

*The Christine Center*  
Winter 2023/2024

# A Season of Presence and Grace

## IN THIS ISSUE

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Letter from our Acting Director

Owl Encounter: Impact Beyond Words

Mission Impact

SDGT Program Re-imagined!

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Dear Friends and Community,  
Your presence in our shared love of the Christine Center is a blessing and inspiration. Our shared community is a place of growth, healing, and transformation. We come seeking refuge, to rediscover our true selves, to drop in to our depths, and to support one another on our individual journeys. Together, we create a space where our collective wisdom and love have the power to inspire change in our lives and the world around us. In quiet moments of reflection, laughter shared over a meal, and conversations that spark new

insights, we find the true magic of this place. Through shared seeking we find connection, and the impact we have on each other's lives is immeasurable.  
The Christine Center invites us to be real, encouraging us to seek our own truths and trust in whatever appears. What a powerful gift! My own truth discoveries fueled my devotion to being one of the "keepers" of the Christine Center. To "keep" something means to care for, to tend, to honor, to hold, to nourish. The Christine Center has many keepers... team members, facilitators, donors, Sisters, volunteers, and guests...

even the creatures who grace this land. It is a sacred commitment shared by all of us and truly a blessing to be a part of.  
I am deeply committed to this place and all who come here. I honor you, your truth, your journey, and all that leads you to seek retreat in the sacred stillness of the Christine Center. You are my chosen community. In truth, we are like family... greeting one another with familiarity, welcome, and love whenever we gather.  
Thank you for trusting the Christine Center to hold your spiritual path and practice. We have a remarkable team

whose shared goal is to ensure that this community continues to be a sanctuary where everyone can find solace, growth, and inspiration. Soon we will seek a new director.  
Sending you warmth and care on behalf on the Board of Directors, Partners in Mission, and all Christine Center team members – may your holiday celebrations be heart filling.  
With deep respect, love and gratitude,  
Valerie Haberman  
Acting Director &  
Communications Manager

# The Silent Messenger: Impact Beyond Words



Are there moments in your life that made you pause? Did you notice the impact of the experience? What did you feel physically, emotionally, spiritually?

One evening in March, this owl was encountered on the porch of Grace hermitage. Upon seeing one another, there was an immediate stillness, a pause as two creatures, raptor and human, looked at one another.

We talk often of the stillness here. Our phrase “the stillness calls you...” was offered by our dear friend Mike Ward (RIP), a wonderful author and friend of the Center who found these words to capture the essence here. The owl’s gaze and silent presence, the immediate pause that asked us to be present to this moment, brought a deeper experience of the stillness that is found here.

Earth offers up reminders that our actions and intentions, whether seen or unseen, send ripples through the lives of those we touch. Just as the owl’s visit stirred awe, our interactions, however brief, can create moments of deep significance in people’s lives. The impact we have on one another often

transcends spoken language. It may be in the way we offer a comforting smile, extend a helping hand, or stand in quiet solidarity with one another.

The owl, with her wordless presence, conveyed a timeless message of interconnectedness—a reminder that in the vast tapestry of existence, our lives are intimately woven together.

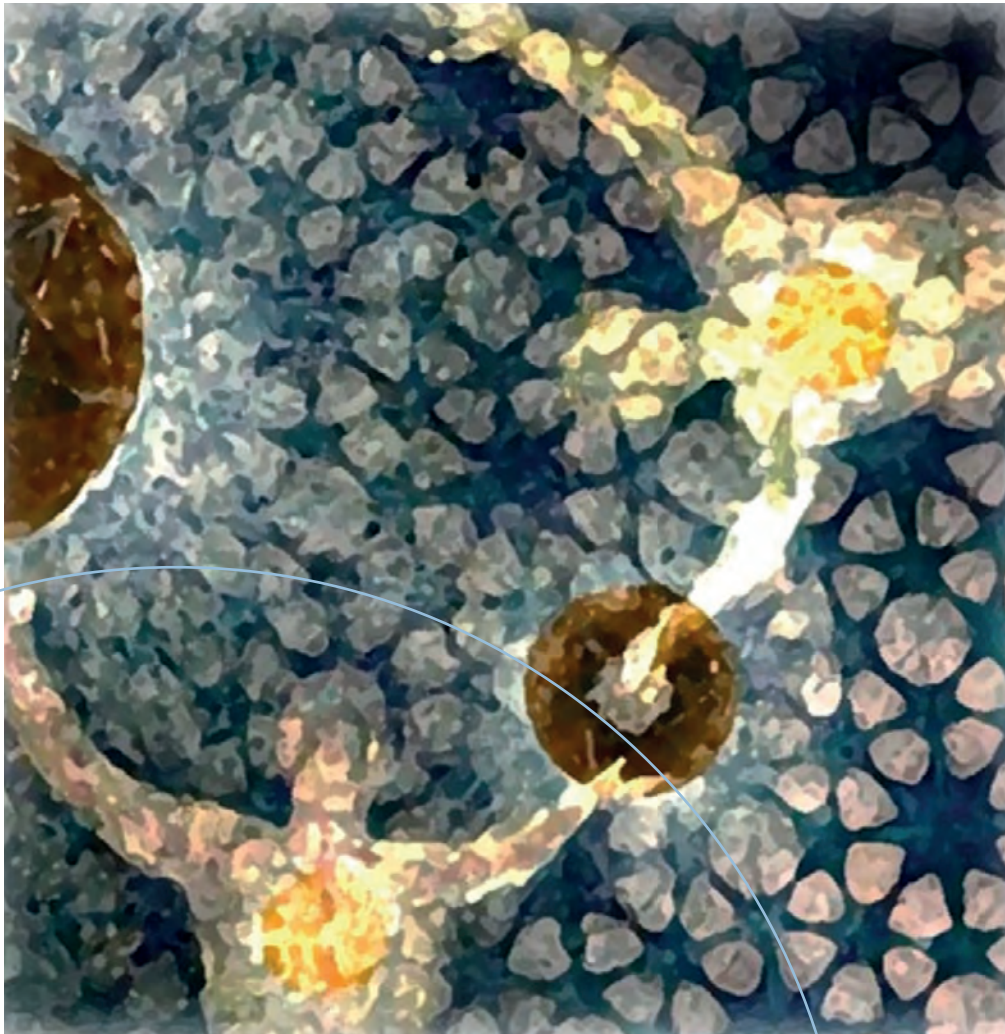
In the presence of this silent messenger, a deeper understanding of impact emerged; the effect our presence can have on one another—the intricate

dance between us, the world, and one another.

Let us navigate this dance with mindfulness, leaving behind a legacy of kindness, empathy, and a profound awareness of the interconnection that binds us all. The silent messenger’s visit reminds us that impact is not always loud; it can be as gentle as a whisper, as powerful and transformative as the soul’s awakening.

Offered by Valerie Haberman,  
Acting Director





*Spiritual Deepening for Global Transformation* This invitation begins with the closing lines of “A Brave and Startling Truth”, an anthem written by Maya Angelou to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations in 1995. The poem speaks of human stupidity, of human awakening, and of amazing human grace, honoring the courageous and stunning reality that:

Sister Cecy had the vision and approached Sister Gabe to help with development....

It was their dream to invite seekers to mature in their personal practice and to gather for mutual learning and deepening in a nurturing multi-spiritual community. Six cohorts have completed the formal SDGT three-year commitment. Many still continue to gather for

Learn more about the Spiritual Deepening for Global Transformation Program on pages 10–15.

When we come to it  
 We must confess  
 that we are the possible  
 We are the miraculous,  
 the true wonder of this world.  
 That is when, and only when  
 We come to it. —Maya Angelou

Are you called?

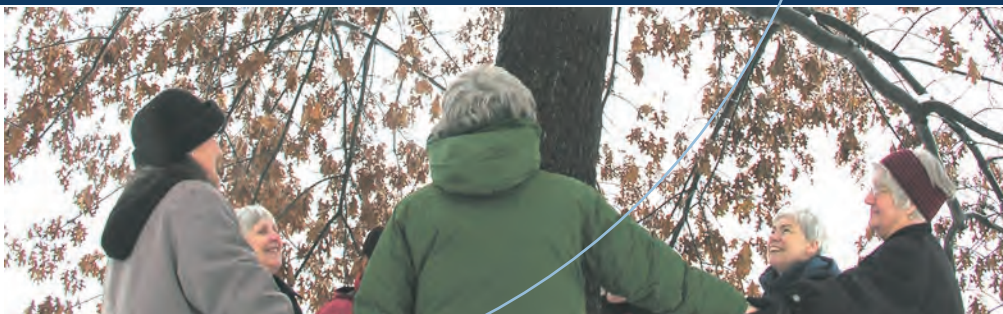
What a brave and startling truth to realize that global transformation happens only as individual souls deepen, one by one, relationship by relationship, and practice by practice—shaped by all the myriad choices we each make. That you are reading these lines is a wonder. That you are part of the Christine Center circle is miraculous. And our common lure to soul depth, supportive community, and heartfelt unfolding is our daring and astonishing truth.

depth and encouragement in smaller, informal ways. We continue to discover that all experience, all that is, is a great complex, ongoing, communal, energetic and alive “one thing”.

Key to the SDGT program is that while our pathways inward might differ, we share together from the growing edge of what we discover on the way. We come together, all of us, as both teachers and learners in an intentional community committed to depth and transformation. Now, miraculously, and wonderfully, a fresh cohort is being convened, beginning the weekend of May 16-19, 2024, and continuing through November of 2026.

Spiritual Deepening for Global Transformation (SDGT) was first designed in 2006 from the desire of the Catholic sisters in residence to support the spiritual awakening so many people had experienced through introductory retreats and workshops.

*Might you be called to join us?*



# Impact

## the Mission of the Christine Center

Each of us influences the world around us simply as we interact with it—our communities, families, and relationships. This speaks to our vision of *Spiritual Deepening for Global Transformation*—as we care for ourselves, our own transformations impact those in our circles. We are one.

Your support of the Christine Center has allowed us to:

- Advance our technology
- Expand renewable energy use
- Renovate buildings
- Add critical staff resources creating a platform for our future

Your support helps to maintain Center operations, necessary to realize our mission, and impacts communities around the country. Your gift makes a significant impact in meeting our expenses, helps to carry the mission forward, and ensures that together, we maintain this sanctuary for all seekers.

### RESULTS LAST YEAR:



Our programs, meditations, personal retreats, spiritual guidance, and sabbaticals served 3,820 people. 1,678 online and 2,142 on campus.



Individual donations and grants from foundations contributed over \$340,000 to meet our annual expenses of \$750,000 and to support several needed improvements to our infrastructure.



Volunteers provided 2,616 service hours working on trails, in the kitchen, bookstore, gardens, office, and Board service (thank you!).

WATCH FOR MORE RESULTS ON OUR WEBSITE IN 2024

### YOUR GIFT MAKES POSSIBLE...



### Ways to Contribute

- Be an Annual Campaign Donor
- Send a gift today
- Schedule a regular/monthly donation
- Make an IRA or stock contribution
- Plan a memorial or legacy gift
- Use your employer match

Visit [www.christinecenter.org](http://www.christinecenter.org) for more details



Multiply the impact of your gift with a \$1:\$1 match to reach our goal of \$150,000

### GREER FOUNDATION

**\$25,000**  
Matching Challenge Grant

The Greer Family Foundation, led by Carl Greer, who believes and supports the Christine Center mission, offers a \$25,000 challenge grant to match donations made to impact the mission and vision of the Center.



## How the new Spiritual Deepening for Global Transformation is Shaped...

Becoming the transformation that we desire is at the heart of the SDGT experience. The first year primarily intends the consolidation and deepening of personal spiritual practice and heartfulness, of becoming aware that inner work is ultimately Earth work. The second year is for the integration of body, earth and soul, realizing that we “matter” together for the sake of world soul. The third year, as Maya Angelou suggests, is for coming to it: for finding our way forward through our hearts and practice, deeply listening for what the world needs from each of us, now.

Covid has taught us new possibilities for convening, and we have learned from past experience. We will meet six times a year (once every two months). The two longer on-site retreats (Thursday evening to Sunday midday) are offered each year in the natural sanctuary of

the Christine Center. With the trees as our sentinels, and the natural elements our guardians, the intention is to host gracious space for communal intensive practice, supportive sharing, heartfelt ritual and personal restoration. An additional four Saturdays each year offer rich opportunity for online learning and integrative conversation.

The two 2-hour Saturday sessions (morning and afternoon) will feature selected deepening conversations presented by seasoned teachers for ongoing exploration.

### The new core team of SDGT conveners...

As the new SDGT emerges Ss. Johanna and Henrita offer their blessing and support. With happiness for the continuation of the Christine Center commitment to transformative deepening in compassion and oneness, they look forward to greeting and supportively participating as time and energy permits. They bless and affirm the new core team of SDGT conveners:

#### SR. GABRIELE UHLEIN

“The time is NOW. We are in the midst of the transformation we have been waiting for. What is needed is Earth-making at the deepest level of soul: rejuvenation, restoration and evolution in the midst of cultural upheaval and the sixth planetary extinction.

Held in a community committed to spiritual deepening for global transformation, change happens one person at a time, responding with depth and compassion. This is the invitation now: to a fully soul-present, earth-centered emergence. Welcome to an uprising of hope and creative becoming.”

Gabriele Uhlein, PhD is a Wheaton Franciscan sister deeply inspired by the spirit of Hildegard of Bingen, Francis

of Assisi and Teilhard de Chardin. She holds a doctorate in depth psychology and process theology from the Chicago Theological Seminary. As Franciscan



scholar and artist-in-residence at the Christine Center, Gabe continues to promote the profound connection between planetary consciousness, contemplation, and compassion in everyday life. Gabriele’s creativity workshops concentrate on the cultivation of intuition, and her spiritual deepening workshops focus on heart-centered, integral Earth presence. Incarnational art and personal ritual making complement her spiritual guidance and spiritual deepening offerings.

#### RONALD E. MOOR

Called to the life of Spirit well over 40 years ago, Ron has devoted his life to deepening his own spirituality and to a vocation of service. A tour in Vietnam shook his beliefs in “The American Way”. An MBA and ten years in corporate America convinced him there had to be a better way. In his questing he has been fortunate to be personally mentored by Joseph Campbell, Carl Rogers, Manly P. Hall, Rosalyn Bruyere, Mary Elizabeth Thunder, Hyemeyohsts and Swan Storm, Roger Weir and Robert Sardello.

Called to sacred ministry, in 1984 he received ordination after completing a four-year program through The Healing Light Center Seminary in Sierra Madre, California. He has been ministerial

guide to three spiritual communities in California and Minnesota. As a part of his ministry he has been a hands-on energy practitioner since ordination, currently with the Thiensville Health Alliance in Thiensville, Wisconsin.

He was a volunteer provider for 25 years at Pathways in Minneapolis facilitating classes and individual healing sessions. Pathways is a nationally recognized health crisis center offering free resources and alternative health care services for those with life threatening and chronic illness. He also served on their board for 17 years.



For three years he participated in an annual medical mission to the Mayan people of Guatemala. He has studied with indigenous North American and Mayan shamans in the US and Central America.

He has facilitated classes and retreats on spiritual growth and bio-field energy healing in 6 states, including at The Christine Center. Through The Christine Center Ron hosts a weekly on-line Tao meditation and discussion circle.

Ron firmly believes we are at the threshold of an emerging, more humane and inclusive civilization embodying spirit and matter. The Call is being sent out. His participation as one of the core faculty of The Spiritual Deepening for Planetary Transformation Program is a major part of his commitment to contribute in this time of unprecedented challenge. *Cont. on pg. 15*

Cont. from pg. 13

## The new core team of SDGT conveners...

### JOANNE NELSON

Joanne Nelson is a writer and retreat/workshop leader certified by the McLean Meditation Institute as a meditation and mindfulness teacher. Her second half of life retreats and spiritual story workshops allow participants to engage and awaken their creative and intuitive best selves while learning to restore and re-story. Joanne has led retreats at the Christine Center since 2016 and looks forward to being immersed in the interspiritual community that this next SDGT cohort will develop. She relishes the opportunity to learn, experience, and grow together.

Joanne is the author of the vignette collection, *My Neglected Gods*, and the memoir, *This is How We Leave*, both available from Vine Leaves Press. Her writing appears in numerous anthologies



and literary journals, she is a past winner of the Hal Prize in nonfiction and has been a contributor to Lake Effect, her local NPR affiliate. Joanne lives in Hartland, Wisconsin where she develops and leads community programs and adjuncts. Over thirty years of experience as a psychotherapist allows Joanne to combine clinical expertise with her love of teaching to create programs that are research based, practical, and enjoyable.

She holds an MFA from the Bennington Writing Seminars and an MSSW from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. More information about Joanne can be found at [wakeupthewriterwithin.com](http://wakeupthewriterwithin.com)

### SHARON DEVO

At ease with a variety of faith and spiritual traditions, Sharon maintains a daily practice of meditation, and prioritizes restorative time in her garden or studio to balance her work life and responsibilities as a caregiver. Sharon is attracted to the integration or interplay of nature and creative exploration on the spiritual path, both in her personal practice and in her work with individuals, groups and day retreatants as a facilitator and Spiritual Companion.



Sharon was present in the first SDGT cohort, completing the program in 2010 and is currently Director at Tau Center, a ministry of the Wheaton Franciscans. In addition to time spent in extended retreat and attending art workshops, Sharon studied Spiritual Direction at Hesychia, Tucson AZ; SoulCollage Facilitation, Madison WI; and Expressive Arts Facilitation at Abbey of the Arts, Mt Hood WA. She holds a BA in Human Resources, with graduate coursework in Training & Development and various professional certificates.

Her intention is to be fully present with you in community, staying open and curious to allow space for our personal and collective inner wisdom to emerge and be heard.

## What can the facilitators offer that can be meaningful and helpful to me?

Gabe, Joanne, Sharon and Ron are long-term dedicated seekers, each with an established and strong personal practice. They each have over 30 years of intensive practice. Each in their own way understands the world in which we live, its precariousness and its splendor. Spiritually multilingual, they are skilled docents on the soul-deepening path, suggesting practical and embodied insights and practices. They offer their questions, their experiences and what they are currently learning. They invite participants to bring their own wisdom and current queries. We will enter the not-yet-known together, helping each other find the just right

“We are not human beings having a spiritual experience.

We are spiritual beings having a human experience.”

Teilhard de Chardin



## Is SDGT right for me?

### SOME DISCERNMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Wondrously and miraculously, as Maya Angelou suggests, you might feel your heart quicken at the invitation to join our newest SDGT community. Here are some considerations to hold in your heart as you discern:

### DO YOU HAVE A SENSE OF “MORE” POSSIBLE IN YOUR SPIRITUAL PRACTICE?

The SDGT is intended for those who are experiencing a sense that more is possible, or that the depth of practice they sense as possible is eluding them. Perhaps you feel a sameness, a dullness with your practice... Perhaps there is no freshness or enthusiasm. Consider these experiences as threshold guardians, waiting for you to engage in a heartfelt, renewed willingness to break through into the not-yet-known of what is possible.

### IS A CALL TO JOIN WITH OTHER SPIRITUAL SEEKERS SOMETHING YOU ARE YEARNING FOR?

### DO YOU EXPERIENCE A HEARTFELT DESIRE FOR SPIRITUAL COMPANIONS?

More than self-directed study and individual retreats, joining an intentional community of seekers offers a synergistic field that opens portals not possible on a solo path. The time of the solitary scholar or mystic is over. Consider the desire for spiritual companionship as a call to participate in a mutually supportive community. The SDGT invites a commitment of three years of deepening together --- to create together a new way of being fully human, fully present, fully conscious for the sake of the world and all beings.

### IS SUCH A COMMITMENT DESIRABLE TO YOU AT THIS TIME?



## What is spiritual deepening anyway?

### HOW WILL THIS HELP ME? HOW WILL THIS HELP OUR WORLD?

While there are many ways to deepen, common among them is the human experience that we are more than our body, and more than what we know ourselves to be.

### DO YOU HAVE A DESIRE TO EXPERIENCE LIFE FULLY—TO THRIVE AND FLOURISH WHOLLY?

Spiritual deepening practices of all lineages open us to the experience of both our human vulnerability and our infinity of soul. We learn the awesome simultaneity of the tangible particular and the transcendent whole. The SDGT draws on nature and metaphysics, and on the many traditions both east and west, indigenous and classical.

Participant seekers are encouraged to deepen in the path that is most resonant for them.

### ARE YOU READY TO DISCOVER WHO YOU TRULY ARE AND WHY YOU ARE HERE?

This is how our world is transformed, one person, one community at a time.

*An ongoing contemplation...*

Humans have never lived in such a critical time of both peril and promise. A poem by Adrienne Rich captures it well:

My heart is moved by all I cannot save,  
so much has been destroyed.  
I have to cast my lot with those  
who age after age, perversely,  
and with no extraordinary power,  
reconstitute the world.

—Adrienne Rich

As we face cultural shifts on a planetary scale how shall we hold in our hearts our own well-being, that of those we love and even those who cause us grief? Mystics all through the ages have asked the same question. Now in wonder, and through miraculous circumstances, it is our turn to puzzle out a fresh world-creating answer. As we enter into another year with countries in critical combat, another presidential election cycle, another series of climate change natural disasters, *where will we find refuge and restoration, hope and possibility?*

### CAN IT BE WE ARE BEING CALLED TOGETHER TO BLESS AND RECONSTITUTE THE WORLD, ONE ENCOUNTER AT A TIME?

If you would like more information and to experience what it might be like to participate in the SDGT 3-year experience, join us for a “come and see” retreat the weekend of March 1-3, 2024. Specifics will be forthcoming on the website.

*Offered by Sister Gabriele Uhlein, OSF*





THE STILLNESS CALLS YOU...

## mission

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

## vision

Spiritual deepening for global transformation.

## values

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

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