

Soul Food

... reviewing books, web-sites and other resources to nourish the soul

An Occasional e-mailing to Friends of Stillpoint Spirituality Centre and Faith Community

May peace prevail on earth

Stillpoint is deeply committed to tending a place of peacefulness where people may come to find peace for their hearts and minds; and to joining others in prayers and actions that promote peace in society and in our world.

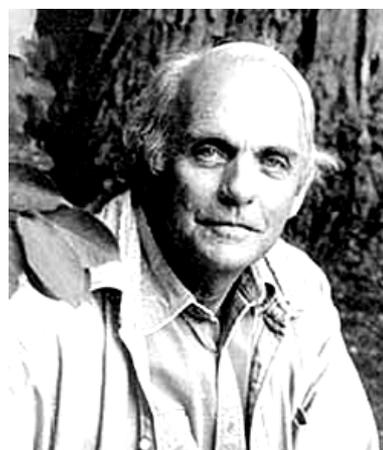


The above is a universal prayer for peace. Join us between 6-9 pm on Sunday November 9 in the Nunyara Chapel, 5 Burnell Drive Belair for a prayer vigil and contemplative worship.

Books ...

In the last few years I have found less energy for heavy theological tomes or books about church life, and a growing appetite for books that share people's personal journeys through life, books of poetry, books of prayers and liturgies, good novels, and books that make bold explorations into the "meaning of life." I am now passionate about wisdom and less interested in information! So, for what it's worth, here is what I've discovered lately"

Having heard Frederick Buechner quoted for years I finally ordered a book from Amazon, and I wasn't disappointed. "**The sacred journey**" is a memoir of Buechner's early days as he grew up, moved towards becoming a Presbyterian minister and thought deeply about how his experiences revealed God to him. Here's a sample: *'Listen. Your life is happening. You are happening ... A journey, years long, has brought each of you through thick and thin to this moment in time as mine has also brought me. Think back on that journey. Listen back to the sounds and sweet airs of your journey ... the music of your life is subtle and elusive and like no other ... The question is not whether the things that happen to you are chance things or God's things because, of course, they are both at once. There is no chance thing through which God cannot speak.'*



Another book had such a profound impact on me earlier in the year that I shut myself away for a day to read and reflect on it, because I knew it would shape all the retreats and workshops that I was involved in for the rest of the year. "**Roots and wings: the human journey from a speck of stardust to a spark of God**" by respected spiritual guide Margaret Silf looks at how our personal stories connect with the great, wondrous story of a universe unfolding over 14 billion years. It touches the infinite mystery at the heart of faith, yet grounds itself in a re-telling of a number of Gospel stories from the perspective of the key character in each.



Many of us were saddened by the untimely death earlier this year of Irish writer and poet John O'Donaghue. My most recent purchase has been "**To bless the space between us: a book of blessings**". Blessing people confers enormous affirmation and strength, yet we are reserved in our offering of blessings, both personally and as church communities. John has created a book of blessings for numerous occasions, from a new home to friendship, from a blessing for a mother to a blessing for someone needing courage. From a blessing for one taking up new work: "May the work fit the rhythms of your soul/enabling you to draw from the invisible/new ideas and a vision that will inspire.

And an old favourite I pick up again and again when I need to find a prayer, a poem, a meditation or a ritual to awaken the hearts of people during worship or a retreat is Joyce Rupp's **Out of the ordinary: prayers, poems and reflections for every season.**"

Web-sites

www.spiritualityandpractice.com is still one of the best in terms of resources and courses.

Many of us are inspired by Parker Palmer's teachings about leadership, living with integrity and more recently his teaching based on his Quaker experience in Clearness Committees (discernment). He was scheduled to be in Australia next year but has needed to cancel for health reasons. However, his teaching is very accessible via his books and web site. The Center for Courage and Renewal has information and pod-casts and if you go to Parker Palmer's pages within that web-site there are generously shared articles and talks. **http://www.couragerenewal.org**

www.gratefulness.org offers a regular newsletter of upbeat and uplifting articles, poems and reflections. Teachers on spirituality have often pointed out how learning to be grateful makes a profound difference to life.

http://www.davidwhyte.com This poet has worked with business organizations to help them clarify values and direction, using his profoundly moving poetry. The web-site has many samples.