



Consd News

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF NORTH SAN DIEGO



To Sue with grateful hearts



On Christmas morning at 2:50 a.m., with her beloved Chris and children Scott and Karin at her bedside, Sue Hagen left us to continue her transformation in Christ. We now have the pain of separation but also great gratitude for the spiritual influence she has had on our lives. This influence stems from her complete devotion to God and to the practice of Centering Prayer. In fact, many of us can trace our introduction to Centering Prayer, a life-changing moment in our lives, to Sue's leadership.

So how did Sue, herself, come to the prayer. Moved by the events of 9/11, Chris and Sue began attending St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Poway and in a church bulletin saw a notice for a Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop. They attended, learned the practice, and began their deep commitment to centering prayer. From 2002-2005, Chris and Sue served COSD, the San Diego chapter, and for a time were the Coordinators. In 2005, as the demand for more prayer support grew in north county, Chris and Sue became the Co-coordinators for the new chapter, CONSD, and as Sue once put

it "went to work."

Now, after the name "Contemplative Outreach," the parent organization for the chapters, are four defining words: *silence, solitude, solidarity, and service*. All beginning with the letter "s." But for those of us in CONSD, there is another "s." An "S" for Sue, the embodiment of those characteristics.

Silence. Sue's prayer life and its silence modeled for many of us her commitment to the prayer. In the Hagen's prayer group Sue reminded us firmly and often, "20 minutes, twice a day." She told us that she never missed a day without the prayer and that she and Chris have a specific morning and evening time when they practice. In fact, sometimes when she called, she would ask, "am I interrupting your prayer?" Or "have you prayed yet?"

Solitude. Every year the Hagen's went to St. Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado for a 10-day silent retreat. For a while they attended C.O.'s Intensive/Post Intensive retreats and eventually decided to reserve a private hermitage and create their own retreat. Then one year, they each had their own hermitage in order to experience silence and solitude to an even greater degree. Sue also told their Tuesday prayer group after going on a cruise that she and Chris did not enjoy it as much as they did before. The noise, close quarters, and activities were not as inviting as they had been in the past, and she said, "I guess we just enjoy a quieter vacation now."

To Sue with grateful hearts

Solidarity. One of Sue's greatest gifts to all of us has been her devotion to both the chapter and to Contemplative Outreach. Over the years, she and Chris attended all of C.O.'s yearly conferences held throughout the United States, networking and gathering ideas and information to bring back to the chapter. They also took advantage of C.O.'s week-long training for presenters, for Coordinators, as well as the training to become mentors for would be and new Coordinators. They stayed abreast of all the bulletins and resources that C.O. continually offered and updated. They realized the need for stewardship and encouraged us as a chapter and individually to donate to C.O.

Service. The contributions Sue made to each of us, to the chapter, and to C.O. are too many to list. We have all been touched by her directly or indirectly if we have been part of a prayer group, attended a chapter event or the Prince of Peace silent weekend retreat, read the CONSD quarterly Newsletter, looked at the CONSD website, facilitated a prayer group or served on the Servant Leadership Team. She made it a point to attend every Introductory Workshop and every chapter event, even when she was ill. She reminded us that our tasks as a chapter were simply to introduce the prayer to others and to support those who practiced. She worked every day, making her calls around 3, responding to emails, dealing with the bank, responding to the mail—planning and connecting and organizing. She was God's servant, and we were to be servants, too. She felt an urgency to this mission, for she clearly knew how the

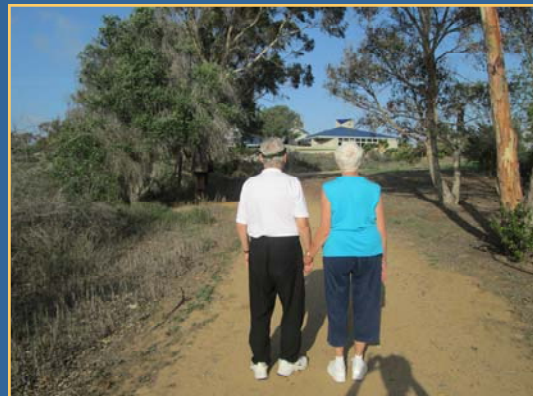
prayer could and would change our lives. We are on the journey to Divine Union, a journey like no other.

But that is the Contemplative Outreach Sue. For many of us there was the familiar Sue calling Chris "sweetheart", holding his hand and always insisting that they sit together. Sue telling every Introductory Workshop group, "This prayer will change your life" and Sue passing out little centering prayer cards at the end. Sue at events, playing Taizé on the piano, greeting us warmly, and reminding us that for today, the men's bathroom would be another women's bathroom. At the Tuesday prayer group meetings, we recall Sue remembering the monks at Snowmass with get well and birthday cards. Or Sue saying with a glow, "I have a surprise for you. Look! A letter from Fr. Thomas." Or Sue straightening something just barely crooked on the little altar. Or finally, Sue blowing out the solitary burning candle at the end of the meeting.

Sue, the candle is extinguished but your light burns bright.



To Sue with grateful hearts



To Sue with grateful hearts



Kathy Agnew

When I think of Sue, I first think about the early days when we were all starting out in Centering. This is when CO was one group, and we would meet in Point Loma for servant leadership meetings. Sue and Chris were at the meetings, but I don't think I even talked to them. Then it was announced that they would coordinate a separate chapter in North County. Susan Siciliano and I stayed on the leadership team and looked to both Sue and Chris for help in organizing the intro programs. I would call with questions and Sue would pick up the phone, I would ask my question and Sue would say, "Kathy-wait a second. Let me get Chris on the other phone." And then the two of them would give me invaluable advice. Later on, I would call with questions having to do with my prayer group, and they would always be available and always give helpful advice. I think Sue's wisdom and love have been at the

source of her advice, and I have appreciated that greatly over the years. I have always felt that when I am practicing the prayer with Sue in the group that my prayer time has been deep. I think this is because Sue's prayer has a great deal of depth. Lovingly, Kathy.

Jenny Alcazar

For me, Sue has been a strong woman, encourager, and faithful leader within our area of the centering prayer practice. When I began, 9 years ago, she was so positive and supportive. For every event she was welcoming. Sue invited me to write the article for our newsletter on the Prince of Peace silent retreat multiple times. Her faith in me to share through my writing has helped me to grow as a contemplative person. We have all been greatly blessed by her faithfulness, her leadership, and her spirit of encouragement. Those qualities are reflected in the many things she has done in her vocation with CONSD. I am grateful to have known Sue. I will carry her within my heart for the rest of my days.

Maureen Anderson

Dear Sue was such a loving, centered person, I know I will miss the balance and focus she gave to all in Centering Prayer. I felt connected to her and to Chris from the first time we met and I know her strong spirit will continue to inspire and guide us as she rests in everlasting life.



To Sue with grateful hearts

Winnie Baumer

I have so much to be grateful for because of you dear Sue. The first COSD workshop you and Chris gave at St. Bart's 16 years ago was my wakeup call. I knew that day I had found what I had been searching for. You held the key to peace, love, joy, and serenity. You and Chris were faithful never missing a meeting in all those years except for your retreats at Snowmass which you always brought back chocolate chip cookies for us from the Monks and a loving message from Fr. Thomas Keating. For 16 years, you came prepared for us to learn something new in Contemplative Prayer. That was over 800 sessions for books and videos study. Thank you! In those first 10 years you went out of your way to accommodate 30+ of us. Every Tuesday, 5:00pm for those coming straight from work and 6:30pm for those with families. That meant that you and Chris put off your own dinner until after 8:30 or 9:00. Thank you! And then you both took on CONSD. With only 200 members, but through hard work and many, many workshops and retreats brought the total to over 800 enthusiastic Centering Prayer members. Thank you for being such a loving and caring Mother Hen. I am eternally grateful for all you and your dear soul mate did for us. May you rest in peace. I have so much to be grateful for because of you dear Sue.

Nancy Bob

I really appreciate Sue's leadership qualities. I have been fortunate to attend many workshops/retreats she chaired, and she has a calm, quiet, unrushed demeanor. However, as a participant, I would realize after that her workshops were always focused and on schedule. These contrasting qualities are ones I and many others appreciate.

Gail Carr

To be in the home of Sue and Chris Hagen at Servant Leadership meetings of CONSD was to be in the Presence of God. Sue's faith and her response to God's calling in her life were an inspiration to all fortunate enough work alongside. Sue reflected in her very being God's abiding love for all his children.

Marilyn Clements

I first met Chris and Sue and the introductory workshop held at St. Bart's many years ago. Like everything they do, the presentation was flawless, and they taught me how to begin my first step to years of silence with my God. I will always be grateful for their introduction of Centering Prayer and to the idea of silence in my home and in the group setting. We are told to look for the Christ in everyone we meet. As I have gotten to know Sue better, Christ shines in her eyes and you don't have to look for it. I understand what Jesus said when he told us we had to become like the children. Her enthusiasm and love is childlike. I would love to watch her tell about their next trip to Snowmass. It was like a child telling about going to Disneyland! She just shines with her love and enthusiasm for Centering Prayer and it is a beautiful thing. She is a fine example for all of us. She has certainly finished her journey of learning how to be a Christian and how to love all. I will miss Sue as she passes on to be with Christ. I know He is waiting with open arms and is holding her right now helping her to transition to the life for which we all long. I know God will say to her, "Well done my good and faithful servant. Thank you, Sue, for your gift of love."

To Sue with grateful hearts

Colleen Clementson

I met Sue when I was involved with COSD, many years ago. I was at a meeting at the church in Point Loma that was the office and library of Contemplative Outreach of San Diego. The chapter was growing rapidly, and it was discussed and decided that we would start a new chapter in North County. Sue and Chris were fairly new to Centering Prayer and the chapter, but they were so enthusiastic about this wonderful gift! We had a time of prayer and Sue was so relaxed during prayer time, she fell out of the chair! Of course, it scared me that she was having a medical emergency, but she assured us, (and Chris) that she was OK. As we went forward with the meeting, she and Chris responded to the call to become the co-leaders of the new chapter that we were forming. Throughout the years, Sue continues to amaze me with her commitment to leading the group. She has always shown respect and unconditional love to those around her. I also have observed the special connection she has with Chris. Not only the support they have given to each other through leadership of the group, but also in times of ill health. There is a loving gaze that is present in both of their eyes, that brings peace to those who are present. I am so grateful that this wonderful woman has been a part of my faith journey. She is a model of how to show God's love to others through action, support, and silent prayer. Thank you, Sue, and bless you always!

Nancy Datte

I wish to share my love and gratitude to Sue for her introduction to Centering Prayer for me. When I read Chris' Dec. 11th Caring Bridge message in which he shared her favorite psalm passage from Nan Merrill's book (Psalm 119), I could just hear Sue reading this

as she did so many times just before going into the prayer. I have such appreciation for all she has done to make this practice available and meaningful for me and all who have learned from her. Sue, you have been a beautiful example for many.

John Dentone

Since I've known you, Sue, you have exemplified a strong woman and a person of deep-seated faith. You have set an example to me of projecting your faith even during this struggle with cancer. You seem at peace with Chris and your faith. I'm blessed to have known you, and to share centering prayer and an occasional 5pm Saturday night service with you and Chris at St. Bart's. I know that the God we believe in, will welcome you into Heaven with open arms. God Bless you Sue.

Linda Dollins

I met Sue Hagen at the San Dieguito Methodist Church thirteen years ago at my second Introductory Workshop. Sue and Chris were the presenters. Sue's confidence, assurance, and inspirational teaching of the prayer at that workshop opened my mind and my heart. Later, I joined the Intro Workshop team. Sue's involvement in the Intro's was perfectly pitched—she assisted in weak areas but otherwise didn't interfere. And she came to every single workshop. After Chris's retirement, I became her co-coordinator. It must have been difficult, but she made it work—even during her cancer treatments. When the chemo sapped her enormous vitality, she would ask, when I came over, "do you mind if I lie down on the sofa?" And then we would discuss chapter business. Sue taught me to pray, to be more focused, to act more and to talk less, to honor the work of the chapter—supporting Centering Prayer—and most of all to pray, every day.

To Sue with grateful hearts

Parth Domke

Sue Hagen has been an indomitable force behind the growth of Centering Prayer in our northern San Diego locale for many years. She and her loving husband, Chris, started our CP group in St. Bart's Episcopal Church sixteen or so years ago, and not only remained its facilitators, but the result of their efforts to spread the Prayer led directly to the formation of CONSD. I entered into their prayer group in the second year of its formation. Sue Hagen lives and breathes Centering Prayer. Her innate organizing talents were galvanized with the passion of the Prayer and the resultant combustion has rewarded countless practitioners of the prayer; from the people in her prayer group to the church she has attended to the chapter she helped found within the Contemplative Outreach community of which she has been an integral member. Her loving service flows through all of these spiritual and sacred places. Her life has lit the inner lives of so many — and many of whom she may be unawares — through her consistently passionate service to Centering Prayer. If there were ever a missionary for Centering Prayer, it would be in the person and heart of Sue Hagen. Sue would often call me to ask for some type of service — whether it be writing an article or taking notes or representing Centering Prayer at a church or a CONSD event — with words spoken with a directness that seemed more statement than request. I love this about Sue! Her single-minded and heartfelt organizing of actions that support the nurturing and the spreading of the Prayer were executed in such a way that it seemed she could not imagine how one would not want to be part of this process! Be part of this process! he simply loves Centering Prayer. And it is especially in these latter years, when Sue had her health struggles, that we could so

clearly see the beneficial effect of the Prayer in her life. She grew in peace and acceptance, even as she took necessary actions to bolster her health. She asked for our prayers, welcomed them, and thanked us for them. She told us of God's presence with her along her way, along her particular journey of faith, with Chris so faithfully at her side. Sue has modeled the love of Centering Prayer and the practice of it at home, at church, at retreats, and I am certain, in all of the relationships and locales that have been graced with her presence. I am so eternally grateful for this beautiful woman who has mothered me in ways unknown to her, and yet for which I now tell her from the depths of my heart, "thank you, Sue, I love you, and God continue to bless you always."



To Sue with grateful hearts

Susan Elmore

Sue, Thank you for sharing your musical ability with us. Your piano playing made the beginning of our gatherings inspirational and joyful.

Pastor Karla Halvorson

We offer prayers for divine peace for Sue and her family. May she experience the profound peace of God. Her consistent work with CONSD has given us so many gifts. She is a true servant of God, the most blessed vocation imaginable.

Barbara Hudson

In gratitude for the gift Sue was to me personally for bringing Fr. Thomas' Wisdom out of his books to life for me. She will always be in my heart here on earth and beyond. Not gone just gone on ahead.

Pat Julian

Dear Sue, my memory of her is the warm welcome she gave me the first time I met her at one of our Contemplative mornings at St Barnabas. She stopped what she was doing and went to make sure I saw Chris who was busy with the tech set-up. Doesn't that sound just like her? She is in my prayers.

Ann and Mike King

We first met Sue and Chris about 35 years ago when our children were in high school in Encinitas. We reconnected about 18 years ago through Contemplative Outreach and Centering Prayer. We have been blessed by that connection and their leadership in the Spiritual journey we share in Centering Prayer. In special tribute to Sue, we so admire her qualities of kindness, Spiritual growth example, and steadfast commitment to a Contemplative

Prayer life, and to leadership in Contemplative Outreach. Many lives have been blessed by the light of her loving presence with us on our Spiritual path.

Susan Komis

There are not enough words to express my gratitude for the loving service that Sue has so graciously rendered to the San Diego (north county) Chapter of Contemplative Outreach. Sue and her devoted husband, Chris, saw the need and opportunity to share their commitment and love for Centering Prayer with others in their "neck of the woods." With open hearts and minds, they formed a contemplative community and opened the door to those who came providing support, enrichment and spiritual growth for many. Having personally visited many chapters over the years, I was inspired by the level of service that I observed of Sue and Chris when visiting San Diego. They truly exemplified an extraordinary level of servant leadership. Sue was always gracious, loving and excited about the next Chapter event! I know that Fr. Thomas Keating appreciated their service to Contemplative Outreach and always welcomed them to St. Benedict's Monastery. I think of Sue when I recall the statement made by Thomas Merton following his "enlightenment" moment amidst the busyness of people coming and going on the corner of 5th & Walnut Streets in Louisville, Kentucky"how can we tell them that they are shining like the sun?" Your presence has certainly been a "shining light" to many over the years.

Psalm 103

¹ Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

To Sue with grateful hearts

Diane Langworthy

Here is my tribute to Sue. Sue was a dear friend, whom I will deeply miss. Our friendship developed around our mutual commitment to the prayer and calling to share it with others. We first met and worked together on the Servant Leadership Team in San Diego, and then for many years with the new chapter in North County. I treasure the memory of our many phone calls, where the focus of conversation included not only chapter concerns, but the sharing of our intimate spiritual journeys, family life, and work concerns, encouraging and supporting one another. Sue's frequent promise, regarding any matter was "I'll be praying for you. Let me know how it goes. Promise you will call me." This was always in response to what ever matter I had confided in her. I also treasure the memory of the Servant Leadership Team being gathered for the prayer, prior to the actual meeting, in her family room. Sue began the prayer every time with this part of Psalm 119. "I give myself into your hands, that I may live fully into your Word. Open my heart's eye, that I may see the wondrous blessings of creation. I am a sojourner on earth; may I know myself as a spiritual being! My soul is consumed with an intense longing, to be blessed and sustained by you, O Divine Lover". I loved to hear parts of her private conversations with Thomas Keating and Abbot Boyle, sharing their insights and wisdom. She was so excited to meet the many speakers, whom the chapter brought to San Diego for retreats and workshops. "Just think" she said about Edwina Gately, (and her book, *In God's Womb*). "The whole world lives in God's Womb!" Sue's beautiful blue eyes sparkled, and she sparkled with the prayer. Frequently she said "I just love talking about the prayer." Sue was dedicated to the prayer, and the prayer

lived in and through her. The joy of Sue's presence is with us always, as the memory of her beckons us to be consumed with an intense longing for the Divine Lover, found, revealed, and sustained in silence. Thank you, Sue, for such love and faithfulness!



Kathy Mullen Mendoza

Sue Hagen's name was introduced to me by Pat Johnson at Snowmass when I was on retreat. I asked Pat how I could become more active in Centering Prayer. She suggested that, because Sue had become ill, I might be of service. Upon return to Encinitas, I called Sue, and she welcomed me with an invitation to a planning meeting at the Hagen home in Escondido. There we met in person for the first time. Impressed with her direct acceptance of me and my wish to be of service, I continued meeting and taking on new little acts of service. Thus, my prayer was answered by her LOVE of Christ and willingness to serve and lead. Gratitude and love are her legacy in my heart. Through her acceptance and fine leadership, my centering world has expanded with new friends, deep shared prayer experiences, new challenges and fun, too. Thank you, Sue. You are missed. I see you standing close to Jesus with your head on his shoulder and his arm wrapped around you. "Been waiting for you, my friend." With love, Kathy

To Sue with grateful hearts

Leslie Ricketts

My main early memory of Sue was her calling me back after I first moved here in 2012 and had questions about local prayer groups. She gave me an honest description about several prayer groups and suggested one that she thought would welcome a new member close to where I was living. I've been attending Linda Dollins' prayer group ever since. Thank you, Sue.

Audrey Spindler

Sue Hagen has earned the "well done good and faithful servant" commendation not only by her years of service in health, but also those during her recent illness. I enjoyed hearing Sue play the Taizé chants on the piano very much as one of the other "little additions" to all the other major things she did for Contemplative Outreach.

Jim Ullman

My impression of Sue is of a gracious lady who exhibits cheerfulness, friendliness, and a deep faith. If I ever have to walk the journey she is walking now, I hope, I can do it with as much grace and courage as she is doing it.

Janet Williams

Sue has been a great role model for me. She has shown great leadership, humility and the warmth of love she gives. She is very generous and inspires us to continue to develop our path with God.

Mary Williams

I met Sue Hagen just as the CONSD chapter emerged in the first decade of the 2000s. The opening of a new chapter was a blessing to the growing San Diego region, and—as revealed through their years of tireless service—we



were doubly blessed that Sue and Chris Hagen accepted a call to leadership as CONSD co-coordinators. Sue embodied a delighted and enthusiastic dedication to the Christian contemplative path. As she would often mention at CONSD events, "Call me anytime if you want to talk about centering prayer and Contemplative Outreach – I love to do that, and I never get tired of it." And she meant that! Whenever I called the CONSD number, it was invariably her sunny voice that greeted me, eager to listen and respond. I will always relish how hospitably she would introduce and thank guest speakers at CONSD events—radiating a happy anticipation of and gratitude for their wisdom and service. And I can only guess at all the hidden work that Sue did—the behind-the-scenes organization and tasks that she tackled with her gifts of administrative service. I cannot thank you enough, Sue, for all that you did for our chapter in its early years. Bless you for your steadfast presence and stouthearted guidance. May you rest in peace, and may the spirit of your joyful commitment to contemplative living continue on through us who remain on this side of the veil.

To Sue with grateful hearts



Let Your God Love You

Be silent.
Be still.
Alone. Empty.
Before your God.
Say nothing.
Ask nothing.
Be still.
Let your God
Look upon you.
That is all.
God knows

And understands.
God loves you with
An enormous love,
Wanting only to
Look upon you
With love.
Quiet. Still. Be.
Let Your God
Love You.

~Edwina Gately

Psalm 119

I give myself into your
Hands that I may live fully
into your Word. Open my
heart's eyes, that I may see
the wondrous blessings of
creation. I am a sojourner
on earth; may I know my-
self also as a spiritual be-
ing! My soul is consumed
with an intense Longing to
be blessed and sustained by
You, O Divine Lover!

~Nan Merrill

