



# Offerings

...touching lives in Christ

November / December 2017  
Volume 4 • Issue 6

The cost of this newsletter was generously subsidized by Kay Satterfield and Maureen Collins (members of our Board) and a gift from a community of religious sisters.

Thank you!

## WEEKLY MEETINGS

Our Catch the Spirit Bible Study Group meets Tuesdays, 10-11:30 a.m. to discuss the lectionary (Bible) readings assigned for the coming Sunday. Marise May, OSF, resumes leadership of this study.

The Contemplative Prayer Group meets Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Tom O'Connor facilitates this group of meditators. Contact him at 315.313.3758 if you would like to attend.

The Women's Faith Sharing Group meets monthly on Thursdays from 3 - 4:30 p.m. The next meetings are November 16 and December 14. Led by Kathy Papa, group members meet for mutual spiritual encouragement as they navigate life. Contact Kathy at 315.457.4922 for more details. Suggested offering: \$15 per session.

*Every time I think of you,  
I give thanks to my God.*

- PHILIPPIANS 1:3



In this season of Thanksgiving, we are deeply grateful for the support of all our friends and benefactors. The enthusiasm of those who attend our events, the trust given us by those who seek direction, the dedication of numerous volunteers, and the expertise of our Spiritual Directors are all gifts from God through you. Your ongoing prayer, encouragement, and financial support allow us to carry on this ministry which touches so many people's lives for the good. Thank you for being God's grace to us – and to them!

In Christ,  
Jim Krisher  
Director

## ABOUT US

The Spiritual Renewal Center is a Christian ministry that provides spiritual direction and renewal opportunities to all members of the community.

Learn more about us at [spiritualrenewalcenter.com](http://spiritualrenewalcenter.com).

## DIRECTOR

Jim Krisher

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## EDITOR

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The Spiritual Renewal Center is located at 1342 Lancaster Avenue in Syracuse. You can reach us at 315-472-6546.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday:  
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Thursdays: 9 a.m. -  
6 p.m., and Fridays: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

## HOLIDAY HOURS

The Center will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

Thanksgiving: Nov. 23 & 24  
Christmas: Dec. 25 & Dec. 26  
New Years: Jan. 1

# Feel the joy and spirit at the Center

The colder months are slowly arriving and soon the holidays will be here. Let the joy and spirit of the Center keep you warm. We are offering several opportunities to keep your soul enriched. You can register online at [spiritualrenewalcenter.com](http://spiritualrenewalcenter.com) or contact us at [mail@spiritualrenewalcenter.com](mailto:mail@spiritualrenewalcenter.com)

**Tree of Life: Living the New Creation** | Presented by Rev. Donnel O'Flynn | Thursday, Nov. 9 | 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. | \$20 or whatever you can afford



Ancient Christian artists frequently depicted the cross of Christ as a life-giving tree, growing amid a new creation. Eastern Christian churches equate the cross to the tree of life described in Genesis. Such images and forms of worship invite reflection. What is Christian spirituality

like if a new creation is its principal idea, and a living cross its symbol? Can these ancient images resonate for Christians today? Explore these questions with Rev. Donnel O'Flynn, a retired Episcopal priest and the author of the recently published book *Holy Cross, Life-Giving Tree*.

## Midlife Crisis

Saturday, Nov. 18 | 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
Presented by Rev. Ginny Smith | \$20 or whatever you can afford



Rev. Ginny Smith

The middle years, typically defined as ages 45-65, present unique challenges in our spiritual development. We start looking inward to figure out how we operate and fit into ourselves. This time of personal growth is unparalleled in our lifespan.

Midlife is exciting and unsettling in its many spiritual challenges. Join the Rev. Dr. Ginny Smith, a retired Presbyterian clergy person, in exploring midlife's spiritual developmental tasks to nurture your relationship with God. Ginny has received Professional Certification in Spiritual Gerontology from the Johnson Institute (St. Louis) and is a spiritual director on staff here at the Center.

**And the Soul Felt Its Worth: An Evening of Christmas Poetry** | Presented by Shaun Slusarski | Thursday, Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. | \$20 or whatever you can afford

The Christmas season offers Christians an invaluable opportunity to behold the awesome mysteries at the heart of the faith. Poets old and new alike have attempted to shed light on these mysteries through the power of their words. Join us for this festive evening of inspirational poetry that will surely be a respite during the most wonderful (and too often stressful) time of the year. Carols and holiday refreshments included! Shaun Slusarski, our Jesuit novice, will lead this event – his last presentation during his time with us!

**Building the Beloved Community: Welcoming the Reign of God Together** | Presented by Shaun Slusarski  
Thursday, Nov. 16 | 7 - 9 p.m. | \$20 or whatever you can afford



Shaun Slusarski

Amidst our social and political divisions, how might Jesus' message of repentance, tenderness, and responsibility enliven us to better care for our neighbor? What resources within the Christian tradition might help us to build a society that more closely resembles God's dream for the world? Jesuit novice

Shaun Slusarski will lead this evening of encouragement. Shaun studied theology at Boston College and Villanova University and taught religious studies at St. Joseph's Prep in Philadelphia.

**Sacred Waiting: An Advent Reflection** | Presented by Sr. Marise May | Two offerings – Thursday, Dec. 7, 7-9 p.m. & Friday, Dec. 8, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. | \$20 or whatever you can afford



Sr. Marise May

Our culture is geared to speed, instant response and high production. Yet, biblical insights seem to indicate that waiting is a favorite school for God's teaching. What is the experience of our ancestors in faith and latter day mystics of waiting on the Lord?

Can I develop the patience that God requires of me? This presentation will attempt to answer these questions. Sr. Marise May will be our presenter.

## Looking ahead to 2018 – Silent Directed Retreat Weekend

Join us Friday, Jan. 5 - Sunday, Jan. 7 for our annual retreat. The cost is \$250 to attend; \$50 non-refundable deposit.

Our annual Silent Directed Retreat will be held at Christ the King Retreat House from 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 5, until noon on Sunday, Jan. 7. The fee includes the scenic retreat house with a private room, all meals and snacks, quiet time for rest and prayer, and individual sessions with a spiritual director. The Eucharist will be celebrated on Saturday evening.

Directors for this year's retreat will be Sr. Rose Bill, Matt Cortese, SJ, Jim Krisner, Sr. Marise May, and Lana Riley – all staff spiritual directors from the Spiritual Renewal Center. If you wish, you may indicate a preference for spiritual director when you register. Contact the Center to make your reservation for this grace-filled time of retreat.

## The Center welcomes new spiritual director



Matt Cortese, SJ

Matt Cortese, SJ, has joined our staff as a Spiritual Director. Matt is a Jesuit scholastic currently teaching philosophy and theology at Le Moyne College. He received master's degrees from Yale Divinity School and Saint Louis University,

where he studied and practiced spiritual direction. He is thrilled to have a second opportunity to minister at the Center, having spent a semester here as a Jesuit novice learning from the staff. He enjoys folk music, vegetarian cuisine, and medieval accounts of love.

Our ministry of spiritual direction continues to grow, and we have 22 trained Spiritual Directors of various Christian denominations. To explore whether spiritual direction might be fruitful for you, check out our website at [spiritualrenewalcenter.com](http://spiritualrenewalcenter.com) or call Jim Krisher at the Center.

## Come & enjoy Seasons, the Center's new art exhibit



The Spiritual Renewal Center is pleased to host *Seasons*, an exhibit of Karen Burns' paintings. The repeated and inescapable seasonal changes she portrays are not unlike the seasonal changes of our spiritual lives.

Karen describes her work as follows:

*My paintings are born out of a love of the natural world. Sometimes vibrant, other times subdued, my work depicts our*

*ever-changing seasons -- vivid fall colors, a pristine blanket of snow in winter, the promise of spring or the rich greens of summer. I strive to find the subtle hints of change, the threads that connect and provide a bridge from one season to another.*

Karen is also a graphic designer and created the Spiritual Renewal Center's logo and newsletter design. We are honored to present her paintings for your reflection, enjoyment, and prayer. The exhibit will hang through the end of the year.

What Does Grace Look Like? is a series of reflections about God's grace from staff at the Spiritual Renewal Center. This month's submission comes from Shaun Slusarski, nSJ, the novice currently serving at the Center.

## What Does *Grace* Look Like?

As part of my Jesuit formation, this past May my brother novices and I served as nurse's aides at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx. Dubbed "the Vestibule to Heaven," Calvary offers hospice care to patients facing terminal illnesses. During our six week visit, our care was primarily bodily -- we bathed patients, fed them, and helped them go to the bathroom.

One morning, a crotchety, but affable octogenarian summoned me to his room. He wanted to use "the Jonathan," and the tone in his voice indicated how much he loved his variation on the more typical slang for toilet. I walked him into the bathroom, but when he had finished, I noticed that he had made a bit of mess. He cracked a joke about it, and we bantered back and forth as I began to gently wipe his legs, his back, and his bottom.

Before I left, he shook my hand and thanked me for helping him use "the Jonathan." He took such mischievous delight in that term. "I promise that in ten years when I'm dead and gone," he said, now with tears in his eyes, "You're going to think of that word - 'the Jonathan' - and it will be me trying to reach you from heaven."

I left his room, now with tears in my eyes too. I was in awe at the sudden depth that had emerged, and astonished by the power of the new connection I had with this man. I was amazed that God's Presence could be manifested through an accident in the bathroom, the playful tenderness it provoked, and "the Jonathan." I hope he keeps his promise.



That's what *Grace* looks like. +

# The holidays have arrived at Hand to Hand!




Thanksgiving and Christmas are fast approaching and we're ready at the Hand to Hand Fair Trade Gift Shop. The shelves are well stocked, but keep in mind that our suppliers sell out early. We love the enthusiasm of customers as they buy special gifts for special people—and their enthusiasm for shopping fair trade.

We thank all of you who help us support fair trade crafters and their vision. Remember... you can change the world by changing the way you shop!

Hand to Hand is ready for the holidays with new merchandise in stock! Stop by and pick up your gifts soon...before they go.

## Connect with the Spiritual Renewal Center

Get social with the Spiritual Renewal Center and find us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter today. You can also share your email address with us at [spiritualrenewalcenter.com](http://spiritualrenewalcenter.com) and get the the latest information sent right to your inbox.

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