

Star Gazer

Star of the North Retreat Centre

It's winter once again and the prospect of four more months of snow, ice and freezing temperatures looms. I've already started to hibernate: I'm reluctant to go out at night, preferring to indulge in a hot bath, read a good book and eat comfort food. Winter on the prairies! Such a mood breaks around March though, when the days start getting longer and you can smell Spring. That's when, like many around me, I begin to daydream and plan my garden. Seed catalogues start arriving, landscape magazines command my attention and visions of floral splendour and bountiful harvests fill my head. I conveniently ignore the harsh reality that I am, in fact, a terrible gardener. I lack both the discipline and the skill necessary to cultivate and grow a healthy garden. Wise gardeners know that it is not enough to simply plant seeds, stand back and let Mother Nature take over. Wise gardeners know that plants must be tended and nurtured carefully if they are to be strong and the harvest fruitful. So it is with Christian believers. Faith needs careful tending and nurturing if it is to be strong and fruitful. We see the image carried forward in the recent publication from the Canadian Catholic Bishops, *'On Good Soil: Pastoral Planning for Evangelization and Catechesis with Adults.'* Showing us how to scatter, plant and nurture the seeds of faith among believers, this pastoral plan, for all involved in evangelizing and catechesis, reminds us of our responsibility not only to tend our own garden of faith, but to be sowers of faith also. Here at Star of the North, we strive to be sowers and nurturers of faith. Through our outreach, we scatter seeds by which faith can grow. The sacred space of The Star offers a fertile ground for one to cultivate the life of Spirit. Our programming offers numerous opportunities to grow in your understanding and knowledge. Winter reigns at the moment but Spring will surely come and gardens will blossom and bloom. We invite you to, 'Follow the Star,' and nurture the garden of your faith.

Sandy Prather

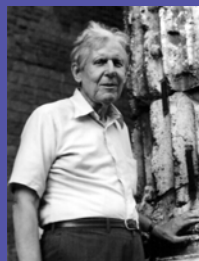


Missionaries, Visionaries & Prophets: Hildegard, Teilhard & Thomas Berry

Come for one or both retreats! Come reflect on the life and wisdom of three mystics within the Christian tradition— Hildegard of Bingen (1098 – 1179), Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881 – 1955) and Thomas Berry (1914 – 2009). These mystics celebrated the cosmos and earth as numinous or "afire with Spirit" (as Hildegard expressed).

Hildegard, 12th century visionary Benedictine nun, healer, and hymnodist of the Rhineland, taught that the elemental communion of cosmic life depended upon humanity becoming wise with and to the ways of the earth. For Hildegard, to pursue Wisdom was to become 'earth literate.' Come for the day or continue for the weekend (you may book personal retreat space if you wish to extend your retreat).

Finding divine love to be sunk even into the very "nature" of cosmos, **Teilhard**, a 20th century paleontologist and French Jesuit, challenged



humanity to assume the full responsibility of our evolutionary emergent human consciousness. Our contemporary mystic **Thomas Berry**, a Passionist monk, scholar of world religions and cultures, an inspiration to perhaps millions in the last three decades, challenged us to face the irony that our contemporary commitment to 'progress' has actually depleted basic life systems. Thomas frames this as a crisis of spiritual vision. We have lost the sense of the sacred revealed in and through nature. He calls us to reclaim this deep reverence.

These retreats weave a balance of daily conference (often with imagery), prayer together (outdoors as weather permits), silence, reflective readings, optional creative expression and listening circle, agape ritual. It is the intention to highlight Lenten and Easter themes within the mysticism of these three great ones of our tradition.

**A Day with Hildegard -
Thursday, March 29th
9am- 4pm \$79.**

**A Weekend with Teilhard and
Thomas Berry –
7pm Friday, March 30 to
4pm Sunday April 1
Live in: \$249. Commuter: \$185.**

**Retreat Guide:
Maureen Wild, SC M Ed.**

Maureen Wild, SC, M.Ed., is a lecturer, teacher and retreat guide whose graduate studies ('93 Boston) and primary ministry focus for two decades has been on themes of *Sacred Ecology*. She served as Director of two spiritual-based ecological learning centres (US and Canada) and is currently developing Pax Gaia Educational and Retreat Initiatives. www.paxgaia.ca Sister Maureen is one of the Catholic Sisters featured in the book *Green Sisters: A Spiritual Ecology*, Harvard University Press, 2007. She lives on the west coast of British Columbia, Canada.

Winter/Spring Programs

'AWAY' Days with Sandy Prather

Sometimes it is good to get away. When we get away, we step back from the ordinary routine. We rest and relax; we allow ourselves to be renewed. We take time simply 'to be,' instead of always 'doing.' We have time for listening and learning, sharing and reflecting. Star of the North invites you to an 'Away' Days Retreat. Each 'Away' Day will focus on a different contemporary spiritual book. Through a combination of presentations and reflective time, we will explore the themes and ideas of the authors, and apply their insights to our lives. *It is not necessary to have read the books.* We invite you to take advantage of the peaceful space at the Star and join us for the Winter 'Away' Days.

9:30 am - 3:00 pm

Advance Registration: \$25. OR \$30. at the door

Tuesday, January 24

***Proclaiming His Kingdom: Meditations for Personal Reflection.* John Fuellenbach, SVD 1992.**

Start the new year right with a mini-retreat! Divine Word missionary priest John Fuellenbach is a gifted retreat leader who uses Scripture, stories and poetry to invite his readers to a new experience of God. Under such headings as Trust, Presence, Compassion and Obedience, Fuellenbach focuses on conversion and what it means to follow Jesus. With insights both wise and easily accessible, Fuellenbach invites us into discipleship and a deeper relationship with God.

Tuesday, February 21

***Jesus' Plan for a New World: The Sermon on the Mount.* Richard Rohr with John Bookser Feister, 1996.**

Whenever Richard Rohr tackles Scripture, you know you are in for a treat! With an eye that reads the Scriptures from the bottom-up, Rohr always inspires even as he challenges the status quo. In this book Rohr and Feister invite us to see Jesus' sermon on the mount as a radical manifesto for a new world order, one based on the gospel values of cooperation, service, trust and redemptive suffering. As a new picture of Jesus emerges, so do new possibilities for Christian living. You might find yourself considering your Lenten journey in a new way!

Tuesday, March 20

***Lazarus, COME FORTH!: How Jesus Confronts the Culture of Death and Invites Us into the New Life of Peace,* John Dear, S.J. 2011**

"Resurrection is here and now, for one and all," [Dear, p.3] The journey from death to life; from tomb to resurrection; from a culture of violence to a new life of peace. Jesuit priest and noted peace activist John Dear has written a powerful and profoundly moving reflection on an underused gospel story. In the episode of Lazarus' being raised from the dead, Dear hears all of us being called out of our tombs into new life. The story offers us three new commandments of Jesus to obey: 'Take away the stone!' 'Come forth!' and 'Unbind him and let him go free.'

The last becomes our mandate for unbinding a humanity caught in a culture of war and violence. Comforting, challenging and hopeful, John Dear's book is the perfect Lent/Easter accompaniment.

Tuesday, April 24

***Between Heaven and Mirth: Why Joy, Humor and Laughter are at the Heart of the Spiritual Life.* James Martin S.J., 2011.**

Jesuit James Martin, *The Colbert Report's* official chaplain, looks at the role joy, humor and laughter play in our spiritual lives. Using Scripture, the lives of saints, spiritual teachings, and numerous anecdotes, Martin shows how joy is the inevitable outcome of faith. He offers practical advice on how humor helps us embrace our humanity, demonstrate courage, foster relationships and deepen our experience with God – all while enjoying ourselves. Holy people are joyful people and Martin offers numerous examples beginning with Jesus, biblical figures and the saints. Come share some Easter joy!

*"How beautiful on the mountain
tops are the feet of the one who
brings good news, who heralds
peace..."* Isaiah 52:7

Compassionate Communication: An Introduction to Nonviolent Communication

If you want more compassion, joy, connection, fun and ease in your life, join Anne Walton on Thursday, Jan 26 for a 2 hour introduction to Nonviolent Compassionate Communication. This process will provide practical tools for:

- Listening to others (and yourself) with an open heart
- Experiencing more connection with loved ones
- Expressing yourself even when it's scary
- Transforming anger and conflict into trust and cooperation
- Staying connected to your own power in challenging situations
- Hearing the life serving message the inner critic is giving you
- Living life more fully, in alignment with your value
- Increasing Harmony at home, at work, on Planet Earth!

Thursday, January 26

7:00 -9:00 pm \$20.

Facilitator Anne Walton, Certified Trainer with the Center for Non-violent Communication, has a background in banking and nursing and now passionately shares NVC both here in Alberta and in Southern California. As a facilitator, Anne blends her natural warmth, authenticity and zest for life with a delightful sense of humour to create an environment in which transformation occurs. For more information on Anne and Nonviolent Communication, please see <http://chooseconnection.com>

Winter/Spring Programs

Living in the Present Moment: Practicing Mindfulness In Daily Life


Mindfulness practice, inherited from the Buddhist tradition, is increasingly being employed in Western psychology and spirituality both to alleviate a variety of mental and physical conditions as well as making spiritual practice practical in daily life. In our busy lives, we are often not aware of our selves, others or our environment. We are often lost in the thoughts, feelings, wants, needs, struggles and difficulties of the "little self". Come and explore contemplative practices that can awaken us to the subtle awareness of Divine Presence within the daily moments of our lives. **Facilitator: Jane Leifer, DMin**, is a spiritual director, retreat leader and counselor.

Wednesday, January 11
7:00 pm \$20.

'A Starry Night': Table for Two Dinner *Enhance Your Romance; Take Time for Your Marriage*

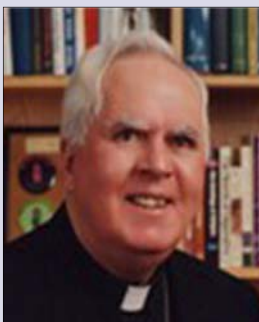
To celebrate this romantic time of year, give yourselves the gift of some special time together. Enjoy an intimate **four-course dinner with candlelight and wine, by the glow of the fireplace in our Hearth Room**. Throughout the evening you will be offered questions to reflect on together, to help deepen your relationship and spark romance. It is an evening to be savoured by just the two of you!



 **Thursday,**
February 16 \$95./
couple
Dinner is served at 7:00 pm

Lenten Evening Retreat with Most Reverend Joseph MacNeil

"Way of the Cross to Resurrection"



Join us for this evening of Lenten prayer and reflection with Most Reverend Joseph MacNeil, who served as Archbishop of Edmonton from 1973 to 1999.

Wednesday, March 14
7:00 pm \$20.

Heart Spa

Retreats for Women

Forgiveness

This is an intentional Christian retreat experience designed to facilitate the personal growth of women as they discover how to let go of the ties that bind them through the act of forgiveness. Gift yourself with a day away to name and claim issues, circumstances or relationships that need to be healed through forgiveness. Participant's growth will be nurtured through group sessions, guided reflection exercises and private reflection times.

6:30 pm Friday, March 9 to
4:00 pm Saturday, March 10 \$159.
(includes Friday accommodation and breakfast & lunch on Saturday)

Making Peace with the Self

This is a guided Christian retreat experience intended to facilitate the personal growth of women as they seek to let go of unhealthy beliefs about the self so they may fully engage in the life they were created to live. Gift yourself with a day away to renew your mind, heart and Spirit and learn to embrace the beautiful woman you are – you are closer than you think to living life with personal peace. Participant's growth will be nurtured through group sessions, guided reflection exercises and private reflection times.

6:30 pm Friday, May 4 to
4:00 pm Saturday May 5 \$159.
(includes accommodation, breakfast & lunch)

Facilitator **Michelle Jensen** is a counselling therapist in private practice. Michelle is passionate about helping others achieve personal wholeness and inner freedom to be who they were created to be.

Vatican II and the New Evangelization with Fr. Stefano Penna

Reflecting on the Fifty Years Since Vatican II

When Blessed John XXIII invited the Church to "throw open the windows" the Second Vatican Council responded with a renewed commitment to understanding Evangelization as an essential element of being the People of God in Communion. How our world has changed in the five decades since the Council gathered in Rome! Many see the openness of the Council as historically passé. Others may mourn a seemingly retrenchment in the Church of the new millennium. This evening will explore the rootedness of the call to a New Evangelization in the great act of the Holy Spirit that was Vatican II. How is the wisdom of the Council the foundation for new ways of proclaiming and being the Good News? Come and see!



Wednesday, April 18 7:00 pm \$20.

Winter/Spring Programs

Grace Filled Grandmothering: A Retreat for Grandmothers

*"Grandmothers hold our hands for awhile but
our hearts forever" [anonymous].*

There is nothing quite like the joy of being a grandmother! During this retreat, you will have the opportunity to reflect on what grandmothering means to you. There will be time for story-telling, personal reflection, rituals and sharing as you engage your own story and your role as a grandmother. You will be given privileged time in a prayerful, positive setting to explore the joy, hopes, dreams and challenges you experience in being a grandmother to your grandchildren. Join other women as we grow together in our understanding of what it means to be 'grace-filled grandmothers.'

Facilitators: Sandy Prather and Pam Melnyk

7:00 pm Friday April 13 to

4:00 pm Saturday April 14 \$125.

(includes Friday accommodation and breakfast & lunch on Saturday)

Yoga and Journal Writing Retreat

Yoga and journal writing offer participants the opportunity to explore their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual bodies. In this one-night retreat, you'll be invited to experience relaxation techniques, yoga movements, and guided journal writing. Use these practices to reflect on your behaviour and bring awareness to your life in the present moment. Explore how your behaviour and choices may be contributing to your stress and challenges. No yoga or journal writing experience is required to attend this retreat. Please bring comfortable clothing, yoga mat, journal, and small blanket. **Facilitator Angela Wiens** believes that yoga meets you where you are. Her teachings are suitable for students who want to experience an integrated approach of asana (postures), pranayama (breath work), mantras, meditation, and philosophy. Her goal is to provide an opportunity for people to learn principles for developing a healthy body, a clear mind, and a joyful spirit.

Friday, March 2 at 6:30 pm

to Saturday, March 3 at 4:00 pm \$125.

(includes Friday accommodation and breakfast & lunch on Saturday)

Yoga Workshop: Releasing the Neck, Shoulders and Upper Back ... Ahhhh!

Most of us carry tension in our neck and shoulders and as a result the blood vessels in these areas shrink, thereby creating pain and stiffness and often leading to headaches and fatigue. Such tension and stiffness reduces our ability to think clearly, to communicate effectively and express what we need to say. In this workshop, you will learn stretches and exercises for releasing tension in these key areas to promote a stronger and more clear mind-body connection. By the end of the workshop you will be giving a big sigh of relief - ahhh! **Teacher: Cassie McColl**

All levels welcome. Bring a sticky mat.

Sunday, March 25 2:00 pm-4:00 pm \$35.

Yoga at the Star: Making Body Mind Spirit Connections

Tuesday Evening Hatha Yoga

Enjoy the stretching and strength building postures of yoga, along with breathing and relaxation! The classes are open to all levels; no yoga experience is required. Come experience all of the benefits that yoga has to offer! *Wear comfortable clothing; bring a yoga mat and a blanket.*

Teachers:

5:15pm - Darlene Klassen 7:00pm - Jeannette Heit

Winter Session: \$96.

Tuesdays: January 10-February 28
5:15-6:45 pm OR 7 pm - 8:30 pm

Spring Session: \$96.

Tuesdays: March 6-April 24
5:15-6:45 pm OR 7 pm - 8:30 pm

Thursday Morning Purna Yoga

These Purna Yoga classes include physical postures and meditation. Purna means 'complete', and the classes are intended to nourish your body, mind, and spirit. Emphasis is placed on precision and alignment of the body in the physical postures. The classes are open to all levels; no yoga experience is required. Come experience all of the benefits that yoga has to offer! *Wear comfortable clothing; bring a yoga mat and a blanket.*

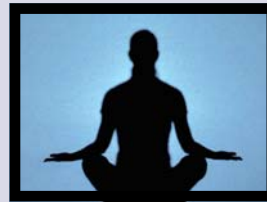
Teacher: Cassie McColl

Winter Session: \$96.

Thursdays: January 12-March 1
10:00 am-11:30 am

Spring Session: \$96.

Thursdays: March 8-April 26
10:00 am -11:30 am



For more information about our yoga teachers,
please visit our web site: www.starofthenorth.ca

Register Early! Some programs fill up quickly, others may be cancelled due to insufficient registrations. We require payment or a deposit upon registration. We accept VISA and MasterCard, over the phone, or you can send in a cheque. Call 780-459-5511 to register.

Cancellation Policy: For programs costing \$50.00 or less, the full fee will be required as a deposit. If you cancel 7 days or more BEFORE the start date, all but a \$10.00 administration fee will be refunded. If you cancel within 7 days there is no refund. Programs costing more than \$50.00 will have a deposit amount that will be refunded or held according to the above 7 days policy. If we cancel a program, your full fee will be refunded.

Star Gazing! News and Notes

Fair Trade at the Star



On November 6 Star of the North hosted our annual "JUST in Time" Fair Trade Christmas Sale. "We received this encouraging feedback: *"Thank you very much for including us in your "JUST in Time" fair trade event. We were very successful and it was in great part due to the support that we get from the Star. I think it was an great expression of justice and a real education on fair trade to a number of new people. We received requests for ongoing sales, so it is also a growing demand for fair trade products. We also want to thank the staff for their hospitality and total support and accommodating our every need."*

'Star Trekkers' Needed!

In June we once again plan to participate in the **Roy Financial Mayor's Walk for Charity**. We need volunteers to join us in this enjoyable fund raising event. You can participate by getting sponsors and joining our 'Star Trekkers' on the walk to raise funds for The Star, or by being a sponsor and contributing financially to this event. Call Star of the North for more information.

Welcome Shelly!

We extend a warm welcome to our new staff member in our housekeeping department! Shelly Rasmussen comes to us from Morinville, where she lives with her husband David and their two dogs. When not cleaning and polishing at The Star, Shelly enjoys using her creative side: painting, singing, & writing. She loves working at Star of the North as "...It is so peaceful here, and everyone is so friendly."



Thank you Starfest Supporters!

Our October 21, 2011 celebration of Starfest was a gala occasion! Almost 300 guests gathered at the Italian Cultural Centre for an evening of excellent food, good friends, and the always interesting Silent and Live Auctions. The proceeds of Starfest go to keeping our building upgraded and functioning. Huge THANK YOU's go out to all of those who donated items, money, or time, and to all who attended the event. We are so grateful for all of your support!



Personal Retreats

Do you need time out from a busy schedule and the stresses in your life? Private retreats are a time for taking a day or several days for a special quiet time to refresh your spirit, to gain a new perspective on things, and rediscover the sacred dimension of life. A bedroom or suite can be booked on a day use or live in basis.

Women's Wellness

In May, Star of the North Retreat Centre will once again host our "Time Away From the Everyday", a wellness retreat for women from the inner city. The weekend would not be possible to run without the support of the many individuals and groups who contribute hours of time, supplies, skills and talents, and we are so grateful for all of these. Connelly-McKinley has for many years provided transportation out to St. Albert for the women. We also depend on the generous donations of many groups & individuals who provide financial sponsorship to allow the women to attend. Many of the women who attend look forward to this event all year! If you would like to help, send your donation to Star of the North: Women's Wellness.



Gift Certificates

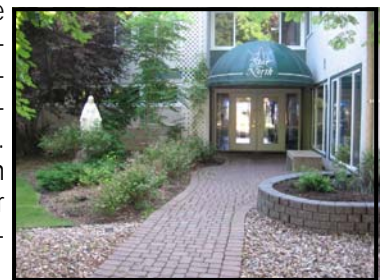


Looking for a special gift? How about a Gift Certificate for Star of the North? The gift certificate can be used for some personal time away on retreat, OR to attend one of our Star of the North programs. You choose the amount that fits your budget. Whether its for a Valentine's gift to attend Ta-

bles for Two, the Grace Filled Grandmother's Retreat as a gift for your grandma, some quiet time to herself for a busy Mom, or a yoga class for a friend, a gift certificate for Star of the North makes a wonderful gift!

Looking for a Facility?

Star of the North Retreat Centre is ideal for board or staff retreats, strategic planning or visionary days, business meetings, workshops and seminars. Our commitment is to offer each guest hospitality and superior service in a warm inviting setting.



Star of the North's amenities include two large meeting rooms, three board rooms, sixty-one bedrooms, dining facilities and peaceful landscaped grounds. Book this great location for your next function!



STAR OF THE NORTH

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Check out our website!
www.starofthenorth.ca

Mark Your Calendar!

<u>January</u>	
10 & 12	Yoga Classes begin
11	Mindfulness
24	Away Day
26	Compassionate Communication
<u>February</u>	
16	Table For Two
21	Away Day
<u>March</u>	
2-3	Yoga & Journaling Retreat
6 & 8	Spring Yoga Sessions begin
9-10	Forgiveness Heart Spa Retreat
14	Lenten Retreat
20	Away Day
25	Yoga Workshop
29	A Day with Hildegard
30-April 1	Teihard & Thomas Berry Retreat
<u>April</u>	
13	Grace Filled Grandmothering
18	Vatican II & the New Evangelization
24	Away Day
<u>May</u>	
4-5	Making Peace With The Self



Follow the Star!

- Star of the North is ideal for:**
- Group rentals, business meetings and seminars
 - All types of conferences and gatherings, large or small
 - Day use or live-in events
- We offer:**
- Affordable facility rentals
 - In-house programming for personal growth
 - Private retreats
 - Access to spiritual direction
 - Business facilities
 - Professionally landscaped gardens and quiet hilltop setting
 - Two spacious conference rooms plus three smaller meeting rooms
 - Small library, reading areas, casual sitting spaces and two chapels
 - Lovely dining room
 - AV equipment is available