

New River Presbyterian Church
Power of Prayer Bible Study Intensive

Fall 2022 - Winter 2023 Session

Rev. Eustacia Moffett Marshall, Pastor/Course Facilitator

Wednesdays 6:30 PM (EST) Online
newriverpc.org

Dear Beloved,

This course is dedicated to followers of Jesus who are students of the living God, who desire to touch the fullness of life with Christ, and consent to take the journey of a lifetime. May you become. May you surrender to the invitation to love. And may God's love in you be a healing balm for others.

In the name of the Carpenter,
Rev. Eustacia Moffett Marshall

We are called to this journey not just for our own personal growth but also for the sake of the whole human family.

-Thomas Keating, *Invitation to Love* (p.3)

Psalm 46:10

Be still and know that I am God.

Luke 6:12

Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God.

About the Course

Rev. Eustacia Moffett Marshall, Pastor/Facilitator

This bible study is designed to (1) introduce the biblical, theological and conceptual foundation of *Centering Prayer*, a type of contemplative prayer practice, and to (2) encourage the practice of Centering Prayer.

Using scripture and the book, *Invitation to Love* (ITL) by Thomas Keating, the course is considered a “bible study intensive” because it will introduce some language, concepts, and church history material reflective of undergraduate/graduate level theological and psychological studies. Participants, however, will not need a degree to follow the content of this study. Each Wednesday evening, disciples will gather to understand and explore the power of prayer embedded in Centering Prayer.

What is Centering Prayer? Centering Prayer is a discipline of Christian silent prayer in which we experience God’s presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself.¹ Through the process of resting in God’s presence, beyond thoughts, feeling, associations, and commentaries, we open up to the divine presence at a deeper level (ITL, 99).

The “power” operating in Centering Prayer is experienced through regular practice.

The regular practice of centering prayer initiates a healing process that might be called the “divine therapy.” The level of deep rest accessed during the prayer period loosens up the hard-pan around the emotional weeds stored in the unconscious, of which the body seems to be the warehouse. The psyche begins to evacuate spontaneously the undigested emotional material of a lifetime, opening up new space for self-knowledge, freedom of choice, and the discovery of the divine presence within. (ITL, 4).

This healing ignites a fuller capacity to love as Jesus loved (John 13:34) and helps us to live out the values of the Gospel.

Centering Prayer is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer. Rather, it adds depth of meaning to all prayer.

Course Materials: Bible
Invitation to Love (ITL) by Thomas Keating, the 20th anniversary edition

Course Invitation: You are invited to practice morning and/or evening Centering Prayer.
See attached guidelines.

¹ <https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org>

Power of Prayer Bible Study *Learning Path*
[Click Here for Brochure on Centering Prayer](#)

- Sept 14 **Course Orientation | The “Why & What” of Centering Prayer**
 Scripture: Matthew 6:6 • Mark 1:39 • Luke 6:12, 10:38 – 41
 ITL: *Introduction*
- Sept 21 **Recalling the Experience of Centering Prayer**
 Guest Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Diane Givens Moffett
 Scripture: TBA
 ITL: *Introduction*
- Sept 28 **Confronting the “False Self” Part I**
 Scripture: Luke 4: 1-12
 ITL: *Chapter 1 • The Emotional Programs for Happiness*
- Oct 5 **Confronting the “False Self” Part II**
 Scripture: Romans 7: 15-24
 ITL: *Chapter 2 • The False Self in Action*
- Oct 12 **Embracing Inner Freedom**
 Scripture: John 8: 1-11
 ITL: *Chapter 3 • The Afflictive Emotions*
- Oct 19 **Break – Please practice centering prayer**
- Oct 26 **Recovering the Whole / Growing into Full Personhood**
 Scripture: Genesis 3:1-13 & Ephesians 4:14-16
 ITL: *Chapter 4 • The Human Condition*
- Nov 2 **Letting Go of Unhealthy Attachments**
 Scripture: Matthew 5: 29 - 30
 ITL: *Chapter 5 • Mythic Membership Consciousness*
- Nov 9 **Letting Go of Unhealthy Theology (i.e. ideas about God)**
 Scripture: Mark 1: 40 – Mark 2
 ITL: *Chapter 6 • Attitudes Toward God*
- Nov 16 **Living with Higher Motivations**
 Scripture: Mark 1: 14-15
 ITL: *Chapter 7 • Mental Egoic Consciousness*
- Nov 23 *Thanksgiving Break*
- Dec 7 **Embracing the Spiritual Journey**
 Scripture: Matthew 6:6 • Philippians 2: 1 -11
 ITL: *Chapters 8, 9, 10*

- Dec 14 **Embracing Wisdom from Dark Nights**
 Scripture: Matthew 4: 12-17 & John 1: 1 – 5
 ITL: *Chapters 11, 12*
- Dec 21 *Christmas Break*
- Dec 28 *Christmas Break*
- Jan 11 **Receiving Blessings in the Wrestling**
 Scripture: Genesis 32: 22-31
 ITL: *Chapter 13, 14*
- Jan 18 **Understanding the Contemplative Path**
 Scripture: Psalm 16: 11 & Philippians 2: 12 -13
 ITL: *Chapter 15 • The Stages of Contemplative Prayer*
- Jan 25 **Bearing Fruit**
 Scripture: John 15: 1 - 17
 ITL: *Chapter 16 • The Night of the Spirit*
- Feb 1 **A New Way of Being in the World**
 Scripture: John 17: 20-26
 ITL: *Chapter 17 • The Transforming Union*
- Feb 8 **Looking Like Jesus – Part 1**
 Scripture: Matthew 5: 3 - 6
 ITL: *Chapter 18 • The First Four Beatitudes*
- Feb 15 **Looking Like Jesus - Part 2**
 Scripture: Matthew 5: 7-10
 ITL: *Chapter 19 • The Last Four Beatitudes*
- Feb 22 **Ash Wednesday Worship or Study TBD**
During Lent, a Centering Prayer devotional guide will be offered to the New River community.
- Mar 1 **Surrendering to God’s Silence and Action Within**
 Scripture: I Kings 19: 11-13
 ITL: *Chapter 20, 21*
- Mar 8 **Praying with our Feet**
 Scripture: Matthew 25: 31-46
 ITL: *Chapter 22, 23*
- Mar 15 **Maximizing the Benefits of Contemplative Prayer Daily**
 Scripture: Matthew 16: 24-28
 ITL: *Chapter 24 • Spirituality in Everyday Life*

Centering Prayer Guidelines

1. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to be open to God's presence. Choose any short word with which you are comfortable to remind you to be present to God.
 - Examples of a sacred word: Jesus, Yes, Silence, Be Still, Listen, Peace, Mercy, Let Go.
2. Sitting comfortably with eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.
3. When you notice that you have become engaged with your thoughts, gently return to the sacred word.
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.
 - You may end the prayer with intercessions or the Lord's Prayer.

Considerations

- Two sessions of 20 minutes each day are recommended, but if that feels like too much at first, begin with five or ten minutes.
- Set a timer or use the centering prayer app. You can find the app in the [App Store](#) if you have an Apple or the [Googly Play Store](#) if you have an Android; search for Centering Prayer, select the one by Contemplative Outreach.

