



# Star Gazer

Fall 2010

## Star of the North Retreat Centre

### “Not for a retreat, but for an advance.”



I am not usually fond of fighting images but I find some truth in a comparison between the military strategy of retreating and the idea of a spiritual retreat. A wise military commander will pull back his troops in the face of a pitched battle not because they are being defeated, but to offer them a chance to regroup. Refreshed after a rest, they are then able to go back and rejoin the fray, with a new spirit and a new heart. It is then that advances can be made.

Therein lies the analogy with our lives. Sometimes we feel overwhelmed in the face of constant demands on our times, overbooked schedules or just the emotional wear and tear of daily life. It is then that we see the wisdom of coming away on retreat, to regroup, recharge one's batteries, focus on priorities and find one's spiritual equilibrium. Retreat centres remind us that we need periodically to escape from the mind-numbing noise of the world. They offer us an alternative to the frenetic activity that normally consumes us. They invite us into sacred space where the priority is not to do more, but to be more.

Here at Star, we are all about retreating. Hospitable staff create a welcoming space for both individuals and groups to take whatever they need so that they can do what they need to do. Whether it is retreats, meetings, seminars or workshops, it is all time away for renewal.

Our programs also focus on renewal and transformation. You might choose a yoga session for your body or choose one of the programs designed to enrich your spirit: Partnering with People, Grace-filled Grandmothering, Away Days, Advent Evenings, or any of the others. Whatever you choose, you will be guided to new insights and renewed hope.

The American poet Carl Sandburg writes, "Once having passed over the margins of animal necessity, human beings come to the deeper meaning of their bones: the song and the dance and the story and the time for thinking things over." When we find ourselves too caught up in the vagaries of life, it is truly time to retreat in order to advance.

*Sandy Prather*

## Starfest 2010

Join us for a spectacular and sparkling evening at the **Italian Cultural Centre on Friday, October 22, 2010.** Starfest is Star of the North's major annual fundraising event.

### You can help us to keep the Star shining:

- by attending
- by making a cash donation
- by making a donation of new items or services for the auction

Bring your friends, and come to enjoy this fun filled evening, with fine food, and the well-organized live and silent auctions. For tickets or more information call :

**780-459-5511**

21st Annual  
**Starfest**  
6 pm, Friday, October 22  
Italian Cultural Centre  
Tickets: \$60.

# Follow the Star!

# Fall 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 Fall 'Away' Days.



**9:30 am - 3:00 pm**  
**Advance Registration: \$25.00**  
**OR \$30.00 at the door**

### Thursday, October 7:

**'The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See',  
Richard Rohr, OFM, 2009**

"Change your mind!" Renowned speaker, retreat leader and spiritual author, Franciscan Richard Rohr wants us not only to change our minds but also to transform them. He invites us to move beyond 'either-or' thinking to an alternative way that allows for 'unity beyond duality.' Our Christian tradition knows it variously as mysticism, contemplation or pure presence and Rohr stresses that this way of 'seeing' is for everyone. It opens us to the deepest truths of Jesus' teaching and our faith: "*You are already a child of God, equipped with everything you need to be resonating with the divine,*" [p.104]. Challenging and deeply inspiring, Rohr's '*The Naked Now*' is an invitation to transformation.

### Thursday, November 4:

**'Not Counting Women and Children: Neglected Stories  
From the Bible', Megan McKenna, 2004**

Shiphrah and Puah; Miriam and Abigail; the widow of Naim: these are some of the women of Scripture. Their stories are powerful testaments of faith and discipleship, yet, like so many of the women's stories in Scripture, they are largely unknown. Combining lively story-telling with solid Scripture scholarship, Megan McKenna brings these invisible women and their overlooked stories to life. We find ourselves encountering real women who, with courage and grace, face danger and oppression as they respond to the action of God in their lives. In their stories, we find our own and we are blessed.

### Thursday, December 2:

**'Starlight: Beholding the Christmas Miracle All Year  
Long', John Shea, 1992**

A natural born story-teller as well as a poet and theologian, John Shea breaks open the Christmas story to illuminate our faith lives all year long. Using the rich symbols and details that cluster round the birth of the Christ child, Shea uncovers a light that shines through all our darkness, offering hope and comfort on our journey. Make your Christmas special this year by deepening your Advent journey. Join us for an Advent Away Day that will include prayer, poetry and presentation, centred on Shea's insightful reading of the Christmas miracle.

## Stoking the Fire: Maintaining Courage and Hope for the Work of Justice.

*"Can one be passionate about the just, the ideal, the sublime and the holy, and yet commit no labor to its cause? . . . The gospel of light is the crossroads of indolence or inaction. Be ignited or be gone."* (Poet Mary Oliver)

As Christians, we know that social justice is not an option but we also know it is a hard sell. Workers in the field of social action oft-times find themselves overwhelmed, alone and dis-hearted. Parishes often find themselves struggling to maintain an active and committed core of volunteers who are passionate about working on social issues.

How might we maintain our courage and hope in the face of so many demands and so much apathy? How do we move past our own disillusionment, weariness or cynicism? What are the sources that might feed us, nurture us and keep us ignited and on fire?

Join us for an evening designed to support, affirm and inspire you in your justice work. Meet others like yourself who are concerned and caring justice people. Come and stoke the fire in your heart.

Facilitator: Sandy Prather

**Wed. Nov. 17 Cost: \$25.00**

**Dinner at 6 pm followed by program**

## Dreams—Awakening the Forgotten Language of the Inner Self

Explore understanding the symbols and meaning of your dreams. An early church theologian, Tertullian once said: "The dream is the most usual way of God's revelation to humankind." When understood correctly dreams can be a real part of self-discovering. Through metaphors and symbols dreams can reveal hidden truths that can set us free, while bringing nurture and guidance to our lives. These 3 evenings will be an introduction to working with your own dreams, giving you tools to understand the language of the unconscious.

**Tuesdays: Oct. 5, Nov. 9, and Nov. 30**  
**7-9 pm \$55.00**

Facilitator: Jane Leifer, D.Min Spiritual director and counselor, Jane has both Psychosynthesis & Jungian dream work training. She utilizes dream work in counseling and spiritual direction.



## Heart Spa: Retreats for Women

### Living with Purpose: Deeply Connect to What Truly Matters

A guided retreat experience to facilitate the personal growth of women as they seek to uncover the life they were meant to live. Gift your self with a day away to name and claim what truly matters in life. Narrow the gap between "what I want" and "what is"... You are closer than you think to living a life with purpose! Participant's growth will be nurtured through group sessions, guided reflection exercises and private reflection times.

**6:30 pm Fri. Nov. 19 to 4:00 pm Sat. Nov. 20**  
**Cost per retreat: \$159.00**

*Includes Friday night accommodation, and breakfast & lunch Saturday.*

# Fall Programs

## Fall Yoga At the Star: Making Mind-Body-Spirit Connections

Come stretch your body, mind and spirit! 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! Teacher: **Cassie McColl**. **Wear comfortable clothing; bring a yoga mat and a blanket.**

### Session I:

Tues. Sept. 14,-Oct. 26 5:15-6:45 pm OR 7:00-8:30 pm  
OR Thurs. Sept. 9- Oct. 28 10:00 am-11:30 am

### Session II:

Tues. Nov. 2 - Dec 14 5:15-6:45 pm OR 7:00-8:30 pm  
OR Thurs. Nov. 4, -Dec. 16 10:00-11:30 am

(Please note that there is no class Sept. 30 and that occasionally a class may need to be rescheduled due to facility bookings.)

**Cost: \$84.00 session**

## Nurturing Body, Mind and Spirit: A Purna Yoga Weekend Retreat

Come stretch your body, mind and spirit with a weekend of Purna Yoga! Purna means 'complete', and the retreat consists of both physical yoga postures and meditation time, providing a wonderful opportunity to take care of your body, quiet your mind and go deep within. Teacher: **Cassie McColl**.

*Some yoga experience recommended. Wear comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat and a blanket.*

**6:30 p.m. Fri. Nov. 19 to  
4 p.m. Sat. Nov. 20 Cost: \$125.00**  
(includes accommodation & 2 meals)



## A Purna Yoga Meditation Workshop

Welcome to an introduction to the basics of Purna Yoga meditation. Learn to connect to and open the heart center, the source of true wisdom and love in the body, using simple meditation techniques. This workshop is suitable for all levels of experience. Everyone is welcome. Enjoy the feeling of peacefulness and restoration that comes with connecting to the spirit.

Teacher: **Cassie McColl**.

**Sun. Sept. 19 6:30-8:30 p.m. \$35.00**

## Yoga for the Office Workshop

Do you sit for long hours at a desk at home or in the office? Feeling tense and stiff after working at the computer? This workshop is for you. Learn simple stretches for the neck, shoulders and wrists to release tension and encourage mobility. Also learn stretches for the back, and exercises to keep the spine limber. All of these stretches can be done either at the desk or in the office. Last but not least, learn a practical meditation technique to center and calm the mind. Say goodbye to tension and hello to freedom and joy!

**Sun. Oct. 24 6:30-8:30 p.m. \$35.00**

## Partnering With People: Sharing the Blessings of the *Mustard Seed* Ministry

As we take time at Thanksgiving to be grateful for our many blessings, how can we as Christians share our bounty with others? Star of the North is partnering with the Mustard Seed Community in Edmonton's Inner City to invite you to share a simple meal and learn more about their ministry.

The Mustard Seed is a Christian humanitarian organization that seeks to address poverty in greater Edmonton through the building of a healthy community. This also includes addressing the needs of those whose lives have been impacted by crime and incarceration. By incorporating a restorative justice framework to these issues we seek to bring healing and restoration to those who have offended against our communities.

**Tuesday October 5 Cost: \$20.00**  
**The evening begins with dinner at 6 p.m.**

## Grace-Filled Grandmothering: A Weekend Retreat for Grandmothers

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

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.'

**7 pm Fri. Nov. 5 to 1 pm Sun. Nov. 7**  
**\$249.00 (includes 2 nights accommodation & meals)**  
**\$259.00 after Oct. 31**



**Sandy Prather, B. Ed, M.Th.**, teaches and facilitates in the areas of faith and spirituality. She draws upon her theological training and faith perspective to 'break open the ordinary' so that we might know God 'amidst the pots and pans.' She is the proud and happy grandmother of ten grandchildren, five boys and five girls, who range in age from sixteen years to one year old.



**Pam Melnyk** has a Bachelor of Education and a Graduate Diploma in Special Education. She has taught in Saskatchewan and Alberta for nearly 30 years. Recently retired, she enjoys travel, books, puzzles and entertaining friends. Pam is Nana to four boisterous boys, two of whom live in Europe.



**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, you will be fully refunded your fees.

# Fall and Advent Programs

## Hope 1001: Practical Strategies for Using Hope

How hopeful are you? On what do you base your hope? How can you increase hope in yourself and others? Recent studies indicate that **HOPE positively affects every aspect of our lives**. Understanding the influence of hope can help us achieve **balance in life and work**. There are **real skills and strategies** for staying personally hopeful, and for dealing with hopelessness when we encounter it.

In conjunction with The Hope Studies Certificate Program at Norquest College, Star of the North is offering *Hope 1001: Practical Strategies for Using Hope*. The first of a three part certificate program, Hope 1001 explores how a hopeful perspective and practical strategies can positively influence quality of life, health outcomes, and job satisfaction. Participants will

- explore a practical view of the value and nature of using hope
- discover opportunities to identify hope and helplessness in themselves and others,
- learn hope-focused strategies that can be applied in life and work.

Small, in-class groups afford participants the unique opportunity to reflect, utilize, and share in hope-focused exercises. A written, reflective assignment is due three weeks following the course classroom instruction. See [www.norquest.ca](http://www.norquest.ca) for more information.

**5 Thursdays, Sept. 16 - Oct. 14**

**6:30-9:30 pm**

**Cost: \$249.50**

(includes, tuition, program & facility costs)

**Hope 1002 will be offered Oct. 28 - Dec. 2**

## Permaculture Principles for Urban Backyards

**ACTION for the EARTH:** What can we do as people of faith to respond to the needs of our continually emerging universe? Increasingly, Christians are recognizing that our faith mandates embarking on new directions in the earth-human relationship. The Star's **Action for the Earth** programming is designed to provide a foundation for conscious, spiritual living as we contribute to positive action for the earth.

Permaculture is an ecological design approach for creating diverse, healthy and sustainable landscapes. Fall is the time to wrap up the gardening season and contemplate changes for spring. We will explore permaculture principles and strategies that will help you transition your yard to a landscape that provides sustenance and beauty for your family while creating habitat for bugs, birds and other creatures. While our gardens are resting, we can still supplement our diet with fresh greens sprouted indoors. *Bring an empty pie plate (plastic or aluminium, with lid if available) and a canning jar for a hands-on activity to get you started.*

**Wed. Oct. 13 7:00 p.m. \$19.00**

**Facilitator: Claudia Bolli – Wild Green Garden Consulting**

Claudia has been involved in gardening, environmental and nature education for over ten years. Her mission is to help families grow productive gardens and learn about permaculture. She is doing work with Evergreen, Sprout Farms, Cityfarm and private consulting.

## 'Just' in Time! Fair Trade Christmas Sale



*Do you want to make your Christmas gift-giving more meaningful?* Want to build justice into your purchasing and make a difference in someone's life? Come to **Star of the North for 'Just in Time'** Christmas shopping. We've invited a variety of development, justice, and Fair Trade organizations to come to the Star, set up displays and sell their fair trade products. Come check out the beautiful & unique handmade crafts, Christmas decorations, coffee & other gift items. Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers.

**Sun. Nov. 7 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

## Advent Wreath Making

Advent wreaths have long been used as a focus for family prayer and celebration of the Advent season. As we begin to prepare our hearts for Christmas, learn the history and symbolism of the Advent wreath, and make this beautiful Advent symbol for your home. We will use the wreath in prayer, and provide a blessing for your Advent wreath. *Please bring scissors and a glue gun if you can.*

**Wed. Nov. 24 7:30 pm**

**Early registration: 48.00**

**After Nov. 16: \$50.00**

**(Includes \$35.00 for supplies)**



**Facilitators Gary Simpson and Réal Labbe** created the many beautiful Advent Wreaths seen in our Centre. Gary has studied the history and symbolism of the wreath, and he and Réal will share their knowledge and skills with us.

## Advent: A Time for Inner Preparation

In December, the days grow shorter and our lives get busier with outer preparation for Christmas. We can forget the profound meaning of Christmas. Considering taking three evenings this Advent to prepare your heart for the birth of Christ again in you and our world.

Each evening will include a short introduction of the week's theme, a short reading, contemplation, silence prayer/meditation and sharing.

Facilitator: **Jane Leifer, D.Min**

**Thursdays Dec. 2, 9, 16**

**7 pm**

**\$50.00**

*"Christ can be born a thousand times in Bethlehem but all in vain if he is not born within the human heart" –Angelus Silesius*

# Star Gazing! News and Notes

## Women's Wellness

In May Star of the North Retreat Centre hosted our 5<sup>th</sup> "Time Away From the Everyday", a wellness retreat for women from the inner city. We had our largest turn-out ever: 34 women attended the retreat. We partner with several inner city agencies who refer the women who come to us on the retreat. For many of our returning women, it is an event they look forward to all year. This year we welcomed women referred to us by:

Inner City Pastoral Ministry  
Elizabeth House  
Partners for Adult Literacy

Bissell Centre  
Learning Centre  
Strathcona Outreach



The generosity and support of the community has been overwhelming and we are truly grateful. A special thank you goes out for the many financial contributions that came in to sponsor women to attend the retreat. Many women religious and CWL groups as well as a number of individuals have become regular sponsors. The weekend could also not happen without the support of the many individuals who contributed hours of time, supplies, skills and talents. A special thank you to Youville Home for transporting the women who needed the Handibus. We are so grateful to everyone who makes this weekend possible.

Here are some of the comments made by women who attended:

**Being here has given me confidence...It was healing... It was a breathing space...I feel more empowered...I found myself this weekend...It was great to be part of the fun and the laughter.**



## Welcome to Lesley!



In the spring we welcomed Lesley Baartman to our office staff. Lesley and her family recently moved to Alberta from the Mount Anderson Mountain Catchment Nature Reserve in South Africa. She is a certified reflexologist. If you call in on a Thursday or Friday you are likely to hear her lovely accent when she answers the phone!

## Own a Piece of 'The Star'!

Star of the North has purchased a star! It can be viewed at the TELUS World of Science on their interactive 'Be a Star' display, by inputting 'Star of the North'. Our star, known as 'Mesarthim', is found in the constellation Aries. You too can own a piece of our star! Make a donation of \$20.00 or more & you will receive a special gift certificate certifying that you own a piece of the Star as well as a memento. A 'Piece of the Star' makes a great gift, and your contribution supports our work at 'The Star'.

## 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.



Garden Suite

## We are Grape-ful for our Volunteers!

On May 18 'The Star' treated our volunteers to an evening of fine winning and dining. Our staff served dinner to our guests, then entertained them with a unique version of the song "I Heard it Through the Grapevine" (That our volunteer's are mighty fine!) We concluded with a PowerPoint presentation of our volunteer's activities over the past year, and a prayer ritual.



## 'Star Trekkers' Shine

### in the Roy Financial Mayor's Walk!

Once again we sent an enthusiastic 'Star Trekkers' team to the Roy Financial Mayor's Walk for Charity. The fund raiser walk took place on June 19, 2010. Our 'Star Trek' donations go towards projects that directly affect our clients. This year's funds will be used in dining room upgrades.

**THANK YOU to all our Trekkers and supporters for making this event such a success!**

## Community Spirit Grant

### More power to your charity dollars!

Star of the North Retreat Centre is the grateful and happy recipient of a **Community Spirit Donation Grant**. This grant gives more power to your charity dollars! Based on donations to Star in 2008 we received a matching grant from the Community Spirit Donation Grant Program that allowed us to do bathroom renovations and upgrades.

We are fortunate to have a committed base of donors and this grant program enhances their giving. It provides a powerful incentive for continued generosity. Visit our website for more information on this program!



## 'The Wall'

One of the walls at 'The Star' has a new look. Our "Support the Star" wall was designed to highlight the variety of fund-raising projects we rely on to support the centre, including Starfest, the Roy Financial Mayor's Walk for Charity, and our 'Star of the North' T-Shirt sales. Come take a look next time you are at 'The Star'! Many thanks to all of you who participate in these events and provide support to our ministry at Star of the North.



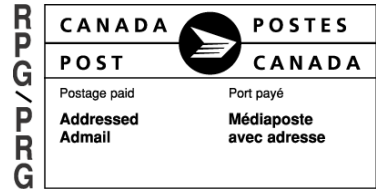
## Ron Rolheiser, OMI Lenten Retreat

Plan to join us for this lenten retreat with Fr. Ron: "The Passion and Cross of Christ" on Friday April 8 to Sunday April 10, 2011.

## New Website Design

Check out our recently redesigned web page at

[www.starofthenorth.ca](http://www.starofthenorth.ca)



RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED  
PORT DE RETOUR GARANTI

**STAR OF THE NORTH**

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Check out our website!  
[www.starofthenorth.ca](http://www.starofthenorth.ca)

**Mark Your Calendar!**

September

14 & 16 Yoga Session I begins  
16 Hope 1001 begins  
19 Yoga Meditation Workshop

October

5 *'Dreams' series begins*  
5 *Partnering with People*  
7 *Away Day: 'The Naked Now'*  
13 Action for the Earth : Permaculture  
22 *'Starfest!'*  
24 Yoga for the Office  
28 Hope 1002 begins

November

2 & 4 Yoga Session II begins  
4 *Away Day: 'Not Counting Women & Children'*  
5-7 *'Grace-Filled Grandmothering' Retreat*  
7 *'JUST' in Time Fair Trade Christmas Sale*  
17 Stoking the Fire  
19-20 Yoga Retreat  
19-20 Heart Spa: Living With Purpose  
24 Advent Wreaths

December

2 *Away Day: Starlight*  
2 *Advent series begins*

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