



GOOD NEWS

A Publication of the Valle Crucis Conference Center

April 2018

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*Deeply Rooted on
Sacred Ground*

Good News
April 2018



Spring Approaches in the Valle

Well, the daffodils are beginning to push their heads through the dirt in front of the Inn, and the crocuses are making themselves known down by the Mission House. I even heard frogs singing the other night, echoing in the stillness. I suspect we'll get another hard freeze and maybe some more snow before it's all said and done, but evidence of the world's turning is all around us, and for that we're celebrating.

What else are we celebrating? The sale of the Barker House after over a year on the market. The profits from the sale will increase our financial stability through boosting our operating reserve and allow us to engage in some much needed deferred maintenance projects. The new owners are happily making the Barker House their own, so all in all, it's a wonderful benefit to everyone.

We're also celebrating and honoring Mildred Tester, our oldest employee and the face of the Dining Hall for many years. Mildred turns 90 years old on February 26 - truly a cause for celebration. Read more about Mildred and her work here inside this newsletter.

And of course we hope to be celebrating YOU and your return to the Valle. We have a busy spring lined up, and we sure hope you'll find a way to be a part of it all. We are always delighted to see you.

Yours in hospitality,

In This Issue

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2018 VCCC PROGRAMS

COME SPEND SOME TIME ON SACRED GROUND

Short Introduction to Centering Prayer

Sunday, May 6 - Tuesday, May 8

Rev. Rob Field & Becky Hannah,
Center for Spiritual Wisdom

\$374 Full Program; \$274 Commuter

Most faith traditions have some form of meditation or contemplation. Virtually all methods of meditation have a goal of expanding, or deepening, the consciousness of the practitioner. The details vary. Centering Prayer is a surrender method of meditation, or contemplative prayer, that reaches back to the early days of Christianity. Join Rev. Rob Field with the Center for Spiritual Wisdom, and Becky Hannah with Contemplative Outreach, as we learn the basics of this ancient method of prayer.

Using the Enneagram for Spiritual Growth

Sunday, June 3 - Tuesday, June 5

The Rev. Rob Field, Christine King, and
Paula Benton

\$374 Full Program; \$274 Commuter

How differently might we experience each day if we looked at ourselves and each other with fresh eyes? What if we paid less attention to habitual patterns and behaviors that no longer support us or others?

The Enneagram has been widely recognized for its profound descriptions of nine distinct personality patterns. Today, we're growing to appreciate the Enneagram's invitation to release the personality masks we present to the world — often unconsciously. When we let go of the masks, our Soul's qualities have room to express their beauty, bringing kindness and compassion to ourselves and others.

Resting in the Quiet Heart: A Mountain Yoga Retreat

Friday, June 8 - Sunday, June 10

Chad Hallyburton

\$214 Full Program; \$124 Commuter

The most visible faces of yoga are the popular stretching, postures, and breathing techniques, but yoga offers an entire toolbox of ideas to live life to the fullest. From ethical guidelines to commentary on the nature of reality and divinity,

students of yoga through the ages have left a trail of breadcrumbs to guide us. We'll follow that trail through physical yoga, meditation, journaling, discussions, and more, as we explore the possibilities to begin or deepen our individual yoga practices.

Owner of a yoga practice in Cullowhee, Chad adapts the tools of yoga to the individual needs of students, whether they seek physical or emotional health or tools for a deeper spiritual practice.

A Journey in the Daring Way

Sunday, Aug. 26 - Wednesday, Aug. 29

The Rev. Cyndi Banks & the Rev. Karla Woggon

\$450 Full Program

\$306 Commuter Rate (includes all meals)

In these anxious times, it is easy to lose our bearings and find ourselves struggling with all the voices telling us that we fall short. The Daring Way™ process helps us peel back the layers and understand what happens to us; it points a way forward where we can engage our lives with our whole heart.

We will wrap this experience in prayer, ritual, and community, rooted in an inclusive Christian spirituality, as we find our way forward together. Due to the nature of the work we will do, this event is alcohol-free. We also ask that participants be present for the entire event, from beginning to end. Commuters are welcome, but we ask that you be present for all sessions and meals.

Led by the Rev. Karla Woggon and the Rev. Cynthia Banks, both Certified Daring Way™ Facilitators.

Women Writers Workshop II

Thursday, Sept. 13 - Sunday, Sept. 16

Katerina Whitley

\$304 Full Program

\$169 Commuter Rate (includes all meals)

\$58 Day Student (includes lunch & program)

(See description of Workshop 1 on previous page. You are welcome to attend one or both of these workshops; they are not sequential.)

Mysticism & Mindfulness in the Work of Hildegard of Bingen

Friday, September 21, 10 am - 3 pm

Robin M. Garner and Mary Taylor

\$70 includes lunch, programming, & concert

Thursday overnight lodging available for \$45

Join us for a workshop on mindfulness and meditation based on the music and poetry of the 12th century mystic Hildegard von Bingen. Gain a better understanding of this important medieval female figure and how mindfulness practice can impact one's life. Practice meditation, mindful journaling, mindful walking and enjoy a short music recital. End the day with a time of sharing.

Advanced Centering Prayer: Deepening the Silence

Sunday, Nov. 25 – Sunday, Dec. 2

Becky Hannah, Joan Ricci Thome, &

The Rev. Bob Cook

\$533 Full Program

This retreat is for those who would like a prolonged experience of centering prayer and are interested in entering into the more profound levels of spiritual practice in an atmosphere of silence, solitude, and community.

Due to the length of this retreat, each participant should have an established practice of centering prayer for at least a year. This retreat is limited to the first 20 registrants. Participants must stay on campus and plan to attend the entire retreat.

Come Thou Long Expected: A Short Advent Retreat

Friday, December 7, 10 am - 3 pm

Katerina Whitley

\$52 includes lunch, book to take home

What comes to your mind when you think of Advent? Can you stop worrying about decorating and gift buying to concentrate on the Coming of the Christ Child? Every year, people of faith long for something different, spiritual and holy, to prepare them fully for a Christmas to remember.

Katerina Whitley will focus and refine this longing. The world waited for this "central event in the history of creation," as C.S. Lewis called it. We will examine this waiting through writings, poetry, the prophets, the Birth Narrative, and our own hopes and desires for peace and joy.



The Inn porch chairs glowing in the February sunlight



January snow scene



Mast Store Annex holiday party

Find more information about our programs and register quickly and securely online at www.vcconferences.org or complete and mail the form at the end of this newsletter.

You may also register for any of our programs by calling the office at (828) 963-4453.

Reflections in the Valle on William West Skiles

Michael Rich

*Communications Director, Western NC Conference
The United Methodist Church*

Recently, I was on retreat at the Hermitages at the Valle Crucis Conference Center. I am a United Methodist, but I identify heavily with the Anglican roots of Wesley. I have spent time among the Episcopalians at St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Canton. I learned about Valle Crucis during those few years.

I like the Book of Common Prayer. It is a source of daily practice for me. I spent my days in Valle Crucis in a rhythm of praying the Daily Office, hiking, reading, and reflection. It may have been one of the best spiritual retreats I have ever taken.

During my time on the mountain, I re-read the story of William West Skiles that was on the bookshelf in the Julian of Norwich cabin. (*Missionary Life at Valle Crucis*, Susan Fenimore Cooper, 1890). It may be a tiny book, but it is full of history and insight on this place called Valle Crucis.

Though Skiles is a central character in the book, his missionary experience was not solitary, and included a cast of characters that entered and exited. In the end, the missionary experiment of Bishop Levi S. Ives was a team effort, and was not primarily a mission to a remote part of Appalachia, but a mission with the people and communities in that mountain track.

For those who don't know his story, Skiles was an Episcopal layperson from Hertford, NC (near the coast) who was an experienced farmer, lumberman, and mechanic, and was middle-aged when he was tapped for service by Bishop Ives. He showed up at the Valle Crucis mission in 1844 at age 37. It was not long before he endeared himself to the community and he took on the roles of postmaster, store keeper, treasurer of the mission, as well as tending to the farm and livestock, along with other jobs during his 18 years at Valle Crucis.

He heard his call to a religious vocation early in his time there, and was ordained as a deacon in the meager, basement chapel at Valle Crucis in August 1847 (at nearly 40 years of age). He became the first monk to take orders in the Holy Cross monastery started by Ives that same year. It was the first monastic community in Anglicanism since the Reformation, and the first Episcopal monastic experiment on American soil. Though short-lived, and controversial at the time, the early monastic venture was a significant point in the history of the community and mission.

William West Skiles and the mission at Valle Crucis may be a model for the future of ministry in the 21st century - missional and monastic. Small, committed groups of clergy and laity embedded in their community and working within a specific context to meet needs and providing an authentic expression of the Christian Gospel.

Skiles was a long-serving servant in the community - though priests and bishops came and went during the 18 years he served the community, Skiles remained steadfast and committed to the mission. Persons who commit to a community and a location for the long term have the opportunity to do substantial ministry.

The expanding mission of Valle Crucis to outlying communities, and the establishment of new churches over time, is a model with which I am familiar as a Methodist. When our denomination was growing at its greatest rate, we were doing the same thing on the American frontier. I am convinced that our future as mainline churches in the 21st century lies in recovering that spirit.

At the roots of the Valle Crucis Conference Center are the fingerprints of William West Skiles. I discovered in my days on the mountain that in the roots of my own faith are examples like Skiles.

I am grateful for the hospitality of this Thin Place.



St. John's Mission Church, with Skiles' grave marker

If you've ever eaten in our Dining Hall, you might have had the privilege of seeing Mildred standing at the doorway to the kitchen.

You might have drunk the iced tea she makes so strong and sweet you can stand a spoon in it, or eaten the pimento cheese that is her special recipe. If you're VERY lucky, you might have enjoyed a slice of her homemade bread or sampled one of her lighter-than-air yeast rolls. There are folks who swear they had to tie a string to those rolls to keep them from floating off the plate.

We think Mildred started working in the kitchen sometime in the late '50's, but it's definitely been at least forty years, and probably much longer. She ended up running the kitchen, and a tight ship she ran, too! Guest services manager Deana Coleman (who has also worked here in since before she could see over the counter) remembers "her and Brenda sitting at the back porch, peeling potatoes in the sunlight."

Mildred took a break for several years to take care of sick family members, but came back to work after a while and hasn't left since. She's slowed down some in recent years, but that's from hurricane speed down to mere gale-force.



IN HER ELEMENT

Mildred Tester turned 90 on Monday, February 26. Half a century feeding Valle Crucis guests has not dulled her spirit or even slowed her down much.

She has always taken pride in hard work, in perseverance, and in doing things her own way.

Property manager Dale Townsend has known Mildred all his life. They're cousins, and he's eaten a lot of Mildred's meals. Dale remembers, "I can tell you about her determination. In 1993, we had a bad snow storm. [We] went to take Mildred home. We had tried to get her to stay overnight, but she wasn't having it. She just wanted to get home. We got stuck in the snow over about a quarter mile from her house, and we were trying to get unstuck. We looked around and Mildred was gone, and there was a track through the snow. She had walked the rest of the way home in waist-deep snow. **She said, 'I wasn't gonna hang around waiting for y'all to get unstuck. I'm goin' home!'**

VCCC director Margaret Love has this to add: "'To me, Mildred embodies the can-do spirit of mountain women. From baking endless loaves of bread to putting a shine on countless pots and pans, Mildred's hands are never still.

She's generous to a fault with those she loves. She puts family first, always. And she can still beat me up the Annex's steep, snow-covered concrete back steps."

Mildred's Yeast Rolls: Definitely a *Recipe from the Heart* *Pan McCaslin*

From Our House to Yours: Recipes from the Heart is a recently published cookbook sharing the story of **Hospitality House**, a transitional living facility in Boone which serves seven counties. Underwriting costs were provided by area restaurants and food service organizations.

The Valle Crucis Conference Center sponsored the *Bread* section, highlighting Mildred Tester's famous yeast rolls. The entire recipe is included. Over 600 copies of the cookbook have been sold and are available at all sponsoring restaurants and the Conference Center. The books can also be ordered through the Hospitality House website at www.hosphouse.org and can be gift wrapped and mailed as needed.

The cookbook, with a forward by Linville resident and cookbook author, Jorj Morgan, tells the story of the 30-plus year history of Hospitality House. In addition, stories shared by former and current residents are included, along with recipes provided by Bread of Life volunteers who provide meals to the residents 365 days a year. "I make no exaggeration when I say that you will 'feel the love' when you turn the pages of this cookbook," writes Morgan in the forward.



Order your copy at www.hosphouse.org
or purchase one in the office at VCCC

Thank you for Tipping the Scale for Hospitality!

Maryl Battin

Bob & Iona Brigham
Bob & Polly Capps
The Rev. Mike & Elizabeth Cogsdale
Claude Courbois
Shirley J. Cullop
The Very Rev. Jeanne Finan & Tom Eshelman
Sandy* & Dorcas Jones
Karen B. Kassinger
Beverly Laughlin
The Rev. Dr. G. Richard Lobs, III
C. Michael Newton-Ward
Tracy B. Neyenhuis
The Rev. Dorothy L. Pratt
Francis & Sybil Pressly
The Women of St. Phillips Episcopal Church, Brevard
Dan & Carolyn Shepherd

**Denotes 2018 Board of Directors*

In Memory Of...

Leila Morrison Holcombe

Sandy & Dorcas Jones

Bill Logan

Bobbie M. Burlbrink



Want to see your name here?

Generous donations such as yours help us continue our ministry of hospitality.

Donate securely on our web site at www.vcconferences.org or mail to
P.O. Box 654, Valle Crucis, NC 28691.

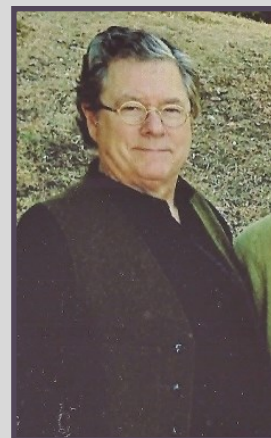
New Members of the VCCC Board of Directors



The Rev. Marshall A. Jolly and **Walter G. Browning** were selected as 2018-2020 new members of the Board of Directors team. Marshall is rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Morganton, NC. He is married to Elizabeth Jolly, a clinical social worker and coordinator of the department of forensics at Broughton Hospital. He's brought youth groups in partnership with other Mountain Deanery churches and is excited about the opportunity to shape the vision of Valle Crucis, especially for the younger people of the Diocese.

Walter has recently retired as corporate counsel for a Texas-based energy company. He has held a license to practice law for 44 years. He and his wife Jennifer have recently moved back from The Hague, Netherlands to Valle Crucis. Walter has previously served two terms on the VCCC Board of Directors and is a friend of the Conference Center in many ways.

VCCC Board members volunteer for 3-year terms and meet in person on a quarterly basis, as well as periodically by electronic means. We are grateful for their dedication and love for this special place. If you are an in-Diocese Episcopalian and are interested in serving on the Board of Directors, contact Margaret Love at director@vcconferences.org.



Valle Crucis Conference Center 2018 Programs Registration Form

PO Box 654, Valle Crucis, NC 28691 (828) 963-4453 www.vcconferences.org

Please complete entire form and mail with your deposit check to the address above. Registration form can also be found online.
Checks can be made payable to VCCC.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Primary Phone: () _____ ☐ Cell ☐ Home

Email: _____

Confirmations are made by email. Please include an email address when possible.

Non-refundable deposits are required for multi-day workshops, with remainder of balance due on arrival.

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Sunday, May 6 - Tuesday, May 8

- ☐ \$374 Full Program
☐ \$274 Commuter

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A Mountain Yoga Retreat

Friday, June 8 - Sunday, June 10

- ☐ \$214 Full Program;
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A Journey in the Daring Way

Sunday, Aug. 26 - Wednesday, Aug. 29

- ☐ \$450 Full Program
☐ \$306 Commuter

Women Writers Workshop II

Thursday, Sept. 13 - Sunday, Sept. 16

- ☐ \$304 Full Program ☐ \$169 Commuter
☐ \$58 Friday ☐ \$58 Saturday

Mysticism & Mindfulness in the Work of Hildegard of Bingen

Friday, September 21, 10 am - 3 pm

- ☐ \$70 Full Program
☐ +\$45 Thursday overnight lodging

Advanced Centering Prayer: Deepening the Silence

Sunday - Sunday, Nov. 25 - Dec. 2

- ☐ \$533 Full Program

Come Thou Long Expected: A Short Advent Retreat

Friday, December 7, 10 am - 3 pm

- ☐ \$52 Day Program (includes book to take home)

Total: _____

If attending a multi-day workshop:

I would like to room with: _____

- ☐ *I am requesting a single room, with knowledge that a single may not be available.*

Diet requests, allergies, or other needs: _____

Register securely and quickly online! General information and policies can also be found on our web site, www.vcconferences.org. Please feel free to make photocopies of this brochure and any related materials, or call (828) 963-4453.



VALLE CRUCIS CONFERENCE CENTER

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April 2018**



The Valle Crucis Conference Center is a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina. Located on over 450 acres of mountain woodland and verdant farming valley, the Conference Center is truly one of the more beautiful places on Earth. With its beauty comes a sense of timeless spiritual grace that transcends denomination or faith tradition.

The mission of the Valle Crucis Conference Center is to inspire, by loving example and service, those who break bread with us and share in the quest for spiritual renewal, Christian community, and stewardship of this sacred place.

The Valle Crucis Conference Center is located in the historic Mission School, featuring buildings dating from the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, nearly all of which are on the National Historic Register.

The Conference Center is open year-round to accommodate groups of 5 to 150. Rates include three hearty, nutritious meals a day, beautiful meeting spaces with modern amenities, and a view that is simply breathtaking.

To inquire about availability of our accommodations or meeting spaces, or to learn about our Hermitage retreat cabins, visit our web site at www.vcconferences.org or call (828) 963-4453.