



The Anchorage
A Contemplative Ministry
P.O. Box 9091
Greenville, SC 29604

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The Anchorage
A Contemplative Ministry
Come away...

DEPTH SOUNDINGS

Encouragement, Inspiration and News from The Anchorage

November 2013

Return Service Requested

*"You are worried and distracted about many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part which will not be taken from her."
Jesus in Luke 10:41-2*

"Sit Here with Me"

By Catherine Powell

Our theme for the year, "Sit Here with Me," must include some benches at Mepkin Abbey, where I do a lot of sitting with God. The bench in the cover picture is known as "THE bench" at Mepkin, even though there are many. As you can see it is in a grassy area looking southwest over the West Branch of the Cooper River. Some retreatants have said that the river is always changing; it never looks the same.

The last time I sat on that bench was on retreat in September, and I just happened to arrive as the tide was changing. The river was perfectly still. Usually there is a pretty good flow, going in or going out. The calm waters lasted for over fifteen minutes. As I sat with the stillness, I was aware of how far away the Atlantic Ocean is from that part of the river and yet, its flow was determined by the ocean tide. The metaphor was not lost on me: the ripple effect of something long ago or far away may affect our world drastically.

As we say in our Vision Statement, when just one person moves into a love relationship with our gracious God, it changes the world. And I think that is the way God wants to change the world, one person at a time. Also I was aware of how much WHO we are and WHAT we do might possibly affect others, without our even knowing. But God knows and cares.

On this page, the picture is of another bench at Mepkin in the garden between the store and the monastic area. The bench faces a statue of Jesus holding a baby lamb with a grown lamb beside his leg. Again the metaphor is clear: on retreat it is often like being held in the arms of Jesus. Both benches are places to sit with God, for more awareness, for comfort in the potential pain of that awareness. God knows just what we need when.



Is God inviting you, saying, "Sit here with me?" Wherever you are, in ordinary time, or on retreat, can you be fully present and open to receive whatever it is God wants to give you? God continues to show me, God is worthy of our trust.

Financial Status as of October 13, 2013 (Fiscal Year is July 13 – June 14)

Total gifts budgeted	\$ 12,450
Total received	\$ 3,035
Amount needed	\$ 9,415
Total income budgeted	\$ 28,000
Total received	\$ 6,321
Amount needed	\$21,679

Praising God for you, our awesome donors and participants!

Plea for Pledgers

Could you consider making a pledge to help with our planning? Any time frame, any amount, allows us to make decisions based on facts. Currently we have seven generous pledgers. **THANKS!**

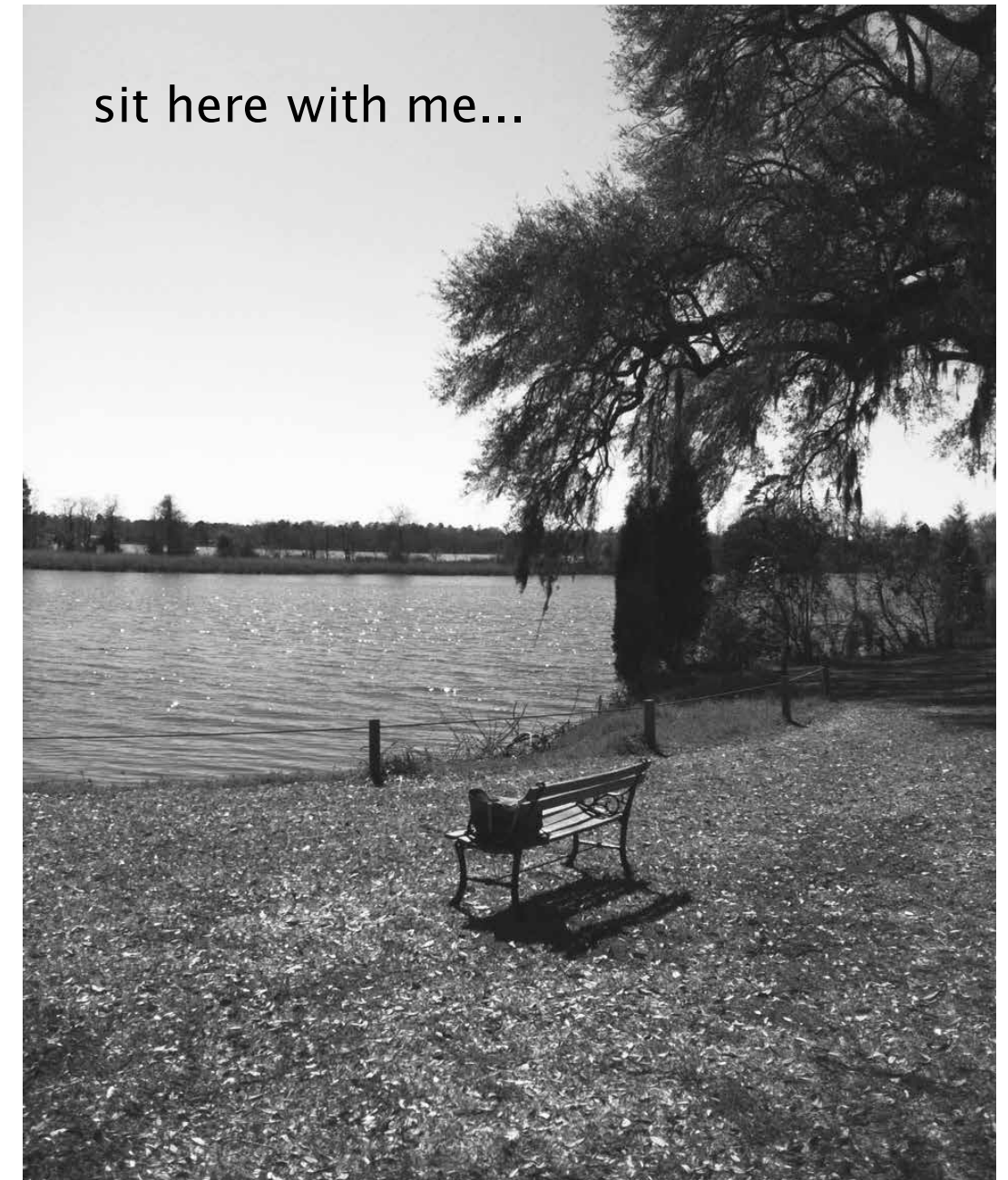
**Please help get the word out:
WE ARE STILL ALIVE!!**

Gifts for Printing

Thanks for your fantastic response last year to our request for funds to print "Depth Soundings" for those who prefer/require a printed copy. Of course it is an ongoing need as we send out 4 issues a year. Thank you for your generosity for others!

All gifts are fully tax-deductible.

sit here with me...



A bench at Mepkin Abbey facing the West Branch of the Cooper River



*anchor
deep*

“To Seek God’s Face”

By Sonia Coffin

“Come,” my heart says “seek his face.” “Your face, Lord, do I seek.”
Psalm 27:8

Where does one go to center – to seek the Lord’s face – to be still and listen – to feel peace and joy? I found all of this at Mepkin Abbey, May 27-31, 2013. By following the monastic schedule, rising at 2:30 a.m. and attending all Vigils, Lauds, Eucharist’s, Terces, Sexts, Nones, Vespers and Complines throughout each day, I found the peace of Christ.

Walking the beautiful grounds in silence, looking at the stars in the heavens, taking communion, chanting the psalms, hearing scripture, meeting with my spiritual guide, sitting on a bench by the Cooper River (see cover picture) and praying in the chapel, I heard words of love and tenderness dropped into my hungry heart.

A chance encounter with a Carmelite priest and another with a troubled woman escaping an abusive husband showed me yet again that there are no coincidences, only divine appointments. Laughter with my housemates over our talk with the Abbot about the communion wine added to the pure joy of each moment there. Love and laughter – it doesn’t get much better than that.

Reentry back into “ordinary time” (not the real world, because being with God so intimately is the MOST real world there is), came swiftly when my friends and I stopped for lunch in Moncks Corner. The music was loud, the noise in the café sounded deafening after the blessed silence of the Abbey.

I find now that I seek silence more, and I’m more eager to get to my devotional in the morning, wanting to pray my agenda for the day with the Lord. God is faithful, and I am grateful for this special time away. So use me up, Lord, direct my paths, renew and sustain me and nudge me to ever seek your face.

(Thanks to Sonia Kulka Coffin for this article and for her participation with The Anchorage. She is a native of Edmonton, Alberta, and has lived in the US for more than 40 years, now in Charlotte, N.C. She is married, the mother of a son and daughter and the grandmother of six grandchildren. She has worked as an English and French teacher, a director of tourism, tutor and librarian. She has written book reviews for The Vancouver Province and The Charlotte Observer. She particularly enjoys her involvement with Kairos, a prison ministry to women in Columbia, S.C. Sonia is an active member of Covenant Presbyterian Church.)

“Wading Out a Little Deeper”

By LaMon Brown

I think it was C. S. Lewis who compared how our spiritual or religious lives may be like the boy who would go down to the sea side, let the water run across his toes, but refuse to wade out into the deep. When Catherine asked me to write for Depth Soundings I was initially excited to do so, but as I thought more about it, I realized that I know far more about the shallows than the depths.

This is not false humility or ‘humble bragging’ as a friend of mine would say. I read the mystics. They have been a life-long love of mine. In many ways they are models and inspirations for me. I know what folks who have been into the depths are like and I’m not there yet.

I told a group on a retreat at Mars Hill years ago that I was a kind of spiritual dabbler. I have tried a little of this and a little of that—Anglican prayer beads, the Jesus Prayer, praying with icons, practicing silence, breath prayers, imaginative meditations, writing Haiku as a spiritual exercise, et al.

Some of these I continue to do from time to time, but there is one spiritual practice that has kept me centered for over 30 years. It is the practice of daily devotions. Various elements have come and gone and come again, but three things have always been present; prayer, scripture

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The Anchorage

Vision

For all people everywhere to see God more clearly, love God more dearly and follow God more nearly. For when just one person moves toward living out of that graced space, where we know we are loved, there is a ripple effect which is our best hope for the healing of our world. The Anchorage wants to contribute to that hope.

Mission

The Anchorage provides a setting in which women and men may come away to be with God, as revealed in Jesus the Christ; and to come to love more deeply, through contemplative retreats, book studies, and spiritual direction this God who loves us beyond measure.

Metaphor

A safe harbor in which to anchor deep in still waters as a respite from the wind and waves; where pilgrims may enjoy prayerful grace, honor the rhythm of Sabbath and open more fully to the mystery of God’s love.

Servant Leaders

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Madeline Blackwell
Stephem Clyborne
Peggy Dulaney
Martha Ebel*

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*Susan Leaphart, Volunteer
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*Catherine Powell, Founder,
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“Come, Lord Jesus”

By Madeline Blackwell

The Season of Advent is approaching and will soon be upon us bringing the joyful expectation of the birth of our Lord, Jesus The Christ. During these weeks we prepare to bear witness to the coming of the True Light of God’s Presence and Love. Thomas Merton describes this Holy Mystery as follows:

“It is not we who choose to awaken ourselves, but God who chooses to awaken us. Our discovery of God is in a way God’s discovery of us. We cannot go to Heaven to find Him...He comes down from Heaven and finds us.”

Reflecting on these words, I began to wonder just how are we to prepare for this One who allows us with full hearts and spirits to assuredly proclaim: “God is Love.” How do we ensure that we take down the “no vacancy” signs from our being and acknowledge our emptiness so that Christ can be born anew in ourselves and in the world?

In our lives of busyness and commercialism the Advent Season with all its intended moments for prayer, anticipation and holy waiting often becomes so filled with commitments, gift buying and entertaining that to even consider finding time for ourselves to reflect in quiet on The Blessed Gift of God seems impossible.

On the evening of Dec. 5th we are offering an evening emptied of the clutter of the season. It will be an opportunity to prayerfully and intentionally focus our expectation, worship and anticipation on the Incarnate Deity who without ceasing invites us to join Him and receive His Love and His Kingdom: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice, I will come in and dine with him and he with Me.” (Rev. 3:20) Please gather with us then as we say together:” Come, Lord Jesus.”

(Thanks to Madeline Blackwell for this article and for her involvement with The Anchorage over the years, currently serving as a Servant Leader. She has worked as an educator and counselor, and now enjoys a ministry of availability, with her friends and family including six grandchildren. She will lead our Advent Retreat!)

Wading (continued from page 2)

reading and journaling. It is the journaling that has been the key. After years of reading through every part of scripture, the last fifteen or so have seen a different focus. Most mornings I read from the Psalms and every morning I read a Gospel portion. (The last sentence is a bit of a hyperbole reflecting my intention but not always the fulfillment of it.) The Psalms help me to pray and the Gospels help me to understand and to live.

Without the journaling, the reading could become cursory and unfulfilling. With my journal in front of me, I always intend to write something related to what I have read. I might write a prayer, a reflection on a particular word or phrase, or how the passage relates to my current situation. Knowing that I am going to write, I have to pay attention. Perhaps if I were a deeper Christian that would not be necessary.

In addition to writing about my readings in scripture, I might write about some other reading or my environment or my previous day or what I plan to do in the present day or some combination of any of these. I always intend to write at least one page.

I remember in my early days I might have half a page or even less! But with this decision to never stop with less than a page, it keeps me focused longer on God and life. And with this focus I’ve moved out a little further into the ocean of God’s love.

(Thanks to LaMon Brown for this article and for his participation with The Anchorage over the years. He is a former missionary in Thailand with Southern Baptists and American Baptists. He has pastored churches in New York, Louisiana, and Georgia. He has written Growing with the Saints published by Smyth & Helwys. He is married to Pat and they have two children and five grandchildren. LaMon’s hobbies include reading, writing, listening to music and playing golf.)



Upcoming Events

2013

Fri., Nov. 8, 9:30 – 3:30
Fall Quiet Day: Love Songs from Sacred to Secular.

Enjoy a day in spacious silence within a gentle rhythm of music and quiet reflection together and in solitude. There are many places to ‘sit with God’ – inside and out – during the peak of the leaves. Led by Catherine Powell

Thurs., Dec. 5, 6:30 – 8:00
Making Room in the Inn: Advent Retreat. Note article to left. Led by Madeline Blackwell

2014

Jan. 24 – 26 Beach Retreat XVI Praying with St. Francis

Let your heart be opened to the wisdom and the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, the Holy Poverello. Come encounter this saint! Led by Sr. Caroline Smith

February 24 – 28, Mepkin Abbey 4-day Directed Retreat using the Ignatian method of entering into scripture with the imagination, meeting daily with the director, joining the monks for prayer. Led by Catherine Powell

Fri., Mar. 14, 9:30 – 3:30
God Cares for Caregivers

A day to appreciate caregivers as we remind them that God sees every cup of cold water given, and applauds, even if no one else seems to notice. Retreatants are free to come and go, having lunch or snacks with other care-givers. Encouraging teaching led by Peggy Dulaney

Mar. 21 – 24, Mepkin Abbey 3-day Directed Retreat (see Feb. 24-28, above)

April 7 – 11, Mepkin Abbey 4-day Directed Retreat (see Feb. 24-28, above)

Fri., Apr. 13, 9:30 – 3:30

Spring Quiet Day: Take Heart! Attention given to phrases that reference the heart, especially in Scripture. Full of encouragement! Similar to the Fall Quiet Day, but during the peak of the azaleas!

If \$10 is all you can pay, then that’s all you pay!