



MAY 2020

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL CENTER



Living our History

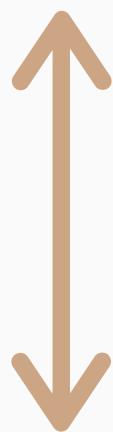
In 1855, Bishop Neumann welcomed three women as the Founding members of the Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia. Their first ministry was hosting immigrant women and nursing the sick and poor in the city. But the smallpox epidemic of 1858 saw them expand their care for those sick and even housing them in their small convents and such compassion led the Sisters to open their first hospital in 1860. In those challenging times, Mother Francis wrote, “As long as God does not stop giving to us, we shall not stop giving to the poor.”

During this pandemic, the Franciscan Center continues to serve, not in the same direct service way, but with the same heart of compassion and care for all. We are blessed to follow in the tradition of St Francis and St Clare and the founding Sisters in this sponsored ministry of service in the Northwest. We continue to trust in God’s providence and the Spirit’s direction.

Spiritual Direction

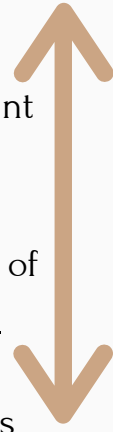
Our six spiritual directors are still available to meet with you - via zoom or phone. If you are seeking guidance, assurance, or peace in these turbulent times and would like to talk with one of our trained spiritual directors, please call the Center or [email us here!](#)

Chair Yoga & Meditation



Weekly Chair Yoga and Meditation Wednesday mornings with Cecily Hunt at 10 am. Learn and practice ways of self care, movement and meditation to help you in these days of anxiety and sheltering in place. [Sign up here!](#) Now through May 21st. New class starts May 27th. 6- sessions for \$50

Homes as Spiritual Art Spaces



This online course takes a look at how we can turn a part of our home into a spiritual art space. Any size area can be worked with - from a shelf to a wall or mantel. Participants will be given many examples of spiritual art ideas that they can create in their own homes. [Register here!](#)

One of THE BEST places to connect with us is online! At our various platforms below you will find words of encouragement and humor, blogs, videos, and other resources to help you stay connected during this time of social distancing! Just click the title or icon below to go directly to the platform of your choosing!

- [Instagram](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Youtube](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Website](#)



Your Gifts

Thank you for remembering the Franciscan Center as part of your loving and caring for others and all creation. Your gifts at this challenging time continue your work of bringing peace, wise counsel and calming presence to the world. You make it possible. And your gifts created a new Peace and Meditation Garden and Labyrinth. You are amazing. Thank you. Bless you.

THANK
YOU

Looking Forward

We Shall Walk: Labyrinth Update

Phase two of our Peace and Meditation garden is a new 5 circuit Classical labyrinth on the Western side of the property. PLC Estate Gardeners have completed the irrigation system, installed the benches and boxwood plants and laid down the grass sod canvas and the surrounding gravel path. Next the labyrinth designer, Stephen Shibley, came to outline the path, cut out the grass and inlay the red brick. We welcome you to come and bless it with your steps. We will have a formal dedication at some point in the future.

Thank you, thank you for your gifts and support to accomplish this new addition to our ministry. We are investing in beauty and following in the steps of St Francis who praised God through all of creation.



The 10th Annual Dinner and Auction

We will hold our 10th Annual Auction on Sept 17, 2020 either at our preferred choice of Gray Gables or virtually via the internet, our new friend for staying connected.

The Auction committee is hard at work planning for both possibilities and we will for sure have an opportunity for on line bidding on the auction items – probably before and after the actual date.

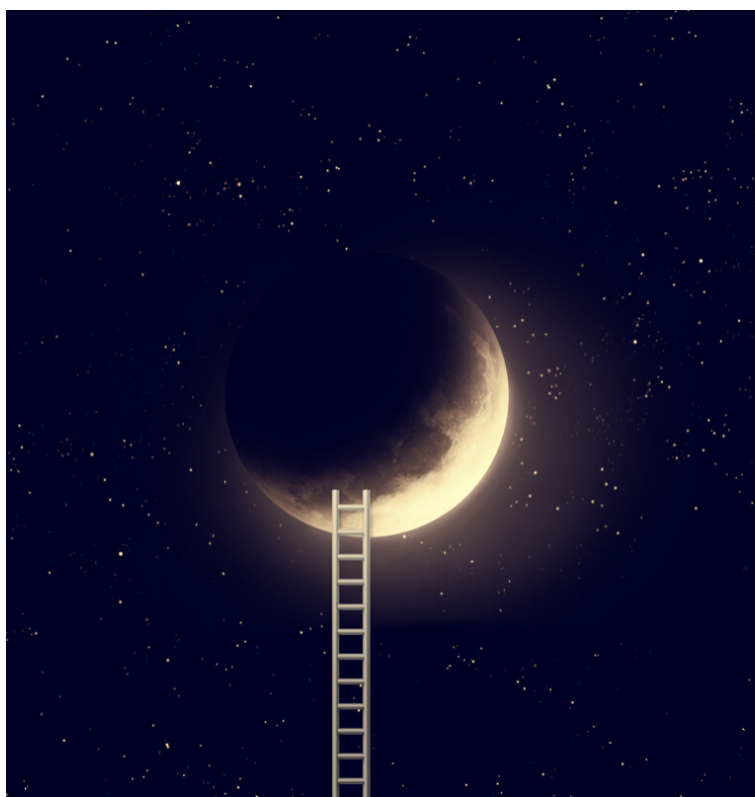
If you have a beach house or mountain cabin and could donate a weekend or week at your place for our auction, let us know. If you have a connection with a donor or business who could donate to our work, let us know. We appreciate your ideas and connections in these times. Contact [Terry Cappiello](#) or [Val Hornburg](#) with your items and ideas.



Resources

- [Westminster Prayer & Worship](#)
- [Zoom Prayer Check-Ins & Virtual Worship Options](#)
- [Wild Edge of Sorrow](#)
- [Kid-Friendly Resources for Coping with Self-Isolation](#)
- [Center for Action and Contemplation Podcasts](#)
- [Illustrated Ministry](#)
- [The Creator in You- A Virtual Retreat On Creativity](#)
- [Spiritual Comfort for Troubled Times & Holy Week](#)
- [Storyline Community](#)
- [Give Back](#)

Dream Consultations



Did you ever wake up in the morning wishing you knew somebody who could help you understand your dreams? If your answer is “yes,” then we have an offering for you.

Mark Lesniewski, a Spiritual Director, Retreat Facilitator, and Meditation Instructor at the Franciscan Spiritual Center has been working with his own dreams and those of others for more than 30 years.

Many people experience intensified dreams in intensified times. You do not have to be alone as global issues affect your inner life.

The program includes a free 30 minute session, PLUS five 50 minute sessions, costing \$55-\$85. Call Mark at 219-613-6804 for any questions and he will return your call.

Virtual Hermitage

Join us for a four-day virtual retreat, Living with a Franciscan Heart in the Midst of a Pandemic, on May 22nd, 23rd, 24th and 25th from 10 am-12 pm where we will be exploring how the Spirit of St Francis and St Clare can inform the way we live during this unusual time.

We will use the time to center around shared stories of Francis and Clare, as well as the emotions and anxieties we are carrying in our bodies and souls through this pandemic.

[Register here!](#)

Cost: \$20 per session (if you want to tailor which ones you are interested in), \$80 for the whole session, scholarships are available.



National and Global Reach

The word is spreading about the ministry and especially the Spiritual Direction Training Program of the Franciscan Spiritual Center. Our new two year program begins in September and already we have accepted applicants from Africa and all over the United States including Vermont, Georgia, Texas and Hawaii. Never before have we had such global interest and never before have we been able to consider opening the community based program to an on line community. Thanks be to God, we are moving forward to accommodate wider participation with some new tools of communication.

The decision to close the Center follows the directive of the Governor and is the correct one to insure the safety of our guests and staff. Yet, it does have financial consequences as we have cancelled programs and closed to groups that use the Center.

We are grateful for sponsorship of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia but we are dependent on program revenues and donations.

If you are in a position to help us continue to bring peace, presence and community with a gift, a check mailed or an on line donation, at this time, we would be grateful and others will be blessed. Thank you. Bless you.

**Click here
to donate!**



Encouragement & Reflection

Little Graces

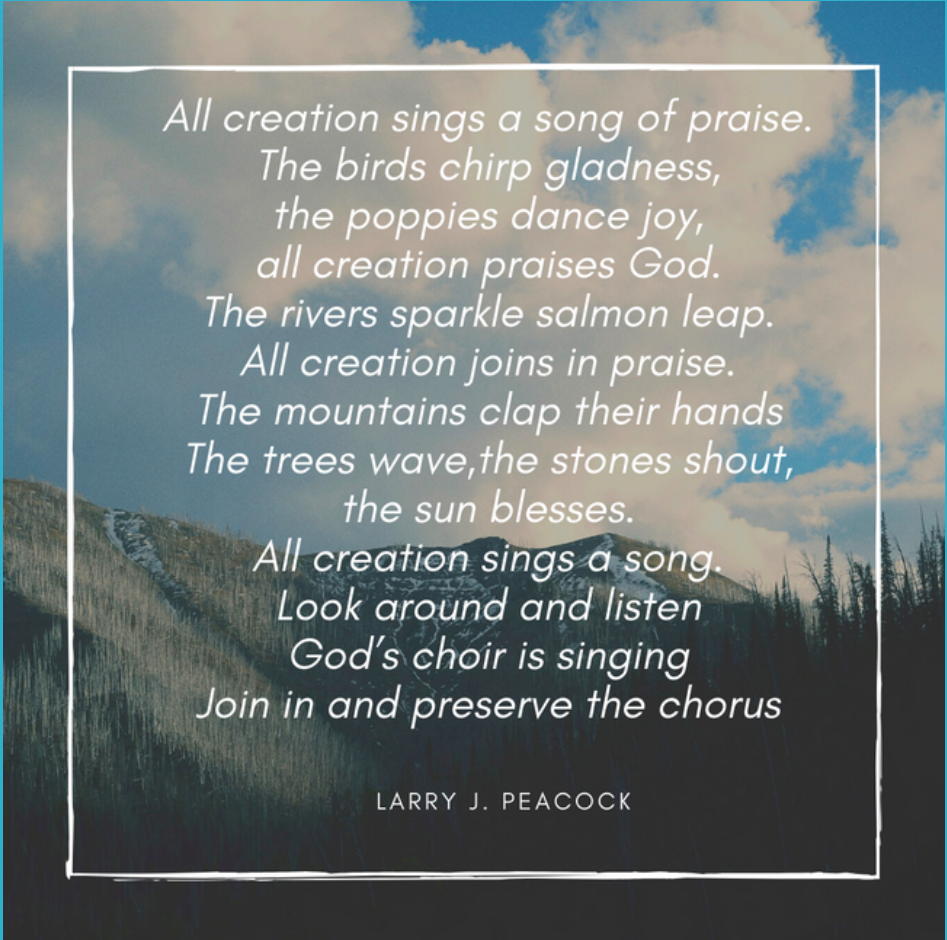
Earlier this year, before the pandemic erupted, FSC hosted a program on Howard Thurman, considered the soul of the Civil Rights movement and a prominent teacher, writer and mystic. In his book, *Meditations of the Heart*, he reminds us that life goes on in the midst of turbulent times. *“The mass attack of disillusion and despair, distilled out of the collapse of hope, has so invaded our thoughts that what we know to be true and valid seems unreal and ephemeral.”* But we are not to be deceived by what is happening for there is still good and birds still sing and the stars still shine and “the heart is still inspired by the kind word and the gracious deed.” He says it is *“as important as ever to attend to the little graces by which the dignity of our lives is maintained and sustained.”*

Attend to the little graces – such wisdom for our times. Smiling at a neighbor as we enter the street to yield them the sidewalk. Noticing the pink dogwood blooming and breathing in the scents of the Spring. Writing a handwritten note to a friend from our past. Participating in a Zoom church or listening in to a choir sing in harmony from 20 different rooms. Attend to the little graces. Trying a new on line class like our Chair yoga and discovering a deeper breath and a straighter spine. Calling a friend who does not have internet. Picking up some groceries for a neighbor when we brave safe distance shopping. Life goes on and we do not give in to cynicism, or fear. We care about others and creation. As someone said, we keep a safe distance and stay inside so that when we do gather again (and we will), no one will be missing.

Attend to the little graces all around us and make some ourselves, for by such grateful living, we “keep alive a sensitiveness to the movement of the spirit of God.”

We carry you in our hearts and pray for you.

- Larry J. Peacock, Director



All creation sings a song of praise.
The birds chirp gladness,
the poppies dance joy,
all creation praises God.
The rivers sparkle salmon leap.
All creation joins in praise.
The mountains clap their hands
The trees wave, the stones shout,
the sun blesses.
All creation sings a song.
Look around and listen
God's choir is singing
Join in and preserve the chorus

LARRY J. PEACOCK