Consd News



THE NEWSLETTER OF CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF NORTH SAN DIEGO Volume 10 Number 1 February 2015

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A Day of Visioning

On May 19th 2007, the members of Contemplative Outreach of North San Diego gathered at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Poway to create a vision for the Chapter's future. In 2011 our Servant Leadership Team sent an extensive "needs assessment" survey to the entire Chapter membership. The wisdom shared by our membership in both the visioning process and their responses to the needs assessment survey has provided our Servant Leadership Team with the knowledge that has been needed to shepherd our Chapter over the past seven years. It is now time to once again seek the wisdom and prayerful direction of our membership. To this end we will hold a re-visioning day on May 2nd 2015. On this day, through the use of large and small group processes facilitated by Susan Komis, CO, Ltd's Director of Chapter Programs and Services the participants will gather, synthesize, sort, and prioritize the wisdom of the membership. During this visioning process we will celebrate our strengths, explore current challenges, prioritize our needs and create a road map for the next two to three years, and prayerfully discern the selection of a Chapter Co-Coordinator.

The calling of a Co-Coordinator is necessitated by my decision to step aside from my role as a Co-Coordinator. However, I will continue in this capacity until a new Co-Coordinator has been called, recommended to, and accepted by Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. While I am stepping aside Sue will continue as one of the Chapter's Co-Coordinators. The following are the major responsibilities of a Chapter Coordinator.

A Chapter Coordinator:

Makes available the "Introduction to Centering Prayer Program," including the six follow-up sessions, to individuals and groups in their local area. Organizes Contemplative Outreach events according to International Office guidelines e.g. workshops, retreats, Presenter training, and Facilitator training. Encourages the establishment of Centering Prayer groups and the support of Prayer Group Facilitators.

Oversees the practical aspects of the Chapter. **Note:** a description of the "practical aspects of the Chapter" that I have been carrying out will be provided to the membership prior to May 2nd.

(Continued on next page)

A Day of Visioning

The requirements to become a Coordinator are as follows:

They serve in accordance with the Contemplative Outreach Vision Statement and its Administrative and Theological Principles, the "Guidelines for Contemplative Outreach Service," and the "Essentials and Formats for the Contemplative Outreach Centering Programs."

- They have an ongoing commitment to a regular practice of Centering Prayer.
- They have attended the "Introduction to Centering Prayer Program."
- They have attended a Contemplative Outreach Ten Day Intensive Retreat or agree to do so.
- They have completed viewing the Spiritual Journey tapes/DVDS.
- They have read the following books by Fr. Thomas Keating: "Open Mind, Open Heart," "Invitation to Love," and "Intimacy with God."
- They have attended or agree to attend the Coordinator Servant-Leader Formation Workshop. This workshop will be offered at the Marianist Center in St. Louis, MO July 26th through August 1st 2015
- Availability to attend the Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. Annual Conference. (There will be no conference in 2015).

This day of visioning is a special day that is set aside to celebrate and contemplate where we have been and how we have grown as a contemplative community, where we are now, and to further discern where we desire to go in terms of our highest potential. Sue and I as well as the CONSD Servant Leadership Team are excited about this day and encourage all to attend. We ask in advance that you commit to attend the entire day....you won't want to miss it!

~Chris Hagen

Silence, Solitude, Solidarity, Service

On Saturday, November 8th, 60+ men and women gathered at St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Poway for a half day retreat sponsored by CONSD. The morning began at 9am, with registration and hospitality, followed by a welcome and 20 minutes of Centering Prayer, and then silence. Elena Andrews was the facilitator with assistance from Avril Bland, who led the beautiful and restful chants. Each section was introduced with a reading and a chant and followed by 15 minutes of silent reflection. There were handouts with additional readings which reflected the values of the retreat plus soft music and a meditation corner with appropriate visuals on a screen.

Each topic, led seamlessly to the next, flowing naturally to the last, SERVICE "...a call from God to serve God in others." Ironically, as the presentation on service ended, the chimes from the church rang out and played, "Here I am Lord". We then had a period of Centering Prayer and Large Group Sharing. Comments included Peace & Meditation, Hope & Relaxation, Solidarity, Power of Silence, Solitude in Community, the progression from Silence & Solitude lead beautifully into Solidarity and ultimately Service, the fruits of Centering Prayer.

~Joan Gansert

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About Centering Prayer

One objection to Centering Prayer is as follows: "One is advised to let go of the sacred word just to rest in God's presence: " That advice has to be taken in its proper context and depends on certain steps going before.

First of all, letting go of the sacred word in Centering Prayer is not a deliberate choice. Still less is it a permanent disposition. The whole thrust of Centering Prayer is to encourage us to let go of all thoughts. A "thought" in Contemplative Outreach terminology is any perception whatsoever including memories, plans, visualizations, external or internal sensations, feelings, and self reflections. Any kind of reflecting, even to make a choice, is a "thought," and hence, an invitation to return to the sacred word. We suggest returning to the sacred word or symbol only when we notice

that we are attracted to some other thought. The meaning of this advice is that with time and regular daily practice one can discern intuitively whether one is disinterested in the thoughts that are coming down the stream of consciousness. Disregard of the thoughts is the sign that the consent of the will is becoming habitual. The will can be directed to God at a very delicate level without having to express its intention in a sacred symbol. Thus, from our perspective, the sacred symbol is not a means of going some place like an elevator. Still less is it a means of bulldozing other thoughts out of awareness. It is rather, a question of cultivating the spiritual level of awareness, which is real awareness, but without particular content.

~Fr. Thomas Keating

A Lectio Divina Immersion Experience

On February 28th 2015 Fr. Stephen Coffey, OSB will lead those in attendance into a deep understanding and experience of the spiritually deepening power of Lectio Divina. Lectio Divina is the divine reading of the Sacred Scriptures in order to make them a part of one's everyday life. This method of divine reading of the Sacred Scriptures comes from the Hebrew method of studying the scriptures called "Haggadah." Haggadah is the process of reading the Sacred Scriptures over and over until the words take residence in the heart, thereby, transforming one's life.

Fr. Stephen will present four conferences on Lectio Divina; two conferences in the morning and two in the afternoon. The first conference will focus on how to approach a passage of scripture for the first time. The emphasis in this conference will be on an understanding of the literary, historical, and theological context of scripture. The second conference will delve into how the intuitive senses opens one to the symbolic essence of the text. Spiritual exercises for sharpening one's intuition as an aid to prayer will be offered during this conference as well.

The first conference in the afternoon will focus on how the scriptural text leads to prayer of the heart. Here we will explore a comparison of Lectio Divina and Centering Prayer as complementary contemplative practices. Finally, how the deeper mystical voice of the text is grasped by the interior spiritual senses will be the focus of the fourth conference. In this conference we will explore contemplation as the goal of both Lectio Divina and Centering Prayer.

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A Lectio Divina Immersion Experience (continued)



The content of this retreat is drawn from the personal experiences of Fr. Stephen as well as the from the works of Thomas Keating and Bruno Barnhart as well as Sr. Meg Funk's book *Lectio Matters: Before The Burning Bush.*

Fr. Steve is a Benedictine monk in residence at the Monastery of the Risen Christ in San Luis Obispo, CA. For many years he has been involved in retreat ministries as well as ministries of spiritual direction, spiritual formation and evangelization. He holds advanced degrees in theology, Christian spirituality, monastic studies, and pastoral leadership and has made presentations to the World Community of Christian Meditation on the topics of The *Roots of Christian Mysticism*, *The Cosmic Christ*, and Lectio Divina.

For the Steve Coffey presentation, be sure to mark February 28th, 2015 on your calendar so you do not miss this wonderful opportu-

nity. While walk-ins are always welcome we would appreciate receiving the following preregistration form as this will help us plan the hospitality that will be available in the morning and at breaks.

Date: 2/28/2015

Time: Registration/hospitality: 9:00am. Retreat: 9:30am – 3:30pm,

Please bring lunch!!

Place: St, Bartholomew's Episcopal Church 16275 Pomerado Road, Poway, CA 92064

Suggested donation: \$25.00

consd-news@cox.net		
Name:	Phone:	
Email:		
Address:	City:	Zip:

<u>Please make check out to:</u> CONSD (Contemplative Outreach North San Diego). Mail pre-registration form and check to: CONSD 908 via Linda, Escondido, CA 92029

Q and A with Fr. Carl Arico

Q: My difficulty with Centering Prayer is distractions of thoughts spilling over and being unable to get to or sustain a deep place in the prayer. I usually sit down to pray and all is well. Then I read a psalm but a feeling or ache in my head starts before I center and linked thoughts just crowd my mind. It is more like a thinking mediation.

A: You wrote, "my question is that maybe my contemplative life style has had an overabundance of stress and therein lies the difficulty. I know God is in charge. Keating's latest book on Reflections on the Unknowable struck me when he says to let God love you. My husband says the same thing to me." Yes, you have had many deaths in your family in such a short period of time. These are times of sorrow and profound separation. You have been there for your family, now it is time for them to be there for you. Let God love you back for all the love you gave. It is time to receive - your husband is right. How? One of many ways beside the

gift of daily mass is to recommit yourself to prayer, especially Centering Prayer. You mentioned that "My difficulty with Centering Prayer is distractions of thoughts spilling over and being unable to get to or sustain a deep place in the prayer." Let me suggest that your intention for praying the prayer may be misdirected. First of all, it is good that your thoughts are spilling over, which means they are coming out. What is coming up is going out. Centering Prayer is not about no thoughts, but letting go of your thoughts to be able to receive the grace of putting on the mind of Christ. You used the phrase "in order to get to." There is no place to get to, you are already in the presence of God and the Spirit of God is within you. Centering Prayer is a prayer of consent. That is the purpose of the prayer, to practice and celebrate consenting. We are not being called to "get to or sustain a deep place in prayer"; instead we are consenting to God's presence and action within us and around us.

A Congregation Enters the Silence

"As a church we need to engage in basic spiritual practices: prayer, silence, corporate worship, Scripture study, giving, service." Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Last winter, I entered a time of extreme spiritual loneliness. I don't think I could call it anything else. I reached out to friends, colleagues, mentors, but this loneliness was not abated. When I tried to describe it, it was as if I was looking for someone to understand a deep need within me to be understood.

I am not a lonely person. With three kids, an active congregation and a husband who is also a Lutheran pastor, my life is full and usually (Continued on next page)

joyful. But this was different. This was a pain or discomfort at a deeper level. Since pain is a great motivator, I decided to do something about it.

I began by seeking spiritual direction from a local Franciscan retreat center. There I met with a wonderful Spiritual Director. After we sat in silence for a bit, she asked me what was the desire of my heart. The answer came bubbling forth "I want to be in the presence of God!" With that confession, I knew what this discomfort had been all along: a prompting and prodding toward a deeper spiritual connection.

A Congregation Enters the Silence (continued)

subtle changes to my prayer life. I have for call within, the need to sit with the Holy One years had a devotional life, reading the Bible in deeper connection, submission, and union. or spiritual literature, journaling, reviewing my long intercessory prayer list and ending with a few minutes of "meditation". During that time, I would try to sit in silence but my thoughts would still be racing. My director encouraged me to rearrange my devotions, beginning with a brief reading then going immediately to sitting in the presence of God in silence. She also instructed me on how to quiet my mind.

gation brought in an article about Contempla- Centering Prayer congregation. tive Outreach which is "a spiritual network of individuals and small faith communities committed to living the contemplative dimension of the Gospel". I was still in the dark about what this all meant, so I brought this information to my Spiritual Director. She knew much about this organization and encouraged me to find out more. It so happens that we have an active outreach in our area. We contacted the leader To hope for something better in the future is and found that they offered a half-day work- not the theological virtue of hope. Theological shop on Centering Prayer, followed by six hope is based on God alone, who is both infiweeks of once-per-week instruction. We set nitely merciful and infinitely powerful right our half-day workshop for late September.

A group of about 40 met for the workshop, people from my own congregation and those around. We learned the basics of Centering Prayer, its ancient roots in the Christian tradition, how to choose a sacred word, and how to begin to follow this instruction "Be still and know that I am God". Our instructors and attendees were from many different Christian denominations, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Methodist, non- denominational, and Lu- surrender and trust in God?" theran.

The half day workshop gave us the basics, and the six weeks of follow up answered still more

My Director encouraged me to make some questions. For many of us, this answers a deep

At our 2014 Pacifica Synod Assembly, we had the privilege of having Presiding Bishop Eaton as a key speaker. She spoke about her own spiritual practice of sitting in silence for 20 minutes, a miraculous feat for one as busy and active as she. Now all of those who have attended this Centering Prayer workshop have this same commitment, sitting in silence in the presence of God for 20 minutes, once or twice About that same time, a member of my congre- per day. Beginning Nov. 12, we will become a

> ~Pastor Karla Halvorson San Marcos Lutheran Church, San Marcos, CA

A Moment of Reflection

now. Here is a formula to deepen and further the theological virtue of hope with its unbounded confidence in God. Let whatever is happening happen and go on happening. Welcome whatever it is. Let go into the present moment by surrendering to its content ...

The divine energies are rushing past us at every nanosecond of time. Why not reach out and catch them by continuing acts of self-

> ~Thomas Keating, Reflections on the Unknowable

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Hospitality Volunteer Needed



Bea Doblado is the only member of our CONSD Hospitality Service Team and she and she would very much like to have more members to help her provide hospitality at our CONSD events.

Those who join her on the team would assist her with the following tasks:

Hospitality Preparation & Clean Up

Shop for hospitality items
Prepare coffee, tea
Prepare food items (chop fruit, slice bagels, display muffins, etc.)
Place food on the hospitality tables
Replenish food & drink as necessary
Remove and repack leftovers
Empty & clean coffee pots
Wash trays, dishes, & misc. CONSD items
Repack dinnerware & utensils
Leave kitchen clean & tidy

Those joining Bea on the Hospitality Team would not carry out all of these tasks. They would share them with her. Please contact Sue Hagen: to volunteer 760.745.8860 sue.hagen@sbcglobal .net

Prayer Group Facilitator Support and Affirmation Meeting



On January 10th, fourteen Prayer Group Facilitators gathered at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Poway for our first meeting of the new year. After a period of Centering Prayer each Prayer Group Facilitator shared information about the formation material in which

their prayer group was currently engaged. This was also a time to share other prayer group activities as well as any issues within a prayer group that a Prayer Group Facilitator wished to obtain the discerned guidance of the entire group. Then we moved into the following two discussion topics selected for this meetings: "How can Prayer Group Facilitators help prayer group members mature in their understanding of the method of Centering Prayer?" And "How can Prayer Group Facilitators encourage prayer group members to maintain a faithful daily practice of Centering Prayer?"

Following the discussion, we all perused the Chapter's material that our librarian, Diane Langworthy, had laid out for us to review, check out, and bring back to our prayer groups.

St. Gabriel's Centering Prayer Group

The St. Gabriel Centering Prayer group in Poway which meets Friday mornings at 9:30 in classroom C7 was founded by Evie McGreevy over 20 years ago. She guided the group faithfully for many years, sometimes with only 1 or 2 members in attendance. When she stepped down after years of service Elena Andrews became the facilitator and continues to facilitate the group with much appreciated help and support from the multi-talented and committed members.

As would be expected, our membership has evolved over the years as people come and go and a few have passed into eternity including our beloved Evie in 2011. We have supported each other through, illnesses, dark nights, personal struggles and life's ups and downs. Due to our relatively long life we are a "mature" group but welcome new members. Many of us are blessed enough to attend other prayer groups in the area throughout the week.

The centerpiece of our circle, our "altar," includes mementos of our group's history including Evie's Circle of Friends candleholder and her picture; a print of the "Hands of Jesus" is a reminder of another heavenly member, Shirley, an artist who had a dream of making a fountain of the hands of Jesus; a third heavenly member, Carol, contributed a carved wooden monk statuette. There is also an owl feather, a small crucifix from Rwanda, a tiny feather on a cotton ball, 3 little stuffed lambs among other tokens of love given from members through the years.

Our time together starts with fellowship and announcements, we then share any intentions before our Centering Prayer period of 20-25 minutes, followed by faith-sharing, discussion and formation. We have used a number of formation materials including books, movies,

Contemplative Outreach DVDs and Lectio Divina. This month we have pressed one of our members with extensive knowledge of Hildegard of Bingen to teach us more about this fascinating saint. We also have been reflecting on short readings from Henri Nouwen.

Our entry to our period of Centering Prayer is a reflection born from the words of David Frenette and embellished by Elena. It goes more or less like this:

As we prepare to enter our secret room with the intention to consent to waiting in the silence of the presence of the trinity, Father, Son & Spirit living and loving within us we notice the sounds around us. We gently let go of any attraction or aversion to the sounds we may hear. Understanding that the silence of God is always present and always available beyond noise and beyond sound.

We notice our bodies, incarnations of Divine life in this world. We gently let go of any commentaries about any pain or discomfort we may feel and do our best to just let it be.

We notice our thoughts. Resisting no thought, retaining no thought, reacting emotionally to no thought. We let them come and we let them go.

We notice our breath. Breathing in we fill our souls with the spirit of God. Breathing out we release any anxiety or dissatisfaction. All shall be well.

We let go of our desire to change ourselves and consent to the mystery of Divine transformation, letting God change our hearts.

We welcome our sacred word or sacred symbol as a sign of our intention to consent to this time of silence and rest in God. (Continued on next page).

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St. Gabriel's Centering Prayer Group

And let the living God arise in us.

Letting God's sacred word, Christ, arise and live in us, with us, and through us.

We close our time of Centering Prayer with a reading from one of Nan Merrill's Psalms for Praying. This part of psalm 105 is a reflection of the spirit of our group:

O Divine Presence, as we surrender our hearts to You, teach us to be worthy of trust.

O, that what we think and speak might be in accord with our highest aspirations,

That our faces might shine with openness, reflecting integrity and honesty within,

That we would choose to live in peace and harmony, our decisions made in accordance with Love.

Upon the path of trust, O friends, we need not judge ourselves or others,

For, as we reverence all life, the beauty and unity of diversity will be seen.

~Elena Andrews

Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama when asked what surprised him most about humanity, answered:

"Man. Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future and he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived."

Prayer of Silence

In Silence.

To be here before you, Lord that's all.

To close the eyes of my body,

To close the eyes of my soul,

To become still and silent,

To expose myself to you who are here,

exposed to me.

External Presence, I am here before you.

I am willing to feel nothing, Lord,
to see nothing, to hear nothing.

Empty of all ideas, of all images,
in the darkness.

I am here, simply, to meet you without obstacles, in the silence of faith, before you, Lord.

Inner Room

Prayer is the disposition that expresses our relation to God. So the invitation, then, is: if you would like the deeper knowledge of God, if you want to enter into this process that leads to divine union and peace, to the sensitivities of the Fruits of the Spirit, to the dance of contemplative prayer and action, in which God guides you more than your own ego and self-centered programs for happiness, then enter your Inner Room.

~Thomas Keating, The Spiritual Journey Series, part 5

CONSD & COSD Events—2014-2015

CONSD EVENTS – 2015

Full Day Retreat

Presenter: Fr. Stephen Coffey, OSB

Event: Lectio Divina Immersion Experience

Date: February 28, 2015

Time: 9:00am -3:30pm, please bring lunch. Location: St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church

16275 Pomerado Road, Poway Suggested Donation: \$25.00

United in Prayer Day

Date: March 21, 2015 Time: 9:00am -12:30pm

Location: TBA Freewill Offering

Re-Visioning Day Event

Facilitator: Susan Komis Date: May 2, 2015

Time: 9:00am -3:00pm, please bring lunch.

Location: TBA

Half -Day Retreat

Presenter: Chris Hagen

Event: Embracing your False Self

Date: June 20, 2015 Location: TBA Freewill offering

Evening and Day Retreat

Presenter: Edwina Gateley Dates: September 11-12, 2015

Location: TBA

Suggested Donation TBA

Weekend Retreat

Dates: October 16-18, 2015 Location: Prince of Peace Abbey, 650 Benet Hill Road, Oceanside

Cost \$170.00

Please let Sue know if you are coming as space

is limited

Half Day Retreat

Facilitator: Elena Andrews Date: November 21, 2015

Location: TBA Freewill Offering

For information on all CONSD events call Sue

Hagen at (760) 745-8860

COSD EVENTS

For information on COSD Events call Kathy at (619) 749-4141

Have you recently changed your home address, email address, and/or phone number? If you have, please send us the changes so we can keep our database up-to-date. This will help us to continue to inform you about the CONSD newsletters and of upcoming special events. Please call Sue Hagen at 760-745-8860 or email her at consd@cox.net

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CONSD CENTERING PRAYER GROUPS

	Area	Facilitator/s	Telephone	Location	Day & Time
1	Carlsbad	Rev. Madison Shockley	760-729-6311, ext. 207	Pilgrim United Church of Christ, 2020 Chestnut Ave., Carlsbad	Wednesdays 6:30-7:30 pm
2	Del Mar	Kathy Agnew	858-481-8754	St. Peters Episcopal Church, 334 14th St.DelMar	Thursdays 4:30-6:00 pm
3	Encinitas (1)	Shirley Shetula	760-436-6721	1333 Camino Lorado, San Marcos	Mondays 10:30 am
4	Encinitas (2)	Mike & Ann King	760-753-1575	Home of Ann and Mike (Call for directions)	Thursdays 7:00 pm
5	Encinitas (3)	Susan Elmore	760-518-8387	Call for location	First & third Mon. 6:30 pm
6	Escondido	Linda Dollins	760-745-5100	First United Methodist Church, 341 S. Kalmia	Mondays 4:30 pm
7	Fallbrook (1)	Barbara Hudson & Susan Gross	760-645-0726 760-451-0514	St. Peter the Apostle in the Upper Rm. 450 S. Stagecoach Lane	Wednesdays 9:15-10:00 am
8	Fallbrook (2)	Ann Keegan	760-723-0855	(Call for location)	Saturdays 8:30 am
9	Oceanside (1)	Ed Clifford	760-630-1897	Mission San Luis Rey, McKeon Ctr. Room 12	Wednesdays 7:00 pm
10	Oceanside (2)	Mary Williams	760-510-9337	St. Thomas More Catholic Church, 1450 S. Melrose Dr.	Thursdays 1:00 pm
11	Oceanside (3)	Kelly Jo Farnum	760-529-3450	Mission San Luis Rey, 4050 Mission Avenue	Wednesdays 2:00 pm
12	Poway (1)	Elena Andrews	858-451-2098	St. Gabriel Catholic Church, 3734 Twin Peaks Rd.	Fridays 9:30-11:00 am
13	Poway (2)	Colleen Clement- son & Rebecca Crowley	858-748-8548 858-748-3801	Community Church of Po- way, 13501 Community Rd.	Tuesdays 6:30-8:00 pm
14	Poway (3)	Sue & Chris Hagen	760-745-8860	St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church,16375 Pomerado Dr.	Tuesdays 5:00-6:30 pm
15	Poway (4)	Sherlene Moller- stuen	858-451-6825	Lutheran Church of the Incar- nation,16889 Espola Rd.	Mondays 5:00-6:30 pm
16	Ramona	Joan Gansert	760-518-2081	Immaculate Heart of Mary	Thursdays 11:00 am
17	Rancho Bernardo	Audrey Spindler	858-740-9055	San Rafael Parish Center, Rooms A & B	Wednesdays 3:30-5:00 pm
18	Rancho Santa Fe	Dixie Welsh	858-756-1911	Church of the Nativity, 6309 El Apajo, Rancho Santa Fe	Saturdays 9:00 am
19	San Marcos	Pastor Karla Halvorson Jim Ullman	760-727-1509 760-598-8943	San Marcos Lutheran, 3419 Grand Ave., Sanctuary	Wednesdays 9:00am
20	Serra Mesa	Diane Langworthy	619-697-3558	Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community / Gethsemane Lutheran, 2696 Melbourne Dr.San Diego	Tuesdays 7:00-8:30 pm
21	Temecula (1)	Jenny Alcazar	951-696-5657	23479 Canterbury Way, Murri- eta	Second & fourth Wed. 12:30 pm
22	Temecula (2)	Deb Potts	951-265-7502	Temecula United Methodist Church, 42690 Margarita Rd.	4th Monday in April, Aug. Nov. 6:00-7:00 pm