



St Mary's Contemplative Prayer Group
942 Hopmeadow Street
Simsbury, CT

Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10.

We are a Christian Contemplative Prayer group practicing Centering Prayer and Lectio

Divina. Please join us on the First and Third Sundays at St. Mary's Simsbury Lower Church at 7:00 PM to share in these beautiful forms of Christian Contemplative prayer. A Welcoming Prayer guided meditation starts the evening followed by a short contemplative video teaching with group dialogue. We conclude with a 20 minute period of Centering Prayer followed by Lectio Divina. Please Contact Mike Smoolca (msmoolca@hotmail.com) at 860-798-8992 or Ellen Graham (ejgraham08@gmail.com) for further information.

Welcoming Prayer - is consenting to God's presence and action in our physical and emotional reactions to events and situations in daily life. This prayer helps dismantle the emotional programs of the false-self system to heal the wounds of a lifetime by addressing where they are stored – in the body. It continues the process of transformation in Christ initiated in Centering Prayer.

Lectio Divina - means "divine reading." It's the ancient practice of praying the Scriptures. During Lectio Divina, the practitioner listens to the text of the Bible with the "ear of the heart," as if in conversation with God, and God is suggesting the topics for discussion. Lectio Divina includes moments of reading (lectio), reflecting on (meditatio), responding to (oratio) and resting in (contemplatio) the Word of God with the aim of nourishing and deepening one's relationship with the Divine. Like Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina dates to the time of the Desert Mothers and Fathers and was made a regular Monastic practice in the 6th Century by St Benedict.

Centering Prayer - seeks to still the activity of the mind in order to experience a loving awareness of God's presence. Centering Prayer is a contemporary form of an ancient method of Christian Contemplative Prayer the goes back to the Desert Mothers and Fathers. It was inspired by the 14th Century book *The Cloud of the Unknowing* and formalized in the 1970's at St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts. Centering Prayer adds depth of meaning to all prayer and facilitates the movement from more active modes of prayer into receptive prayer; simply resting in God. This method emphasizes prayer as a personal relationship with God and as a movement beyond conversation with Christ to communion with Him.

Guests and Beginners are very welcome to join us! We invite new members and guests to join and deepen their prayer practice with us. For beginners, an orientation starting at 6:30 on the nights we meet can be arranged by contacting Mike Smoolca in advance. In addition to the orientation, we provide beginners with initial material on Welcoming Prayer, Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina and recommend further resources to help them start their Christian Contemplative journey.