

COSEW Annual Report – 2021

“Thank you” sums up Contemplative Outreach of Southeast WI (COSEW) 2021 Annual Report to everyone on our mailing list! The Coordinating Team of Contemplative Outreach of Southeast WI (COSEW) is sincerely grateful to you...

for attending our programs, taking our classes, and participating in our retreats,
for offering your expertise to present programs, and
for donating time, talent and treasure to this organization.

Your generosity is deeply appreciated.

This Report starts back in December 2020, when many of us experienced the disappointment of having our annual Advent retreat at Siena Retreat Center cancelled due to the pandemic. Waiting a whole year, twenty-six of us were able to attend this past December 2021. We were led by Rev. Dr. Shawn Kafader on a contemplative journey with the Advent and Christmas characters. We were given thought provoking phrases to ponder for each member in the story, e.g., the prophets – What are you waiting for? Joseph – The power of silence. The Sages (Kings) – Follow your star.

Currently, the Coordinating Team (formerly called the Leadership Team) consists of the following:

Christine Bender – Presenter Training for Centering Prayer Workshops, Spiritual Journey Courses

Jack Dierks, Program Coordinator for Introductory Centering Prayer, The Welcoming Prayer

Kathryn Ann Kobelinski, SSND –Lectio Divina Workshops, Presenter Training for Lectio Divina

Ann Koerner, CSA – COSEW Treasurer, Retreat Leader

Kenny Kohberger – Prison Ministry (currently on Leave of Absence)

(Pictures and bios are on website, <https://www.contemplativewisconsin.org/about>)

We give a “shout out” to Jill Nowlen, who led COSEW during 2021. Thank you, Jill, for your leadership! She is now on track to be ordained as a Deacon in the Methodist Church. Her focus on ministry requirements is her priority. Congratulations!

Our Mystic Series is in its third year and has been a favorite of many. Last year Jim Gill presented Julian of Norwich, Meister Eckhart, Celtic Spirituality, and Debbie Harmon presented on Mystical Experiences: Uncommon & Common. Also in her third year is Sr. Patricia Rass, SSND, who has brought contemplative Art Making to our audience as only a contemplative artist can.

Other popular programs that are offered annually include:

Lectio Divina- Sr. Kathryn Ann Kobelinski, SSND

The Welcoming Prayer, Jack Dierks

Centering Prayer Introductory Workshops, multiple presenters

Centering Prayer 11th Step Introductory Workshops, multiple presenters

Centering Prayer Presenter Training, Christine Bender

Spiritual Journey Classes and Follow Up Sessions, Christine Bender

The United in Prayer Day was held via Zoom in March 2021 with a celebration of Sr. Ann Koerner’s service to COSEW as Coordinator over the last six years. She continues to serve as Treasurer and leads COSEW’s July and December retreats.

In our fourth year, we continue to maintain The Center for Contemplative Living (The Center), a small suite of rooms located in the Village Court in Elm Grove, WI thanks to a very generous donor. It is a brick-and-mortar place to conduct meetings, have in person programs, conduct spiritual direction sessions, and is equipped with technology for hybrid events, houses our inventory of resources (books, AV materials) and more.

Financially, COSEW has had a solid year, with many members generously donating to the Scholarship Fund and to our operating fund. For the first time in November, we sent out a special letter soliciting donations which resulted in almost \$500 in donations. Thank you again for all the support...many of you give even when we do not ask. Gifts to the Scholarship Fund enabled COSEW to support four retreatants with partial scholarships to attend the December 2021 retreat.

We have been very fortunate to have volunteers step up to design and maintain our website. Claudine Willoughby is credited with moving us to WIX software, starting online registrations for all our programs, using credit cards or PayPal, and also adding a "donate" button. This year we took another giant leap in website design when Stephen Cutsforth did the next upgrade. Take a look if you haven't already, <https://www.contemplativewisconsin.org/> We now have a service agreement with Stephen to maintain the site. Thank you, Claudine and Stephen, for your many volunteer hours dedicated to COSEW.

We have branched out into social media with COSEW's Facebook and Instagram accounts that are synced to the new website for greater network marketing outside of the current COSEW community. The hope is to attract younger generations to the mission and vision of COSEW.

The Coordinating Team has been busy developing internal documents like position descriptions and protocols for various programs and other tasks. This is helping to identify volunteer opportunities for COSEW members. Assistance with preparing folders for the retreats, running off copies, preparing the Center for programs, and entering data into Excel are some of the current tasks you may have time to do. **Please let us know if you have time to volunteer. Thank you!**

To support groups during the pandemic, COSEW purchased a Zoom account for members of COSEW. Five groups are utilizing this account so they can meet regularly for centering prayer. Local groups are listed here on our website [Greater Milwaukee Area Centering Prayer Groups](#). If you are not part of a small prayer group, we encourage you to check them out, ask for guidance from the Spirit, and reach out to the contact person.

COSEW continues to partner with Contemplative Outreach of Chicago Chapter and the Madison group, especially marketing each other's programs. Jack Dierks is COSEW's liaison to the Madison group leadership team and attends their quarterly meetings.

This report will end as it began...THANK YOU for supporting COSEW in so many ways!!

The Coordinating Team
Christine, Jack, Kathryn Ann, Ann, Kenny

Looking ahead...Retreats in 2022: Save the Dates



July 24-30, 2022 (Sunday to Saturday)

The seven-day retreat will be two tracks, Advanced and Post Intensive, and will be held at the Benet Lake Retreat Center in Benet Lake, WI, on the Wisconsin/Illinois border, south of Kenosha. The Advanced Intensive track will have a video with reflection every day, and the Post Intensive track will have more prayer periods and silence. If this is your first or second long retreat, we suggest you sign up for the Advanced track. We will let you know when registration is open.

December 8-11, 2022 (Thursday to Sunday)

In 2022 the Advent retreat is scheduled for December 8-11 when we will explore the universal symbol of the sacred circle known as the “mandala”. We will explore why we are naturally drawn to this sacred shape. Together we will experience how and why entering the process of creating and working with mandalas fosters physical, psychological, and spiritual grounding in our lives. Retreatants will be invited to create four mandalas as part of the retreat, under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Shawn Kafader. We will let you know when registration is open.