



# GOOD NEWS

A Publication of the Valle Crucis Conference Center

July 2016

## Board of Directors

The Rev. Sam Tallman  
*President*

The Rev. Dorrie Pratt  
*Vice President*

Jim Banks  
*Treasurer*

Walter Browning  
*Secretary*

The Rev. Augusta Anderson  
Amy Cole  
Sandy Jones  
Karen Kassinger  
The Rev. Beth Lilly  
Keith Martin  
Jim Sturdivant  
The Rev. Karla Woggon

### Ex-Officio

The Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor  
*Bishop, Episcopal  
Diocese of Western NC*

Margaret L. Love  
*Executive Director  
Valle Crucis  
Conference Center*

Rev. R. Allan McCaslin  
*Rector  
Holy Cross Episcopal Church*

## Contact Information

Valle Crucis  
Conference Center  
P.O. Box 654  
Valle Crucis, NC 28961  
828.963.4453  
[www.vcconferences.org](http://www.vcconferences.org)

Margaret L. Love  
*Executive Director*  
[director@vcconferences.org](mailto:director@vcconferences.org)

Wendell J. Seaver  
*Business Manager*  
[business@vcconferences.org](mailto:business@vcconferences.org)

***Deeply Rooted on  
Sacred Ground***

**Good News  
July 2016**

## Arrivals

We're celebrating arrivals this spring, of several sorts. Daniel Ze'ev Love was born on March 5, 2016, weighing in at 7 pounds 11 ounces, and demonstrating lungs that can only be described as healthy. He has brought joy both to the Valle Crucis family and to guests from around the country. He's fitting right into the hearts of everyone he meets, with a dimpled grin that is already deliciously mischievous.

We welcomed the arrival of the four final candidates for the next Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina. It was a beautiful, prayer-and Spirit-filled occasion. Our meeting spaces were filled to capacity as we listened to how God is moving in the lives of the four candidates and their parishes. By the time you read this, one of those four - the Rev. Hannah Atkins, the Rev. Cynthia Banks, the Rev. Thomas Brown, or the Rev. José McLoughlin - will have been elected as our next Bishop. We pray that the Spirit will continue to guide and strengthen the hearts and minds of the candidates, their families, and those on whose shoulders the decision making process falls.

We also welcomed the arrival of the Wisdom School in early May. Wisdom School participants left their mark here, quite literally, by helping to paint the front porch railing of the Inn, along with weeding, chopping wood, washing windows, and other projects. Participant and muralist Andrew Brietenberg left us a truly beautiful gift: a Celtic cross painted on the panel above the Annex door. It serves as a reminder both of the presence of the Wisdom School and of the Presence in this special place. To see more of Andrew's work, check out [www.selahmade.com](http://www.selahmade.com).

Finally, we're eagerly awaiting the arrival of the **North American Academy of Pipe & Drum**, which kicks off five weeks of classes beginning June 19th. We welcome the music of bagpipes back to the High Country. Here's hoping we'll welcome YOU back to Valle Crucis soon, too!



New Celtic Cross graces the Annex door panel, May 2016

## In This Issue

- Arrivals
- 2016 Programs
- Thank You!
- Remembering Mary Ellen Townsend
- Conservancy Work
- Program Registration



## 2016 VCCC PROGRAMS

COME SPEND SOME TIME ON SACRED GROUND

### Women Writers Workshop

Thursday – Sunday, Sept. 1 – 4

(Labor Day Weekend)

Katerina Whitley

*\$308 Full Program*

*\$191 Commuter Rate (includes all meals)*

Some people dream and talk of writing while others just do it. Writing is lonely and difficult, but it is the most satisfying expression of our thoughts and feelings. We find that it's much easier to write in the company of like-minded people and with the guidance of a professional who loves to encourage others in the craft of writing. Join this group of women writers to capture memories, define thoughts, express emotions, and bring order out of chaos. New writers are most welcome.

A native of Thessaloniki, Greece, Katerina Whitley has worked as a church journalist on the diocesan and national levels, taught at universities, and is the author of six books.

Full Program rate covers all lodging, meals, and program costs. Commuter rate includes meals and program costs. Deepen and hone your craft, get to know some wonderful women, and enjoy the beauty and tranquility of Valle Crucis for a long weekend. What could be better?

### Storytelling as Evangelism

Friday – Saturday, August 19 – 20

The Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor & Dr. Arthur Taylor, Ph.D.

*\$180 Full Program*

*\$87 Commuter Rate (includes all meals)*

*\$40 One-Day Rate (includes lunch on Saturday)*

Humans make meaning through stories. ***Jesus answers questions with stories because narrative or metaphor is the only way to articulate our deepest truths.***

This workshop will explore how telling our personal story is a primary method of evangelism. We do not sell programs or a spiritual experience. We tell the ongoing story of redemption and invite others to connect their story to it.

Bishop Taylor and Dr. Taylor will give an overview of the theology of story and offer guidelines for how stories are most effectively told. Participants will have opportunities to tell a story from their own experience to one another, and will learn to value more deeply the story God is telling in their lives as well as to teach a skill of telling stories that matter. The day will include poems, stories, lecture, and discussion.

For this two-day event, we are offering a special overnight rate. Begin on Friday evening with dinner and a contemplative Compline service, and continue on Saturday. *Lodging space is limited and available only on a first-come, first-serve basis, and assumes double occupancy.*

Bishop Taylor grew in Asheville, N.C., and earned his B.A. in English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, his M.A. in English from the University of South Carolina, and his Ph.D. in theology and literature from Emory University. He received his M.Div. from The School of Theology at Sewanee and served several churches in the Southeast before his call to the Holy and Sacred Order of Bishops. He is the author of *To Dream as God Dreams: Sermons of Hope, Conversion, and Community*, and *From Anger to Zion: An Alphabet of Faith*.

In addition to being Bishop Taylor's son, Arthur Taylor is a renowned clinical psychologist practicing in Atlanta, GA. After graduating Eckerd College with an undergraduate degree in Psychology with high honors, Dr. Taylor received his doctoral degree (Ph.D.) in Applied Psychology from New York University. He completed his postdoctoral fellowship in a private practice setting in Atlanta. His clinical training has ranged from mental health treatment in higher education to civil and criminal forensic evaluations. In addition to his clinical work, he has been involved in research on positive psychological experiences such as altruism and forgiveness. He teaches graduate level courses in forensic assessments and spiritual interventions in counseling.

**Don't miss this opportunity to hear the Bishop in his last program in official capacity at the Valle Crucis Conference Center!**

Program registration form can be found at [www.vccconferences.org](http://www.vccconferences.org). You may also register for any of our programs by calling the office at (828) 963-4453.



## 2016 VCCC PROGRAMS

COME SPEND SOME TIME ON SACRED GROUND

### Art & Quiet Day

**Friday, October 28 10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.**

RaRa Schlitt

*\$10 for lunch*

*Location: 1st Floor of Johnson Hall*

Art has long been a way to tap into the divine and unlock the secret depths of the heart. Though a painting stimulates the visual sense, there's something about a painting that somehow touches the more interior parts of us too. Join artist RaRa Schlitt in exploring the relationship between art, prayer, and contemplative worship.

RaRa Schlitt is a nationally renowned folk artist and children's book author and illustrator. Her art is represented in galleries across the US and internationally. RaRa is a physical therapist and volunteers part-time teaching and conducting art projects in her community. She resides in Maryville, Tennessee, with her husband, Tom, and her golden retriever, Rosie.

*Paintings will be available for purchase; 20% of sales benefit the Conference Center*

### I Love to Tell the Story

**Friday, October 28 - Sunday, October 30**

The Rev. Pam Webb, Facilitator

Naomi Faw, Storyteller

Ramona Curtis, Musician

*\$210 Full Program; \$114 Commuter Rate*

The pages of Scripture are filled with sacred stories of people of faith. Led by Reverend Pam Webb and facilitated by the storytelling of Naomi Faw and the music of Ramona Curtis, we will rediscover, explore, and share the stories of our own faith and discuss how to encourage others to tell their stories.

The Reverend Pam Webb is an ordained Episcopal priest. She was previously Director of Christian Education at a parish in Birmingham, AL. She has also served as an Education for Ministry mentor; rector of two parishes; interim rector at five parishes, including St. Paul's, Wilkesboro; Director of Alumni Affairs and Church Relations at Virginia Theological Seminary; and is an experienced retreat and workshop leader. Rev. Webb is retired and living in Williamsburg, VA with her husband, where she continues to serve the Church.

Published author and storyteller Naomi Faw has appeared at the Heart of North Carolina Storytelling Festival and the Valle Country Fair in Valle Crucis.

She has recorded one of her stories for WVTF 89.1 FM in Roanoke, VA, and her writing has appeared in *The Upper Room*, the *North Carolina Disciple*, and *Reflections on the New River*. She and her family live in western North Carolina and are active members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

### Come Thou Long Expected: A Short Advent Retreat

**Friday, December 9, 10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.**

Katerina Whitley

*\$40 includes lunch*

*Location: 1st Floor of Johnson Hall*

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.

Katerina is well-known in the Diocese of Western NC and beyond. She is the author of several books, including two about Advent, and a writer of Advent Chancel dramas and plays.





## 2016 VCCC PROGRAMS

COME SPEND SOME TIME ON SACRED GROUND

### Advanced Centering Prayer Retreat: Deepening the Silence

Sunday – Sunday, Nov. 27 – Dec. 4

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 who are interested in entering into the more profound levels of spiritual practice in an atmosphere of silence, solitude, and community.

Centering prayer is a silent form of prayer that directs a person's attention toward God, with ancient roots in the mystical and monastic tradition. The retreat will help participants develop and sustain a regular centering prayer practice. In addition to several centering prayer periods offered daily, you will also have opportunities for contemplative worship, individual meetings with retreat leaders, strolls and hikes, labyrinth walks, and time for solitude and reflection.

Retreat leaders are Becky Hannah, co-coordinator of Contemplative Outreach of Western NC, and Joan Ricci Thome, presenter of contemplative prayer retreats at the Oratory and St. Francis Springs Prayer Center in Stoneville, NC. The Rev. Robert Cook, Vicar of Christ Church, Walnut Grove, NC, is spiritual director for the week. Both Joan and Becky have both been trained to facilitate centering prayer by Contemplative Outreach, the organization founded by Father Thomas Keating as a spiritual network committed to living the contemplative dimension of the Gospel in everyday life.

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.**

*If you have questions about the contents or itinerary for the retreat, please feel free to contact Becky Hannah at (828) 702-3518.*



Program registration form can be found at [www.vccconferences.org](http://www.vccconferences.org). You may also register for any of our programs by calling the office at (828) 963-4453.

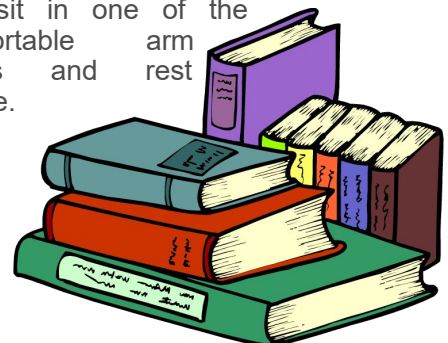


HOLY CROSS EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
VALLE CRUCIS, NC

JULY 14, 15, 16 (THURS, FRI, SAT) ♦ 9 am – 1 pm

### Shout out to our Volunteer Librarians!

What a stroke of library luck to have two dedicated volunteers assist us with organizing, re-shelving, and sorting the books and periodicals in the Mary Wright Robinson Library. **Mary Armstrong** and **Diana Mast White** spent two days helping our collection of religious and spiritual books feel loved. Next time you're at Valle Crucis, check out the beautifully appointed room in Crab Orchard Hall. Peruse the collection, or just sit in one of the comfortable arm chairs and rest awhile.





# Thank You to Our First Quarter 2016 Donors

The Rev. and Mrs. Jim & Diane Abbott  
Jim & Rose Andrews  
Tom Boyle  
Iona & Bob Brigham  
Amy W. Cole\*  
Claude & Judy Courbois  
The Rev. Dr. Jon Davis  
The Very Rev. Todd Donatelli  
Mr. Tom Eshelman & the Very Rev. Jeanne Finan  
Holy Cross Episcopal Church  
Dee Irwin  
Karen B. Kassinger\*  
The Rev. Elizabeth C. Lilly\*  
Mast General Store  
The Rev. Dorothy Pratt\*  
The Rev. Ollie V. Rencher  
Sue Spirit  
Jim Sturdivant\*  
The Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor\*  
Jink & Diddle Fiddle School  
David & Judy Wall  
The Women of St. Phillip's Episcopal Church

## Memorials

**Ernest & Mary Armstrong** in memory of Rev. Carl Cunningham  
**Liz Faries** in memory of Ed Neigh  
**Margaret Brown Hendrickson** in memory of Dorothy Brown Marino  
**Fred D. Hinson** in memory of Gloria Hinson  
**Mark A. Hyland** in memory of Shirley Hyland  
**North American Academy of Piping & Drumming** in memory of Andy White and Arthur Korff  
**Sandy\* & Dorcas Jones** in memory of Mary Kick on her Birthday  
**Anne Korff** in memory of Arthur Korff  
**Gris Miller** in memory of Nina Reid Miller Johnson  
**Cathleen J. Nixon** in memory of Ed Neigh  
**Lynn Schmisrauter** in memory of Reginald Archibald Holtz-Ballew  
**Charles H. Toll** in memory of Emily Toll Hopkins  
**Diana Mast White** in memory of Roy Flint

## Honoraria

**Georgia G. Herring** in honor of Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor  
**Bill & Maxine Hobbs** in honor of VCCC Staff  
**John Kirkman** in honor of Matt Talbot Men's Group #140  
**The Rev. & Mrs. Tim & Beverly McRee** in honor of Mildred Tester's ministry at VCCC  
**The Rev. Jane G. Smith** in honor of Wendell Seaver and the Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor  
**Diana Mast White** in honor of Dale Townsend and Wendell Seaver



## In Memoriam

The Valle Crucis Conference Center family mourns the death of Mary Ellen Townsend, friend and good neighbor of the Mission School. Mary Ellen passed away Monday morning, February 8, 2016, at Caldwell Hospice & Palliative Care.



Born July 24, 1947, in Watauga County, she was a daughter of the late Sherman and Josephine Hicks Isaacs. Mary was a member of Vanderpool Baptist Church, and was retired from the Mast General Store. Mary was a loving wife and mother, and enjoyed visiting the sick and shut-in people in the community, and was a good friend to the Valle Crucis Conference Center staff.

She is survived by her husband of 51 years, Wayne Townsend; one daughter, Annette Eggers and husband Tracy, of Banner Elk; two sons, Terry Townsend of Banner Elk and Eddie Townsend of Vilas; one granddaughter, Brittney Forester and husband Chris, of Banner Elk; and one brother, Arlie Isaacs and wife Lois, of Vilas.

We grieve with Wayne and the rest of Mary's family, and we will miss her little red car dashing between the Inn and the Annex.

\* Board of Directors

## 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.vccconferences.org](http://www.vccconferences.org) or mail to P.O. Box 654, Valle Crucis, NC 28691.

## Blue Ridge Conservancy Sows in Good Soil

What a great partnership developed when the Valle Crucis Conference Center entrusted 430 acres to the **Blue Ridge Conservancy**! The BRC received a grant from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund to remove invasive plants along Dutch Creek on the VCCC property. In March, local landscaper Jim Toomey and his crew used heavy equipment to pull invasive multiflora rose bushes and Japanese knotweed from the creek border and surrounding fields. For the next several Saturdays, volunteers from the BRC, Appalachian State University ecology department, and Trout Unlimited followed, sowing native plants, shrubs, and trees along the creek. Land Protection & Stewardship Director Eric Heigl says, "It will be an ongoing process for a couple of years to effectively remove all the invasive plants."



Multiflora rose, or baby rose, Japanese rose, or seven-sisters rose, is an attractive nuisance. First cultivated as an ornamental, for erosion control, and as a living fence, it forms dense thickets that invade pastures and crowd out native species, even preventing birds from nesting with its thick, thorny growth. Even more pernicious is *Fallopia japonica*, or Japanese knotweed, that is taking over the riparian border along the creek. *Newsweek Magazine* reveals the extent of knotweed's murderous nature: "It presents a pleasing appearance to the eye: heart-shaped leaves, bamboo stems and pretty, little white-flower tassels. What is less obvious is this plant's relentless killer instinct. Look through the horticultural literature, and you will see it described as 'thuggish,' 'ferocious,' 'invasive,' and an 'indestructible scourge.' And where once it resided mainly in the wild, today it terrorizes private gardens and homes." (*Newsweek*, 7/5/2014). Track hoes, volunteers removing by hand, and constant vigilance are what will stop the spread of these pests.



Multiflora rose: beautiful but pesky

Volunteers planted native shrubs such as elderberry, silky dogwood, and Eastern redbud to stop erosion and provide a sanctuary for birds, amphibians, and other critters.

The Blue Ridge Conservancy is a private, non-profit, non-governmental organization incorporated in North Carolina. For the past nineteen years, it has protected over 18,000 acres in Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey Counties. In addition to protecting working farmland like the FIG Farm land at Valle Crucis, BRC's efforts have resulted in the creation of state natural areas like Beech Creek Bog, Bear Paw, and Bullhead Mountain.

With only three full-time maintenance staff, the VCCC maintains a huge property with 19 separate lodging, meeting, and work spaces. Work of this nature from our community partners enables us to protect the natural beauty, native species, and wild sacredness of this place for future generations.



Volunteers with the Blue Ridge Conservancy and Trout Unlimited, April 2016

# Valle Crucis Conference Center 2016 Programs

## Registration Form

PO Box 654, Valle Crucis, NC 28691 (828) 963-4453  
[www.vcconferences.org](http://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.

- |                         |                             |  |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>August 19 - 20</b>   | Story Telling as Evangelism | <input type="checkbox"/> \$180 Full Program*<br><input type="checkbox"/> \$87 Commuter<br><input type="checkbox"/> \$40 One-Day Rate<br><i>\$90 deposit with full program registration</i> |
| <b>September 1 - 4</b>  | Women Writers Workshop II   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$308 Full Program<br><input type="checkbox"/> \$191 Commuter<br><i>\$90 deposit</i>  |
| <b>October 28</b>       | Art & Quiet Day             | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Lunch  |
| <b>October 28-30</b>    | I Love to Tell the Story    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$210 Full Program<br><input type="checkbox"/> \$119 Commuter   |
| <b>Nov. 27 - Dec. 4</b> | Advanced Centering Prayer   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$533 Full Program<br><i>\$100 deposit</i>  |
| <b>December 9</b>       | Short Advent Retreat        | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40  |

**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. \*Singles are not available for Bishop Taylor's program.*

***Diet requests, allergies, or other needs:*** \_\_\_\_\_

Registration forms for programs, general information, and policies can also be found on our web site,  
[www.vcconferences.org](http://www.vcconferences.org).

Please feel free to make photocopies of this brochure and any related materials to pass along.



## Valle Crucis Conference Center

Post Office Box 654  
Valle Crucis, NC 28691

**Return Service Requested**

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
BOONE, NC  
PERMIT NO. 34

---

**Good News  
July 2016**

---



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 and arguably the best towels in Western North Carolina lodgings.

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](http://www.vcconferences.org) or call (828) 963-4453.