



# Good News

VALLE CRUCIS CONFERENCE CENTER • SUMMER 2009

DEEPLY ROOTED ON SACRED GROUND

“At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”

— Albert Schweitzer

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT



### *A Gift to the Valle Crucis Conference Center*

Earlier this year we received a phone call from two special neighbors here in Valle Crucis. Dan and Ellenor Barker wanted to know if we would accept a gift of their house and property here in Valle Crucis. The Barkers live full time in Fayetteville, North Carolina but have owned a home here in Valle Crucis for almost 20 years. Because they no longer travel as they once did, they did not use the house and felt it would make a good gift to our ministry here at the Conference Center. It is contiguous with our property and was once part of the original 500 acres Bishop Horner purchased in the early 1900's. As Ellenor told me, she felt the property was going full circle to return it to the Valle Crucis Conference Center.

The house is a 2 bedroom (2 single beds in each) 2 bath house with full kitchen, washer/dryer, dishwasher and a marvelous sun room with a huge view of the valley and surrounding mountains. It is also beautifully landscaped. The Bishop and The Valle Crucis Conference Center Board of Directors approved the gift, and since we took possession, we have been busy painting, spring cleaning, pruning, spreading mulch and preparing the house to welcome guests.

The house is perfect for families and smaller groups (up to 8 people as there are 2 pull out sofas, 1 roll away and 1 day bed) than we can normally handle and who would like to do their own cooking, although if we are serving you will be welcome to eat in our dining room for an additional charge. The house will be available for retreats of one night and up. Please call the office for availability and current rates.

We are so grateful for this opportunity to continue and expand upon our ministry of hospitality and we thank the Barker family for this incredible gift.

—Peace to you and yours  
Tom Eshelman, Executive Director

# Thank You

Donations Dec 1, 2008 through June 12, 2009

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Elliott and Nivia Woodaman  
The Byerly Foundation of Hickory NC  
The Rev. Cynthia and Jim Banks  
The Rev. Jane Smith  
Susan B. Morgan  
Francis Sibyl Pressly  
For all our blessing by Dorcas and Sandy Jones  
St. Mary of the Hills - Blowing Rock  
Mary and Ernie Armstrong  
Beverley J. Gaines  
Shirrlene and Bill Seaver  
Carolyn and Dan Shepherd  
Kim and Chuck Forester  
The Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor  
Jan and Bo Lewis  
Neila and Carl Cunningham  
Godfrey Cheshire  
Patty Smith  
Moirra and John Turner  
The Rev. Morgan Gardner  
Frieda Lankford  
Judy and David Wall  
The Rev. Jeanne Finan and Tom Eshelman  
Rosemary Sells  
Patti Sjostrand  
The Rev. Clare Barry  
The Rev. Liz Canham  
The Rev. Todd Donnatelli  
The Rev. John and Debra Rice  
The Rev. Beth Lilly  
The Rev. Barbara Petersen  
The Rev. Patti Mouer  
The Rev. Ben Robertson  
The Rev. Austin Rios  
The Rev. G. Miles Smith  
The Rev. Jim Abbott  
The Rev. Greg Erickson  
The Rev. Mike Cogsdale  
Karen Kassinger  
The Rev. Cynthia and Jim Banks  
Dorcas and Sandy Jones  
St. Mary of the Hills - Blowing Rock  
Ann Lane  
The Rev. Scott and Diane Oxford  
The Rev. Clem and Lucy Gunn  
Grace Church Episcopal Churchwomen  
- Grace Episcopal Church - Morganton NC  
Debra and Richard Angell

## MEMORIAL GIFTS

The Society of the Transfiguration  
- The Elizabeth Matthews Fund  
In memory of The Rev. I. Harding Hughes  
by Jean and Harding Hughes, Jr.

In memory of my wife Gloria  
by Fred D. Hinson  
In memory of my husband  
Bernard S. Linn, M.D.  
by Linda A. Loy  
In memory of Emily Pemmy Balchin Huntley  
by Charlie Huntley  
In memory of The Rt. Rev. Junius Moore Horner  
and Mary Ellen Horner  
by Edward Clarke Horner, Jr.  
In memory of Shirley Hyland  
by Mark Hyland  
In memory of Emily Toll Hopkins  
by Charles Toll  
In memory of The Rev. William Pickels, TSSF  
by Jane Tollison and Ginny Robards  
In memory of H.W. Mast  
by Diana Mast White  
In memory of the parents of Charles Barkley  
by Dorcas and Sandy Jones  
For the Mary Wright (Sullivan) Robinson Library  
by the Book Club of her  
daughter Caroline Nave  
by Mary Sullivan, Joyce Lower, Jane Rawdon  
and Mrs. W.T. Hayes

## ROCKING CHAIR FUND

In memory of Joel Hastings  
by Temple Throneburg

## OTHER GIFTS

Power washer and trailer  
by Carolyn and Dan Shepherd

## HONORARIUM GIFTS

In honor of the VCCC staff  
by the Centering Prayer Retreat  
William Hamilton  
Joann and Paul Collins  
In honor of the VCCC Staff  
by The NAAPD  
In honor of Jeanne and George Hardie  
by Dorcas and Sandy Jones  
In honor of Charlie and Paula Glendinning  
by Dorcas and Sandy Jones  
In honor of Tom Eshelman for his vision in  
bringing the hermitage project to fruition  
by Karen Kassinger  
In honor of my mother Berta Messersmith  
by Lisa Griffin  
In honor of The Rev. Jeanne Finan  
and Tom Eshelman  
by Roberta and Jack Rhodes  
In honor of Norma Haralson by Becki Bostick

## HERMITAGE PROJECT



The chapel altar, crafted by David Finck

## • CONTRIBUTIONS

Burt and Phyllis Melton  
The Winston-Salem Foundation  
for Jim and Rose Andrews  
The Rev. Thomas and Hadley Morris  
The Women of St. Philip's  
- St. Philip's Episcopal Church - Brevard

## • A HERMITAGE BENCH

In honor of my dear mother,  
Mildred Virginia Clark, on her 90th birthday,  
March 18, 2009  
by Dorcas Baker Jones

## • HERMITAGE PROJECT: IN MEMORY OF

The Rt. Rev. William Weinbauer and in honor of  
his wife Jean  
by Claire and Tom McDonough

## • HERMITAGE PROJECT GRANTS

Mast General Store

## • HERMITAGE PROJECT: IN KIND GIFTS

Handmade welcome books and journals  
for each hermitage  
by Karen Kassinger  
Handmade chalice and patten  
by Gwen Temple in memory of her mother  
Shaw Howard

## • FLOWER GARDEN & LANDSCAPING FUND

In memory of Mary Kick for our flower gardens  
by Dorcas and Sandy Jones  
Wendell Seaver for the Matney Barn

## • ROCKING CHAIR FUND

In memory of Charles "Mack" Townsend  
by the board and staff of  
The Valle Crucis Conference Center

## • OTHER GIFTS

Handmade quilted pillows for the Hermitages  
by Danby Ludgate  
Refrigerator/freezer by Robin and Larry Byerly  
Handmade quilt  
by Faye Cooper

# BITS & PIECES

## MAILING LIST CLEAN UP

We would love for your help in cleaning up our mailing list. If you are receiving this newsletter but no longer wish to please let us know by e-mail or letter and we will take your name off our list. Our periodic newsletters are always available on our web site as are our current listing of programs offered.

## MARY WRIGHT (SULLIVAN) ROBINSON LIBRARY

During the summer of 2008 we received a call from Caroline Nave whose mother, Mary Wright (Sullivan) Robinson attended the VC Girls School and graduated in the class of 1942. The family was looking for an appropriate way to remember their mother with a bequest from her estate. Our library in Crab Orchard Hall was badly in need of refurbishing and updating. Over the past winter our staff tore out the old counters and shelves, added wainscoting, painted, replaced ceiling tiles, installed all new doors with windows, bought new pull down blinds for all the windows, new book shelves, all new Mission style furniture, new lamps and a new area rug. We will also add new siding on the outside to cover the old red asphalt shingle siding. What a wonderful

way to remember this remarkable woman who loved to read and never stopped learning. Mary and I attended the same church in Memphis Tennessee and she was so happy when she learned I would become the director here over 12 years ago.



Mary Wright (Sullivan) Robinson



Mac Townsend with that famous twinkle in his eyes

## MACK TOWNSEND: REST IN PEACE

Our good friend and neighbor and the father of Dale Townsend our Director of Maintenance, Mack

Townsend died on March 14, 2009 at the age of 85. Mack always was eager to help us with our molasses making and loved to tell a story or two while he was here. Mack always had a twinkle in his eye and loved to garden and he raised all kinds of animals and birds and had one of the best trout ponds in the area at his home place up at the head of Dutch Creek Road. He will be missed by all those who knew him.

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*"We can't thank  
the kitchen staff enough"*

— Christine Cooney

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## CLERGY RETREAT WITH CYNTHIA

March 2-3 we hosted as many of the clergy in our Diocese as were able to brave a raging blizzard and freezing cold weather to hear noted author The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Bourgeault for their annual Lenten Clergy Overnight. Bishop Taylor hosted a reception in front of our fireplace for all those in attendance.



**“Our lives begin  
to end the day we  
become silent about  
things that matter.”**

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

## GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

- **Class Size:** We are committed to keeping our class size small as we believe it is in the small group environment that learning and spirituality flourish. Because class sizes are kept small, classes fill quickly. Early registration is encouraged!
- **Price and Room Policies:** Listed prices for programs include room, board, tuition and materials. Most accommodations are double, triple or quadruple occupancy. If you prefer a single room, we will try to accommodate you though we cannot guarantee this until check-in when the final availability of single rooms can be determined. Please notify VCCC in advance if you have any medical needs such as diet or disability accommodations. We are unable to accommodate pets or provide childcare. Smoking is not permitted in any building.
- **We appreciate the fact that sometimes things may come up in your busy life that may prevent your attending one of our programs for which you have paid a deposit. In that case we will consider your deposit a donation to our ongoing ministry of hospitality.**
- **Meals:** We serve home-cooked, nutritious meals. The fare is hearty. Our kitchen staff will try to accommodate any special dietary needs if they receive 14 days prior notice. If you have any dietary questions, please give us a call.
- **Timing:** Unless otherwise noted, conferences begin with registration and check in at 4:00 p.m. on opening day, followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. They close after the 12 noon lunch on the closing day. To assist our housekeeping staff, we request that you complete your check out prior to lunch closing day.
- **To Register:** A non-refundable, non-transferable deposit of \$50 is required for each course except for single day programs when a non-refundable payment in full is required. Please mail your check with the completed registration form.
- **Directions:** You will receive directions to the conference center with your registration confirmation. We are easy to find and are located just 9 miles outside of Boone, NC (2 hours from Winston Salem; 2-1/2 hours from Charlotte).
- **Commuters:** A limited number of spaces are available in each multi-day program for commuters not requiring lodging. The fee does include three meals per day as mealtime is an important part of the program's fellowship. Those who choose to commute are encouraged to make a commitment to full participation in all meals and community activities.

## PROGRAM REGISTRATION

*(Feel free to copy this form but please use one form per person)*

Event for which you are registering: \_\_\_\_\_

Starting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Faith Tradition: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* I would like to room with \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I will not be staying at the Conference Center but will commute.

\_\_\_\_ I am coming for a Program Day and will not need lodging.

*(if you wish to arrive the night before a Program Day, call to check on room availability.)*

Enclosed: \_\_\_\_ Nonrefundable, nontransferable deposit of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Full payment of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Return this complete form with your check (payable to VCCC) to the address below. You will receive a registration confirmation by email with any further information necessary.

VCCC, PO Box 654, Valle Crucis, NC 28691

\*\* When requesting a specific room mate(s), registration forms and deposits should be mailed together.

*“Thanks to the staff!  
That includes the  
housekeepers. We  
never met them but  
appreciate how well  
they do their work.”*

– John Parcels  
SERMEISS



# PROGRAMS '09

AT VALLE CRUCIS CONFERENCE CENTER

*Come spend some time on sacred ground.*

## ■ Program Day:

### Fear Not – The Sacred Search for Courage

Friday, September 11, 2009

10 AM - 3 PM - \$35, includes lunch

Facilitator - *The Rev. Jeanne Finan*

Repeatedly in scripture we hear the words, usually from the mouths of angels, “Fear not.” From Esther and Judith, Samuel and Peter, to the cowardly lion in *The Wizard of Oz*, courage is a spiritual virtue and practice that some seem to easily possess and many seem to longingly seek. Using scripture, prayer, poetry and silence, this retreat day centers around roping our fears and replacing them with peace, passion, and possibility.

—The Rev. Jeanne Finan serves as the rector of St. John’s Episcopal Church in Asheville. She also leads retreats and offers spiritual direction. She is the author of *Remember Your Baptism: Ten Meditations* (Cowley Publications).

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## ■ Program Day:

### A Retreat Day - Births, Deaths, and Rebirths

Saturday, September 12, 2009

9 AM - 4 PM - \$45, includes lunch

Facilitator - *Pierrette R. Stukes, PhD*

In mythology, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth is considered a monomyth—a trans-cultural and primary meaning-making collective energy. It is a cycle repeated in the four seasons of nature, in the dusk and dawn of each day, and in cultural and religious myths of the hero and his, and her, quest. The hero’s quest begins with a mysterious birth and continues with a journey into the unknown, the return “home” with insight, culminating in self-transformation. To be human means to participate in this repeated journey of birth, death, and resurrection, again and again, as we become more whole and authentic. This retreat day offers you the opportunity to go within and contemplate your hero’s journey, to shed what has served its purpose and to release new life in you. Come join others for a quiet day of reflection and meditation on the births, deaths, and resurrections into which you are being called. This retreat is for women only.

Once you have registered, please contact Pierrette at 336-982-2402, or [pstukes@skybest.com](mailto:pstukes@skybest.com).

Pierrette received her PhD in English Literature in 2002 from The George Washington University with a specialization in psychoanalysis and culture theory. She is an ongoing student of Carl Jung. She taught at colleges and universities for 15 years. In January 2009, she was awarded her certification in Spiritual Direction from the prestigious Haden Institute. She has been offering compassionate hospitality to others since 2006 with programs that mine the intersection of the soul and the psyche.

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*“I always come home from Valle Crucis feeling so good.”*

— Bryson Christy  
St. James Episcopal, Black Mountain

## ■ Program Day With our Two Labyrinths

Monday, September 14, 2009

10 AM - 3 PM - \$35, includes lunch

Facilitator - *Tom Eshelman*

Have you heard about labyrinths and thought you wanted to know more? Well now is your chance! In this day long retreat you will learn about the fascinating history of this ancient tool of walking meditation and prayer as you spend the day walking our indoor and outdoor labyrinths.

—Please wear comfortable clothes and walking shoes and bring a journal. There will be lots of handouts and plenty of time for questions.

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## ■ Program Day:

### Our Growth In Christ

Friday, October 2, 2009

10 AM - 3 PM - \$35, Includes lunch

Facilitator - *The Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor*

In the fourth Chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes: 11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. 14 We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. 15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.

As Christians we are called to be intentional about our individual growth into Christ, just as the Church is to be intentional about building up the Body and transforming the world. What does it mean to grow up into Christ? What are the tools we are called to use for this growth? How can we help one another in this lifelong process? Conversely, how can the corporate Church enable each part to work together properly and promote the Body’s growth? What would spiritual maturity look like?

—The day will focus on our seasons in this lifelong process of maturation as Christians as well as the journey of the Church. You are urged to bring a Bible as well as a journal or notepad. Format will be presentation, small and large group discussion, and individual reflection.

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## ■ Program Day

### Here my Cry, O God (Psalm 61:1)

Monday, October 12, 2009

10 AM - 3 PM - \$35, includes lunch

Facilitator - *The Rev. Elizabeth Canham*

This workshop on the psalms will focus on how we can pray through times of distress, fear, disappointment and the feeling that God has abandoned us. The economic downturn, job losses, war and natural disasters are all realities that cause us to fear the future and lose a sense of equilibrium in the present. Through

reflection on psalms of disorientation, music, creativity and the creation of a “wailing wall” we will bring our anguish before God and, like the psalmists, rediscover the confidence that we are embraced by the God who holds and heals us.

—Liz is a noted author of many books and workshop leader. She leads tours around the world and is on the staff at Calvary Episcopal Church in Fletcher NC.

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### ■ Program Day: Experiencing Contemplative Prayer

Friday, October 23, 2009  
10 AM - 3 PM - \$35, includes lunch  
Facilitator - Jim Banks

When asked what is prayer, a common response is, “Talking with God.” But what about listening to God or being with God or even experiencing God? Come to experience a variety of Christian prayer forms that disengage the calculating mind. The day will alternate between teaching, discussion and practice in a relaxed setting. Participants will experience praying with scripture, prayer beads and Centering Prayer, concluding with a contemplative form of intercessory prayer.

—Jim Banks is a spiritual director trained by the Shalem Institute in Washington, DC. He is currently enrolled in post graduate studies in religious experience at the University of Wales in the UK.

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### ■ Centering Prayer Retreat

Sunday, November 29, 2009 - Sunday, December 6, 2009  
\$435.00, includes 7 nights lodging, all meals and program  
Facilitators - *Becky Hannah, Joan Ricci*  
Worship Leader *Rev. Rick Lawler*

This retreat is designed for those who would like a more prolonged experience of centering prayer and who are interested in entering into the more profound levels of spiritual practice in an atmosphere of silence, solitude and community.

Centering prayer is a silent form of prayer that directs a person's attention toward God. It is a prayer form with ancient roots in the mystical and monastic tradition of the Christian faith. The retreat is intended to help persons develop and sustain a regular centering prayer practice. Nine 20-minute periods of Centering Prayer will be offered daily. You will also have opportunities for contemplative worship, individual meetings with retreat leaders, walks and hiking around the Conference Center grounds, access to two labyrinths, as well as time for solitude and reflection.

—Due to the length of this retreat each participant should have an established practice of Centering Prayer for at least a year.

—This retreat limited to the first 20 registrants. No commuters.

—The retreat leaders are Becky Hannah, (828-667-2799), Coordinator of Contemplative Outreach of Western North Carolina, Joan Ricci, presenter of contemplative prayer retreats at the Oratory and St. Francis Prayer Springs, and the Rev. Rick Lawler, Rector of St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church in Blowing Rock, NC. Joan and Becky have both been trained to present centering prayer by Contemplative Outreach, the organization founded by Father Thomas Keating as a spiritual network committed to living the contemplative dimension of the gospel in everyday life. Please feel free to call Becky if you have any questions about this retreat.

### ■ Advent Retreat: Holy Space, Sacred Circles

Sunday, December 6 - Wednesday Dec 10, 2009  
\$245, includes 3 nights lodging, all meals and program  
Facilitator - *The Rev. Jeanne Finan and artist Danby Ludgate*

*There is nothing so wise as a circle.*  
—Ranier Maria Rilke

Circles have an undeniable power. Circles collect and focus us; circles soothe us and challenge us. Circles represent wholeness. Our church year circles through the seasons. The season of Advent is the beginning point of a new season, a new circle.

Advent is a time of focusing ourselves on the holy that is present in our lives and the holy that will come.

Each day follows a quiet rhythm of silence, prayer, meditative readings and creative expression. All sessions are optional, offering participants time to focus on their own holy longing in this Advent season. Some participants use the time for a silent retreat; most enjoy the conversation and companionship with others.

Participants will also contemplate the dimensional meaning of holy space by creating a group mandala of objects as well as receiving instruction to create personal mandalas on paper. The word “mandala” means circle or completion.

Episcopal priest Jeanne Finan will offer meditations, prayers and poetry around the retreat theme of sacred circles.

The holy ground of the Valle Crucis Conference Center offers a place for silence, walks in the woods and on two labyrinths, and the hospitality of simple delicious meals and comfortable, historic accommodations.

Join us for Word and worship, visual art and prayer, as we clear the way for the holy and step into the vast deep circle that begins anew with Advent.

—The Rev. Jeanne Finan serves as the rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Asheville. She also leads retreats and offers spiritual direction. She is the author of *Remember Your Baptism: Ten Meditations* (Cowley Publications). Danby Ludgate is a renowned fiber artist from Charlottesville, Virginia who has created the many quilted, painted and embroidered hangings that bless the buildings of the Valle Crucis Conference Center.





**VALLE CRUCIS  
CONFERENCE CENTER**

Post Office Box 654  
Valle Crucis, NC 28691

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# Good News



## VALLE CRUCIS CONFERENCE CENTER

AT THE HISTORIC MISSION SCHOOL

Telephone: 828-963-4453  
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E-Mail: [vccc@highsouth.com](mailto:vccc@highsouth.com)  
Web Page: [www.highsouth.com/vallecrucis](http://www.highsouth.com/vallecrucis)

### OUR MISSION

The mission of the Valle Crucis Conference Center is to inspire, by loving example and service, those who break bread with us and share in the quest for spiritual renewal, Christian community and stewardship of this sacred place.

The Right Reverend G. Porter Taylor  
Bishop of the Diocese of Western North Carolina

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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