/her five minutes would recite a poem, or tell a very short story, or dance a dance, or show a picture or fabric creation etc. and briefly comment how this work is linked to soul expression. The work presented could be the presenter’s own, or could be someone else’s.

If you would be interested in being a presenter on this panel, please contact Chris Bullock at chrisbullock@shaw.ca If more than five people are interested, my principles of

selection will be: a) first come first chosen; b) if possible, getting a spread of arts represented.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MEN'S CIRCLE

Having explored the idea of circles as a whole in the first article of this series, we move to the men's circle. To build this article, we asked as many men in the circle as were willing to send us reflections on what the men's circle meant to them. From these reflections we've tried to draw out some common themes and topics, in the hope that identifying these will create a rich and varied picture of the meaning of circle for COT men.

Submitted by Stephen Graves, Chris Bullock, Hendrik de Pagter

THE MEN'S CIRCLE:

"The Men's Circle is guided by a very few policies and principles. The chief "rules" are that when a brother speaks the other men listen, do not cross-talk and do not comment. Active listening is practiced, with reasonable success. Everything said in the circle is confidential. This principle is extremely important. And, no advice is given unless requested. We almost always use a talking stick or feather and, although it is an unwritten and largely unstated "rule," we actively participate in providing and sharing food and in the subsequent clean-up." (Hendrik)

BEGINNINGS:

"Our Circle started in January 2012 when I invited a dozen men from the Community of Conscious Living to my house to share a meal and share what was going on for us, personally, as men in the world. We have met every two weeks since then taking large parts of the summer off to do other things but it is never too long before someone calls the brothers together." (Dancing Wolf)

"I recall vividly the feeling I had when we met at the home of Dancing Wolf in January 2012 and for the first time sat in circle around an altar, after what has proven to be, over and over again, a typically excellent pot luck. Passing the talking stick from man to man and witnessing the deepening vulnerability, openness and sacredness of the unfolding event, I felt, and expressed, that I was witnessing men giving birth, to something precious, a solidarity and support without the usual macho trappings that so often accompany a gathering of men." (Hendrik)

"That first meeting in January 2012 was remarkable, and set the tone for the rest of the meetings I attended. It was a new circle from within a larger circle named the Church of Truth. I've been in men's groups before, starting in 1991 after I did my first men's weekend in Vancouver. However this COT group took it to a new level. Our group

thrived from the outset by the shared intent of loving men loving men in a sacred space.”
(Steven)

SAFETY FOR EXPRESSION OF VULNERABILITY:

“I’ve been coming to the circle since its inception. What I get is there is safety and that translates into freedom to be myself and express my deepest and sheltered thoughts and feelings. The circle and the talking stick, its rules make safety and sanity possible.”
(Don)

“It is becoming increasingly obvious that we all want connection, contact and communion with something intangible yet palpably real. The shared food, the hugs, the raw emotion are all part of meeting this need. My ongoing challenge is to open myself enough to let it touch me in the deeper places of my being. And to this end I continue to attend our Circle gatherings and am grateful for the opportunities afforded therein.”
(Brian)

“My experience of the circle begins with being impressed by the sincerity of the guys, their friendliness and the warmth of their welcome of the new face. They did their best to include me. I was hoping not to embarrass myself and my sharing was a mix of bits of personal history and putting on a brave face. Gradually, over time, I revealed something of the underlying emotions behind my descriptions of my life, all the while still keeping a distance of sorts. The retreat was a much more potent experience and cracked me open. The raw power inherent in the sharing of our stories shook me out of my isolation.” (Lynn)

“When people come together in a circle, it creates an atmosphere which allows participants to open up and share and engage in self exploration in a non-threatening environment. This is because in a sharing circle there exist certain values. Equality, trust, openness and respect of confidentiality are an integral part of all circles and it is up to the participants to ensure that those values are supported so that the circle can be a safe place for each to explore their inner selves and open up in new ways.

When a group of men come together to share, there is a unique dynamic that gets added to the mix. All of a sudden, as if by magic, men have a space in which they can open up and be vulnerable and introspective and feel, and the depth they can reach is truly remarkable...When men are allowed the feel love, not lust but love, for and from other men, it is only then that he can reach his full potential and open in all the ways that women want men to be. I believe that this has to do with men feeling safe to be vulnerable and loving without the fear of being perceived as “unmanly” and of feeling like being a man is a beautiful thing.” (Pierre)

LISTENING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY

“The sharing aspect of the circle made me realize that we are all just human beings with our own inner struggles. We as a group had the immense honour of gaining an understanding of the pain of others. And we all grew from giving love and support to those among us so afflicted.” (Jack)

“One of the most rewarding benefits of sharing so intimately was learning to listen so much more deeply. Sure it was good, really great in fact, to express myself openly amongst men, to bare the painful, icky, joyful, tormented, soulful parts in ways I had not before but compassion and respect seldom move in another’s direction when we are talking about ourselves. So to sit quietly for two hours and hear about other men’s agony, YOUR agony, triumphs, joys, aspirations, sorrows, whims, tenderness, anger, fear, courage, dreams, doubts, fulfillment, despair, humility, happiness, well the list is so much longer but you all know what I mean, to hear the naked truth, from almost all of you, about what is really going on inside.....well....it is really a profound gift in that it opens me to your experience. That is a dance of intimacy that rarely happens with men and one that opens my heart in ways I was unaware of. My ability to be compassionate and trusting has grown with much room left yet this inner movement is so important in my life.” (Dancing Wolf)

“What the COT men’s circle shares with all the men’s groups I’ve experienced is a circle structure that encourages a new way of being a man. Like many men, before the men’s movement started up, I experienced my relationships with men as based on dominance and display (“My son’s just graduated from Harvard”; “I spent last weekend finishing the roof on my 5,000 square foot house”) or male banter “How about them, Oilers, eh? Put a wet blanket on your Flames”—Ok, it’s a historical example!) Being listened to when I talked, learning to listen, and feeling safe no matter what I admitted were life-changing experiences for me, as for so many men’s in men’s groups.” (Chris)

ARE WE DEEP ENOUGH?

“As you know by now, from my past experiences, I really value and recognize that from a deep searching in the conscious and unconscious mind, one discover, feel, share and release unnecessary baggage that can free oneself and finally live fully in the present, which is the only true TIME. I feel that in the last months, maybe a year, that we are more of a social club. Don't take me wrong, I really enjoy hearing about your recent events. But, for me, I miss to know you better. I want to find more about you, the real YOU! Hence, why I sometimes share with you from my core being, my guts. That frees me from the bondage of the ego mind. I feel, then, such a relief. (Daniel, TimberWolf)

“The main thing that other men’s groups I’ve been in did that the Men’s circle usually doesn’t do is to have a structure to allow a man to plunge into the depth of his experience in an extended way. This happens at Men’s circle retreats to some extent, but a talking circle with a large number of people just hasn’t the time for depth work, and, as

a matter of principle, doesn't encourage the suggestions and responses which this work often needs." (Chris)

LOVE, SACRED SPACE, BEAUTY, MYSTERY

"The mystery of our men's circle, why has it flourished so well? I prefer to consider it as "magic". When I have the talking stick, it is my circle. I can bare my soul knowing that all shall be contained within its boundary. When another brother has his turn, I feel, I live, I am the trust, the responsibility of holding this sacred space. Tis the magic of the universe, tis love that has brought us together. It is love that binds us to our truth. And there is no greater Love for in the circle we are One... What directed our paths to come together, to experience the unity of the circle? I do love a mystery." (Stephen)

"This community has taught me the power of listening, the intimacy of being vulnerable and open and the potential of collaborative interaction with others. In my mind these learnings have come from living the protocols of the 'Sacred Circle' as practiced in the Men's Group and codified in Cottalk's Purpose, Guidelines and Facilitators' Role." (Colin)

"The circle of life is inherent in everything... Yet the greatest of all its powers is Love, for it is love that magnetically draws the appropriate person, group or thing to you, according to your invisible emanations, your vibrational aura. And it is Love that I feel when in the presence of my group brothers, a bond that has been, and will be so in the future to come. It is our communal joys and pains, our humanity that binds us into ever deepening love and compassion, shared in silence, words and feelings. The circle of Love and Life increases my sense of worth and trust, as I 'Open my Heart' to everyone, as everything rejoices with me. In my circle of brothers, I feel at home." (Troii)

"One of the things men experience [in circles] is love for each other and what an amazing gift that is. Homophobia keeps men isolated from each other due to the fear of not fitting the "typical male stereotype" and being perceived as gay. Whether or not we like to admit it. This has had a profound psychological impact on the male psyche (often an unconscious one) and thus on how men live their lives... We need to feel part of something beautiful so that we can in turn feel beautiful. Once we feel that beauty, we then have something of true value to share with the world, our communities, our friends and our loved ones and now we have a solid foundation of self-esteem which allows us to stop feeling like we have to defend our manhood because deep down we know that being a man, which is one of the key aspects of our existence, is truly a beautiful thing." (Pierre)

SHARING FOOD:

"One of the most precious features of the Men's Circle for me is the opportunity we have to physically nurture each other with shared food, a concrete manifestation of the

love and care we harbour for each other. Every gathering is a feast, for the body and for the soul, and I am grateful for the reoccurring opportunity to nurture and be nurtured in this way.” (Hendrik)

“One of the great aspects of eating together before we share, besides the often yummy food, is the different kind of sharing that goes on before we gather formally. We banter about thoughts and antidotes, make corny jokes, well mine aren’t of course, talk politics things we do not talk about at 111 Superior but that allow another window into who we are and also a door for stuff to get out that might take up precious time in the Circle later.” (Dancing Wolf)

WIDENING OUR FOCUS?

“I see that our circle has continually expanded in trying to effect change in larger circles, such as the Men's Divine Dining event last year. I see us struggling to deepen our understanding of ourselves through grief work, sweats and the shield exercise at our retreat. We grow and grow.” (Hendrik)

“Reaching out from our Men’s Circle has been important if not exactly frequent enough for my liking. Yes we did the amazing Ying Yang Circles in November 2012 as part of Oneness Wednesdays and of course our very successful Divine Dining which was wonderful and brought deeper bonding for many of us. There were other much smaller things we contributed too but for me there could have been more.” (Dancing Wolf)

“Does the men’s circle reach out enough? I have to admit that I miss some discussion of how our experience relates to the larger issues concerning men in our time. I don’t think this discussion has to be intellectual; some of the leaders of the men’s movement, like Robert Bly and Sam Keen, talked about men’s need to take an active role in the world—like being a steward for the land—without being at all intellectual.” (Chris)

THE FUTURE?

“...I will mention something that words will only crudely approximate..there is a sense of something NEW emerging. Perhaps it is something NEW in the uniqueness of the ‘chemistry ‘of the group..?? Perhaps it is the edge of a ‘collective consciousness’ that is making itself apparent where willingness and authenticity are found together..?? heck..!! it may be that so many good cooks never gathered in one place before...??? but it’s real and it’s special and I’ll be in that circle as long as they will have me...” (Dennis)

“Circles can go round and round and round and round and become insular and stagnant. Going it alone can likewise be unproductive. I feel that a combination of the two must take place thus producing a spiral in which there is forward movement with cohesiveness. Our Men's Circle has exhibited this spiral movement to some extent and I believe will be open to continuing this in the future. The Divine Dining event and the

Retreat are two significant examples of outer expression and inner revelation. There are many riches to yet be explored. May the journey continue apace.” (Brian)

Second installation on Blessings

The Essence of Blessing

I closed the first part of blessings, entitled The Twelve Blessings, with the universal Kahuna blessing, aloha, which in essence translates as, "I joyfully share my life energy with you!" And so we open with a cheery ALOHA as we delve more deeply into the art and science of blessing.

On the surface, the idea of blessing is quite simple, as all true ideas are, but when explored more a depth of meaning and understanding emerges that goes far beyond the original simple idea. As I wrote initially, true blessing is the process of joyfully sharing your positive thought and feeling energy with the world around you. In order to do this you must be conscious and aware on mental, emotional, energetic and physical levels.

The simple thought of blessing is good, but does not contain the focus or the power of a full blessing. In order to really pour out life energy you need to be in a calm, relaxed, centered, conscious state, with little or preferably no interfering thoughts, feelings and events going on around you. Otherwise your good intention to bless can be interfered with and distorted. We hear a lot about the power of intention, but unless we also have clear, focused attention we are not doing what we really want to do. "Set your intention, but always watch your attention," is a good rule. This is often easier said than done, as I am sure everyone has recognized.

True blessing, however, is not as difficult as all this may sound. If one is relaxed and feeling good, and just enjoying being one's self, and suddenly feels like sharing that wonderful feeling with the world, a wonderful blessing literally pours out, whether silently, in thought or feeling or in word. The important thing is that the energy goes forth focussed and qualified with strong positive feeling, especially a love feeling, or a feeling of appreciation or gratitude. Such a blessing would have tremendous power for good and could pour out to all around, to a whole city, the whole planet, even all life everywhere! The amazing thing is that all of life knows and feels the blessing instantly, because thought and feeling are instantaneous and travel beyond the speed of light! Isn't that a wonderful thing, and a wonderful ability we have. We are universal energy receivers and transmitters; we are all doing this all of the time (usually in a scattered and unfocussed way), but when we consciously focus our blessings the power is amplified many, many fold. We are truly blessed and we are truly a blessing.

For myself, the essence of blessings is best expressed in the follow excerpt from my book, The Book of Blessings:

Blessing ultimately expresses the joy of being alive, part and parcel of

All that Is.

Blessing is the power that effects everything around you beneficially, without bringing harm to any part of life.

Blessing is "the open door that no man can shut" into the inconceivable wonder and grandeur of life itself.

Blessing is the wholly grand and wonderful expression of the essence of love itself.

Blessing is love in action.

Blessing is the divine in you acknowledging itself in the sacredness of all of life.

Blessing is the remembrance of the perfection you once knew before the world was.

Blessing is an act of supreme intelligence; it recognizes only that which is real and true.

Blessing is acknowledging that you and the Creator are one.

Blessing is the Creator recognizing the creation.

Blessing is the creation honoring the Creator

And if this were not enough, blessings is a most enjoyable process, even fun.!

Yes, you are indeed blessed and you are a wonderful blessing, endowed by the Creator with the full rights and benefits of blessing to your heart's content.

Why not enjoy your birthright as expressed in this ancient Navajo song:

Now I walk with talking God;

With goodness and beauty in all things around me I go.

With goodness and beauty I follow immortality;

Thus being I, I go!

Until next time, ALOHA!

Submitted by Leonard Thornton, Ph.D.

Freedom is Your Destiny

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We Celebrate with YOU!



| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Don Morris | Aug-15 |
| Genevieve Eden | Aug-16 |
| Stephen Graves | Aug-16 |
| Ron Rayner | Aug-17 |
| Linda Chan | Aug-20 |
| Elsie Mary Poliquin | Aug-25 |
| Leonard Thornton | Aug-26 |
| Jennifer Sager | Aug-29 |
| Patricia Huot | Aug-30 |

Member Exchange Network

Be available to offer a helping hand to fellow members by “opting in” to the Member Exchange Network, our community-wide email support system. Post personal requests for yourself or on behalf of another.

Just choose to “opt in” on your annual membership form.

Contact: memberexchangenetwork@gmail.com

Use of the Church of Truth Community E-mail List

Church of Truth, Community of Conscious Living
Community E-mail List Reminder:



Each member is to use the list only for church or contact of a personal nature - but NOT for general jokes, junk, marketing, advertising or any other communications of like nature, or that the list be given to any other organization etc.

When you are sending out a notice to many members list them in the BCC section on your computer.

Submitted by The CoT Board

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTORY FOR CHURCH of TRUTH MEMBERS

For information only. These events and services are not endorsed by the Church of Truth, Community of Conscious Living.

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Haiku Poetry

Submissions from the Community Service July 26th

Wise Men seek Jesus
They find birth; but it's their birth
THE REAL JOURNEY BEGINS

Contemplate flowers
Evolution Emerges
Commune of NEW SOULS

The great mystery
Of universal Love born
Remains unanswered

Bow before sunrise
Sight ails me beloved moon
Choose softly thy course

Rebirthing as love
Begin to sound earth's oneness
Emerge; embrace; BE
Together we grow
Flowers warmed by the sun
Helping each other

Loving connection
Joy: pure, sweet, beaming silence
Flows from me to you

Submitted by Moneca Gabriel