

MorningStar

Empowerment for the journey
to wholeness and love



Adventures

In the Dawn
of a new day

Autumn 2004 Issue 2

Volume 19

Following The Morning*

by Julie D. Keefer

On our journey toward greater wholeness, the Spirit of Life has held, consoled, nurtured, taught and challenged us through the living "Word"; the sacred wisdom found in the wildness and beauty of nature, personal journey stories, relationships, the great archetypal stories of the human journey, plus our ongoing curiosity, experience and study of how Spirit works in and through all life. Immersed in this "Word" and the unfolding story of MorningStar these many years, we have learned from these teachers about the mysteries found in the rhythms of stillness, creativity, letting go and the power of death, as essential to the coming of new life.

Today, as we behold the environmental, social, political and economic realities/disasters of our world, our minds and hearts join with global leaders whom we respect in giving voice to our concern about the future of life on this planet. We cannot live in denial that we are in trouble as a species when so many of our natural and human systems are being stressed to the breaking point. Death is an ever present reality.

Many would say that we are in the "end" times and that the greatest glory and reward is in heaven...then continue to exploit the natural resources of the earth at the expense of the most vulnerable of the earth. This, to us, is comparable to what the extremist suicide bombers are saying and doing. Both glorify the eternal at the expense of the sacred trust of right relationship with all life. The glory of God is humans fully alive to the interdependent whole of all creation. Here. Now. We must wake up!

Even though we are all suffering in some way from the stress of rapid change, war, economic shifts and the demise of our environment, we believe we can effect change and bring hope and healing to ourselves and to the natural world

through connecting deeply with the Spirit, which is within and in all life. Hope is found as we awaken to the life-force of Spirit seeking to flow through us, receiving its gifts of beauty, wisdom, freedom and joy, then bringing them into embodiment in the world. How could the vision we hope for come about in any other way?

By opening our senses, our hearts, and our minds and paying attention to what is here in the present moment, we can receive the guidance and love we need to heal and reweave the torn fabric of our ecological and spiritual lives. We call this ecosapience; the wise care of our home, beginning with our minds, bodies, souls and spirits and moving outward into our surroundings and the greater world.

We believe that as people hold this prayerful intent and act toward it, each in our own way, it will make a difference. We are held together in love throughout time and space, and have a choice in becoming more loving and conscious, or not. When the heart and passions are stirred, coupled with disciplined choice and action, miracles will happen!

Since everything is so connected through God's visible and invisible presence and evolving creation, we also believe life continues on in new ways even after we lose our present physical bodies. Consciousness and the actions of love are never lost, only re-cycled into deepening possibilities for the future evolution of the embodiment of the Word on earth and beyond. So, our choices in how we live on earth do matter.

Together we need to muster the courage to overcome fear and make the changes that will help preserve life on this planet for the sake of all the human and natural life present and yet to come. We believe failure to do this is a failure of love.

As humble and wise partners of God's embodiment on Earth, join us in honoring the Sacred Word found in all life. This, for us, would confirm the "end times"; the old paradigm of fear

and division ushered out, and the era of the long awaited "second coming" ushered in. Here. Now. In and through us.

"No, I have never created a child, but I have created a life. I see now, we can give birth to ourselves, not an indulgence, but another form of survival. We can navigate ourselves out of the current. We can pull ourselves out of the river. We can witness the power of erosion as a re-creation of the world we live in and stand upright in the truth of our own decisions. We can begin to live differently. We can give birth to deep change, creating a commitment of compassion toward all living things. Our human centered point of view can evolve into an Earth centered one.

Is this too much to dream? Who imposes restraint on our imagination?"

~Terri Tempest Williams, champion of wilderness preservation, author of Red, and Refuge, and An Unspoken Hunger



"Most of our populace and all of our leaders are participating in a mass hallucinatory fantasy in which the megatons of waste we dump in our rivers and bays are not poisoning the water, the hydrocarbons we pump into the air are not changing the climate, overfishing is not depleting the oceans, fossil fuels will never run out, wars that kill masses of civilians are an appropriate way to keep our hands on what's left, we are not desperately overdrawn at the environmental bank and really, the kids are all right" Excerpt from Barbara Kingsolver's "The Good Farmer"

MorningStar Calendar 2004

Unless otherwise indicated, the suggested donation for day long retreats is \$55-65 and includes facilitation, lunches by Elise, and materials. Please consider the larger donation to offset the cost for someone of lesser means. Thank you!

NOTE: Consider incorporating a personal retreat overnight with your retreat day for \$40 per person.

Re-Connecting with Nature and Self

September 18, 10- 5:00 with Elise Schlaikjer and Julie Keefer - In the simplicity and beauty of the fall forest we will explore various ways to heighten our senses and open the windows of perception before you are given time to just "be" on the land. The aim is to bring awareness of our embeddedness in nature and experience nature as a source for restoration and inspiration. A cosmic time line will be set up for you to walk through the 13 billion years of Earth's unfoldment. We'll begin and end with a Circle of sharing. Suggested donation \$55-65

Land Labors September 26, 2-5 Come help us

prepare for winter hauling wood, making kindling, washing windows and putting in storms, trail making, bedding down the garden, etc. This follows our monthly ritual and brown bag lunch. We will provide a light dinner.

Dreams: A Gateway to Wisdom

October 22 - 23 from 8 pm on Friday to 5 pm on Saturday - With Inie Bijkerk and Julie Keefer. All over the world, all through history, people have regarded dreams, however differently they might approach them, in similar ways. Dreams were seen as giving wise counsel for living right, healing and transformation. They were revered as a manifest link between secular and sacred, human and divine. We will utilize a variety of approaches to explore and honor the wisdom of our dreams, and their symbolic language, by tapping into the rich associations of the group, as well as by taking some time for journaling, drawing, working with clay, movement and/or ritual. Bring a dream you want to work on or you may want to incubate one overnight.

Suggested donation: \$100 - \$125 Includes, lodging, facilitation, breakfast and lunch

Embracing Anger as Creative Ally

November 6th, 10-5 with Julie Keefer

Fear and guilt about having anger are huge for women. Blocked anger is a major obstruction to receiving and experiencing the joy of spiritual, and relational connectedness. Buried, it reaps depression, self-destructiveness or physical illness. Our day will give time for dialogue about our relationship with anger, how we express it, how it affects our lives, and how we can embrace this energy as a creative force for good in our lives. Readings, journaling, movement, clay work and ritual will punctuate our circle sharing.

Suggested reading: Transforming Fire, by Kathleen Fischer. Suggested donation: \$55-65

Integrative Breathwork November 20th 10-6 with Inie Bijkerk, Sylvia Kallemeyn, Julie Keefer - In a safe and spiritually supported environment, this is an opportunity to enter into a process of listening to music geared to the various energy centers of the body while doing faster than normal breathing. It is a means of opening, at your own pace, to deeper levels of self-knowledge, freedom and integration. The experience will be followed with making a mandala. Inie Bijkerk, Ph.D., a therapist, has worked with dreams for over twenty years. She is also a cherished member of our M* Sistery. Sylvia is a certified massage therapist and will be doing partial massage. Suggested donation: \$55-65

To Register for a retreat:

Send your name, address, phone number, e-mail and retreat title and \$40 non-refundable deposit to:
MorningStar Adventures
20564 MorningStar Trail
LeRoy, MI. 49655

If you want an overnight, please call and make a reservation @ 231 768-4368

MorningStar News

New Community Member!

This spring Mary Weber, our treasurer, friend, bought our neighbor's log home on ten acres along Dayspring Path and is now our third year-round community member. We are delighted to have Mary's administrative and creative gifts working with us as well as her passion for recycling and simple living. Mary is an educator and physical therapist doing home health PT for Munson Health Care.

EEWC

Julie presented a seven hour workshop entitled "Pathways of Prayer as Gateways to Healing" at the national conference of EEWC (Evangelical, Ecumenical Women's Caucus) in Claremont, California in June. EEWC consists of inclusive feminist Christian women and men who have done pioneering work to bring a liberating word of equality to women and men through feminist biblical scholarship. Our speakers, including theologians Rosemary Radford Ruether, Phyllis Tribble, and Virginia Ramey Mollenkot, have represented voices of women across all traditions and gender orientations. Our topic, "Crossroads and Open Gates", led us to explore the nature of wisdom as found in the Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions. If you are a feminist and seek a more liberating view of the Bible and of yourself as a spiritual woman, this organization may be for you. EEWC has been a source of wisdom and empowerment for ourselves and our work since 1984. For more information: <http://www.eewc.com>

Monthly Ritual Circle

Our monthly circle continues to grow. If you are looking for a spiritual community with whom to celebrate and learn, we meet the last Sunday of each month at 11:30, followed by a personal brown bag lunch, conversation, or other activity on the land. Participants are invited to take turns creating and leading ritual. Our ritual is open to all seeking to connect with the Wisdom and Wellspring of Life.

Spiritual Midwifery Circle

A circle of six has been meeting monthly to learn a variety of meditation practices, share our journeys and do independent study with a variety of

handouts related to our bio-psycho-social-spiritual journey. The circle will continue with ritual, circle sharing and self directed learning.

The Sisterly Circle

Our governing board, the Sisterly, consisting of eight women, has been engaged in learning, with consultant Ginny Hayataka, more effective ways of communicating and sharing greater responsibility for the affairs of MorningStar. MorningStar is needing a broader base of leadership and support in order to carry us into our future. If you share the mission of MorningStar to empower women through healing, learning and celebrating life, and are open to exploring ways to use your gifts to further this work, let us know. Our board meetings are the second Saturday of the month from 9-1, including a potluck lunch.

Coursework

Over the past year Elise has been studying the science of BioGeometry. Her foundational course was with Dr. Robert Gilbert, founder of Vesica: Spirit and Science Resources in Ashville, NC, and her advanced course was with Dr. Abraham Karim of Cairo, Egypt. As expressed by Dr. Gilbert, "BioGeometry is a design language of shape, color, sound and motion. It reveals the hidden ways in which nature creates and distributes energy for the benefit of living beings. Developed over 3 decades of intensive research by Dr. Karim, BioGeometry combines previously secret methods used in ancient Egypt with breakthrough contemporary European discoveries regarding the spectrum of living energies which affect health and consciousness." This study has been a rich experience for Elise, and she is weaving her learning's into her daily life and surroundings as well as continuing to study this fascinating science.

"Wisdom consists of doing the next thing you have to do, doing it with your whole heart and finding delight in doing it. And the DELIGHT is the sense of the sacred." Helen Luke

The Call by Mary Weber

Tell your story.

Tell it in the first person.

Put away shyness – it is only your "loyal soldier" trying to protect your frightened ego.

The risks are worth it.

The Spirit has no voice, no hands, if not your own.

Commit.

It will only take every fiber of your being and the gifts of the Spirit.

For this you were born, and you know it.

Why spend your life on less?

You've made the commitment in your heart, why not profess it boldly?

Feel the terror and do it anyway!

It will kill you more surely to hold back your passion than to risk being thought of as crazy, gullible, foolish, and abandoned for such.

If you abandon yourself – your Self – what does it matter that the rest of the world approves of you?

Tell your story.

Live your story.

Now.



"Don't ask yourself what the world needs -ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive." — Harold Thurman Whitman

A Gardener's Gleanings

by Elise Schlaikjer

It is August as I write, but it feels like September. Even when the sun shines, the air has a chill edge to it. And there are those in LeRoy who have already been struck by frost. Fortunately, my garden was not one of them. It seems that the razor of delineation comes according to its own mysterious time frame, not the human invention of monthly calendars, nor the yearning for a long growing season. I have been told that there was one summer here in Michigan that had frost every month. I truly hope it never happens again!

One of the greatest joys of having a garden, or a local farmer's market nearby, is eating seasonally. The over abundance, not only in quantity, but also in diversity, of long traveled fruits and vegetables, ripened by gases and not the sun, which are found only in the local supermarket are soon forgotten..... abandoned for the sensual pleasure of eating each new arrival as it appears. I do not eat strawberries or blueberries from the supermarket. Instead I wait like a child at Christmas time for that wondrous moment when the first ripe berry from the garden slips between my lips and my taste buds pick up all the exquisite nuances of its essence.....here is birdsong and moonlight, summer rain and the buzz of honey bees, warm sunshine and berry essence....all wondrously blended with the berry's unique flavor. My nose, too, is treated to the special fragrance that comes from organic sun-ripened produce. No wonder the slugs race me to each ripened berry. I, too, would like to wallow in its sweet body while sipping its goodness!

A lot of this pleasure also comes from watching the first leaves emerge from their winter sleep. Who made it thru the winter? Who was not hardy enough? Who needs special attention? When the first blossoms appear my heart sings. Soon will come the fruit. Gardening is a relationship much like raising children. Tender care is needed along with the power of daily attention. And the rewards of such love are similar.

I have talked here mostly of berries, but it also applies to whatever you grow in your garden. If you do not have the time to garden, then I hope you can find a farmer's market nearby, or

even better; a CSA (Community Sustained Agriculture) where you can buy a share in the produce. Not only will you be supporting your local farmers, eating truly delicious food, but you will also be helping to reduce our reliance on petroleum. What a combination!!!

Blueberries are at their peak now so I am sharing one of our favorite recipes for their use. If you are fond of ginger, use some of it fresh in the sauce instead of the cinnamon. Bon Appetite!

From Elise's Kitchen

Blueberry Couscous Cake

- 6 cups of apple juice
- 1 TB. vanilla extract
- 3 cups couscous
- 1 pint blueberries

-Pick over the blueberries and wash them gently under cold water. Set aside on paper towels to dry thoroughly.

-Place the apple juice, vanilla, and couscous in a large pot, and bring to a boil. Stir continuously, until the couscous has thickened and all the juice has been absorbed.

-Gently fold the blueberries into the hot couscous. Pour immediately into a 9" x 14" rinsed, undried shallow baking pan. Chill until set, about 2 hours. Can be served cold, at room temperature or gently warmed. This is really good with blueberry sauce.

Blueberry Sauce:

- 2 cups of blueberries
- 1 cup of apple juice

Put the two of them in a sauce pan and cook until the berries are soft and have released their juices. If you want a thicker sauce you can dissolve a tablespoon of arrowroot in the apple juice first, stir until the juice clears and then add the blueberries and a dash of cinnamon.



Woman Vision

by Julie Keefer

Who is this Wise Woman who lives within my bones? What is she calling me to? What is the vision she has for my life? How would she live through me? As I catch glimpses of her, this is what I see:

She draws on the multi-giftedness of her being to create a nurturing and empowering place for herself and others--home as a symbol of ultimate Home.

She works to create a life-giving web of relationships which serve to support the journey Home.

She has a gift of hospitality, having something to offer each guest for nurturance: food, a cup of tea, listening heart, insight, information, affirmation, touch. Her home is a womb out of which life evolves and is an external expression of her interior reality and meaning.

She is adept at taking what is on hand and using it for the needs of home-making and soul making; she is ingenious and creative, wasting little and requiring little for fulfillment. She manages her resources well and creates a life-style with a view to keeping it balanced in relationship to the needs of the poor of the world. To her "small is beautiful", and she "thinks globally and acts locally", using her resources for the well-being of others, including her bio-region.

She loves nature and is herself natural and surrounds and fills her home with natural beauty. She is knowledgeable about the flora and fauna around her and tries to live in harmony with all life, knowing of her interdependence with all things. She accepts the cycles of life-death-rebirth and is willing to let go what needs letting go, enabling new life to come forth. She lives in harmony with the seasons of earth allowing them to teach her of her own cycles and seasons.

She is aware of her seasons, her cycles of various interests. In her multitalentedness, she must have a broad palette with which to express herself. As she moves through her seasons of interest, she deepens her skills and abilities through practice, improving her capacity to function in the whole. She is a co-creator of life--an artist who takes her colors from the diverse palette of experience, blending them

together to create something new.

She values her time and tries to use it wisely because she knows, "This is it!" Life is NOW.

She is aware of the needs around her, yet knows what is her responsibility and what is not. She takes care of her own needs well, knowing that this empowers her to be an empowerer of others.

She trusts the healing and unfolding process in others and does not take on for them what they need to learn for themselves. She believes in their capacity to gain the lessons and experiences they need. Yet, she is there to gently remind, encourage, and point the way with her own life. In this she is unconditional in her love, knowing it is ultimately up to each of us to find our own way--and that as each person does so, we will all live in greater respect and harmony with one another.

She is keenly aware of her humanness and need for "not knowing", not needing to be "right". She is humble in her self estimation, yet confident of the gifts she has been given. She knows that all that she has is a gift, and her response is one of gratefulness and a willingness to give back to life that which she knows she must. She gives from the abundance of her giftedness rather than focusing on what she doesn't yet have.

She ages with grace and self nurturing gentleness. Her spirit remains youthful, playful and joyful. Integrity is her mantle. Love and laughter her guides.

How satisfying life becomes the more I value and practice the receptive way of being and integrate it with the active way of being--the Wise Woman Way; a be-er who acts! (Copyright 1993, 2004)

"Blessed are those who have discovered wisdom,
those who have acquired understanding!
Gaining her is more rewarding than silver,
her yield is more valuable than gold.
She is beyond the price of pearls, nothing you
could covet is her equal.
In her right hand is length of days;
in her left hand, riches and honor.
Her ways are filled with delight,
her paths all lead to contentment.
She is a tree of life for those who hold her fast,
those who cling to her live happy lives"

Proverbs: 3:13-18

Enwisen me, Oh God!
 Enbolder me!
 Shake me from my sleep!
 Wipe the cobwebs from my eyes;
 the dust from my ears,
 That I may see your plan
 for my work in this world
 And hear your call.
 Teach my touch to be ever so gentle
 on all your creation.
 Open my heart and inform my tongue
 that I may speak truth passionately.
 With each breath,
 that I inhale and exhale,
 Let me re-spire
 the sweet fragrance of your Love.
 Enwisen me, Oh God!
 Enbolder me.
 Wake me up!

-Mary Weber August 2004

Wilderness Journal

by Julie Keefer

One way I feed my soul is by looking into the mirrors of archetypal stories and nature, inviting the Wisdom of Spirit to teach and guide as I ponder the stories or living realities. I place myself in the characters/archetypes and get a feel for what part of me they represent and what realities of my inner and outer life I'm needing to pay attention to. Sometimes they reveal a wounded and needy self and what I need for healing and integration. For instance, in the Biblical story of Mary and Martha, Martha is upset with Mary because Mary is sitting at the well of wisdom and Martha is feeling burdened attending to the details of living. Jesus tells Martha that Mary has made the better choice, not because attending to details is unimportant, but because Martha has lost her perspective in doing those activities. Her motive may have become too concerned with outer approval as opposed to a deeper purpose motivating her choices. Consequently she becomes anxious.

Yes, I know the misery I cause myself and others when I've not sat at the well to keep my

perspective and actions aligned with my deepest heart's call.

These mirrors also reveal loving actions I am being called to initiate for the sake of maintaining integrity and love. For example, when I see a turtle crossing the road, I am moved to stop my car, get out and assist the turtle to the other side. I know that if I don't, there is a good likelihood the turtle won't make it. The turtle teaches me to remember the slow and vulnerable pace of the journey and the need to counsel and protect the vulnerable aspects of myself from getting run over by the fast lane of life. A hard protective shell will not protect the turtle...or me!

In these moments of reflecting, I feel deeply connected to the mysteries of living and am being compassionately invited to move toward greater integrity and love.

Actually, anything might be a mirror reflecting the presence of divine guidance, if I am open to the wisdom being conveyed. The challenge is to pay attention!



"Eventually, we face the deepest mystery of all: how all of us, the family of life together, are continuously emerging out of the womb of an endlessly pregnant universe....We may never be able to fully grasp the larger system that enfolds us, but we have many hints and many suggestive analogies. The tiniest part of a fern leaf bears the shape of the entire fern branch. When we return to nature, we find that there are many such "fractal" examples, from trees to rivers to blood vessels, in which the very small mirrors the shape and function of the very large." From "Toward an Ecology of Devotion" by Dennis Rivers as published in Earth Light Magazine Vol. 13, Is 49 www.Earthlight.org

Anonymous Cabin Journal Reflections...

Remember to be gentle with yourself and others. We are all children of chance, and none can say why some fields will blossom and others lay brown beneath the August sun. Care for those around you. Look past your differences. Their dreams are no less than yours, their choices in life no more easily made. And give. Give any way you can, of whatever you possess. To give is to love. To withhold is to wither. Care less for your harvest than how it is shared, and your life will have meaning and your heart will have peace.



MorningStar is an organization and a community committed to inner work, outer service, sustainable living and celebration of all life.

We depend on your support through retreats and contributions. Thank you!