

# Faith Formation Events

## 2009 – 2010



### SECOND WEDNESDAYS

7:30 – 8:30 p.m.



We gather on the second Wednesday of the month for discussions on topics related to spirituality, prayer, growth in faith, wellness, and wholeness. Held in the Annunciation Room on the first floor. A brief contemplative eucharist precedes the sessions at 7:00 – 7:25 p.m. in the nave.

September 9: *Journaling: A Companion to Spiritual Growth* – Karol Weigelt

Our stories are sacred and unique--each one different. Our own journeys are the paths which can find expression through the written word--a personal map of our inner and outer lives. This short exploration of journaling offers techniques and methods which open and invite the written process as a vehicle for your own spiritual growth. Karol provides spiritual direction and counseling through Holy Trinity's Spiritual Life Center.

October 14: *Focusing* – Ann Sanders

Dr. Eugene Gendlin uses the term "focusing" to describe a specific body-mind skill that anyone can acquire for the purpose of stress reduction and emotional growth. It involves paying close attention to one's bodily expression of emotion in order to resolve negative feelings. By contacting the inner feeling (known as the "felt sense"), welcoming it, accepting it and listening to it, a person is able to clear it from his/her system. Ann is a spiritual director and recent graduate of the Institute of Spiritual Companionship.

November 11: *Health and Wholeness* – Carol Schickel

How do we sustain being healthy and whole as an individual while being part of a relationship? Consider how it is possible for you to feel complete as you are, even as you enter into relationships...with friends, at work, in dating and partnering. Join this conversation about effectively caring for yourself as you establish or grow in connecting with others. We will explore the concept of differentiation and try out some simple communication practices. Carol Schickel is a therapist and one of the founders of the Spiritual Life Center at Holy Trinity.

December 9: *What Are We Waiting For?* – Pr. Craig Mueller

Most of us spend a good deal of life waiting for our lives to get better, for the pain to go away, or for our luck to change. As much as Advent spirituality invites us to learn the virtues of waiting and patience, there is also wisdom in living in the "power of now," to quote well-known author Eckhart Tolle. As we prepare for Christmas, come and reflect on the gift of "waiting for what we already have."

January 13: *Inner Work for the Challenges in the Outer World* – Pr. Craig Mueller

Though we often consider "the problem" outside ourselves, many times the only changes we can make are within us. What invitations to inner work and personal growth come with the many struggles, conflicts and issues in our outer lives such as conflicts in relationships with significant others, colleagues or family members?

February 10: *Centering Prayer* – David Webb

In our busy lives centering prayer is a practice that nurtures a sense of God's presence. Using prayers of simplicity, like the sacred word (mantra), we shed the comings and goings of our daily lives and spend time in God's presence, allowing the silence and stillness to serve as the medium through which we experience God. David Webb, a seminary student at LSTC with experiencing leading Centering Prayer, will provide an introduction to this spiritual discipline.

March 10: Led by Seminarian Matthew Stuhlmuller (topic to be announced)

April 14: Led by Seminarian Crystal Solie (topic to be announced)

May 12: *Creating Your Life or How to Be(come) a Lily* – Barbara Wahler

Changes in our lives may give us pause, but major upheavals can present major opportunities - for reflection, examination, and alteration. As Neale Donald Walsch writes "when everything changes, change everything." Join a discussion on how we can learn to roll with the changes life throws our way, perhaps even to welcome and celebrate them. Barbara Wahler is a social worker and one of the therapists at Holy Trinity's Spiritual Life Center.

### food4thought

Sundays, 11:45 (following the 10:30 a.m. service)



With the challenges of busy schedules and getting around in Chicago these events are scheduled when the community is already gathered—following Sunday morning worship! Come upstairs to Passavant Hall after the liturgy for a meal and a thought-provoking presentation or discussion.

The meals prepared for food4thought support local farmers, educate volunteers from the congregation in healthful cooking, and help us care for creation through organic and sustainable food systems. Freewill donations accepted. Sponsors for the meals are also welcome. Contact the church office for more information.

September 20: *What Is Your Story? The Psychology of Personal Identity* – Dan McAdams

Professor Dan P. McAdams (Psychology Department, Northwestern University) will talk about research he has done over the past two decades on the psychology of personal identity among young and midlife American adults. The research shows that people begin to construct and internalize self-defining stories, or personal narratives, in young adulthood as a way to find meaning, purpose, and identity in life. How do we do this? What kinds of stories do we ultimately tell about our lives? How do stories reflect culture and faith? McAdams will discuss how people can gain insights into their own personal narratives and will highlight some of the more inspiring, as well as some of the more troubling, stories that we Americans live by.

October 25: *Make It Simple: Gratitude, Contentment and Generosity*

Several members of our community will share faith stories about living simply as we seek to practice the values of eco-spirituality, living with less and sharing what we have with a world in need. If the prospect of simplifying your life intrigues you, come and hear some practical ways of bringing spirituality into the way you live, eat and use the gifts God has given you.

February 21: *Always Online: Blessing and Curse*

Many hours a day most of us are "connected" to the internet, e-mail, Facebook, cell phones or even old-fashioned radio and television. As much as there are many gifts in these connections to one another and the world, it is often hard to disconnect and relax in nature or with loved ones. Come and share some of the challenges of always being online and as well as some creative ways to go offline for spiritual refreshment.

March 14: *Celebrating Easter on Planet Earth* – Ben Stewart

The early church's celebrations of the Easter Vigil overflowed with images of a restored and flourishing creation. Come learn what contemporary scholars are saying about the relevance of the Easter Vigil in this age of ecological emergency. Some examples of the Easter Vigil at Holy Trinity will be incorporated into the presentation. Ben Stewart is professor of worship at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and this is the third Seminary Sampler event led by faculty from LSTC.

April 25: *Classical Music, Contemporary Spirituality: An Introduction to Handel's Messiah* – Jonathan DeSouza

From concert halls to movie soundtracks, Handel's *Messiah* and its famous "Hallelujah Chorus" have been part of pop culture for over 250 years. Getting ready for an upcoming performance at Holy Trinity, we'll explore musical, historical, and theological aspects of this iconic work—and reflect on how art from the past can enliven our creative and spiritual lives today. Jonathan is a doctoral student in music theory at the University of Chicago.

**HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH,**  
Chicago, Illinois

# SUNDAY FORUM

**9:30 – 10:15 a.m.**

*We meet each Sunday between services in St. Mark's Room (upstairs) for a forum on either appointed scripture readings for the Sunday or another topic of interest. Sunday School for children is held concurrently in Passavant Hall. Many of the sessions will include the study of scripture, a practice encouraged by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Book of Faith initiative.*



September 13 – *This Sunday: Reflecting on the Scriptures of the Day* – Pr. Craig Mueller

Today's gospel about denying ourselves and losing our lives for the sake of our faith could not be further from our society's emphasis on self-fulfillment. Come and reflect on the spiritual challenges and gifts of this text in light of the world in which we live.

September 20 – *This Sunday: Reflecting on the Scriptures of the Day* – Pr. Craig Mueller

We are encouraged to make something of our lives as we strive for excellence. When Jesus talks about greatness he uses a child to make a point about hospitality and servanthood. Come and explore Jesus' challenging words for us as we follow him today.

September 27 – *Hellfire and Brimstone: Gehenna in Mark's Gospel* – Josh Herzfeld-Kamprath

What is Hell? How does our modern 'romanticized' vision of hell compare to the ancient understanding? How and why does Mark utilize this concept? In this forum, we will explore Mark's usage of the Greek word 'gehenna', paying close attention to the appointed gospel for the day, Mark 9:38-49. Josh received a master of arts from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago last May and is Holy Trinity's administrator.

October 4 - *This Sunday: Reflecting on the Scriptures of the Day* – Seminarian Matthew Stuhlmuller

October 11 – *This Sunday: Reflecting on the Scriptures of the Day* – Seminarian Crystal Solie

October 18 – *What's So Special about Mark's Gospel?* – Carol LaHurd

Scholars believe Mark is the earliest gospel, and the one that first reports the important story of Jesus' death. Carol LaHurd will use this week's readings to explore key themes and the use of the sayings of Jesus in Mark. Carol teaches part-time at LSTC and coordinates Middle East peace work for the ELCA.

October 25 – *Mrs. Luther* – Joel Cruz

From her childhood poverty to her forced entry in the cloister to her marriage to the famous (or infamous) reformer, Katherine Von Bora was much more than a typical German "frau." Come celebrate this Reformation Sunday with Joel Cruz by learning more about the woman whom Martin Luther called his "boss." Joel serves on the congregation council as worship chair and received a PhD from the Lutheran School of Theology last May.

November 1 - *This Sunday: Reflecting on All Saints Day* – Pr. Craig Mueller

November 8 – *Poetry of the Mystics* – Ryan LaHurd

All major religions have a mystical expression, and most mystics express their vision of the divine in poetry. In this session we will read and discuss poems from Jewish, Christian, and Muslim mystics to hear their visionary voices and discover similarities among the traditions. Ryan, a former college English professor and administrator, now heads the James S. Kemper Foundation.

November 15 – *"Genetics & Faith: Power, Choice, and Responsibility"* (Part 1) – Aana Vigen

One of our very own members, Aana Marie Vigen, is on the ELCA Genetics Taskforce charged with developing an ELCA Social Statement on genetics and she is going to facilitate a two-part discussion of key moral, social, and theological issues as they relate to genetics. In this first session, we get our bearings and explore Lutheran theological and ethical insights that might help us navigate through genetics and the emerging technologies. If possible, skim through Part A of the ELCA study guide, "Genetics & Faith: Power, Choice, and Responsibility" before today's discussion. Download it at: [www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements-in-Process/Genetics/Link-to-the-Study.aspx](http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements-in-Process/Genetics/Link-to-the-Study.aspx) Limited copies available through the church office. Prior reading is not required, however. All those interested in joining the dialogue are welcome!

November 22 – *"Genetics & Faith: Power, Choice, and Responsibility"* (Part 2) – Aana Vigen

Genetic Testing; Genetically Modified Food; Genetic Profiling/Discrimination — Do these terms confuse, interest, or frighten you? We continue our exploration of genetics—focusing on the 1 or 2 topics that are of most interest to Holy Trinity in Part B of the ELCA study guide. We will likely discuss at least two of the following: genetics and the possibility of discrimination; genetic testing and screening; genetic engineering in agriculture; stem cell research and therapy. Aana Marie Vigen, ELCA Genetics Taskforce Member (and Professor of Ethics at Loyola University), will facilitate this session. You are invited to skim key sections in Part B of the ELCA study guide, "Genetics & Faith: Power, Choice, and Responsibility" before today's discussion.

November 29 – *This Sunday: Reflecting on the Scriptures of the Day* – Seminarian Matthew Stuhlmuller

December 6 - *This Sunday: Reflecting on the Scriptures of the Day* – Seminarian Crystal Solie

December 13 and 20 – *Christmas in the Bible: Take Another Look* – Joel Cruz

You *think* you know the Christmas stories, the annunciation to Mary, the humble birth, the shepherds and angels but, just like Jesus in the manger, there is so much more than meets the eye. We invite you to read the Christmas stories from the Gospel of Luke afresh as Joel Cruz leads the Adult Forums on December 13 and 20 and perhaps find a few more reasons to celebrate the season!

December 27 – Sunday after Christmas (no forum)

January 3 – *Logos Christology and the Pre-Existent Christ* – Josh Herzfeld-Kamprath

John's bold proclamation that Christ, as the *Logos* of God, was in the beginning with God, provides an opportunity to reflect on the intimate connection between members of the Trinity. We will briefly explore the history of the Greek concept of *Logos* and its subsequent adoption by early Christian writers.

Jan 10 – *The Myths America Lives By - II* – Ryan LaHurd

Just as individuals create stories that make sense of their lives, so do nations have mythic narratives that create their imagined realities. America has a number of such myths, and better recognizing them can help us to make sense of how Americans and the American government respond to events and to understand our sometimes unconscious reactions. This session will carry on the discussion begun at a similar forum last year.

January 17 – *This Sunday: Reflecting on the Scriptures of the Day* – Pr. Craig Mueller

The story of Jesus turning water into wine is rich in symbolism and spiritual wisdom. Come and reflect on this Sunday's gospel and its meaning for the church and for our lives today.

January 24 and 31 – *Luke the Storyteller* – Carol LaHurd

Carol LaHurd will use this month's readings to introduce the gospel writer's literary skills and theological themes, such as the role of the Holy Spirit, rejection and reversal, salvation for all humanity.

February 7 – *This Sunday: Reflecting on the Scriptures of the Day* – Seminarian Crystal Solie

February 14 – *This Sunday: Reflecting on the Scriptures of the Day* – Seminarian Matthew Stuhlmuller

February 21 – March 28 – *Honoring the Body*

On the six Sundays of Lent we will discuss Holy Trinity's book for Lent 2009, *Honoring the Body* by Stephanie Paulsell. Written for anyone who has struggled with body image, the mystery of our sexuality, weight gain and loss, illness, birth and death, this wonderful book draws on resources from the Christian tradition to show how we can learn to celebrate the body's pleasures, protect the body's vulnerabilities, and develop the practices that will ultimately transform our troubled relationship with our bodies to one of honor and joy. Join the Holy Trinity community in reading this thoughtful, beautifully-written book, but whether you read it or not, join us for conversation led by Pastor Craig Mueller that will deepen your Lenten observance as we prepare for the feast of Easter!

April 4 – Easter (no forum)

April 11 – *This Sunday: Reflecting on the Scriptures of the Day* – Seminarian Crystal Solie

April 18 – *This Sunday: Reflecting on the Scriptures of the Day* – Seminarian Matthew Stuhlmuller

April 25 - *This Sunday: Reflecting on Jesus as Lamb and Shepherd* – Pr. Craig Mueller

Our scriptures have many references to Jesus as both "lamb" and "shepherd." We will explore these images in today's scripture readings as well as in hymns and liturgical texts.

May 2 – *Heaven, Hell, and the End Times in the Book of Revelation* – Carol LaHurd

Carol LaHurd will use this week's readings to introduce the Bible's apocalyptic literature and the New Testament book that's full of visions, mythical beasts, and numerology – and that inspired the popular "Left Behind" book and movie series.

May 9 – *Worship and the Book of Revelation* – Pr. Craig Mueller

During Easter our second readings have been from the book of Revelation. We will examine these texts and their rich images and their use in our liturgy, hymns and theology of worship.

May 16 – *This Sunday: Reflecting on Ascension* – Pr. Craig Mueller

Some say that the ascension of Jesus into heaven is an image and a feast not relevant to us today. Are there important theological points in the story of the ascension and can we make any meaningful connections with our contemporary spiritual lives?

May 23 – *This Sunday: Reflecting on Pentecost* – Pr. Craig Mueller

The Holy Spirit receives far less attention than the other two persons of the Trinity. On this Pentecost Sunday we will reflect on the Holy Spirit in the scriptures, in the Church, in the liturgy, and in our lives.

## HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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