

CONTEMPLATIVE RETREAT IN NATURE
Creation Centered Contemplative Practices
Sponsored by Health & Wellness Ministry



Retreat Orientation- Friday Evening, May 17, 7- 9 PM in the Palmer Room

What can we expect at the Friday night retreat orientation?

Mark Kutolowski, retreat leader and outdoor guide, will:

- Lay the foundation for the ancient Christian notion of nature as “The First Book of Revelations’
- Introduce Creation Centered Contemplative Practices that we will experience at the Church of the Woods on Saturday.

Full Day - Saturday, May 18, 8:15 AM - 5:30 PM at Church of the Woods

What can we expect at the full day Saturday program?

Mark wrote: From a place of contemplative listening, we will learn ways to pray with and through our relationship with the natural world to deepen our experiential sense of God's presence in nature. Participants will learn several spiritual disciplines and prayer practices that include interaction with Creation as a doorway into deeper intimacy with God.

- Slow down and enjoy the beauty and awe of the outdoors as the seasons change in the woods.
- Learn Lectio Terra, a way of listening to God in creation.
- Pray in stillness and community.

How do I register?

Register by Wednesday, April 17 at www.bit.ly/fccwretreat

Or mail in registration form to FCC Health Ministry

Payment made at time of registration, scholarships are available.

Make check for \$50/person payable to FCC-Winchester.

Family members need to register separately but payment can be combined in one check

Return paper registrations and checks to Health Ministry Church Office Mailbox or mail to

FCC- Health Ministry, 21 Church St., Winchester, MA 01890

Early registration is encouraged. Maximum Retreat group size is 24 participants. The Retreat is open to adults and high school youth. Given the nature of the prayer practices, *dogs cannot be accommodated.*

I am unable to attend the Saturday program; can I attend the Friday orientation?

We are able to accommodate 12 participants interested in attending just the Friday night session. Registration for *Friday only* is required and the cost is \$15.

Does the retreat stand alone or will there be follow up practice options?

As we reawaken and adapt our Christian traditions of prayer, church and community to include contemplative prayer and our spiritual connection to nature, we will offer local guided outdoor practice. Our first offering is Saturday, June 8th at 9 am led by Jonathan Goodell.

Saturday Retreat Details

Are we going to car pool on Saturday?

We will car pool from the FCC parking lot at 8:15 am. Return by 5:30 pm. The Church of the Woods is in Canterbury, NH and is about a 90 minute drive from Winchester, MA. Please note on the registration form if you can *drive or wish a ride*.

Are the Saturday practices all outdoors?

We plan to be outside all day. Mark will lead from an open field, but plans to take forays into the woods where the trails and off-trail areas are both fairly uneven. He will introduce activities in an area with easier footing, and then people can go as far into the woods as they feel personally comfortable.

What if the weather is cold and rainy on Saturday?

Mark's response: There is a modest indoor space we can use on site, and we can alternate between time outside and time inside. There is also a yurt on the property with a wood stove that could serve as a warming hut for anyone who is wet/cold. So I think we can make it work with ordinary rain conditions. If there's a major, all day driving rainstorm we would cancel.

What facilities does the Church of the Woods have?

The Church of the Woods is best described as a 106 acres of wild woods and wetlands in Canterbury, NH where the earth itself is the bearer of sacredness. The modest facilities do not have electricity and are not yet fully ADA accessible. There are portable toilets. Learn more at kairosearth.org/church-of-the-woods.

If I have mobility issues is there an alternate way to participate with value?

Mark will introduce the practices in an accessible area and participants can walk more or less from that area as they feel capable. Folks should be comfortable going for a relaxed recreational walk at home at a minimum. You might consider bringing a folding chair.

What do I need to bring?

Each participant will *bring their own lunch and water bottle*.

Water will be available.

We will practice "Leave no trace."

As it will be early spring, come prepared for sun, rain and cooler temperatures.

Checklist:

- Long pants and long sleeved shirt.
- Boots as the woods might be wet in May
- Layer outdoor clothing for warmth and wet climate
- Hat and gloves

- Day pack
- Bag lunch and water bottle
- Notebook and pen
- Sunscreen and sunglasses
- Bug spray
- Large garbage bag to sit on or to keep items dry

How might participants prepare spiritually for the retreat?

Mark wrote: The more faithful people are to their prayer life and practices like Centering Prayer, the more they'll get out of the retreat so do encourage people to pray regularly in the weeks leading up to the retreat.

Resources:

The Wisdom of Wilderness by Gerald May

The Solace of Fierce Landscapes by Belden Lane

The Blue Sapphire of the Mind by Douglas Christie

[Method of Centering Prayer Brochure | Contemplative Outreach Ltd.](#)

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/public-file/method-centering-prayer-brochure>

What is Mark Kutolowski's background?

Mark Kutolowski has led two Contemplative Prayer Retreats for our FCC community in the last three years. Learn more at www.metanoiavt.com.

Have additional questions? Contact Kathleen at Kathleenzag@gmail.com.