St. Mary’s Sewanee Announces 2020 Retreats

Ranging from one-day workshops to weekend-length retreats, St. Mary’s Sewanee: The Ayres Center for Spiritual Development is pleased to announce its events for 2020.

**The Welcoming Prayer, Saturday, Feb. 22**
This introductory day-long workshop will explore the practices of the Welcoming Prayer and Centering Prayer. The purpose of the Welcoming Prayer is to deepen our relationship with God through consenting in the ordinary activities of our day — “consent-on-the-go.” The Rev. Tom Ward will lead this workshop, where participants will learn the method and principles of these prayer practices and have the opportunity to experience them in a quiet, reflective atmosphere.

**Silence and the Grace of Lent, Friday–Sunday, Feb. 28–March 1**
Every Lent, people are called to go apart, to enter into silence, and allow grace to flow more freely within and through themselves. This Lent consider participating in a weekend-long silent retreat that includes two hours of Centering Prayer daily, the practices of Lectio Divina and Visio Divina, daily prayerful movement/yoga, celebration of the Eucharist, and the opportunity to meet with retreat leaders Mary Ann Best, Carolyn Goddard, and LeAnn Billups.

**One River Wisdom, Friday–Sunday, March 6–8**
Led by Rabbi Rami Shapiro and the Rev. Dr. Gordon Peerman, this meeting of One River Wisdom will focus on “Perennial Wisdom: The God Beyond Our Understanding.” Drawing on the mystic heart of the world’s religions, participants will explore the implications of the non-dual aliveness and awakening to one’s true nature. The weekend retreat will engage in a variety of contemplative practices to consider this wisdom.

**Calm and Clear Meditation, Friday–Sunday, March 13–15**
This three-day meditation training and retreat will focus on the simple yet elegant meditation techniques for the development of Calm-Abiding (quiescence) and clarity of awareness. Led by Dr. Arthur Giacalone, Participants will be guided through step-by-step instructions for cultivating an open and wakeful presence; for resting in silence, stillness and non-conceptual awareness; to be single-focused and possess stable attention; and for mindfulness, equanimity, and joyful tranquility.

**The Enneagram’s Greatest Secret: Living in Essence, Friday–Sunday, March 20–22**
Join Dr. Joseph Howell, Lark Howell, and the faculty of the Institute for Conscious Being for an in-depth exploration into the Enneagram’s Greatest Secret: Living in Essence. Whether you are new to the Enneagram or have studied for years, this retreat gives a foundational introduction to understand and apply it within your own spiritual life.
The Spirituality of Japanese Gardens, Saturday, April 4
Designed for contemplation and inner peace, a Japanese garden is a spiritual refuge full of mystery, nature, and serenity. During this day-long workshop led by naturalist Richard Lawrence Dubé, participants will examine the five basic forms of traditional Japanese Gardens, consider at the traditional elements that comprise these gardens, and learn about the pattern language of Japanese Gardens.

Drawing Closer to God, Friday–Sunday, April 3–5
Icon writing is a rich spiritual practice, a meeting place between the divine and the human. Part of the icon’s symbolism is transmitted through the step-by-step technique used to create it. Join Sewanee artist Martha Keeble for this three-day workshop that is an exploration of visual prayer using a traditional Byzantine image to draw closer to God. Participants work on their icons in silence giving the participant an experience of deep contemplation. No prior art experience is necessary.

Rising Strong™ Retreat, Friday–Sunday, April 24–26
In this intensive three-day retreat, led by Maryellen McCone and Richard Barrali, participants will explore the process of rewriting their stories using the groundbreaking research of Brené Brown. The retreat is based on vulnerability: If we are brave enough, often enough, we will fall. The Rising Strong™ workshop is a research-based program about what it takes to get back up, live a more wholehearted and satisfying life, rise strong and how owning our stories of struggle gives us the power to write daring new endings.

Mindfulness on the Mountain, Friday–Sunday, May 1–3
Join the Rev. Dr. Gordon Peerman for a weekend of Deliberate and Effortless Mindfulness practice. This will be a silent retreat with both guided and silent meditations, mindful walking and the mindful movement of Qigong, silent meals (except for the opening Friday dinner), and evening teaching. Both beginners and those with experience in mindfulness practice are welcome.

Forest Bathing with Painting Response, Saturday, May 9
Come listen to the voice of the forest, or the voice within you that the forest inspires during a slow, safe, sensory-rich guided walk, known as Forest Bathing. This workshop, led by Connie Keetle, is an invitation to slow down, become fully present in the moment, and have a full sensory experience of the forest. After time in the forest, and a break for lunch, participants will be invited to respond to their experience by drawing on the creative energies generated by the walk.

Lectio Divina Immersion Retreat, Friday–Sunday June 5–7
This weekend-long retreat provides an opportunity to deepen one’s practice of Lectio Divina as a way of praying the scriptures in an atmosphere of silence and community. The four moments of the prayer are explored as expressions of the four senses of scripture: the literal, allegorical, behavioral/moral, and unitive senses. The retreat, led by Mike Potter and Tim Goldman, includes periods of Centering Prayer each day.

One River Wisdom, Friday–Sunday, June 12–14
Led by Rabbi Rami Shapiro and the Rev. Dr. Gordon Peerman, this meeting of One River Wisdom will focus on “The Golden Rule and the Dark Side of Holy Scriptures.” Holy books are the product of not always so holy humans. For every "Love your neighbor" (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39) there is a "Destroy every man, woman, child and cow of the Amalekites." (I Samuel 15:3). Participants in this
The retreat will consider the darker forces of religion and spirituality, the mindset that feeds them, and how to free ourselves from both.

**Eight-Day Centering Prayer Retreat, Sunday–Sunday, June 21–28**
This retreat is an opportunity for practitioners of Centering Prayer to deepen their contemplative journey in the contemporary world. It is a week-long experience of integrating contemplation and action through silence, solitude, and community. There are daily opportunities for silence, walking, hiking, yoga, and spiritual companionship to foster an ever-deepening level of interior silence and awareness of the presence of God in everyday life.

**Celtic Prayer Bead Workshop, Saturday, July 11**
Learn about the ancient tradition of Celtic Prayer Beads — how to make them, how to meditate with them, and how they can draw you closer to God — in this one-day workshop led by Judy Kahler-Jalbert. The day includes lunch and basic bead-making materials, but participants are encouraged to bring their own special crosses or medals to be incorporated in their prayer bead chain.

**SoulCollage® Workshop, Saturday, July 18**
A SoulCollage® “Unleash Your Creativity” retreat is a therapeutic way to explore and release the artist within . . . even for those who do not consider themselves artists. This day-long workshop, led by Judy Kahler-Jalbert, will examine the nature of creativity and the power of images and the unconscious. This is an opportunity to discover how to develop a sense of artistic identity and to unleash creative flow.

**Introduction to Centering Prayer, Saturday, July 25**
Centering Prayer is a form of Christian silent meditation where one lets go of thoughts during periods of prayer typically lasting 20 minutes. It is rooted in the self-emptying love that forms the heart of Jesus’ teaching and life. The effect on those who practice it is an ever-increasing awareness of God’s action and presence. Participants will learn the method and principles of this prayer practice and have the opportunity to experience this ancient method in a quiet, reflective atmosphere.

**The Grace in Gardens, Saturday, July 25**
Do you want ideas to make your personal garden more spiritual? Are you looking for ideas for church gardens? Do you like to look at beautiful garden pictures or walk in nature’s spaces? Join June Mays on this one-day retreat to explore the link between gardening and spirituality, and tour garden sanctuaries in the Sewanee community.

**Eight-Day Centering Prayer Retreat, Friday–Friday, July 31–Aug. 7**
This retreat is an opportunity for practitioners of Centering Prayer to deepen their contemplative journey in the contemporary world. It is a week-long experience of integrating contemplation and action through silence, solitude, and community. There are daily opportunities for silence, solitude, walking, hiking, yoga, and spiritual companionship to foster an ever-deepening level of interior silence and awareness of the presence of God in everyday life.

**Yoga with Bethany, Saturday, Aug. 29**
Explore yoga or deepen your existing practice at this one-day workshop led by Bethany Sylvan, an energetic yoga instructor radiating positivity. People of all activity levels and capabilities are encouraged to attend.
The Labyrinth Journey, Friday–Sunday, Sept. 11–13
Join Margy Oehmig and Terry Price for a weekend of joy and discovery through labyrinth walking followed by reflection and writing. This will be a special time to step away from the noise and distraction of the world in order to refresh, reflect, and reemerge better equipped to creatively reconnect with the divinity within, the divinity around us, and the divinity in the world. No writing experience is necessary.

Forest Bathing with Painting Response, Saturday, Sept. 19
Come listen to the voice of the forest, or the voice within you that the forest inspires during a slow, safe, sensory-rich guided walk, known as Forest Bathing. This workshop, led by Connie Keetle, is an invitation to slow down, become fully present in the moment, and have a full sensory experience of the forest. After time in the forest, and a break for lunch, participants will be invited to respond to their experience by drawing on the creative energies generated by the walk.

One River Wisdom, Friday–Sunday, Sept. 25–27
Led by Rabbi Rami Shapiro and the Rev. Dr. Gordon Peerman, this meeting of One River Wisdom will focus on the topic, “Be a Blessing: Engaging the Coming Global Food Fight.” Rising temperatures and extreme weather make a global food crisis all but inevitable. Large-scale efforts to mitigate the impact of famine will require international cooperation, but the world’s religions offer guidelines for dealing with the crisis on a personal level. Drawing on ancient texts and teachings, participants will explore practical and meaningful acts that can be a blessing to all people.

Drawing Closer to God, Friday–Sunday, Oct. 9–11
Icon writing is a rich spiritual practice, a meeting place between the divine and the human. Part of the icon’s symbolism is transmitted through the step-by-step technique used to create it. Join Sewanee artist Martha Keeble for this three-day workshop that is an exploration of visual prayer using a traditional Byzantine image to draw closer to God. Participants work on their icons in silence giving the participant an experience of deep contemplation. No prior art experience is necessary.

The Spirit of Place: A Mixed-Media Workshop, Friday–Sunday, Oct. 9–11
This three-day workshop is focused on creating artwork that is designed to help focus attention on significant places in one’s life. Artist and teacher Lendon Noe will guide participants as they use a series of “creative prompts and constraints” to draw inspiration from the beautiful location of New Hope Bluff at St. Mary’s Sewanee. As the workshop continues, individuals will create their own memories of place using techniques such as drawing, collage, frottage, and using text, stencils, and stamps.

Mindfulness on the Mountain, Friday–Sunday, Dec. 4–6
Join the Rev. Dr. Gordon Peerman for a silent contemplative prayer retreat focused on mindfulness, featuring alternating sessions of sitting and walking meditation. Guidance in these practices along with evening teaching talks will be offered. Participants will be holding silence with opportunities for questions and reflections. This retreat is open to beginners as well as more experienced practitioners.

Advent Centering Prayer Workshop, Friday–Sunday, Dec. 11–13
Centering Prayer is the opening of the mind and heart – our whole being – to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words and emotions. This three-day workshop will focus on how Centering Prayer can heighten one’s understanding and appreciation for the season of Advent. No previous experience of Centering Prayer is required.
For more information about these events, including making reservations, call St. Mary’s Sewanee at 931-598-5342, email <reservations@stmaryssewanee.org>, or go online to <www.stmaryssewanee.org>.

St. Mary’s Sewanee: The Ayres Center for Spiritual Development is dedicated to providing spiritual hospitality to persons of diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds, in a place of natural beauty, simplicity, silence, tranquility and warm spiritual rest through retreats, renewal and learning. For the last 30 years, St. Mary’s Sewanee has welcomed individuals and groups from across the United States and around the world to a place to rest, renew and reconnect.