

RETREATS

To arrange a private or group retreat, call 763-689-3540.
Office hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
e-mail: office@arc retreat.org
Web-site: www.arc retreat.org

COSTS

24-hr retreat (Sun-Thurs).....\$75
24-hr weekend retreat (Fri-Sat)..\$80 (individual), \$90 (groups)
Weekend retreat (Fri eve-Sun aft).....\$160
Day retreat (9-4).....\$25 Weekdays, \$30 Weekends
ARC-led retreatsadd \$10/day
Hermitage (24 hrs).....\$75 Weekdays, \$80 Weekends
Cottage.....Call/e-mail or see website for rates
Spiritual companionship.....sliding scale, \$40-\$60
Ask about scholarships as well as special rates for clergy and spouses. Stays of five days or longer are also discounted.
(Rates are slightly higher for profit-making organizations.)
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ARC NEEDS (and desires) LIST

- Massage table
- Contractor’s portable air compressor
- Shade-tolerant perennials for our gardens
- Gently used books for library or Booknook
- Firewood - downed trees or cut wood, especially oak; tax credit given
- Woodcutters on our volunteer wood days
- Sheet sets (white twin size)

LOST AND FOUND: Sometimes precious objects and articles of clothing get left behind and we have no way of identifying the owners. If you are missing something, check our lost and found department!

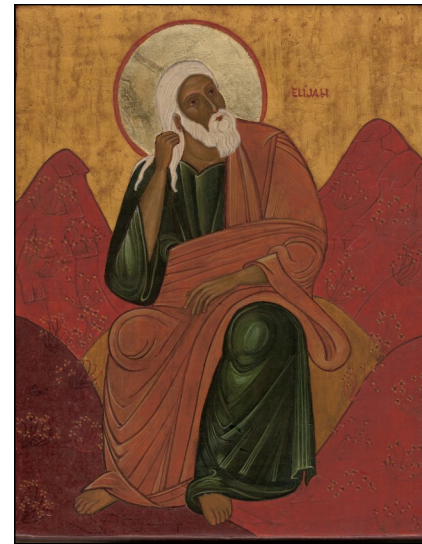


*ARC Retreats...
time apart,
rest,
and spiritual
renewal*



Ecumenical Retreat Community
NEWSLETTER
Summer 2008 VOL. XXIX NO. 2

Journey Inward: Reflecting on Mystery



Elijah, by Sister Albertine (ARC Chapel)

When ARC was asked to host a retreat on Mystery for a congregation embarking on a year-long study of the topic, the idea seemed at once perfectly natural and decidedly risky - like dissecting a balloon to learn what gives it shape and buoyancy.

Silence and solitude, space and stillness open the vast landscape of the interior where the soul may go in search of God, or be rapt in wonder, or distinguish light from darkness, or make peace with grief. These qualities belong to ARC as blue belongs to sky. What happens to people on retreat is beyond our questioning or our knowledge; certainly the experience is beyond our power to direct or explain. All we know is that it does happen, and regularly. This is sacred ground and we walk lightly here.

Leading a retreat on Mystery, then, feels far less instructional than invitational, and always comes with a strong qualifier: “Welcome to the Wardrobe. You may find it opens into the kingdom of Narnia; or you may find nothing but a solid wall.”

As retreat leaders, the best we can say is: here are some tools that have occasionally been useful to people seeking the World beyond (beneath, above, within) our world. You may find them helpful, but then again you may not. There is no Rand McNally map to Mystery, but these are paths that we have taken and have come to love; perhaps you may find yourself walking them, too.

The means that may or may not lead to Mystery are, in fact, simple and ready to hand: above all, silence, first in the external environment and then, increasingly, within. “To begin to enter into the profound silence that resides in the depths of our beings is to begin to enter the realm of the Godhead beyond God,” says Wendy Wright (from *The Vigil*.)

To find the silence we may seek out poetry like that of Mary Oliver or Rumi, so transparent and true it startles us out of speech. Prayer that quiets and centers itself on the breath, or on a single word. The labyrinth, leading us inward and outward, now nearer and now farther from the center, but always toward the goal. Sacred Circle Dance, moving us in harmony with the rhythms of music, of the stars in their courses, of those next to us. Images and icons like the Trinity of Andrei Rublev; or the Elijah of Sister Albertine, or the Visitation of Sister Rose Tuberty work as windows into expectant stillness.

Mystery, continued on page 2

Have you moved—or moved on? Let us know.
To receive the newsletter electronically, change your mailing address, or request to be removed from our mailing list for newsletters and appeals, contact us via email (arc retreat.hotmail.com) or the enclosed response form. You can also visit our website for the latest news at www.arc retreat.org

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The Visitation, by Sister Joan Tuberty.
The original of this icon hangs in Russia.

In it, the aged and formerly barren Elizabeth, now pregnant with John the Baptist greets her young cousin Mary, who carries in her own womb the holy child Jesus. Recognizing his Savior, Elizabeth's child "leaps in the womb." Meditating on the two women, we may also recognize the spark of the Divine mirrored in their eyes and hidden in our own hearts as well.

The icons of ARC

"The icon," says Rowan Williams, "bears witness to the nearness yet otherness of the Eternal. It introduces us to a world of mystery, yet at the same time, we discover that this mystery is not far away, but is hidden within each one of us, closer to us than our own heart."

ARC has been blessed with a number of icons, several of them painted by friends who cherished their time here. Sister Albertine of Grandchamps, Switzerland, (where the seed of ARC was planted) made the *Elijah* icon (p. 1) for ARC's chapel. The icon recalls the prophet's flight to the wilderness; he listens attentively for the voice of God heard not in earthquake, fire, or wind, but in the still small voice—the sound of sheer silence.

The *Visitation* (left) was painted by long-time ARC friend Sister Joan Tuberty under the tutelage of Sister Albertine. In it, the aged and formerly barren Elizabeth, now pregnant with John the Baptist greets her young cousin Mary, who carries in her own womb the holy child Jesus. Recognizing his Savior, Elizabeth's child "leaps in the womb." Meditating on the two women, we may also recognize the spark of the Divine mirrored in their eyes and hidden in our own hearts as well.

Mystery, continued from p. 1

One of the great mysteries of Mystery itself is its transcendence of the normal boundaries separating centuries and faith traditions, almost as if there is a shared language spoken by those who have ventured close to the heart of God. The language is deeply comforting as well as inwardly thrilling, and speaks of the steady perception of God, at the heart of the universe, as a loving and tender presence. Mystics recognize the spark of the Divine in all creation, non-human as well as human. The realization that all creation is infused with this presence, and shines with it, urges a recognition of oneness with all that is, and surges forth in awe and gratitude, pouring itself out on behalf of the world (the "journey outward"). All these are part of the mystic's daily vocabulary.

Again and again, though, all language subsides into silence. Those who are wary, at first, of spending the better part of a day without the easy resource of words find themselves longing, by retreat's ending, for yet more time spent in solitude and stillness. Retreat leaders lead best when they let the Spirit lead.

Retreat centers cultivate silence; silence is our greatest natural asset. But we don't own it or sell it, any more than we can dispense Mystery on demand. We can only extend the invitation, and we do so knowing that what is on offer is beyond value, without price, and available without limit, everywhere and anywhere for those who seek it. A starting point may be as simple as turning off the television or radio to listen instead to the music of the spheres, or just getting out of the car and standing on earth.

And in the end, we do not find Mystery, but are found by it. God may find us most easily in sacred places, "thin places" where the boundaries between heaven and earth loosen and grow transparent, but the holy meets us at every turn if we have eyes to see and hearts to feel it. Once encountered in times spent apart in quiet contemplation, Mystery opens us to the greater Mystery inhabiting all of life. If the ARC experience can open this door and make the invitation clear and compelling, we will be content.

Jan Wiersma

Journey Shared: Celebrating Life Together



From left: Jan Wiersma, Bob Hoxie, Wendy Bronson (astride the loon), Nathan Peterson, Rod Wallin, Kathy Hanish-Wallin.

This spring, the ARC Community traveled to the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, stopping for lunch at the whimsical Lark Toys, near Kellogg. Their hand-carved carousel features not horses but a veritable ark full of God's creatures.

We are constantly revising and expanding our understanding of community: **Kathy Hanish-Wallin**, an expert in office management and bookkeeping, a talented artist and graphic designer, and a dedicated spiritual seeker, has joined the community on a part-time, non-residential basis. She brings her own delightful spirit to community; and we are blessed as well by the wood-cutting skills and engineering ingenuity of her husband, Rod Wallin. Kathy and Rod live near Green Lake between Cambridge and Princeton.

From the ARC Kitchen: Lasagne Florentine

Rumor has it that ARC borrowed this new favorite recipe from the kitchens of Holden Village.

Sauce

4 T. butter	3 T. flour
1 diced onion	1 1/2 c. chicken broth
2 cloves minced garlic	Salt and pepper to taste

Cheese mixture

4 oz. softened cream cheese	1/4 c. sour cream
2 c. cottage cheese	Salt, pepper, oregano and garlic to taste

Other ingredients

9 lasagne noodles	1 1/2 c. grated cheddar cheese
4 c. cooked, chopped spinach	1 1/2 c. grated mozzarella cheese
1 c. sliced mushrooms	1/2 c. grated Parmesan cheese

Sauce: In a medium saucepan, melt butter; sauté onions and garlic until transparent. Stir in flour and cook over low heat. Gradually add chicken broth; cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until sauce boils and thickens. If desired, a little white wine can be added to sauce. Season with salt and pepper. **Cheese mixture:** Stir together dairy products. Season to taste. Cook noodles until barely done, rinse in cold water, and lay out individually so they won't stick together. **Assemble lasagne:** Grease 9X13 pan. Layer in order, one-half at a time: noodles, cheese mixture, well-drained spinach, mushrooms, mixture of cheddar and mozzarella cheese and garlic sauce. After second layer, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Cover and bake 1 1/2 hours at 375 degrees, removing cover the last 15 minutes. Let stand 10-15 minutes before serving. Serves 8-10.

Journey Aided: Thank you to all our friends

Sustaining Members

Richard Andersen
Judith Benson
Ronald Bisek
Winton and Tammy Boyd
Jim and Marilyn Dodge
Doug Federhart
Ruth & Loren Halvorson
Wally and Char Hed
Carol L. Johnson
George & Vivian Johnson
Sara & Dave Kise
George & Mary Jo Lindeberg
Susan Lorenz
Donna & Roger McNear
Chris & Jerry Moench
Sherry Monson
Michele & Micheal Moore
Jim & Sandy Rothschilder
Ann & Mike Tessneer
Dave & Cindy Tidball
Marilu Thomas
Krista Tippet
Casey & Teresa Vanderbent
Kate Weinbender
Gay Wilker
Keith & Kay Wold
John & Eleanor Yackel
Dick & Zarida Young
And others who preferred to remain anonymous.

General Contributions

Mary Adair
Richard Adams and Ross Kylo
Elizabeth Andress and Steven Solbrack
Shelby Andress
Katherine Austin Mahle
Carol Beatty
Bob and Joan Beech
Glen and Margaret Booth
Calvary Lutheran Church,
Women of the ELCA,
Stanchfield, Minnesota
Donna Carlson
Carl C. Caskey

Mary Beth Cavert
Catherine Cowley
Ronald Dexter
Irene Filkins
Kristen Fisher
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Jacquelyn Wiersma
Michael Wilker
Roy & Judy Wolf
Diane Yeager
Alan and Marilyn Youel
Pamela Zagaria
And many others who preferred to remain anonymous. We apologize for omissions and assure you your gift was noted and appreciated!

Memorial Gifts

Doris & Roland Larson, in memory of grandson Tommy Wipf
Jean Lovett, in memory of her father, Herbert R. Lovett
Betty Bear, in memory of Ray Hitchcock's father and David Bear
Robert Peltier, in memory of Viola Ann Halvorson Peltier

In-kind Gifts

To say thank you by name to all who have contributed in a multitude of ways would be next to impossible. We are grateful for:

- * Our volunteers in kitchen, house, woodshed, gardens, and in the mail room;
- * Those who have given wood for burning from their own property, plants for beauty and for food, and other useful gifts;
- * All who serve on committees, attend benefit concerts and special events, and especially, all who remember ARC and its mission in prayer.

The ARC Board and Community

ARC Summer and Fall Retreats 2008

Life Transitions—Inspired by *The Not So Big Life* (Susan Susanka), for those anticipating any one of life's big transitions, and wondering where they go from here. Explore the changes that accompany significant shifts as an opportunity for revitalization and transformation with facilitators Donna McNear and Kathryn Grafsgaard, both gifted educators contemplating their own transitions.

Friday evening, June 13—Sunday afternoon, June 15

Cost: \$175. Meals and accommodation included.

Educators' Retreat—Time apart for reflection and renewal A time to remember our purposes as educators and renew our commitments to those we teach. This is the third year ARC is sponsoring a retreat for educators, designed for people who teach in all contexts and at all levels. Facilitated by Donna McNear, teacher, and life-long learner in the art of reflective teaching. Scholarships available with priority given to teachers of special needs children in urban schools.

Monday, August 18, 10:30 am—Wednesday, August 20, 10:30 am

Cost: \$175. Meals and accommodation included.

4th and 5th Step Retreats (the same retreat is offered on two consecutive weekends)

We welcome members of any 12-step program for an in-depth experience focused on the 4th and 5th Steps. Experience a healing and contemplative environment for your 4th Step work, with time apart and thoughtful discussion. Your guides in the process will be four experienced facilitators (two men, two women), for support and listening to 5th Steps. Confidentiality is a priority.

Friday afternoon, July 25—Sunday afternoon, July 27 OR

Friday afternoon, August 1—Sunday afternoon, August 3

Cost: \$210 single room; \$185 double room (includes six meals, and accommodation). Scholarship funds are available based on need.

Behold! for girls (the same retreat is offered one weekend in July and one in August)

It's like summer camp for contemplation, learning ancient and re-emerging spiritual practices of body, mind and spirit. We will walk ARC's beautiful new labyrinth and explore prayer practices that engage the body, art materials, and silence. This weekend retreat is designed for teenaged girls and an accompanying adult partner of their choice: a parent (Mom or Dad) or an adult friend or mentor. Led by Anita Beste, pastor, lover of the arts, and mother of 3 daughters in their 20's.

Friday evening, July 18—Sunday afternoon, July 20 OR

Friday evening, August 15—Sunday afternoon, August 17

Cost: \$25/participant (Special introductory offer this year thanks to ARC's Gifted Retreat program.)

Third Act Life Development Retreat: Exploring Your Spiritual Genealogy

Who are your spiritual forebears and where have they come from? How have you been influenced by them? What spiritual role models do you now have in your life? We will create a spiritual family tree and scrapbook of those we are related to and those whom we have chosen as spiritual family to us, examining what we would like to pass on and what we would like to leave behind.

Saturday, October 11, 9 am—Sunday, October 12, 12 pm

For costs, and more information, visit thirdactministry.org.

Hold the date: Sunday, October 19, 2-4 pm, for the Clea Galhano Recorder Concert, to benefit both ARC and Third Act Life Development.

Watch the website (arcretreat.org) for information on a forthcoming discussion by Debra Ricci and Dwight Haberman, on their recent Palestinian experience (see pages 4-5).

The discussion will take place at ARC later this summer.

Journey Outward: Acting for Peace

Back to Palestine to Listen and Learn--2008

Former community members Debra Ricci and Dwight Haberman report on their most recent trip to the West Bank. Their experience demonstrates how the inward journey at ARC translates to an outer journey of justice and peace for all people of the world.

We returned to the West Bank in Palestine on Feb. 14, 2008 to see how Palestinian life under Israeli military occupation had changed since our last visit in 2004-2005. We also wanted to check in with the many friends we had made during our volunteer year at Hope School in Beit Jala near Bethlehem. At that time we had sought out Palestinian and Israeli peace and justice groups specifically to learn as much as we could about the conflict. Our aim this time, as before, was to listen and learn; to observe and photograph, to gauge a sense of hope/despair; to practice grief work as appropriate, and to practice peace and maintain a nonanxious presence.



Haberman (l.) and Ricci, back home at ARC

From our experiences from February 15 to May 1, 2008, we could see some changes. The most apparent was the severe stress on the remaining Christian population as a result of the continued out-migration of Christian families. Before 1948, Christians (who trace their heritage back to the original apostles) comprised over 18% of the Palestinian population. Now Palestinian Christians comprise less than 2%. Father George, Pastor of the Melkite Church in Bethlehem, has watched 60 of his family members join the Palestinian diaspora in the last few years. This puts tremendous pressure on those few Christians who remain. They are faced with difficult choices: do I move to a place where I am safe, free, and can make a decent living? Do I remain where my family roots and my land define who I am? Who will maintain the holy places and be the Christian presence in the Holy Land?

We added more to our understanding about the bureaucratic/structural harassment of Palestinians, that invisible framework of control that underlies the more visible strategies perpetrated by the Israeli Occupational Forces. Much like the “crazy-making” procedures of applying for a building permit, or gaining permission papers for access through checkpoints, or getting auto license plates, every transaction of daily life is fraught with uncertainty. Phone and utility service, travel, applying to the university and attending classes, real estate transactions—every aspect of daily life is controlled by an arbitrary and inconsistent application of a legal system exercised solely for Israeli benefit.

We see implosion of Palestinian culture at the family level when viewed from the perspective of violence against Palestinian women. Women and children bear the brunt of the occupation and experience violence from three sources: 1) by virtue of the fact that they are women and children, 2) from particular traditional Palestinian patriarchal norms and values, and 3) from the effects of the occupation itself.

Here is a typical scenario informed from the many stories we heard: A father loses his job (or dies or is imprisoned) because of current economic conditions, mobility restrictions, or physical/mental disability. The family is forced into poverty unless the mother takes a job. This violates strict gender codes; the father is humiliated, and the mother must seek a low-paying, unskilled job such as housekeeping. Once

Peace Labyrinth: Hoping for the unseen



Construction completed, the Peace Labyrinth awaits landscaping.

Since its installation last summer, the Peace Labyrinth has become moving meditation for many guests. Because of the way the labyrinth weaves inward and outward from the perceived center, Rachel Naomi Remen writes: “Walking the labyrinth can be a humbling experience. It often creates in people a willingness to look past the familiar evidence of their eyes and a greater ability to hope for that which is unseen.”

When we ponder the ongoing suffering and conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, we may easily despair. The lesson of the labyrinth teaches that, despite all evidence to the contrary, each twist and turn may in fact be leading us home.

Acting, continued from page 4

she acquires the necessary permits to get to the job, she leaves home before dawn and arrives home after dark. Each time she passes through a checkpoint, she risks delays and harassment (oftentimes shaming, sexual harassment). When she arrives home, she bears complete responsibility for housekeeping and child raising. She quickly becomes exhausted. The father acts out his emasculation by abusing his wife and children. Strict codes of family honor prevent her from reporting to the police or seeking refuge in a legal system that will re-victimize her. If the husband is physically or mentally incapacitated, she bears responsibility for his care, and for keeping the family together.

Most Israelis support an end to the occupation if their security is assured.

We made a special effort to interact with more Israelis on this trip. We met:

1. **Zionists** who want to take all of historic Palestine for the State of Israel, not restricted to Israeli government and military personnel.
2. **Populace Israelis**—average citizens living their lives oblivious to Palestinian concerns as they raise their families and go about their business (albeit in a state of continuous apprehension and insecurity).
3. **Israeli Peace Activists**—Israelis who understand the Palestinian narrative, who seek ways to live side by side with them, and who want to end the occupation.

In fact, most Israelis support an end to the occupation if their security is assured. We found individuals on both sides—Palestinians and Israelis—seeking justice or perpetrating injustice. The divide is no more between Palestinians and Israelis. As Naim Ateek of Sabeel puts it, “It is between the forces of peace and justice in Israel and Palestine and those of violence and domination.” So we join with Palestinians and Israelis, with Jews, Muslims, and Christians that are on one side, the side of justice and international law, and against all those who are on the side of oppression and domination.

Reference: Ateek, Naim. *The apartheid paradigm: How does it apply to Palestine-Israel?* Cornerstone. Issue 48, Spring 2008.