

Feb-May 2020

the  
stillness  
calls  
you







Offering contemplative  
support to persons of  
all spiritual paths  
in a natural  
woodland sanctuary.

Rooted in the Franciscan tradition,  
our values are contemplation,  
hospitality, compassion, simplicity,  
transformation, & care for  
our Earth Community.

## Letter from our Executive Director

### WINTER AT THE CENTER

As I sit silently in the dining room in the early light of dawn, I observe the dark shadow outline of pine trees against a navy blue sky. A deer peers in the window, walking gently in pristine new fallen snow.

This is a special time at the Center, breathtakingly silent and peaceful. Recently we experienced the Winter Solstice, the longest day of the year. Symbolically we are emerging from the darkness and stepping into the light. This is a wonderful time to visit or consider a private retreat at the Center.

Within the backdrop of the silence, much activity is underway at the Center. We have begun to formalize plans for the Christine Center's 40th Anniversary celebration August 28-30, 2020. Due to the generosity of a grant received from Wheaton Franciscan Ministry, we will be developing a Master Plan for the campus with the help of an outside firm. Our goal is to preserve the rustic feel of the campus, while providing integrated spaces, which will allow us to expand. However, while that is in progress, we must pay attention to our aging hermitages. Extensive hermitage restoration and upgrades have already been completed at Ahimsa and Sun. Pictures will be shared in our next newsletter. Ahimsa has historical

significance. It served as the home of Sr. Virginia before she left our campus for health reasons over 25 years ago. Basil is now underway.

As you are aware, the Center employs a small group of dedicated staff to prepare meals, clean rooms and make repairs. Volunteers are needed to assist with many projects. This May 10-15 we are offering a unique gardening program and volunteer opportunity. This will allow us to re-create the garden at the main entrance and provide a more welcoming contemplative space for our visitors. Since Sister Cecy's departure, a few very dedicated trail volunteers have maintained the walking trails. We are excited to have Sr. Cecy joining us at the end of May to coordinate a group of volunteers for the trail restoration and spring preparation! The dates are May 29-31. Please plan to join us!

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to our Board members; staff; the Sisters, Resident Partners in Mission; and to the many Friends of the Christine Center for their time, talent and contributions, which continue to allow us to thrive in our journey of spiritual deepening for global transformation.

Blessings and Peace,



Kathleen Yosko, PhD,  
Executive Director

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Brian Voerding  
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Sister Johanna Seubert  
Sister Gabriele Uhlein  
Sister Marge Zulaski



Hidden away in the Wisconsin woods among the deer and the Amish of Clark County is a ramshackle collection of hermitages with names like Peace, Love, Joy and Wisdom. This is the Christine Center, an improbable place, one of the rare refuges left on earth where you can still get lost, unplug, and tune in to “the ear of your heart.” A place where spirit messages rise up like fireflies in the dark, and the strongest signal comes in, not from the Internet but from the Source. ...

Once past Merillon, Humbird, a nudist camp and a supper club, Highway 12 gets lonely as it climbs north and winds into

the woods. You may see a trio of deer flash by, or a flock of eagles foraging in a ditch, but the only stable landmark will be a shed quietly imploding by the side of County Road I, itself a meditation on impermanence. ...

Those who have relied on GPS to find their way over those remote county roads have been known to end up in a cow pasture. People say location is the Center’s biggest drawback. But shouldn’t a pilgrim be expected to confront some kind of ordeal? Arriving at a monastery in the old days, you might have had to stand out in the rain and cold for three days to prove your intention.

Sister Virginia Mary, the Wheaton Franciscan who founded the Christine Center, never bothered about location. Convinced of a divine calling, she simply threw a dart at the map of Wisconsin. When it landed on Willard with its one church, a garage, and two bars, it was there that it stayed. That was nearly forty years ago. Four Sisters still live in Willard, “aging in place,” faithful to the Center’s Franciscan roots while welcoming and learning from many other spiritual paths. The place is female to its core. ...

All sorts of improbable things happen quite regularly here. Healings, insights, revelations. A man in his fifties might look up at a peerless blue sky in October and realize with a shock that his mind is just as limitless; a woman in the middle of a Robert Sardello retreat might decide overnight that she wants a green burial instead of the cremation she had planned. People dream dreams, see visions, discover new direction for their lives. What else would you expect from “a sanctuary for spiritual deepening and global transformation?” ...

For my part, I was shaken to the core by the depth and intensity of a meditation I experienced under Andrew Harvey’s direction. In an afternoon session dedicated to contemplative practices, he introduced us to the Shahadah, the profession of faith central to Islam – La ilaha illa Allah- there is no God but God. We recited it again and again and were instructed to go home and meditate for an hour that evening, chanting the Arabic words over and over. Astonishing things happened.

Lah! eeLa-hah! Eee-lah-a Allah!

Lah! eeLa-hah! Eee-lah-a Allah!

There is such power in the rhythm of that mantra, sacred sounds whispered or chanted. There is music, movement, laughter, uproarious and light, a lullaby, a baby

rocking in its cradle. Shouts of joy, outrage, exultations, hymns, ecstatic declamations. There are stars spinning in an endless night, galaxies spiraling below, a desert suffused with the presence of God, no God, no God but God. There are no gods in God. Nothing. No thing. Nothing but God in God. No God. No Thing. No God but God. No God but God No God No God No God. There is no God but God! God has knocked down all the idols, all the baubles in their cradles. No him. No Him in Him. No thing! Nothing but God in God. In a place of limitless perfection, surrounded by that huge First Nothing,\*these words form in my mouth ...

You are the perfume of the desert

You are the open door

You are the whirlwind

You are the eye of the storm. ...

There aren’t many places I know of that can bring you to such depths in a matter of days. The Christine Center is one of those places. It receives us in our brokenness and sustains us in our glory. For those of us aware that we living in apocalyptic times, it is a necessary place. Not a perfect place, but a necessary place. Let us be grateful and do all that we can to preserve it, so that, unlike the shed collapsing slowly into itself by the side of County Road I, it will be sustained, ramshackle though it may be, still standing on level ground for many years to come.

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*Jean Feraca is a poet, author, journalist and former award-winning radio host of Wisconsin Public Radio’s “Conversations with Jean Feraca” and “Here on Earth: Radio Without Borders.”*

*She has been a longtime friend, supporter and presenter at the Christine Center.*

*Ms. Feraca wrote “Dancing in the Void” in August, 2019. Please go to <https://jeanferaca.wordpress.com/blog/> to view the piece in its entirety.*

Excerpts from

## dancing in the void

by Jean Feraca





## GREER FOUNDATION \$25,000 Matching Challenge Grant

In September of 2019 we announced an opportunity for a \$25,000 Matching Grant from the Greer Foundation. Carl Greer has been a supporter of the Christine Center for many years. He is a colleague of Sr. Marge and has also presented at the Center. The Greer family truly understands the importance of sustaining this woodland sanctuary as a resource and home for retreatants seeking spiritual deepening.

We are happy to announce that our friends of the Center, who share this vision stepped forward to meet the challenge. Within a ninety-day period, 135 donations totaling \$44,163 were received! We are so grateful to Carl Greer for his generosity and to our loving friends, who are received daily at the center by our devoted staff.

These funds will be used to sustain the Center and to support the many renovations that are visibly underway on our campus as we prepare for our 40 th Anniversary celebration August 28-30. We extend blessings to Carl and to the many dedicated friends of the Center.

## getting here

The Christine Center is nestled in 145 acres of tranquil woodlands in north central Wisconsin, two miles from Willard, about 1-hour southeast of Eau Claire. It's about a 3-hour drive from Minneapolis and Madison, a 4-hour drive from Milwaukee, and 5-hour drive from Chicago.

Nearest airports are Minneapolis International Airport, Central Wisconsin Airport, and Eau Claire Airport. The closest bus station is in Eau Claire. The closest Amtrak station is about 1.5 hour's drive in Tomah, WI.

We do not offer ground transportation. Although we cannot guarantee availability, there may be Willard-area locals willing to provide that service for a fee. Call to inquire. [christinecenter.org/traveling-here](http://christinecenter.org/traveling-here)

## what to bring

Casual clothes for the appropriate weather (we have a laundry facility for longer stays). Cash, checks, or money orders for lodging and meal payments or bookstore purchases. We also accept Visa, Mastercard and Discover credit cards. Please bring personal medications, toiletries, sunscreen and a water bottle.

## what to expect

**PHONE AND INTERNET:** Cell phone service can be unpredictable. Free WiFi is available in the main building.

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Access to some parts of the property may be difficult depending on your level of mobility. Please discuss your needs at the time of registration and we may be able to assist.

## general policies

**PETS:** Dogs are allowed in a limited capacity. Please see more information at [christinecenter.org/bring-know/](http://christinecenter.org/bring-know/)

**VALUABLES:** The Front Office has no facilities to store guest valuables.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Please refer to policy on our website.



**CHECK IN:** 3pm. **CHECK OUT:** 12noon. As you vacate your room please return the card you received when checking in to the front desk. This will allow us to notify housekeeping, to prepare the room for the next guest.

## dining

Meals are served in the main dining area buffet-style at 8:00am, 12:30pm and 5:30pm. Meals are mostly vegetarian and are prepared with fresh natural foods, which are locally grown when available. Gluten free, dairy free, and vegan diets can be accommodated. Please mention your dietary restrictions when making your reservation. Several hermitages are equipped with stoves and refrigerators, if personal meal preparation is desired. Meal prices Breakfast \$12, Lunch \$16, Supper, \$10.

## lodging

Several types of housing units are available. Private and semi-private sleeping rooms are available at the Main Center building. There are also a number of smaller houses, and modern and rustic hermitages located throughout the 145 acre wooded campus, which can accommodate 1-5 adults. Prices vary by site and day of the week. Camp sites are also available with nearby shower/bathroom facilities. Please visit [christinecenter.org/reservations](http://christinecenter.org/reservations) for current pricing.

 @christinecenter.org  
 @christinecenter.org

## our programs and offerings

**PROGRAMS:** See our calendar on pages 10–13.

**CORPORATE RETREATS:** Plan your corporate, business or group retreat at the Center- Meeting spaces are equipped with A/V and can accommodate up to 50 participants. Menus can be tailored to your requests.

**PERSONAL RETREATS:** Relax, recharge and get inspired in solitude.

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:** We welcome you. Please contact the Center.

**WORK EXCHANGE:** Inquire at the Center.

**SABBATICALS:** Requests should be made in writing.

## additional amenities

- Meditation Hall
- Mary of the Angels Chapel
- Bela Maroti Library
- Spirit Jewel Bookstore and Gifts
- Outdoor sauna
- Access to the intuitive painting studio: Inquire at the Center regarding fees and availability
- Trails and walking paths- Maps at the front desk
- Visioning Spiral
- Peace Pole Prayer Garden
- Spiritual Guidance available upon request
- Morning chanting and meditation in the chapel
- Evening meditation in the chapel
- Cantic Circle

## to register

- email: [christinecenter@tds.net](mailto:christinecenter@tds.net)
- Call: 715-267-7507 or 800-333-7507
- Online reservations are currently not available.



Find detailed descriptions about each retreat, bios, and registration at [christinecenter.org/retreat-program-calendar](http://christinecenter.org/retreat-program-calendar)

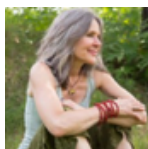


**Feb 14–Feb 16** | Fri–Sun | *With Kimberly Lovejoy and Christine Lord*

### Returning to Your Light: A Self-Love Retreat for Healers

View retreat info here: [www.returningtoyourlight.com](http://www.returningtoyourlight.com)

A retreat for healing professionals to come together and create a space of quiet contemplation; a time to return to their own Light.



**Feb 20–Feb 21** | I Iam Thurs–I Iam Fri | *With Tracy Chimpan, MA, CYT, AYS*

### Yoga Nidra

Yoga Nidra is an ancient practice that offers very deep rest; a systematic method, creating an experience of restful alertness. | \$95\*



**Feb 28–Mar 1** | 7pm Fri–12pm Sun |

### By Women for Women

Our 7th annual celebration of women coming together for ritual, retreat, relaxation, and deep spiritual practice. | Sliding Scale \$75-\$200\*



**Mar 5–Mar 8** | Thurs–Sun | *With Carol and Neal Carbon*

### The Diamond Approach to Inner Work

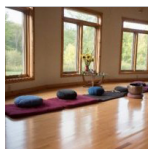
The Diamond Approach is a path of spiritual realization characterized by sincere inquiry into one's experience, fueled by the love of truth.



**Mar 8–Mar 10** | Sun–Tues | *With Julia Gray*

### The Wilderness WITHIN!

An invitation to explore the Wilderness WITHIN you! We will borrow coaching techniques, concepts from non-violent communication, and practice the transformational experience of silence. | \$100\*

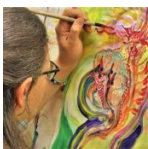


**Mar 13–Mar 15** | Fri–Sun |

### Andrea Russell's Silent Meditation Retreat

Slow down and deepen your meditation practice with gentle yoga, periods of seated and walking meditation, dharma talks, and opportunities to ask questions and receive support.

For information and to register: <http://andrearussell.com/wisconsin/>



**Mar 19–Mar 22** | Thurs–Sun, 10am–5pm | *with S. Gabriele Uhlein, OSF, PhD*

### Intuitive Painting

Brush, paper! GO! Experience a fun and supportive community of happy painters; bring a sense of play, adventure and openness. | \$60 a day / \$30 for half days (all materials included)\*



**Mar 20–Mar 22** | Fri–Sun | *With Beth Turner*

### Birthing Your Own Vision

You carry life. This is your invitation to come away. Amend the soil of your heart and soul. Prepare them to receive the seeds of renewed dreams. | \$200\* (early bird registration before March 1: \$175\*)



"My time at the Christine Center surpassed all my expectations. I felt so nurtured and experienced a sense of peace I hadn't felt in years. I can't wait to return."

- Jennifer K., Minneapolis, MN



**Mar 26–Mar 27** | I Iam Thurs–I Iam Fri | *With Tracy Chimpan, MA, CYT, AYS*

### Peace in Every Breath

In this workshop, we explore our breath and our embodied presence as tools for wholeness, acceptance and joy. | \$95\*



**Mar 27–Mar 29** | Fri–Sun | *With Amie Heeter*

### Spring Yoga & Meditation Retreat

9th annual spring meditation and yoga retreat... an invitation to dive deep, intentionally, into a place that supports the opportunity to see inside and listen. | \$175\*



**Mar 27–Mar 29** | Thurs–Sun | *With Dawn Anderson, CreatetheDawn*

### Poets of Life Workshop

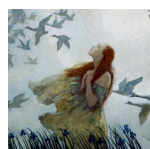
Harness the muse of the trees, the sky, and the hearts of fellow word-lovers. Engage in writing that helps us be present, process, and wonder. We are, after all, Poets of Life."



**Apr 8–Apr 12** | Wed–Sun | *With Henrita Frost, SSND and Johanna Seubert, FSPA*

### Easter Meditation Retreat

Taste the nourishment of silence, meditation and community as we enter into the stillness and beauty of Holy Week; a meditation retreat with guidance. | All-inclusive rate for lodging (4 nights) tuition, and all meals: Modern and Guest Room Housing sliding scale: \$550 to \$600 Rustic housing sliding scale: \$415 to \$475



**Apr 17–Apr 19** | Fri–Sun | *With Liz Rog & Tracy Chipman*

### Soul + Solace—Singing & Storytelling; A Women's<sup>†</sup> Retreat

A women's<sup>†</sup> weekend retreat soaking in the soul tending experiences of singing and storytelling. Together, giving and receiving, we will build community through song and story. <sup>†</sup>open to those identifying as women | Sliding scale of \$150–\$350\*



Find detailed descriptions about each retreat, bios, and registration at: [christinecenter.org/retreat-program-calendar](http://christinecenter.org/retreat-program-calendar)



**Apr 19–Apr 24** | Sun–Fri | *With Suzanne Howard*

### **Ayurveda Retreat: Cleanse, Relax and Rejuvenate**

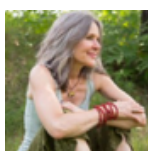
An opportunity to un-plug and experience deep relaxation and inner peace; a complete immersion experience based on the longer Ayurveda program of Panchakarma. | \$1400 all inclusive.



**Apr 20–Apr 22** | Mon–Wed | *With Wendy Mitch*

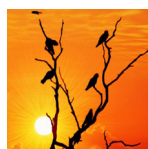
### **Shifting Perspectives: A Transformative Approach to Life & Love**

An experience to help us shift perspective towards a transformative as well as practical spirituality for everyday life and love. | \$150\*



**Apr 23–Apr 24** | I I am Thurs–I I am Fri | *With Tracy Chimpan, MA, CYT, AYS*  
**Yoga Nidra**

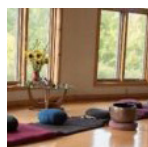
Yoga Nidra is an ancient practice that offers very deep rest; a systematic method, creating an experience of restful alertness. | \$95\*



**Apr 26–Apr 28** | Sun–Tues | *With Kathy Roberg, RN, MS & Nancy Hemesath, MA*

### **The Tapestry of Lives: Linking Ancestors and Legacy**

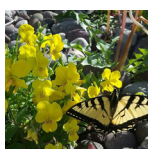
Target the essential final chapter of our lives; distilling lessons from our ancestors, articulating meaning, and chronicling stories and blessings for those who live beyond us. | \$200\*



**May 1–May 3** | Fri–Sun | *With Andrea Russell*

### **Yoga and Ayurveda Seasonal Retreat**

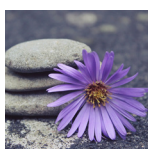
This retreat will focus on slowing down and deepening your yoga and meditation practice as well as learning Ayurvedic lifestyle and practice recommendations to align harmoniously with the season. For information and to register: <https://andrearussell.com/wisconsin/>



**May 10–May 15** | Sun–Fri |

### **Gardening Program and Volunteer Opportunity**

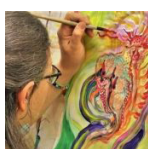
Join master gardener Lynn Watson in developing your own garden plan! Practical application learning will include transforming the center gardens. | \$150\* (volunteer discounts for lodging and meals)



**May 11–May 13** | Mon–Wed | *With Tracy Hart*

### **Spring Renewal ~ Yoga Sadhana**

Enjoy a variety of yoga and meditation practices designed to cleanse & rejuvenate the mind, body, and spirit. | \$150\*



**May 14–May 17** | Thurs–Sun, 10am–5pm | *With S. Gabriele Uhlein, OSF, PhD*

### **Intuitive Painting**

Brush, paper! GO! Experience a fun and supportive community of happy painters; bring a sense of play, adventure and openness. | \$60 a day / \$30 for half days (all materials included)\*



## **NAMASTE** **Giving Tuesday**

We are so grateful to a special group of Christine Center friends who responded to our Giving Tuesday appeal, “Your Seat at The Center.”

The Zafu cushions and Zabutan mats, which have a our treasured guests in their practices for numerous years, were exhibiting the result of hours of use. We recently learned that several of the black mats were constructed nearly 40 years ago with excess fabric formerly used to construct garb for the Wheaton Francis-

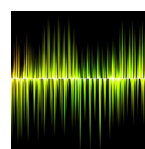
cans. We respectfully honor the retirement of these Center artifacts. As the result of the generosity of our friends \$1,180 was raised, which allowed us to replace 15 cushions and mats. At least 5 more sets are needed. If you intended to contribute and the busy days of the Holiday Season interrupted your intention, you may still do so by going to our website [www.christinecenter.org](http://www.christinecenter.org) and click on the red button that reads, “Make a Donation”. On behalf of our Sisters, staff and future retreatants, we say NAMASTE.



**May 15–May 17** | Fri–Sun | *With Tom Roberts*

### **Zen and the Art of Coming Home**

Experience the opportunity to cultivate the innate sense of returning to our spiritual home; take stock of how far we might have wandered from our deeper wisdom, our deeper sensing true self. | \$150\*



**May 22–May 24** | Fri–Sun | *With Rahjta Ren*

### **An Immersion into Heart and Sound—A Program for Men**

This retreat offers a pathway to quieting one’s mind, living as an expression of this self-realizing boundlessness, and aspiring for an integration into everyday life. | \$150\*



**May 29–May 31** | Fri–Sun |

### **Come Volunteer on the trails with Sister Cecy!**

Help us get the trails ready for the warm seasons and volunteer with Sr. Cecy for the weekend!



**May 29–May 31** | Fri–Sun |

### **Andrew Harvey’s Annual Christine Center Retreat**

Join Andrew Harvey, renowned author, scholar, and teacher for his annual retreat at the Christine Center (details coming soon for this excursion into Divine Love!) | Sliding Scale \$150 to \$250\*



The Christine Center  
W8303 Mann Road  
Willard, WI 54493  
[www.christinecenter.org](http://www.christinecenter.org)  
715.267.7507 or 866.333.7507

We are so  
grateful for our  
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