

# Consd News

THE NEWSLETTER OF CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF NORTH SAN DIEGO  
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## Contemplative Outreach International Conference 2019

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This year's conference, "Contemplative Outreach: Evolution, Transformation, Service," was held at the Denver Airport Marriott at Gateway Park on September 19-22.

How is Contemplative Outreach (CO) doing now? Based on the 125 participants attending the 19th CO Conference, CO is prospering and reaching more people.

Representatives from Canada, Iceland, Ireland, Poland, Korea, and South America joined people from throughout the United States in Denver, Colorado, to discuss and discern where CO is going and how it is transforming into a more organic organization that relies on collaboration for decision making.

Thursday's opening included introduction of the Governing Board members, the paid staff, and the many volunteers who head up the many Service Teams. An overall summary of the 2017 CO conference was distributed. This event concluded with a remembrance honoring the departed CO volunteers of 2017-2019, including our own Sue Hagen, and of course, Fr. Thomas Keating.

Due to the restructure of the leadership model, the central office in Butler, New Jersey, will close permanently in Dec. 2019. CO staff will work from their homes, meeting primarily electronically and occasionally in person. There will still be a phone number to call. However, most information will be on the CO website, [contemplativeoutreach.org](http://contemplativeoutreach.org).

Much of the CO material has been digitalized and is available for free online and on YouTube. Many homebound people and those living in areas without a CO presence are using the online Meditation Chapel.

Friday roundtable discussions featured a Governing Board member and a Service Team leader acting as facilitator at each of 12 tables. The groups of 8-10 that formed Friday morning stayed together until the general session Saturday afternoon.

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## Contemplative Outreach International Conference 2019



Roundtable discussions were preceded by an overview of the process for table discussions based on the Guidelines for Sharing in Small Prayer Groups.

Table topics included:

- ◆ The Roots of Contemplative Outreach as an Evolving Community.
- ◆ Introduction to a Guide for Redesigning Organizations.
- ◆ The Future of Contemplative Outreach as an Evolving Community.
- ◆ CO Resources and Programs.

Dr. Christine O'Brien Travers presented Vestibule Practices to help integrate the mind-body connection during most of the sessions.

Dr. Travers also presented a keynote address on "Contemplative Neuroscience: Contemplative Practices are Well-Being Skills that Re-wire and Reintegrate the Body, Mind and Spirit." She sent copies of her slides to the attendees. She works with Veterans to help them

recover from PTSD. Mindfulness practices such as Centering Prayer help reduce stress in the body.

Saturday afternoon had three breakout sessions. Attendees could attend two of the three:

- 1) The Sacramentality of Technology – The new CO website and other electronic resources.
- 2) 12th Principle of the CO Vision: Deepening our Solidarity with the Marginalized / Oneness with All of Creation – There are many 12-Step programs that use CP.
- 4) Creative Ways to Offer the Gift of Centering Prayer.

The Governing Board (GB) was introduced. The GB is trying to make CO less corporate (top-down directives) and into a more collaborative model. For example, the process of "How to Become a Commissioned Presenter" has been simplified. Chapter Coordinators and Service Team leaders should read "The Voice" and review the CO website regularly to find

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## Contemplative Outreach International Conference 2019

updates in the “Planning Guidelines for Hosting the Presenter Formation for Centering Prayer” and other updates. There will be a CO Conference in 2021. Marie Howard will not be the conference coordinator after coordinating these first 19 conferences. She is stepping down, “This time for sure,” she said.

The evening banquet included a lovely program by the ladies from Iceland. It included an Icelandic version of Ave Maria.

Sunday’s closing session was on Centering Prayer and Monastic Lectio Divina.

About a quarter of the participants had never been to a CO conference before. A few had been to all 19 conferences. There were periods of Centering Prayer throughout the conference. The energy seemed very upbeat, looking forward to the transforming energy of Centering Prayer.

~Joan Thompson

### Intimacy with God

The divine energy is most powerful when it is least perceived by our faculties. When we sit down to do Centering Prayer and form our intention, we know the divine presence is already there. We do not create it. All we have to do is consent. The divine energy flows into us and through us. In its purest form it is available twenty-four hours a day at maximum strength. By consenting we open to God as God is without trying to figure who or what God is. We consent to the divine presence without depending on a medium to express it, translate it or interpret it in terms of our personal history, cultural conditioning and temperamental bias. God communicates himself on only one condition. Our consent.

### 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 V.*

## Prince of Peace Abbey Retreat 2019



On October 18, twenty-eight contemplatives met at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside for the annual three-day silent retreat. I felt the absence of Chris and Sue Hagen, but Mary Williams and Linda Dollins carried the torch admirably.

Not long ago, conflicted about all the different forms of prayer I was encountering, I got a message from the Spirit: “Pray them all.” So, on this retreat “Pray them all” was my mantra. In spite of my discomfort trying to follow the service, I attended Lauds at 7am on Saturday. A glorious treat at Lauds comes through the eastern stained glass. OMG! You don’t get to appreciate that beauty at Compline! I realized that I will need a coach to help me through the book if I am ever to follow the monks. Again, I put down the big black book and just enjoyed the resonance of the chant, the Jesus mural, and the morning light through the windows. This Episcopalian remembered how alienated visitors can be by our books and bulletins and rigmarole. Still, I left uplifted to start the day.

Big, whopping Centering Prayer sessions are my favorite. Why does prayer “work” so much better in a big group? God knows.

I like Lectio Divina, but lately I have slacked off on the practice. So, I made sure to attend both Lectio sessions, even though the same passage was used for both. The restful “no writing, no sharing” method Linda introduced was perfect for introverts on a silent retreat. All we did was listen for an attractive word or phrase as she read the passage (4 times) and let that phrase resonate in us through the Spirit. I can’t speak for everyone, but I got a loving and reassuring message during the first session followed by a deeper twist in the second. Thanks, God.

At high noon, I walked the Stations of the Cross Prayer Walk. One year, this walk gave me a big epiphany about Jesus being right with me in my feelings of rejection. After all, that whole crucifixion thing was one big rejection of him and all he tried to teach. Does Christ understand my pain of rejection? You bet. All of a sudden the stations made sense to me. Today, though, I walked the circuit briskly for exercise. When I returned to my room after trying out each prayer, I recorded my reaction and reflection in the journal I brought with me. This time, filled with gratitude for the opportunity to come again to Prince of Peace, to have silence, and to be alone with God, I wrote a gratitude list. I made sure to be grateful for a bunch of bad stuff that has been happening lately as well as the good. As the Lectio said, his thoughts are higher than my thoughts, and maybe he can see how the bad stuff is really good in the long run. With the good stuff I made sure to list the weather, my co-retreatants, the bunnies, the butterflies, and the peanut-butter cookies (which you missed if you didn’t stay for Sunday lunch). I hope to see you all again next year.

~Pam Bowen



## The Journey to Co-Coordinator



This past July, I became a new co-coordinator of CONSD, serving alongside our gifted and gracious Linda Dollins. To introduce myself, I'll share a bit about my journey and how the Spirit drew me to Centering Prayer and contemplative practices.

As a child, I attended Notre Dame de Sion in Kansas City, a Catholic girls' school known for its academic rigor and interfaith inclusion. Many of my classmates were from Protestant, Jewish, or agnostic backgrounds, and though my family was Catholic, we occasionally attended AME (African Methodist Episcopal) and Baptist churches. My parents encouraged me to explore, inquire, and reflect. I also credit my grade-school classes on the Hebrew prophets and my high-school world religion and philosophy courses for fostering, early on, my spiritual curiosity and ecumenical leanings.

As a young adult, however, I grew increasingly embittered with institutional Christianity as I witnessed the hypocrisy and duplicity of various church authorities. There were several high-profile scandals involving televangelists in the late 1970s and into the 1980s, when I

was attending college. I was also learning more about the historical atrocities and horrors committed in the name of Christianity. I abandoned my inherited tradition and saw myself as agnostic—or religiously indifferent. Las Vegas's Little White Chapel, where Kirk and I got married, was the closest I came to stepping foot in a church for nearly 20 years.

At one point in my early thirties, I was close to completing an MFA degree in creative writing at San Diego State, working at a painfully slow pace on a collection of poems and short stories for my thesis. I was also teaching college English, but after the fading of my initial enthusiasm for this path, my work felt exhausting and uninspired. Moderately depressed, I anesthetized myself with sleep, food, and television. My life had drifted into a fog, and I was hungry for a sustenance I could not name.

Then there was this unexpected internal shift.

I awoke one fitful night, groaning, from a vivid nightmare—images of people trying to outrun some kind of impending world-wide doom. It lingered with me for days as an emotional after-image. As disturbing as it was, the dream also seemed tinged with the *numinous* – uncanny, but also *holy*. Pondering possible interpretations lifted me out of my funk. I eventually came to see the dream as a kind of existential “slap,” a wake-up call proclaiming: *Things can just end at any moment, you know— with little or no warning. If you are to find meaning in life, NOW is the time to seek it. Tomorrow is not a guarantee.*

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## The Journey to Co-Coordinator

So I began, in earnest, to seek. Recalling the religion and philosophy classes of my childhood, I perused books on world religions, spiritual practices, and Jungian psychology. After reading Lawrence LeShan's *How to Meditate*, I began a daily breath-counting meditative practice. In a used bookstore I found a copy of Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*, which invited me to explore Christianity with new—and astonished—eyes. I was also struck by a particular passage in Thich Nhat Hanh's *Living Buddha, Living Christ*: "We need roots to be able to stand straight and grow strong. When young people come to Plum Village, I always encourage them to practice in a way that will help them go back to their own tradition and get rerooted. If they succeed at becoming reintegrated, they will be an important instrument in transforming and renewing their tradition.... We must encourage others, especially young people, to go back to their traditions and rediscover the jewels that are there."

On a visit to New Orleans in the mid-1990s, I stepped into a church for the first time in 20 years. I remember it clearly: a noontime mass during the heat of July, and though I had forgotten my girlhood Catholic training, when to say amen or thanks be to God, I found myself suddenly flooded with emotion in the middle of the opening hymn, "Amazing Grace." A gate opened within as dry spaces in my heart opened up to receive a mysterious *flow* that poured inward with waterfall force. I sensed an unbounded vastness that was also—somehow—intimate, tender, and cradling; and this, I intuited, was Love, flowing from a Source beyond my small self, nourishing me and welcoming me home after a long time away.

Returning to the San Diego area, I knew it was time to heed Thich Nhat Hanh's advice—as well as the call of my *metanoia* moment in New Orleans. Somewhat stumblingly, I searched around for a church community and eventually found one near my home at the (now defunct) storefront chapel, St. Jude Thaddeus. It was a bit of an unusual church, very welcoming to people who questioned aspects of Christianity as an institution. One Sunday in 1999, my friend and fellow congregant Karen H brought in some fliers about an upcoming Centering Prayer workshop at the San Dieguito United Methodist Church. She had recently lent me Basil Pennington's book on Centering Prayer, and we were delighted to learn that there was a local organization teaching people this spiritual practice. We both attended the workshop and six follow-up sessions facilitated by Rev. Harry Starbuck.

Learning Centering Prayer and reading the works of Thomas Keating, Richard Rohr, Cynthia Bourgeault, and others, I soon knew that I had found the path that had been calling to me through my years of spiritual seeking and experimentation. God/Christ ceased to be a mental construct, a theory about a distant and omnipotent being, and instead *flowed* as a living and dynamic Presence, the source of life and heart of compassion, connecting all that is. I was also grateful to see that Keating and other contemplative guides valued the wisdom of other sacred paths, engaging in interreligious dialogue and teaching this prayer as a practice that transcends denominational differences and institutional limitations.

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## The Journey to Co-Coordinator

The wide-hearted spirit of Centering Prayer, along with Thich Nhat Hanh's suggestion to return to one's inherited tradition to serve in its renewal, gently spurred me to rejoin the Catholic Church in 2001. Since then, this contemplative journey has been a great transformative adventure—with its challenges and blessings, its bouts of dryness and its luminous consolations—and I am ever grateful for all of it. (I now prefer silent retreats to vacations!) Over the years, I have experienced the deep joy of praying, learning, communing and serving with the CONSD servant-leadership team and local contemplative community—leading weekly prayer groups at Christ the King in San Diego and St. Thomas More in Oceanside, becoming a commissioned facilitator and presenter of the Centering Prayer method, writing

articles for the CONSD newsletter, and hosting brief retreats.

And now in 2019, I step into this new role of CONSD co-coordinator with a bit of trepidation in these troubling times—but also with a deepening gratitude. Through our silence, solidarity, and service in Christ, I trust that the Spirit will guide us. I look forward to our work together as we continue to share Centering Prayer and the contemplative vision with all who come our way. As Cynthia Bourgeault asserts, “The energetics of willing hearts knows no boundaries.” Thank you for your prayers, your support, and your delightful friendship.

~Mary Williams

## Trusting God as Divine Ground and Source

What would we dare to be, or do, if we believed God was inspiring, sustaining, and energizing us? “The love of God is so powerful that no one can just sit on it. It is bound to express itself. We have to think not just of praying together but how we can reach out and support each other in helping those in prison, the homeless, the hungry, the oppressed, everyone in need. Above all, direct attention to the most unbearable problem in the world today, which is the destitution of the poor...”

~Thomas Keating, *The Better Part*

## Fuel for Contemplative Service

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” Philippians 4:13

“It's no longer I who lives, but Christ that lives in me.” Galatians 2:20

## Q & A with Fr. Carl Arico

**Q:** When I practice contemplative prayer, I fall asleep. How can I remedy this?

**A:** Your question prompted me to go to the New Oxford American Dictionary: Sleep: "A condition of the body and mind such as that which typically recurs for several hours every night in which the nervous system is relatively inactive, the eyes closed, the postural muscles relax and consciousness practically suspended." Rest: "Ceasing work or movement in order to relax, refresh oneself or recover strength." The usual suggestions for avoiding sleep during prayer are finding a time when you are more awake; be comfortable but not so comfortable that you are prone to fall asleep; and surrender to God's redeeming work as you rest in the Lord, and not be concerned about how you are doing. I would also suggest that you begin your prayer time with a definite and clear intention of restating the purpose of Centering Prayer - to consent to God's presence and action within and outside of you. If you fall asleep, then when you awaken, just renew your intention and continue with whatever time remains for that particular prayer period. Concerning sleep and rest - allow the Lord to choose what you are blessed with at that time. Your gift to the Lord is consenting and noticing the fruits of the prayer outside the prayer

time.

**Q:** What is the difference between Buddhist insight meditation and Centering Prayer? I am really confused as to which path.

**A:** I am not qualified to speak about Insight Meditation. Concerning Centering Prayer, it is both a relationship and a discipline - a relationship which has as its source the indwelling Trinity, Father Son and Holy Spirit. The focus of Centering Prayer is the deepening of our relationship with the living Christ. It builds communities of faith and bonds the members together in mutual friendship and love. The heart and soul of Centering Prayer is consenting to the presence and action of God in our lives. The discipline is the four guidelines. The intention is relational on all levels. There are of course external similarities with other meditations, but the intention is key. When I present retreats, I sometimes say to people concerning the variety of meditations - they are like dancers on the dance floor - they may look the same but it is your intention and who is in your arms that make all the difference.

~ Fr. Carl Arico

### Prayer

**F**or me, prayer is a time of total vulnerability and utter surrender. These qualities make this endeavor seem a little scary. But it offers me a place to go where I find my connection to a strength that is humble, gentle, and yielding. In this place I can sense that I am slowly changing, becoming more and more open, like the gentle Spirit.

~Margaret L. Fleming



## Otay Mesa Prison Ministry



detainees include gang members, DUI arrests, and asylum seekers.

Elena said that the Center is oppressive though clean. The cells, several stories high, surround a communal open area and have no windows. Detainees are given twenty minutes to eat and allowed four hours of recreation. Soccer is popular. The orientation group was given instructions about how to

For fifteen years Pauline Ripple of COSD has served as San Diego's lone prison minister at the Otay Mesa Detention Center. She has advertised for assistance at our chapter events, and last summer Elena Andrews of CONSD responded. But Elena was hoping to find a partner for support, and at our Chapter Planning and Discernment Day in July, both Riti Di Angeli and Joan Thompson said they would join Elena in the training. Because of a small problem with Joan's paperwork, though, she will start the certification process later.

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, Riti and Elena joined a group of twenty-four other volunteers representing many faith expressions at an orientation for visitors. Twelve of the volunteers were new, and twelve were re-certifying. The Otay Mesa Detention Center is near the United States Mexico border and at the far east edge of Otay Mesa. It has almost 1,600 beds and the

behave with detainees and an emphasis was made on the importance of not touching or responding to any detainee request. There is a chapel in the Center, but the small group ministry that Elena and Riti will offer will take place in the large open area between the cells. Riti is a native Spanish speaker, and she and Elena hope to work as a team so that both English and Spanish will be used in their group. Pauline Ripple has continued to be very supportive during the orientation process and has accompanied Riti, Elena, and Pilar Clark from San Diego to the Center. She is also working with the volunteer group to show them how she works with the detainees which includes using Lectio and praying for 10 minutes. If you are interested in prison ministry or would just like more information, please contact Elena Andrews: [eabandrews@gmail.com](mailto:eabandrews@gmail.com)

~Linda Dollins

# *CONSD Half Day Retreat*

## CENTERING PRAYER: OUR RESPONSE TO DIFFICULT TIMES



*"God seeks himself in us...we exist solely for this:  
to be the place God has chosen for His presence,  
His manifestation in the world."*

*-Thomas Merton*

*Break Through to Joy*

*Saturday, November 9, 2019*

*9:00 am Hospitality and Gathering*

*9:30 - 12:30 Retreat*

*This retreat led by Elena Andrews  
will include periods of centering  
prayer, chanting with Avril Bland,  
periods of reflection and a slide  
show by Chris Hagen*

*Free will offering*

*St. Bartholomew Episcopal Church 16275 Pomerado Road  
Poway 92064*

## CONSD & COSD Events 2019-2020

### CONSD EVENTS 2019

#### Course

Spiritual Journey Series "The Human Condition:"

**Presenter:** Patti Smith

**Time:** 10:00am—12:00pm

**Dates:** October 16—November 29

**Registration:** Closed

#### Half Day Retreat

"Centering Prayer: Our Response to Difficult Times"

**Presenter:** Elena Andrews

**Date:** November 9, 2019

**Time:** 9:00—9:30am hospitality, 9:30am—12:30pm retreat

**Location:** St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16275 Pomerado Road, Poway

**Cost:** Free Will Offering

### CONSD EVENTS

*For information on all CONSD events call Linda Dollins at (760) 743-829 or Mary Williams 760-822-3916*

### COSD EVENTS 2019

#### Full Day Retreat

"At the Heart of the World with Thomas Keating"

**Presenter:** Fr. Stephen Coffey

**Date:** November 16, 2019

**Location:** St. David's Episcopal Church, 5050 Milton St, San Diego, CA 92110

**Suggested donation:** \$20.00

Please bring your lunch

**RSVP:** kathystone0904@gmail.com or

COSD: 619-955-0962

### COSD EVENTS

*For information on all COSD events, see the COSD website, [www.contemplativeoutreachsd.org/workshops-and-retreats/](http://www.contemplativeoutreachsd.org/workshops-and-retreats/)*

#### Video by Chris Hagen

There is a video from the workshop, "**Putting On The Mind Of Christ. How Centering Prayer Changes the Brain**" by Chris Hagen. For the link: click [here](#). For instructions on how to use the YouTube controls: click [here](#).

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**Website:** [www.consd.com](http://www.consd.com).

**Editor:** Linda Dollins ([dollinslinda@hotmail.com](mailto:dollinslinda@hotmail.com)).

**Telephone:** (760)-743-8297 for Linda Dollins.

**Cell/Text:** 760-695-2028

**Post:** CONSD, 644 Hibiscus Glen, Escondido, California 92025. Postmaster: please send address corrections to the address above.

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## CONSD CENTERING PRAYER GROUPS

	Area	Facilitators	Telephone	Location	Day & Time
1	Carlsbad (1)	Rev. Madison Shockley	760-729-6311 ext.207	Pilgrim United Church of Christ, 2020 Chestnut Ave. Carlsbad	Wednesdays 6:30-7:30pm
2	Del Mar (1)	Barbara Hamilton	480-236-7319	St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 334 14 <sup>th</sup> St.	Thursdays 4:30-5:45pm
3	Del Mar (2)	Kathy Agnew, Nichola Riggle	858 481-8754 760-448-5224	St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 334 14 <sup>th</sup> St.	Tuesdays 8:55-10:00am
4	Encinitas (1)	Shirley Shetula	760-525-6721	(Call for location)	Mondays 10:00am
5	Encinitas (2)	Virginia Erickson	760-846-5749	Beth Lutheran, 925 Balour Dr., Multipurpose Rm., Encinitas	Mondays 4:30-6:00pm
6	Encinitas (3)	Lynne McKiernan	619-665-6344	San Dieguito United Methodist Church, Encinitas	Mondays 1:30pm
7	Escondido	Linda Dollins	760-745-5100	First United Methodist Church, 341 S. Kalmia	Mondays 4:30pm
8	Fallbrook	Barbara Hudson	760-645-0726	(Call for location)	Saturdays 8:30am
9	Murieta	DeeDee Warden	951-265-8557	42753 Settlers Ridge, Murieta	Wednesday 4:00pm
10	Oceanside (1)	Ed Clifford	760-630-1897	Mission San Luis Rey, McKeon Center, Room 12	Wednesdays 7:00pm
11	Oceanside (2)	Mary Williams	760-510-9337	St. Thomas More Catholic Church, 1450 S. Melrose Dr.	Tuesdays, call for time
12	Oceanside (3)	Pat Julian	760 757-3659 x123	Mission San Luis Rey, 4050 Mission Ave.	Fridays 10:00am
13	Poway (1)	Elena Andrews	838-663-6584	St. Gabriel Catholic Church, 3734 Twin Peaks Rd.	Fridays 9:00-10:30am
14	Poway (2)	Colleen Clementson & Rebecca Crowley	858-748-8548 858-748-3801 88 748-3542	Community Church of Poway, 13501 Community Rd.	Tuesdays 6:30-8:00pm
15	Poway (3)	Parth Domke	858-829-2664	St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16375 Pomerado Dr.	Tuesdays 5:00-6:30pm
16	Poway (4)	Audrey Spindler	760-215-0782	Order of St. Luke* (call for directions)	Sunday 10:45am
17	Ramona	Deborah Lewallen & Cindy Dodson	760-519-1811 602-549-9839	St. Mary's in the Valley Episcopal Church, 1010 12th St., Ramona	Mondays 4:30-5:45pm
18	Rancho Bernardo	Audrey Spindler	858 208-8609	San Rafael Parish, Center. Rooms A & B	Wednesdays 3:30-5:00pm
19	Solana Beach	Ann Deakers	858-775-1738	St. James Catholic Church, 625 S Nardo Ave, Solana Beach	Tuesdays 9:15-10:30am
20	San Marcos (1)	Karla Halvorson & Sharon Phelps	760 727-1509 760-533-2437	San Marcos Lutheran Church, 3419 Grand Ave., Sanctuary	Wednesdays 1:30-2:30pm
21	San Marcos (2)	Jim Ullman & Marjo Gray	760-598-8943	St. Mark's Catholic Church	Tuesday 1:30-3:00pm
22	Serra Mesa	Diane Langworthy	619-697-3558	Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community/ Gethsemane Lutheran, 2696 Melbourne Dr.	Tuesdays 1:00-2:30pm
23	Temecula (1)	Pam Bowen, Joan Neidig, & Marigold Velasco	909-938-9932 951-676-2928	Home of Joan Neidig, 42149 Camino Romo, Temecula	Thursdays 6:30pm
24	Temecula (2)	Robin Orner & Pastor Sandy Benz	951-669-3998 951-676-6262 X205	Hope Lutheran, 29043 Vallejo Ave. Classroom 6, Temecula	Tuesdays 6:30pm
25	Vista	Martha Treutle	760-809-2529	United Methodist Church of Vista, 490 S. Melrose Dr. Vista	Mondays [9:30-10:30am