

Governing Board of Contemplative Outreach
Minutes of the extended meeting on Zoom
June 12th – 15th, 2020
Final

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Jenny Adamson, Nick Cole, Kathy Di Fede, Maru Ladron de Guevara, Adal Henriquez, Pat Johnson, Julie Saad, and Tom Smith.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS: Mary Jane Yates, Administrator

Friday afternoon June 12th

6 pm: Centering Prayer followed by check-in. Discussion of the purpose and flow of the Board intentions for CO. Also, discussed logistics for Saturday's session.

Saturday morning June 13th

9 am: Centering Prayer followed by reading and reflecting together on the Vision, Theological Principles and Guidelines for Contemplative Outreach Service.

Saturday afternoon June 13th

1:15 pm: Centering Prayer. Role of the GB is to support the staff.

- Share the prayer and conceptual guidelines.
- Listen
- Staff meeting with GB

Mary Jane's observations: What are the Board intentions? Assure Contemplative Outreach is where everyone belongs.

GB to discern how to use the intentions for the benefit of everyone.

Sunday morning June 14th

9:30 am: Centering Prayer.

Priorities for the budget:

- Funding an IT person
- Hiring someone to do an expanded role
- Global expansion

Interviewing new candidates for the Governing Board. Jenny gave an update on setting up interviews. It was also decided who would be the lead interviewer for each candidate.

12 Step Outreach Team update: Jenny reported that 12 Step Outreach will purchase a Zoom account in order to host 11th Step Centering Prayer meetings and retreats but may also make the account available to others within Contemplative Outreach.

The next Governing Board meeting is scheduled for July 7th at noon EDT.

Because of the importance of the process we, as the Governing Board of Contemplative Outreach, went through during this meeting, we decided that someone should summarize the discussion of our reflections and sharing. These reflections come out of our prayful reading and reflecting not only on the Vision, Theological Principles, and Guidelines for Contemplative Outreach service that Fr. Keating gave to CO, but also our reflections on the role of the Governing Board.

Below are Julie's summary from Sunday and Maru's summary from Saturday and Sunday.

Sunday-Julie

Fruits of Discernment with Vision, Theological Principles and Guidelines

Vision: We embrace the process of transformation in Christ, both in ourselves and in others, through the practice of Centering Prayer.

Purpose: The fundamental purpose of Centering Prayer and of Contemplative Outreach is to further the knowledge and experience of God's love in the consciousness of the human family.

- We aspire to listen... to the staff, service teams, chapters, volunteers, members, individuals, other groups who share a contemplative purpose.
- We always remember that we are about Centering Prayer. It is who we are, what we have to share, what we have as our focus, our roots, our being, our center.

- Our vision starts with “We embrace...” Our embrace needs to be bigger than it’s been, more inclusive, with a wider definition of marginalized. This includes the international community and other populations in the U.S. that we haven’t yet reached.
- We support the Administrator in the repurposing of staff positions, in particular the program position, to more closely align with the desire for a bigger embrace.
- Along with the bigger embrace we also support taking care of beginners and smaller chapters/groups that many of our staff and volunteers tend to.
- We endeavor to reach out to staff, service teams and others in the community to ask them for a short list of what they perceive are the priorities of Contemplative Outreach. We envision a back and forth of prayer and discernment which would result in a shared way forward, with a timeline of completing this process sometime in September.
- We will keep any priorities that were discarded for now, but which may contain important items that need further discernment.
- We will host meetings with Chapters on Zoom with particular topics, inviting perhaps 2-3 coordinators from 4-5 chapters at a time and including staff. An ad hoc team will be formed to work out the details (team would include Donna, who brought a similar suggestion forward). The format would include doing Centering Prayer together, listening to the community, sharing the Vision, Theological Principles and Guidelines, and discussing/listening to a selected topic.
- We are willing to accept any invitation from the staff to a joint call with them on Zoom to discuss topics they would like input on and to discuss priorities.
- We would like to get simplicity back into our logo and keep the value and attitude of simplicity in our work.
- Edit our talking stick sharing on the Vision, Theological Principles and Guidelines and put it on the web.
- Put the Nine-Month Course (Contemplative Living Experience) on the web to make it more widely available.
- Create a weekend retreat once a month at the monastery (virtually) with prayer occurring in the chapel in the retreat house to bring together the community, including many who may not have had the opportunity to come to the monastery.
- 12-Step Outreach will purchase a Zoom account to host 11th Step Meetings as a priority but will also make the account available to others within Contemplative Outreach.
- We support the use of technology as a tremendous tool for communication and connection in our work of outreach.
- We support beginning and continuing dialoguing with other contemplative groups about how we can work together and support each other.
- We are committed to being open to evolving and expanding, to not being afraid or rigid or caught up in mythic membership, to listening to the voice of the spirit, to sharing our collective wisdom.
- We recognize polarities and where we are aspiring to move:
 - from many practices to a few people → one practice to many of us
 - from expert driven → engagement of diverse voices
 - from rules based → emergence based
- The only plan we need is for further engagement.
- Broaden the Circle of Friends to include people from around the country and the world.
- Recognize that the board and staff are different groups with different roles but complement each other.
- Develop ways in which we can determine how we are doing.

Saturday and Sunday-Marur

Stars, gems, and other hints...

There's a thread you follow. It goes among things that change. But it doesn't change.

- Simplicity - All about the prayer - Other practices not about the integrity of the teaching - Guideline 2 - All our work in CO in support of the prayer.
- Together with the community of CO, the board embodies the Mission and Vision- We are called to discern the call of the Spirit and to Live into our purpose
- Principle 1 - To further the knowledge and the experience of God's love
- Make people feel included - especially those who don't fit in to mainstream culture
- Expand - Evolve - TK expected us to change
- People need our love. Our capacity to love comes from the prayer
- Expanding Vision - Not stuck - Deepening Practice - Transformation
- When we face resistance, we run the risk of getting stuck in the struggle
- What the Holy Spirit reveals through each of us
- Serve the needs of the world
- Interactive - Interconnected - Interdependent - Aligned to Embracing everything
- Belonging - No need to fit into dogmatic lines
- Shifting - Need for Alignment - Flow
- Intentions like stars that guide us in the night. We notice when and where Spirit is breathing and insinuating action. Keeping our sensing open, awake.
- Aggregating new and old Voices
- Aspire - Inspire - Dispositions of humility and attentive listening
- Attuned to the needs of communities and individuals
- Devoted - Responsive - Taking the lowest place
- #5 Our instinctual needs not fully integrated - Parts of us always being driven - A lifelong process. Hearing as a collective, live organism. Grounded as a human being
- Embracing the process of Transformation not just in ourselves and others, but in the organism
- Evolving - Change - Endings that lead to beginnings
- From "What's wrong with this picture?" To "What's right with this picture?" to holding the tension of opposites

- What is the sunrise going to be?
- False self has to be exposed to be transformed
- All decisions are made with incomplete information
- Progress, not perfection
- Putting our consciousness together to chart a good course. I know we will do our best and have the humility to make course corrections
- It's a Healing Process of Transformation that we need to consent to.
- God is working in me. God is working in others. Accepting where we all are in the process. Embrace - Can I open my arms fully?
- Listen as deeply as I can

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Di Fede, Secretary

