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MOVING TOWARD THE LIGHT

Our December theme can be seen on two levels. On the archetypal level, moving into the light involves our journey from the darkness of the womb, and the dark periods of our lives (that we fight against but learn from), into a greater Light, the light of Soul and selfless service.

On the level of ancestry and ritual, we should remember that December was a time of great anxiety for our distant ancestors, since they did not have our certainty that longer days would reappear. The offerings they made to persuade the light to return, including fires and decorated trees, are the origin of many of the customs we continue today. On both levels of meaning it seems appropriate to consider what the darkness is that we need to bring light to, and how we bring light to it.

Submitted by Troi Leonard & Chris Bullock, SDC



The Lighthouse December 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

President	Sanjara Omoniyi	250-900-0281
Past President	D. Joan Thomas	250-721-4054
Vice President	Deborah Hawkey	250-813-1747
Inside Maintenance	Jennifer Sagar	778-440-5234
Secretary/Treasurer	Ron Rayner	250-474-2715
Outside Maintenance	Deborah Hawkey	250-813-1747
SDC Liaison	Colin Lee	250-514-1270

Your Spiritual Directions Committee

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

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SUNDAY SERVICE SCHEDULE

Theme: Moving Toward the Light

December 6

2nd Advent Sunday

Respecting the Dark

Coordinator: Chris Bullock
Moderator: John Vanden Heuvel
Meditation: Junie Swadron
Speaker: Laurie Noble
Greeter: Elsie Mary Polinquin

December 13

3rd Advent Sunday

Vision Quest

Coordinator: Bill Israel
Moderator: Bill Israel
Meditation: Laura Lane's Musical Quartet
Speaker: Hilary Marks
Greeter: TBA

December 20

The Coming of the Light

A Solstice Christmas Celebration

Coordinator: Jack Hyatt / Event produced by Sanjara
Moderator: Don Morris
Meditation: Jennifer Sagar
Speaker: Sister Eileen Curtis
Greeter: Ella Brown

December 27

Celebrating the Light

Community Service

Coordinator: Marvelous Trudeau
Moderator: Lorna Rennie
Meditation: Marvelous Trudeau
Greeter: TBA

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Description of Services

Just as the increasing darkness of the earlier part of December is a part of the cycle of nature, so some dark and difficult places are inevitably a part of everyone's lives. The key issue is what we do in those places? Denial of the dark does not work. Denial of the vision that we are all beings of the light equally does not work. So the question is: how do we respect the dark and still keep that vision?

December 6

Respecting The Dark Presenter: **Laurie Noble** is the mother of two sons, both born on Salt Spring Island. From Salt Spring, the family moved to the Shuswap, and for the last four years Laurie has lived on Vancouver Island. Though she presently lives in Chemainus, she has been able to attend the Church of Truth from time to time. She most recently worked as a technician in an optometry office. Serious illness has challenged Laurie to find a way of respecting the darkness represented by her illness while maintaining hope, courage and vision. This aspect of her journey is what she will focus on in her presentation.

December 13

Hilary Marks is a member of the Social Inclusion Committee for the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness. A homeless person herself for several years, Hilary is now an active member of the Speaker's Bureau for the Greater Victoria Homelessness Coalition. She will speak about her life experience and the narrative of her personal life transitions. Her story includes the work she does now with the homeless population of Victoria. Hilary has an engaging narrative that is a living version of the Vision Quest theme for this service.

December 20

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 23 years. After the closure of Queensland Retreat and Spirituality Centre where she had worked for 17 years, Eileen carried on the legacy of the former Queenswood by obtaining a 15 year trademark for Queenswood School of Reiki. She then went on to establish, with the help of other dedicated women, the Queenswood Holistic Healing and Spirituality Society. Preceding this, Sister Eileen was a teacher, principal, and educator for 27 years. Her greatest passion lies in her healing ministry, and in the literary arts. She has authored 12 books to date, and has become an accomplished poet, artist, and writer, as well as being a producer of six CDs and three films.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY
We Celebrate with YOU!

Jack Hyatt	Dec-15
Sanjara Omoniyi	Dec 23
Colin Lee	Dec-26
Gordon Thurtson	Dec-31

Talk given by Junie Swadron, November 1st, 2015

When I was growing up in a typical household for the era— I often heard – There are two things we can count on - death and taxes. I wonder what it would have been like if my mom or dad, took me aside – and said,

“Junie...the other thing we can count on, honey, is change.”

“And it is not something ever to be afraid of. In fact, sweetheart, it’s something to embrace. Just as you will grow up and be an adult one day – just like I have...because I too was 8 years old once...and just like the seeds we planted in the jar last month are now starting to spout...everything becomes different than it was. Everything changes. It’s The Way of Nature, the Way of Life.”

“In fact, Junie, we could even look at life as a surprise party – every day something new happens and every day, we can get excited about it. Like the sun suddenly coming out when it’s been pouring all day and you’ve had to stay inside. That was a nice surprise. But what if we planned a picnic on the beach, and you invited some friends to join us and suddenly it started to pour? How do you imagine you might react?”

Can you imagine that – parents who foster their children’s natural gift of imagination to empower them to be their own authors of change?

So that when things they were counting on suddenly took an unexpected turn, they actually competed with their siblings to see who had the best next plan of action!

By now you are probably asking yourself what planet does she live on?

But seriously, what IF our parents had had that conversation with us? Would we not only know that everything changes, because that is obvious, but could we then also take it in our stride?

And if we take it a step further – that it was actually part of the culture to look at change as an opportunity to seek out the best in every situation, how different would the world look then? To casually say, oh, there's that rain again, no matter what that rain represented.

This is not to deny and suppress feelings of disappointment, despair or even outrage when life is going as planned, or so we think and suddenly, possibly without warning (in parenthesis – often we have been warned, but weren't paying attention) and crash, boom, bam!

So much for that plan, that dream, that steady course of action. So back to those ideal teachings again...to learn at a young age that the order of things is that there is no reliable order that we can count on indefinitely, but that's okay because we'd have the resources and confidence to go with the flow – to discover plan B without fear of the future and the dramas that love to tag along. Some of you might know the fable:

There's a little boy and on his 14th birthday he gets a horse... and everybody in the village says, "How wonderful. The boy got a horse"

And the Zen master says, "We'll see."

Two years later, the boy falls off the horse, breaks his leg, and everyone in the village says, "How terrible."

And the Zen master says, "We'll see."

Then, a war breaks out and all the young men have to go off and fight... except the boy can't cause his leg's all messed up.

And everybody in the village says, "How wonderful." And of course the Zen master says, "We'll see."

Imagine going through life with that kind of objectivity and detachment, equilibrium, and wisdom with the things that change our personal reality – and also our global reality?

How do we get there? How do get from the fear of change to a willingness to change and then to actually to embrace it. Embrace Life itself.

I often think that the biggest hurts that we face in life is not what happens to us, but that we hold onto that which has happened, long after it's over and we keep repeating the same story about it – in our minds and to everyone who will listen. Many of you here know I have a book called Re-Write Your Life that was born out of a workshop called, Sacred Stories, and Embracing Your Life Journey which is about to become an on-line program in January.

I could only write a book with that title because of the countless stories in my own life that I have had to re-write – look through a different lens, see the circumstances that have shown up for me as a playground of opportunity – instead of the despair, regret, depression and hopelessness that held me hostage for far too many years.

Now I know there is an unopened gift in every surprise, every unexpected change – I just have to have the willingness to be open to what that could be. To live in the deep Mystery of Life and allow the deeper truths available to me to bring me solace when my heart is broken. To be present to the still small voice inside of me even when I feel I need to control the situation in order to get the imagined best results.

What a misperception that is. Thinking I could ever know what the best outcome would be and a bigger misconception is that I must do something to make it happen.

What a joy it is when I can let go of control and allow the eternal wisdom of my Higher Self or God or The Universe talk to me – show me the way, bring me onto the path of my Destiny which is always for my highest good.

Right now I am seeking that wisdom. Right now I am in a place of openness as well as deeply vulnerability from an unexpected change to a family member and it is the kind of thing that – well, for me, is unimaginable. I'm going to repeat something I said a couple of minutes ago...

...This is not to deny and suppress feelings of disappointment, despair or even outrage when difficult changes arise – but what if, we looked at them in a way that offered us the best solution to carry on – and not just carry on – but to come to 'what's next' with the eyes of curiosity, with our imagination awake and ready to find a way be okay – even embrace whatever arises.

So here is where the rubber meets the road.

I've been a member of this church for over a decade and many of you know of or have met my niece Rachel, whom I adore, when she has come to visit from Toronto. She is more like a daughter to me and her children are like my grandchildren. This past May, her 17 year old daughter, Hannah spent three delicious weeks with me. It was one of the most fun times I can ever recall. Not having children of my own, any chance I'm given to hang out with babies and teens – well, I'm in my element.

Hannah is one of the most up-beat, intelligent, passionate young girls I know. It seems her whole raison d'etre in life has been to save the world! She also started meditating with Thich Nhat Han when she was only 14 – including silent retreats! While her friends were all dressing up in the latest fads and checking out the cute guys in the school, Hannah was studying Buddhism.

This September – just last month, and just weeks after her 18th birthday, she was diagnosed with cancer. She was in Jerusalem at the time beginning her first year of University – excited about everything that she has been preparing for up until now. New, wondrous beginnings...moving toward a future of leadership – because that is what she is. And I pray – and I ask that you pray with me – that her future is one of vibrant health, allowing her walk whatever path she chooses. This is a change that I have to say, I have no idea how to embrace. I don't want to embrace it. There's a gift in this? Seriously? Keep your gift is what I want to say! I'm angry, I'm scared, I'm sad I am 3,000 miles away.

This is one of those times that even though the higher wisdom of the ages tells us to be okay with whatever arises – and isn't that what I've been talking about – the real truth is, at this moment, I am not okay with it. Philosophically, perhaps – but in my heart – seriously, it sucks, it's unfair, it's actually unfathomable!

Change...the willingness to change? Am I willing to change my attitude? Yes, I am, because I am not much good for anyone when I'm raging. I am also choosing NOT to negate my feels of astonishment and heartbreak and everything that comes with it.

I know unequivocally that part of embracing change is to feel whatever arises and allow it to be expressed. To not let the anger, rage, sadness, pain – stay stuck somewhere so that we can look like we have it all together during an outrageous time.

So where is the line of 'acting as if' I'm strong let's say – and not publically showing my fears and concerns?

In two weeks I will be with Rachel, her husband, David, Hanna and their other 3 children. What I would like is to be a beacon of light. To bring comfort to my family. My biggest intention is to be real – to cry with them, laugh with them and see the beauty of life that still exists even in this dire situation.

Rachel told me that when they were flying home from Israel- just after being given the diagnosis – Hanna said, “Mom, let’s write down everything we are grateful for.” The two of them sat beside each other in the plane doing just that. Apparently it was a long list.

Just before Hanna went into surgery – with her family all around her – she said, I want all of you to write down what you are grateful for and when I wake up, I want you to read me your list.

And that’s just what they did. I told you she is a remarkable child. So back to change – back to a willingness to change.

How do we get from fearing change to being willing to change and the embracing all that Life puts before us? This is as much rhetorical as it is a question I’m putting out to you.

I supposed for everyone, it is different. We all have our go-to tools. Nature, writing, therapy, and for me – the one that gives the greatest returns is the simplest, yet sometimes the hardest one of all.

It’s stepping back from the fear, away from the drama and willing to sit quietly and listen. Actually listen to that small voice which will show me the way. And be patient because it may not receive the guidance in the time frame I am hoping for.

So it takes a complete surrender to God – to Universal Intelligence. To deposit all my prayers into the Universal Trust Fund – That T R U S T Fund that always, always brings me home to myself in a way that is better than anything I could possibly make up.

I know this to be true. And the other thing I know to be true, is when I am not paying attention to the guidance I am given, The Universe will give me a gentle nudge to get my attention.

If I still insist on running the show, the next nudge will not necessarily be as gentle. Sometimes, when I’m really glued to the illusion of control, insisting in doing things my way – a two by four lands on my head.

And the biggest irony of all that, is in looking back, I can almost always say, when I 'm being honest – yes, I saw the red flags and I didn't pay attention.

But there is a gift in that too. Even the two by four is a testament of God's love because it is the Universe bringing us home to our deeper truths – allowing us to learn and grow and then pass on our learnings to others who are going through something similar. Like the drug addict who goes into rehab and becomes the drug and alcohol counsellor who knows from the inside the challenges that can arise, and also knows first-hand how to make it better.

Perhaps it in our best interest then, to not wait until thunder and lightning strikes to get our attention. Can we just say, I'm willing to learn. I'm willing to wake up. I'm willing to allow God's Grace enter this situation and trust I am safe.

And if you are lucky like me, you will have experienced the miracles that show up when we surrender and let go. The synchronicities – the God Winks –the angels that are waiting in the wings to hold our hand while we take our next steps. In fact, I believe, when we get out of our own way and say Yes, to the Universe. I'm listening, I'm here – there are 1000 angels giving each other high fives and giving us a standing ovation. They are ecstatic because they can leave the picket line. The strike has ended and They can go back to work doing what they love best. And what do they love to do best? That's easy. It's loving us unconditionally, of course.

And in that...we start to stand taller and can begin to do that for ourselves. To learn to love ourselves without conditions.

And that's when we can give that unconditional love to another, and another, and another still. And sometimes, that self-love shows up as being brave enough to be vulnerable and say to another – "I'm scared. I really don't know how to do this. There is so much going on that I just didn't see coming and frankly, I'm floundering. Will you please help me?"

Sometimes, our reaching out can be one of the biggest forms of healing and transformation, because for many of us, it's breaking through a huge barrier to ask for help.

It is a gift to ourselves – to learn how to receive and it is a gift to our loved one – when we let them in, and not say, 'don't worry, I'm fine.'" For in the end, aren't they the one's doing the high fives because they get to do what they were born to do – and that is to give love.

In the end, it is the gift we give one another – in this ever-changing world of comings and goings, beginnings and endings and new beginnings again – we get to embrace each other with our very own translucent, rainbow-coloured, compassion-filled – love you to the moon and back - angel wings.

Namaste

Submitted by Junie Swadron

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FACING THE CRISIS OF SOUL IN OUR TIMES

Difficulties/ challenges to living a soulful life

By Sue Clough Nov. 8, 2015

CG Jung The most serious spiritual illness of our times is the loss of soul

(I think this still applies to us today even though he said this before his death in 1961 now seen as a kinder gentler time)

When Chris asked me if I would speak this morning on soulful living, I felt a resonance with this topic and was pleased to be asked. However, I need to be very clear that I am here not because I live a soulful life easily and smoothly. Nor am I here because I can pull out a list of the Top 10 Ways to face this crisis of our times. I have no formula, no answers, mostly just questions.

Growing into greater freedom and wholeness is all of a piece rooted in our humanity. My background and love of Psychology and Spirituality have shown me that they both invite us into our core...to our soul. Being human is a journey of becoming and that process is a journey of soul and a deeply spiritual one

My call, my commitment and my struggle has been to take seriously (some have said too seriously!) my time here on this earth, always reaching for, as The Tales of Narnia say, the 'further up and further in' of life. It's the hunger of my heart that keeps inviting me to attend to the something more of daily life. It is who I am and how I choose to live...even tho' it is not perfect and I stumble often.

So, what I offer here this morning is simply me and my life experience, some learnings and a few reflections on my often bumbling efforts to live with meaning in the society we find ourselves.

These reflections may or may not resonate with you. You are on your unique path. I invite you today to receive what speaks to you and to adapt what you wish!

A question: What matters to you? What do you hunger for?

Since you are here this morning there is something in this topic, in this community that does matter to you. You have taken a Sabbath time, a time to change the rhythm of our Monday – Saturday lives. Today, we take time to see with different eyes.

One of the reasons to be here may be because of your own desire to find a way not to be so caught up in the pressures of what we are sold about what good living is. You are here because of your own inner hunger and you heard the voice of your soul...I suggest that that is what matters to you.

Our topic this morning is: Facing the crisis of soul in our times. What is this crisis of soul? Why is there a 'crisis of soul'?

These questions point to this: that it's all about consciousness and choice. How can we wake up to our soul's reality? And how can we choose to live from that awareness?

But first, we need to approach the question, 'What are we talking about when we talk of 'soul'?

Soul

This question, 'what is soul?' has been discussed in so many arenas: Philosophy, Psychology, Spirituality, Science, Feng Shui, with more or less success. I don't intend to give a definition today because defining 'soul' is like detailing the parameters of a cloud from inside the cloud. This short poem talks both of the ineffability of soul and its definite presence.

I am not I.

I am this one

Walking beside me whom I do not see,

Whom at times I manage to visit,

And whom at other times I forget;

The one who remains silent when I talk,

The one who forgives, sweet, when I hate,

The one who takes a walk where I am not,

The one who will remain standing when I die.

(Jimenez)

When we attend, we all know our own soul deep within. It is 'the one who will remain standing when I die.' Soul is of our very essence, the inner core that makes us who we are. Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk, called this our True Self: meaning the self that is clear, authentic, beyond persona or masks. Merton talks of the self who is rooted in this truth: that we are goodness and blessing, that we are divine. Of course, we are not without darkness but the light of our True Self is who we are.

When we attend, we know when we are living from soul and can just sense being united with the Hidden Wholeness of the universe. When we are 'in the flow...' we know it in our whole being.

As I was reflecting on this topic the question came to me: who are you without your 'to do' list? How you answer that question points to soul.

So even if a clear definition eludes us, we can know soul from what it invites us to, from what it does...

Soul Transcends Ego

We are living from our soul and expressing who we are when we are being creative, engaging in a concrete activity like the arts. How often have we heard people say,

'I completely lost track of time when I was writing, or quilting or working with wood...I was in another world.' That is being in soul space. Soul space can also happen in a way that is less measurable, like spending time hearing the cries of the heart of a friend, or walking in the forest being awed by 150 yr. old trees, or being in love. Or when we are able to stand back in a conflict and know that it doesn't have to be this way.

Soul takes us out of our constraining ego into spaciousness, a place beyond opinions, judgments, likes or dislikes into peace and clarity.

Soul expands in ecstasy when listening to Beethoven's 5th Piano Concerto or in singing Brahms's Requiem, whenever we are overcome with awe. To wonder, to open ourselves to awe keeps us open to the deep mystery of being alive.

We are living soulfully when we are in deep reverence for the mystery at the heart of each person, and at the heart of the universe in its innate sacredness.

Soul is Unfolding

What seeds are planted in you, that are breaking open and unfolding to be made manifest in your life? What is your unique soul, your True Self, that can be embodied in our world...in the way that no one else can, but you?

This is not a static, a 'once and for all thing', but an ongoing process of waking up to our own deep self and then claiming it. I'm 70 as are many of my friends and all of us are still a work in progress, all still learning, changing and desiring to live more of our Self in the world.

To be in the world as YOU calls us to 3 things: firstly, to Wake Up to this self; next, to make a Commitment to living from our soul and then, to find ways to Build a life that fosters soul. And here is where choice comes in.

Many are called
but most are frozen
in corporate and collective cold.
These are the stalled
who choose not to be chosen
but rather to be bought and sold.
(L. Pieper)

Waking up to and nourishing soul can happen in many ways.

Being here in Victoria is where my soul has been further awakened and greatly nourished. Before moving here 8 years ago, I had often visited this Island. I had a strong sense that this place was the 'home of my soul'. I chose to move here in order to find out what that meant for me, a meaning that is still unfolding. Without doubt this big 'wake- up call' has been one of the best decisions of my life.

The core group of people with whom I celebrate the seasons of life, my lunch friends, my poetry group friends, are great gifts for me because they keep me connected to that essential part of myself. Solitude centres me in a significant way.

And, some of my reflections today are melded together with those of a soul guide, Thomas O'Kane. I have been with him for about 6 years and his teachings keep me in touch with my soul, nourishing me. I give him credit today with gratitude.

Who do you know that you would say lives from soul? Think of 2 qualities of that person. Share with neighbor.

Whatever qualities you saw in that person, I want to affirm that these are also in you and give you a hint of what may be unfolding in your own soul.

Soul is a Guide thru the Darkness

We all know the place of crisis...illness, death of a loved one, psychological trauma, relational suffering...where we have been dropped into a foreign land,

where we can't depend on anything that we have previously counted on. There is nothing to comfort us, no one to rescue us. Our resources have deserted us: neither talking nor solitude, not reflection nor action helps... it is only soul that knows the way thru.

This is soul time because something old is dying and something new is waiting to be born within us. We have been thrown deeply into the cycle of life-death-rebirth and are lost in the middle of a transformation. It is soul that can lead us through the darkness to the new place. It is soul that shows us how to surrender.

TS Eliot knows something of this way of soul.

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love for the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.
(East Coker)

We all know that it is a challenge to live soulfully, to live from our True Self. I don't want to give the impression that if we just decide to do it, it will happen. We forget and are seduced by superficial glitter, not essence. We are addicted to the finite even tho' it crushes our soul.

Both the external pulls of the world's pressures and values as well as our own internal issues are ample causes for a loss of soul. The crisis of soul exists also because of lack of supports for living soulfully.

I'd like to highlight a few of the many issues in our society that make it difficult to live from soul.

Distractions: We live in an entertainment culture where 'star' power reigns. And the lives of glamorous actors are to be aspired to. It offers us no depth or substance for the deepest longings of our heart.

Technology with all its benefits also has a shadow side: its speed and the variety of information that we have access to fosters a loss of concentration, an inability to focus, to attend to, to slow down. Increased distractions affects the consciousness of all humanity.

Have a look at our interminable lists, family calendars, much multitasking. All separate us from soul.

Addictions: These can be inner compulsions (competition, ideology, jealousy, drivenness) or of substance. There are unlimited possibilities that remove us from true life, from soul rhythm.

Disconnect from Nature: We are out of synch w. natural rhythms (sunrise/sunset) and often our home décor reflects our longing for a reconnection. (ie., collections of rocks, myriad plants, indoor water features,) Need to find ways to stay connected to the wonder of creation. Right here we have the ocean with its beauty, fierce wind and storms...the old growth trees...at our doorstep.
This can surely open us up to largeness...and the greatness of us that we can take this in and be a part of.

Exploitation of Sexuality: of genders, relationships...look at ads and see soul-lessness.

So, what can we do to face this crisis of soul? How can we speak our truth to the power that seems to be all encompassing in our society?

We face the crisis of soul together by creating relationships, places, events that foster another way to live, that are invitations for soul.

It all comes back to consciousness and the choice to commit to the unfolding of our soul.

I leave you with some questions focusing on consciousness and choice:

What do you need to awaken your soul and allow you to live from your essence?
What is it that your soul needs to thrive? A practice, a teacher, certain authors, nature, music....what is your way?

What is it that separates you from living from soul?

What can we create, together, as supports for living soulfully, to honour mystery and the countless ways it is manifest?

In the story of the Little Prince, the Fox teaches the Prince about what is important.

‘It is the time you wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important...’

So, too, in the way of soul...

Submitted by Sue Clough©
sjmc45@gmail.com

Ubuntu: I cannot be what I am meant to be, until you are what you are meant to be

The Blessing of Christ Consciousness

Whether or not one accepts the Great Being who embodied what came to be known as the Christ, anyone who aspires to a more inclusive, tolerant and loving consciousness of life, is seeking the consciousness embodied by that individual. A rose by any other name is still a rose, and one who is informed by the desire to be whole and express greater love, acceptance and joy aspires to that state of being and consciousness.

Christ Mind (sometimes also referred to as Buddha mind, although Christ and Buddha are not synonymous) ultimately knows the wholeness and oneness of life and sees all things through the eyes of love, acceptance and forgiveness. When in this state of consciousness, one knows and sees the Good, the True and the Beautiful, regardless of outer appearances. Fear, criticism and judgment are alien to such a mind, which knows all beings as brothers and sisters, extensions of itself, embodying the same Divine Essence as Itself. The Christ Consciousness is literally the bridge between the Divine and the human, between heaven and earth, for the Being must have been embodied as a human in order to become the Christ. Christ-hood, if you like, is not bestowed; it is earned, often times through much difficult experience, where the outer human resists, fights against, the indwelling spirit, seemingly desiring to "fight to the death" to hold onto its limited conception of self. Attainment of the Christ Consciousness, is never easy, yet a most worthy and wonderful aspirational and inspirational goal; and the path can be one of joy rather than sorrow and suffering. As the Buddha wisely saw centuries ago, attachment to limitations and desires that no longer serve, creates suffering. Seeking Christ consciousness or Buddha mind is still based in desire, for desire is the motor force of creation and change. Yet, it is a desire which impels us to seek the greater, the more fulfilling and rewarding life, a greater love, more joy and happiness. Initially for self, it also takes us beyond self, to the greater Self that sees and knows Its Wholeness and Oneness.

This is the great blessing of Christ Consciousness; it liberates the Self from the self and enables any individual to embody and be the Christ; to be a unique expression of that which is ultimately beyond expression, but ever inspires us to seek and find, and seek yet again and find yet more. Christ consciousness is ever evolving, becoming greater, ever more inclusive; yet always remaining Itself, individual, yet universal; human, yet divine.

In my own humble experience, I was once inspired by a vision of the Christ Being in a meditation; I felt as a child before this great one, and while it disappeared almost as quickly as it had come, my initial confusion soon turned to the realization that I had been challenged to "Come, follow me!" This was exactly what I needed at that stage in my life; something greater to aspire to after my intellectual career no longer interested me.

Whatever we may need at any moment, the Spirit provides, and, if we give it our willingness, wonderful things happen in our lives.

Perhaps the greatest blessing of the Christ Spirit is that inspires us to know, be, feel and express more of what we fundamentally are, but don't yet really understand. We just want to be free of what and where we are. The needed understanding comes through experience and continuous revelation becomes a way of life, each successive illumination revealing more of the greater life that is ever unfolding within and through our outer selves.

There is a story of a monastery where the revered head had passed on, leaving a few dozen monks, living in poverty and unable to attract much of the local population to come to the services it had performed. There was concern that they would not be able to go on. One day the monks received a message that a new leader would arise out of their midst and be and express as a Christ would. They were not told who was the One, and in their not knowing ever one of the monks stated to think he or any of the others might be the One. Not only did they start thinking this way, they also started acting and treating each other as if he was this new Christ-like leader. In short order, the whole atmosphere of the place changed; the monks held their heads up high and gave each other the love, appreciation and respect deemed worthy of the One. The locals noticed a big change and started coming back to their services and helped revitalize the buildings and gardens. The whole place was transformed.

They never found out who the chosen One was. They just continued living and acting as they thought the Christ would. For indeed each had come to embody the Christ Spirit and had attained a degree of Christ Consciousness, simply because they thought and acted as if they or another was the One. And in Truth, each one--everyone--was the One.

Again, in my own expanding life experience, I found that the more I started thinking, feeling and acting like the One who inspired me, the more amazing things happened in my life. And the more challenges arose, for the limiting self does not easily relinquish its control. Yet, the inspiring insight, strength and guidance and love, especially the love, is always there. The Christ spirit, in this case I knew It as the one known as Christ Jesus, became my mentor, guide, friend,

loving companion and headmaster, for the Christ mind knows and develops great discipline; yet it is a discipline always accompanied by great love and acceptance. In time I came to know this Guide as my own Divine I AM Presence, always silently present, yet immediately responsive in thought and feeling to what was needed.

In this most uplifting of seasons, inspired in large part by the light, love and generosity of the Christ Spirit, perhaps the more we think feel and act "as if," like the monks, the more we will also embody the consciousness of the One.

To this end, we might try some of the following blessings for self, others and the world, for as Beloved St. Germain has informed us, "thought, feeling, and the spoken word are the only creative power of the Universe".

I bless myself with the Christ consciousness that fills me with wholeness, love and joy now!

I bless this one (_____) with the knowing and feeling the Christ already dwells within.

May I see the wondrous light of the Christ shining through the eyes of everyone I meet today!

May I remember to bless everyone I see today with all the light and love of the Christ silently dwelling within!

May I also remember to honor the light of the Christ within those who act out fear and violence that they too might feel love and remember the One.

The infinite light, love and power of the Universal One now blazes through the hearts and minds of all mankind and bring peace to the earth.

The blessings of Christ Consciousness blazed through the hearts and minds of all mankind and love and peace came to prevail upon earth.

The limitless forces of light and love blaze through my mind and heart (or the minds and hearts of all mankind) and bring peace to the earth.

I bless my eyes with the ability to see the good, the true and the beautiful, no matter what may be appearing.

I bless and honor the good, the true and the beautiful in everyone I meet.

May the blessings of the great spirit of this season inspire us all to greater heights of knowing the One who silently dwells within us all

In Light, love and peace....Aloha....

Submitted by Leonard Thornton, Ph.D.

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