

∞ ADVENT ∞

Dear Friends of Stillpoint,

As another year draws to a close I would like to thank you for your support, encouragement and prayer throughout 2011. It has been a different year but one which I look back on with deep gratitude to God. I wish you all a happy and holy season and trust you will enter 2012 refreshed and renewed.

Peace

**Gary Stuckey (Rev)
Minister/Director, Stillpoint Spirituality Centre and Faith Community**

An Advent Prayer: Halfway through Advent - have I missed it?

Dear Jesus,

It's halfway through Advent and I'm not sure what happened. I really wanted to make this a reflective and calm season, preparing for your birth and pondering how you came into this world in such a stunningly humble way. But it's so busy and I'm distracted and sometimes even short-tempered with those I love the most. Where are you in THAT?

I am discouraged and wish I could start over. But as I sit here in the rare moment of silence, I contemplate your birth. In a bed of straw, with the smell of manure everywhere. It's a mess in that stable ... and come to think of it, my life is a little messy, too. I suddenly see that it is not just into the mess of the stable but into my mess that you enter the world. You came into a humble place and that humility is often where I live my life - feeling guilty or distracted and wishing I were a better person. But if I stop thinking of myself and focus on you, I realize that there you are, waiting to love me, even though I have so many unfulfilled good intentions about prayer, so many desires of how to change this fleeting Advent season.

I can begin Advent today and make this season deeper by making room in my heart for you. I can take just a moment before I get out of bed in the morning and feel the empty place in my life I so often fill with my busy-ness. It is there I need you the most. Come, Lord Jesus. Come into that dark and lonely spot in my heart. You know what my needs are more than I do. Let me feel your love. If I only carry that thought with me each day, it will prepare me for Christmas.

Thank you, Jesus. It's not too late. You are waiting to enter my life today, where ever I let you in. Help me to open my heart in these remaining days.



It might have happened like this!?

Singing and Christmas go together. The angels sang at Christ's birth and it seems we've been singing about it ever since. There are the great loved carols and increasingly more contemporary music, particularly that which addresses Christmas in Australia without the snow.

But there's one Christmas song I have never really understood; "The Twelve Days of Christmas". Recently something came my way that explains this strange song about partridges in pear trees and maids a-milking. I don't vouch for the historical accuracy, but maybe this is what it is about.

Between 1558 and 1829 Catholics in England were forbidden to practice their faith openly. "The Twelve Days of Christmas" was written as a way of reminding them of their faith and teaching it to their children.

The **Partridge** is Jesus.

Two turtle doves have been identified as either the Old and New Testaments or the Old Testament sacrifice that was offered by the poorest.

Three French Hens are the gifts brought by the Wise Men and the virtues of faith, hope and love.

Four calling birds are the four Gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Five golden rings represent either the five wounds of Christ (two in the hands, two in the feet, one in the side), the five obligatory sacraments (Baptism, Penance, Eucharist, Confirmation and Extreme Unction) or the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible.

Six geese a-laying are the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming are the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit: prophesy, serving, teaching, exhortation, contribution, leadership and mercy.

Eight maids a-milking are the eight Beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, or the nine ranks of angels.

Ten lords a-leaping are the ten commandments.

The **eleven pipers piping** stood for the eleven faithful disciples.

The **twelve drummers drumming** can be the 12 minor prophets of the Old Testament, the 12 points of the Apostle's Creed, the 12 tribes of Israel or the 12 Apostles after Pentecost.



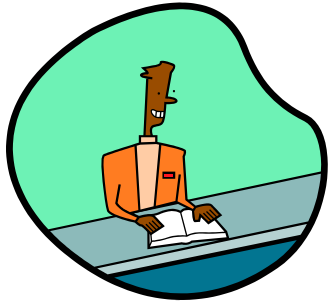
Something to think about.

"Christmas is a moveable feast, a feast that changes meaning as we move through life growing more and more aware of its real significance for us. We were born. Jesus was born. What Jesus did to survive life, to bear life, to create life, to become life, we can do as well. Or better: What we do to survive life, to bear life, to create life, to become life, Jesus did before us. Our struggles are not new. Our questions are not senseless. Our burdens are not unbearable.



Christmas, the remembrance of the birth of Jesus, is not a remembrance at all. It is an awareness that grows in us from day to day all our lives. Christmas, this consciousness of eternal Life alive among us, is not a feast day, it is a ferial day that never ends. It is a call to make today better than yesterday because of a day just like today, Christ did it before us."

Sr. Joan Chittister OSB
In Search of Belief



VOLUNTEERING ON A WEDNESDAY MORNING...

Currently the Stillpoint Office is staffed on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. We are looking for extra volunteers for Wednesday mornings (can be rostered on occasionally or for a couple of hours or so) to answer the phone and be a presence in the office. Ideally we would like help between the hours of 9.30am - 12.30pm. This is not a difficult task by any means and gives you the opportunity for some stillness as you enjoy the quietness of the Centre. You are welcome to bring a book or other material to read or work on.

If you are interested and available on an occasional basis (even for part of this time) we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact Helen on 8178 0048 or stillpoint@internode.on.net if you would be willing to help out. All offers of help are greatly appreciated.

Why not give the gift of time this Christmas?

You can purchase a day or half day retreat for a friend, family member, work colleague or even your minister - this is a lovely idea for someone who may not usually allow time for themselves.

Prices and options:

Half day in quiet room	\$30.00
Whole day in quiet room	\$50.00
Half day retreat (with resources)	\$40.00
Whole day retreat (with resources)	\$60.00
Half day retreat (with resources & spiritual direction)	\$60.00
Whole day retreat (with resources & spiritual direction)	\$80.00



Gift vouchers may be purchased from the Stillpoint Centre:

5 Burnell Drive, Belair SA 5052 8178 0048

stillpoint@internode.on.net

Stillpoint Transition Retreat



Everybody at some point in their life will face significant change as they move from one phase of life to another. It may be from study to work, from work to retirement, from one job to another, or some other noteworthy transition in life. These times can be challenging, but they can also offer an opportunity for reflection and growth that will make the transition a positive experience.

The Stillpoint Spirituality Centre is able to offer a one day Transition Retreat to assist people in the negotiation of these life changes. Anyone who is about to enter, is in the midst of, or has recently been through a time of transition will benefit from participating in the retreat.

Over one day, four segments exploring various aspects of transition will be offered and while you will be guided through the day by a leader, essentially it is a time to connect in a deep way with God and to hear what God is inviting you to.

The cost for the day at Stillpoint is \$80.00 or to receive the material for use in your own time: \$40.00.

If you are interested, simply contact Rev Gary Stuckey at Stillpoint to talk about any questions you may have or to make a booking for a Transition Retreat Day.

Phone: 8178 0048

Email: gary.stillpoint@internode.on.net

Stillpoint Spirituality Centre and Faith Community

Program for 2012

STILLPOINT SPIRITUALITY CENTRE

RETREATS - GOD'S GRACIOUS GIFT OF TIME

Lent Retreat Days

'Lenten Images of the Christ'

A self-led one-day retreat on any of the following dates: 8, 16, 24 March. 9.30am - 4pm.

Spiritual conversation available if requested at time of booking. Up to six people per day. \$25 full day: \$15 half day.

Also available for home use: \$15.

Residential Retreat

'The Wisdom of the Mystics'

Silence, prayer, reflections. 6 - 10 May (Sunday to Thursday). Leader: Rev Gary Stuckey.

At Nunyara Conference Centre and Stillpoint Spirituality Centre. Cost: TBA

Advent Retreat Days

Self-led one-day retreat using specially prepared material. 30 November, 5 or 8 December, 9.30am - 4pm. Spiritual conversation available if requested at time of booking. Up to six people per day. \$25 full day: \$15 half day.

Also available for home use: \$15.

Transition Retreat

This is available by request at Stillpoint Centre as a personal or small group retreat for people in transition (ministers, people relocating, retiring, grieving or journeying through endings and beginnings of various kinds). Experienced retreat leaders available. Room, Leadership & Material: \$80. Material only: \$40.

Personal or Small Group Retreats at Stillpoint Centre

We have two quiet rooms (max numbers 15) where you can reflect and pray privately (material, spiritual direction, and facilitation available on request). For individuals, ministry teams, small groups.

MID-WEEK MEDITATION & HOLY COMMUNION

At 11.30am on Tuesdays we gather in the Lounge to say the Office of Sext followed by a time of Meditation. At 12 noon we gather for Holy Communion. All are welcome to join us for either or both times of reflection.

BE STILL AND KNOW

A monthly gathering for prayer and reflection at the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre. Tuesdays 1.00pm - 2.45 pm.

No registration required. All welcome. Gold coin donation. 14 February, 13 March, 10 April, 8 May, 12 June, 10 July, 14 August, 11 September, 9 October, 13 November.

'FINDING YOUR INNER MONK'

A 10 month program to introduce participants to monastic spirituality and explore the elements of monastic life.

February - November 2012. Contact Stillpoint for details by 23 January 2012.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS' FORMATION PROGRAM

A three year formation program run by a team from the Ecumenical Spiritual Directors' Association (S.A.) for people called to the ministry of companioning others in their spiritual journey: Final intake: 3 February 2012. Participation is via an application process. Sessions during 2012: 23 - 25 February, 3 - 5 May, 16 - 18 August, 1 - 3 November. Contact the Stillpoint Centre for more information.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Rev Gary Stuckey is a member of the Ecumenical Spiritual Directors' Association (S.A.) and offers accompaniment for your spiritual journey, or can connect you with another Director from the Association. Bookings are essential.

Program for 2012 continued

STILLPOINT ON THE ROAD

Stillpoint is committed to resourcing congregations and is able to offer a limited number of opportunities each year for retreats and workshops in country or metropolitan churches. Themes can range from a general retreat to give people "time out" for spiritual refreshment, retreats on particular themes (e.g. seasons of the church's year); workshops on prayer, spiritual growth in congregations, discernment, intercession, living contemplatively, spiritual practices and so on. Talk to us about your needs.

STILLPOINT FAITH COMMUNITY

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP

Holy Communion, singing, prayers, meditation, silence, and a time of community afterwards for those who wish.

6.30pm in Nunyara Chapel (unless otherwise indicated):

8 January, 22 January (Stillpoint Centre), 12 February, 26 February, 11 March (Stillpoint Centre), 25 March (Stillpoint Centre), 8 April (Easter Day, 7.30am Stillpoint Centre followed by breakfast), 22 April, 13 May, 27 May, 10 June (Stillpoint Centre), 24 June, 8 July (Stillpoint Centre), 22 July, 12 August, 26 August, 9 September, 23 September, 14 October, 28 October, 11 November, 25 November, 9 December, 23 December.

6.30pm at Lefevre UC (63 Gedville Rd, Taperoo)

Further information available closer to the time.

REFLECTION GROUPS

At Stillpoint, Mondays or Tuesdays 7pm - 8.30pm.

A Lenten Study will run for 4 weeks from 5/6 March - 26/27 March.

A second study based on the writings of Thomas Merton will run for 8 weeks from 23/24 July - 10/11 September.

Further information available closer to the time.

BENEDICTINE DAYS

The aim of these days is to enrich our life with God and experience the monastic life as a guide for Christian living. Benedictine Days are held at Stillpoint Spirituality Centre from 8.30am - 4.00pm on the following Saturdays (with the option of beginning the day earlier at 7.30am followed by breakfast):

4 February, 3 March, 7 April, 5 May, 2 June, 7 July, 4 August, 1 September, 6 October, 3 November.



BROCHURES with details of costs and registration for all events will become available in due course.

Please contact us for further information.

Stillpoint Spirituality Centre & Faith Community
"Nunyara", 5 Burnell Drive, Belair, SA 5052
phone: (08) 8178 0048
email: stillpoint@internode.on.net
web: www.sa.uca.org.au/goto/stillpoint

Office Hours: Mon - Thurs, 9.30am - 1.30pm
Centre Director & Minister of the Faith Community:
Rev Gary Stuckey
Office Manager: Helen Stevens