



A Thrill of Hope

8:45 a.m. + December 14, 2025 + Third Sunday of Advent

Instructions for living a life:

Pay attention.

Be astonished.

Tell about it.

-Mary Oliver, "Sometimes"

Crossing The Threshold

A Day Full of Hope

"Let Hope Abound"

*Christ of the Dawn come bid me arise.
Lighten my day as darkness dies.
See, with the sunrise new mercies grow,
Hope is the fire that fills my soul.*

*Christ of the Morning steady my way.
Come bless the work that fills my day.
Let every action be filled with grace,
Hope is the breath that sets my pace.*

*Let hope be found in me, let hope abound.
Let hope be found in me, let hope abound.*

*Christ of the Noon, my shelter and shade.
Guard every step my feet have made.
When work feels heavy and strength is thin,
Hope is the stream that flows within.*

*Christ of the Evening gather me near,
Harvest my joy and quiet my fear.
As daylight fades and labors all cease,
Hope is the song that whispers 'Peace.'*

*Let hope be found in me, let hope abound.
Let hope be found in me, let hope abound.*

*Christ of the Night my refuge and friend,
Hold me secure as dark descends.
Till dawn returns and shadows all flee,
Hope is the dream that carries me.
Christ is the hope that lives in me.*

Seeking Signs of Growth

"Now The Green Blade Riseth"

*Now the green blade riseth, from the buried grain,
Wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.*

*When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
Jesus' touch can call us back to life again.
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.*

Psalm 144 Nan Merrill

*Blessed are You, O Radiant One,
You, who are hidden within our hearts,
even as we are hidden within your Heart!
You invite us to participate in the Divine Unfoldment,
as we awaken from our long sleep and give birth to creativity.
Open us that we might recognize the divine in every person,
and become sensitive to all we meet along the path.
May our heart's ears heed well the Divine Word written on every heart,
that integrity and justice may dwell within us.
Let each one be receptive to the Spirit that inspires,
allowing the will to respond with action.
And may all judgments and denials be released,
that our souls are freed to serve the Light with joy!
Thus will we recognize oneness with the Divine Spark dwelling within our hearts,
fanning it to illuminate the way.*

Looking Through Heaven's Eyes

"The Beauty You See"

*I see the worst,
You see the best.
I see a sinner,
You see blessed.
Give me your eyes to gaze at the world,
To see the beauty you see.*

Contemplating Scripture

Matthew 11:2-6

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

Meditation

Song of Response

"Pour Out Through Me"

*Pour out through me,
Lord of glory, Lord of grace.
That all may see
Thy eternal, radiant Face.*

Resting in the Silence

During these 5 minutes of silence, simply rest in God's abiding and loving presence in this moment. Simply be here now. Descend into this Silence. There is nothing you need to do. Just relax. Sense your body. Breathe more deeply than usual. It can help to focus on the region of the heart. You might use a breath prayer to help you descend into this silence at the level of the heart, such as "Fill my heart" (inhale), "with Love" (exhale), or use a sacred word (such as Love, Peace, Abba, Jesus, or Spirit).

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Holy Communion

Receiving a Good Word



Our Staff

Haley Brown – Associate Director of The Anchor House
Courtney Garrison – Ministry Assistant
Christian Ibanez – AV Production
Peter Johns – Associate Director of Contemplative Worship

Zachary Montasser – Violinist
Nick Cavazos – AV Production
Rev. Rachel Sciretti – Associate Pastor
Rev. Dr. Michael Sciretti, Jr. – Pastor of The Center

Today's Music

'Let Hope Abound' – Peter Johns, **'Now The Green Blade Riseth'** – J.M.C. Crum
'The Beauty You See' – Peter Johns, **'Pour Out Through Me'** – Darlene Franz

For information about The Center for Christian Spirituality and upcoming events, visit:

www.TheCenterFCS.org.

Please register your presence in the notebooks in the foyer.

Centering Prayer

Today | The Chapel | Immediately following worship

Community Gathering and Potluck

Today | The Anchor House | Immediately following worship

Join us for some good food and fellowship with friends from our contemplative community after worship in The Anchor House. Make a favorite Christmas treat and bring to share. Your treat can be sweet or savory, we just ask that it not need to be refrigerated or kept warm. The Anchor House will be open before worship so everyone can drop their treat off on the way to the Contemplative Worship Service if you would like. We hope you'll join us and invite a friend or family member.

Yoga at The Center: A Posture of Prayer

Monday, December 15 | The Anchor House | 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. | \$10 per class

In this course, led by Jonathan Mangrum, we will use the practice of yoga as a lens to explore what it means to embody spirituality. Each class will include time engaging in breath work, meditation, yoga postures, and poses.

Poetry Circle

Tuesday, December 16 | The Anchor House | 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Join us for the next meeting of the Poetry Circle with Mark Jodon. The Center's poetry circle will share and critique our poems, explore poetic forms and devices, try our hands at writing prompts, and grow together in fellowship and community. This circle is for anyone who loves poetry, no matter your writing experience level. For more information, contact Mark Jodon at Mjodon@littler.com



Winter Solstice on the Labyrinth

December 21 | The Labyrinth | 4:00pm – 5:30pm

The winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, can feel like a quiet turning point - a pause in the rush of the year. Even in the deep darkness, there's this sense of hope, as if the stillness is inviting us to pay attention to what's ready to grow next. Come join us for a moment to look inward, to settle, to breathe, and to trust that the small sparks we're tending now will eventually brighten into something new. There will be opportunities to walk the labyrinth outside as well as inside, create a SoulCollage card, or simply sit and bask in the last moments of light on the shortest day of the year with a cup of coffee and a labyrinth cookie! Labyrinth & SoulCollage® evenings are offered as a gift to the community by Cindy Serio and Ginny Itz with no fee. Registration is helpful but not required.



The Service of the Longest Night

December 21 | The Chapel | 6:00 p.m.

The Service of the Longest Night is held on the Sunday evening closest to the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year. The "longest night" has also become an expression for the spiritual journey of grief and loss. Our time together will be especially appropriate for those who have experienced a significant loss this past year. In this time of worship, you are invited to quiet refuge of prayer, music, remembrance, and Holy Communion. We will acknowledge our losses and ponder the everlasting hope that shines like a light in the darkness.

The Anchor House Hours

Tuesdays – Fridays | Noon - 4pm

The Anchor House is open in the afternoons for you to come and pray, meditate, walk the Labyrinth or just be still. If you would like to request a specific room for spiritual direction, counseling or for your own time of retreat outside of these hours, please let Haley know and we will make sure a room is available for you.

Holding One Another in the Light

As our commitment to one another deepens, we want to be able to pray for one another – bearing burdens and joining in celebrations. Here is how to participate:

1. Make a request for prayer or thanksgiving using the QR link or go to thecenterfcs.org
2. Opt in to receive the weekly prayer list by emailing Rachel at rsciretti@chapelwood.org.



Giving to The Center

We invite you to financially give to The Center in response to what you have received today or throughout our contemplative offerings. Using the QR code will take you to a page where you can make a one-time offering or recurring gift. Thank you for your contribution and investment.



Save the Date

Christmas Eve Service, 4:00 p.m. in the Chapel (Note this is a change from past years)

January 9-10, "Anchored in The Center" 25th Anniversary Weekend

February 20-21 – Enneagram Workshops with Sandra Smith