

MorningStar

Empowerment for the journey
to wholeness and love

Winter/Spring 2003 Issue 1



Adventures

In the Dawn
of a new day

Volume 19

Ask Earth,

"What
can
I
do
for
you?"

Through the immensity of your Heart,
refine our limited egos with
the Fire of your Love.

To surrender willingly is to awaken to
your Divine Presence,

Ineffable Mystery; plenitude of Life.

As nature freely bestows her gifts,
who among us pauses to acknowledge
her life-giving support?

Awaken!

Mother Earth is a living, vibrant
sacred being.

Her wounds are soars upon our soul.
Help us, O Beloved, to build a world
culture of the heart,
where people from every nation form
true commitment where we all
co-exist in harmony, peace, assurance,
gratitude and love.

Lumen Christi...Holy Wisdom
Nan C. Merrill - Continuum Books, NY

"I swear I will not dishonor my
soul with hatred, but offer myself
humbly as a guardian of nature, as
a healer of misery, as a messenger
of wonder, as an architect of
peace...."

Guardians by Diane Ackerman -
Sysauce Cultural Workers
www.sysauceculturalworkers.org

Following The MorningStar...

In the wake of the escalating chaotic events, both
personal and global, it seems important to commit
to investing in what is essential for life's
sustainability: world peace, just living and loving
community. These seem the only sane way of
coping with the chaos and uncertainty of our outer
and inner lives. To counter the prevalent messages
of fear, which trigger our insecurities and anger, we
must be willing to invest in the practices needed
that keep us connected with our Sacred Center.

The best thing to do with fear and anger is to give
them space, with loving support, to be fully felt and
embraced as friends who want to lead us to a deeper
truth within ourselves that can help us better cope
with outer realities. Doing so can transform their
energies into the clarity of right action. And of
course, this needs to be done over and over in order
to learn how to work with these feelings more
instantaneously, so that fear and anger don't trip
us up, draining away too much precious energy.

We invite you to take time at MorningStar to
connect with the deeper spiritual current running
through your life as a way to sustain health and
well being and to discern your own life response to
a disintegrating world.

Please help us spread the word about
MorningStar to those who could appreciate and
benefit from what we offer:

A place that nurtures the intimate connection with
yourself, with others, with nature; in short, with
God, or however you name and encounter the
Reality of Spirit in your life.

A place that honors and respects each person's
individual process and path of life.

A place offering opportunities and resources for
holistic integration and personal renewal.

Your investment at MorningStar would not only benefit you, it would contribute toward the great paradigm shift toward spiritual embodiment taking place at this time on Earth. It would also help sustain us in these rough waters of cultural change.

An anonymous M* Cabin Journal entry:

I came from
the clamoring voices
the noise, the speed, the action.
I came from the city's heart
the crowds, the traffic
the friction.
I came to the deep, deep snow
and the still black trees
silent, watchful.
I came to
the vast black sky
empty, shining.
I came
and I remembered.

MorningStar News: Gratitude

We are grateful to Marilyn Streider for her many years of service to MorningStar as accountant and treasurer and for Connie Medema for the three years she served on our board of directors. We will miss their presence as Sisterly members, but we bless them on their continued journeys.

And our appreciation and gratitude also go out to the many who have provided sustaining support of MorningStar through prayers, retreats, hands on help, friendship and financial contributions throughout this past year.

We ask for your continued support for 2003 in the ways you feel called.

Year in a glance...

In case you wonder what we do with our time our here in these beautiful woods....Our year consisted of: monthly; ritual and potluck, Sisterly/board gathering, Covenant Group, Archetype Journey Group, Ecology and Spirituality Group, Visioning Group, 171 retreatants, 230 days use for retreats and activities, two mask-making retreats, one sponsored by the local women's shelter W.I.S.E., a Reconnecting With Nature retreat, three labyrinth retreats; for Witness and Park Street Congregational in Grand Rapids, for Fellowship Reformed Church in Muskegon, for a private group

in Glen Arbor, two Labyrinth presentations; in Cadillac, and Glen Arbor, the facilitation of an Archetype workshop for the national women's organization E.B.W.C., our fall festival, four mailings including two newsletters, keeping on top of cabin maintenance and administrative tasks...and grounding it all in our daily prayer and reflection to start our days...just in case you wondered!!!

Symbolism of the Morning Star

Jesus referred to himself as the bright morning star. A Way Shower.

The morning star stands between the darkness of night; our instinctive, intuitive, feeling, receptive selves, symbolized by the moon, or "feminine" aspects, and daylight; our thinking, sensing, activated self, symbolized by the sun, or our "masculine" aspect. The morning star, for us, symbolizes the hope and call to integration of both aspects of ourselves toward wholeness and love which make peace and justice possible in the world.

As integration/ rebirth occur, we manifest more clearly the divine intent for our lives. The captives are set free. The Word/energy becomes flesh! The Way Shower rises in our heart.

Spiritual Midwifery

Spiritual midwifery is a prayerful, mutual process of deep listening to your story or life circumstance to help bring you greater clarity, meaning, purpose or direction. It honors the wisdom within your own being and assists you in drawing that out. A variety of holistic means may be utilized.

Call Julie for an appointment: 231-768-4368 or e-mail morningstar@netone.com.net

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The Cottage Book Shop

Remember to order any books with free shipping through The Cottage Book Shop. Stating your connection with M* will give MorningStar 10% for every book sold. What a deal!!! 1-800-254-5536, pin-7186 e-mail: siepkier@aol.com Thank you!!

Newark To Empower Women (N.E.W.)

MorningStar Friend Marchienne Rienstra has instituted a circle process for small groups of women using nine questions over a period of nine sessions which help empower us on our journeys. For info contact Marty at: marchienne@triton.net.

Wilderness Journal

by Julie Kiefer

This winter has been a time of withdrawing into my cabin "womb" to let the multicolored and textured experiences of my life be woven together into greater wholeness. As I've rested in the silence under this cloak of humility, I've fed my spirit with the Word, I've nurtured my body with centered breathing, simple foods and body prayer, and I've sought clarity on how to proceed in this dangerous and unsettling time in America.

It is a time of letting go thoughts of fearful outcomes and surrendering to the present moment, listening, free from the domination of fear. But to do so often requires awareness of what lies under the fears, and this requires vigilance, humility and compassion to let the deeper agendas be uncovered. What are the hurts, assumptions, illusions, denials and desires that keep me from inner peace and authenticity?

Yes, the Spirit is the flame in my soul burning away the dross of ego's fears and intermittently revealing the peace waiting to be found. Can peace in the world come in any other way?

This I know; that I must hold close to my soul in the soil of life's joys and sorrows, for only from her center of stillness will spring flowers bloom.



"Terror is in the human heart.
We must remove this from the heart.
Destroying the human heart, both physically
and psychologically, is what we should avoid.
The root of terrorism is misunderstanding, hatred
and violence.
This root cannot be looted by the military.
Bombs and missiles cannot reach it, let alone
destroy it.

Only with the practice of calming and looking deeply can our insight reveal and identify this root.

Only with the practice of deep listening and compassion can it be transformed and removed. Darkness cannot be dissipated with more darkness. More darkness will only make darkness thicker. Only light can dissipate darkness.

Those of us who have the light should display the light and offer it so that the world will not sink into total darkness."

— Thich Nhat Hanh in Shanghai, October 19, 2002

A GARDENER'S GLEANINGS

by Elise Sohlkejer

Have you ever noticed that something you have looked at time and again, which seems to be just a pleasant but ordinary part of the landscape, suddenly catches your attention in a new way? That is just what happened to me last summer on one of my numerous drives to Leroy and back. My casual glance at the sumac grove suddenly took in a section that captivated my attention. There, at one end, was a group of ancient, long dead sumacs, whose graceful beauty also radiated a special energy that seemed to call out to me. I really did not know what the call was about and for weeks on my drives back and forth, I pondered its meaning.

Meanwhile, we were making plans for our fall festival which we entitled, "Woman, Earth and Spirit". Part of the fun for me when we have these events is thinking of how to visualize the theme in our decorations. Then it hit me! Paint those old, massive sumacs so that they truly looked like burning bushes and use them as reminders to us all that God is still speaking if we will but listen and that the ground that we stand on is indeed holy. And so paint them I did, all by hand, and I thoroughly enjoyed the process...scrapping off the lichens and old dead bark, and then painting them in shades of red, orange and yellow. I could not help noticing that the energy that drew me to them in the first place became stronger and I enjoyed just looking at them, particularly in the twilight hours where their red radiance took on a life of its own.

After the festival was over we left the "bushes" in place; a reminder of our happy gathering, but also as a reminder of the need to listen to the Spirit as it speaks through the earth, through one another, and most importantly, through listening to our own souls. However, what I did not understand for some

time was that I was being called to tend to my own inner burning bush in more intentional ways. It too was covered with old debris, ways of being that no longer had life and that blocked the original beauty of my soul from shining forth. Reflecting on this with members of my community, they affirmed my desire for time apart in which to renew my inner fires and gain clarity of purpose. And so in the days ahead, I will be inwardly scrapping and clearing, learning to set better boundaries with my time, reverently listening and tending the flame of my soul and her needs.

I feel very blessed by all of this. And I smile at the humor and economy of God, who has a history with us of oil that does not run out, of loaves and fishes which multiply, and bushes that call out from the wayside. My hope now is that someday we may all see outside of each home across the country a bright red painted bush; a heartfelt symbol of each person's reverencing the ground of her or his being and the ground of our beloved earth home.



Each one of us matters, has a role to play, makes a difference.... Together we must reestablish our connections with the natural world and with the Spiritual Power that is around us.

Jane Goodall

Prayer of Surrender

I put myself into your hands today Holy Love/ Sacred Wisdom.
I leave all my fears with you.
May I not deny neither reason nor feeling, but I ask you to direct both.
May I become capable of every audacity and of every renunciation.
May I no longer seek either success or adventure for its own sake, but only in the measure to which it is willed, prepared and offered by you.
I pledge my wholehearted "yes" to this day!
May the deepest good be manifest in my actions.
May the deepest and highest good be manifest through all beings.

May I have the courage and the strength to accept and embrace any hardship I face.

May I learn from this present experience.

May I be given the capacity to make it through.

May I trust that a relationship exists into which my deepest needs and fears can be fully revealed and fully held.

May I trust this relationship into which I am increasingly putting my full weight, believing that I am known, and loved, and responded to.

May I trust that as I realize this tender holding that surrounds me, I will be able to more fully accept life exactly as it is.

Thank you Holy Love that you are healing me according to your perfect schedule!

So be it!

Faith in the future is not dead in our hearts
Better still, it is this hope, deepened and purified
which seems bound to save us.
Teilhard De Chardin

MorningStar Calendar

The theme that seems to be very dominant in many lives these days is variously described as going through a personal "dissolution", a "galactic shift" an "unravelling", a "purgation" of old ways. These seem also to mirror a larger collective call of the Divine for humanity to awaken to the age of spiritual embodiment where we live more fully from an internal guidance system that is deeply connected to/ surrendered to the larger spiritual vision of wholeness and peace for life on Earth; shalom, as Judaism names it.

We encourage you to take seriously your call to participate in this "Great Turning" as Joanna Macy calls it, or the "Great Work" as theologian Thomas Berry names it. And invest your energy into giving space to listening to the shifts happening in your life which empower the birthing of the spirit into greater form on Earth.

Our retreat and workshop offerings invite you to listen in safe and supported ways to the stirrings of your heart and let Spirit guide your next steps in your quest to live peace.

You Have a Song: A Day of Improvisation in the City!

April 26, 9:30 - 8:00

With Lois Hartzler and Becky Kirk, at
Becky's in Grand Rapids.

Expressing soul through playful musical improvisation and quiet "moodling" to listen to the music that wants to be played through us will be the focus of this day of creative expression. The morning will open into improvisational warmups with body, voice and instruments. The afternoon (12:30) will give you time to rest with your journal capturing some of the themes you souls may want to create music around. Or explore the local neighborhood near Aquinas College to find images of inspiration that speak to you soul. The group will re-convene at 4:00 share the fruit of "moodling", more music and ending with a delicious and simple meal. Any level of music is welcome. Lunch is brown bag or out to a local restaurant. "There are no unmusical people", says Lois...and "No wrong notes"

Becky Kirk is a teacher, musician, song writer and singer. Lois is a soulful singer and exuberant teacher of musical improvisation.

Lois and Becky are offering this as a fun-d-raiser for M*....suggested donation is \$40....or more for helping sustain the work of MorningStar.

Writing Your Story

May 24, 10-5 with Marcia Perry

You think your life isn't interesting enough to share? You believe you're "not a writer"? You're afraid people will criticize your spelling or, worse yet, your life-choices? Guess what? You're not the only one. Overcoming such self-doubts and fears is one of the magical rewards of taking a little time to recollect your experiences and put them into words. For many, the hardest part of writing is deciding that this is the time to start.

Maybe you've wanted to tell someone about your life, but didn't know how to pass on a hard-won lesson or bear witness to important world events or just say what it's like to be you. Maybe you've already started a memoir several times or want to edit a journal from a trip you took. Your ambition may be to publish a complete autobiography or simply to pass on one important story to your grandchild. Whatever your reason, here is an

opportunity to discover and appreciate more fully the life you have created and to begin to let others share in its wealth.

Writing things down builds up an image of who you are from the inside-out that other people can appreciate even when you are not physically present. Life is a gift meant to be shared, not hoarded or hidden away. How about "Telling Your Story" this year?

Marcia Perry, a published writer and sculptor, owner of the Ark Gallery in Saugatuck, will serve as a creative counselor to help individuals focus on their specific goals and as moderator for group exchange. Marcia has a Masters in Creative Writing and is offering this as a fun-d-raiser for Morning*....suggested donation is \$40. including lunch.

Women in Praise of the Sacred Feminine

June 7, 10-5 With Kathryn Christian and Julie Keefer

This is an opportunity for women to gather together and sing: to celebrate the sacred feminine in our lives, and to experience the power of the human voice to lift and heal the spirit. Using songs based on remarkable women through the centuries including Mary, Elizabeth, Hildegard of Bingen and Teresa of Avila, we will bask in harmony while allowing our voices to deepen our spirituality, unite us as women, offering our voices as prayer to the Divine. The singing will be deepened through personal and communal reflection, readings and simple body movement.

Kathryn Christian, M.A. in theology, is a singer and composer of music based on scripture and women mystics of the church. Kathryn is a sought after musician for national conferences, retreats and workshops. Her musical releases include Ascension, Come, Holy Mother and Growing into God with Edwina Gateley.

Julie Keefer M.A., is a trained spiritual midwife inviting others to open to the nurturing, healing aspect of Divine feminine reality. Suggested donation, \$40. including lunch.



Inner Turning: Solstice Ritual

June 21 7-9 pm with Pam Poley
consider scheduling a personal Solstice retreat day or two and join us for an evening Solstice ...or just come to the ritual, and as the season turns, listen to what is turning with you.

Pam Poley, M.S.W. is a therapist from Kalamazoo who has worked with women's spirituality groups for several years and has trained with Angeles Arrien using The Four Fold Way

Suggested donation for ritual....free will offering...for the support and benefit of MorningStar.

Suggested donation for retreat cabin is \$40 per person per 24 hours.

Archetypal Journey to Wholeness and Love

June 28, 10-5 with Julie Keefer
Using the Pearson-Marr Archetype Indicator as a springboard, we will explore twelve universal patterns of human behaviors called "archetypes" in depth psychology. These archetypes can serve as a healing mirror to bring greater consciousness and understanding to our journey to wholeness and love. Using material from Carol S. Pearson's book, AWAKENING THE HEROES WITHIN we will explore patterns relevant to our human/spiritual developmental journey: the Innocent, the Orphan, the Caregiver, the Warrior, the Seeker, the Destroyer, the Lover, the Creator, the Ruler, the Magician, the Sage, and the Fool.

The indicator will reveal how active/conscious the twelve archetypes are in your life at the time. The more aware you are of this inner diversity and the needs it represents, the more clearly you can make co-creative choices enabling you to live more compassionately in the moment and effectively in community.

Julie Keefer, M.A. is a certified Journey Guide through the Center For Archetypal Studies.
Suggested donation: \$40-50 including PMAI, several handouts and lunch.

Women and Aging

August 16, 10-5

with the MorningStar Sister's 43rd years of collective wisdom!

In celebration of our aging, this day will give us the opportunity to explore the stages of transition from

mid-life through to the later stages of life as we reflect on and share our journeys. Our Circle dialogue will be punctuated with silence, readings, journaling, celebrating with a mid-day feast, resting in nature and creating a mandala. We are offering this celebration as a fund-raiser for the needs of M*... suggested donation \$40... or more to help us continue offering this safe and supported space.

Re-Connecting with Nature

August 23, 10-5 with Julie Keefer

In the simplicity and beauty of the late summer forest we will explore various ways to heighten our senses and open the windows of perception. The aim is to bring awareness of our embeddedness in nature and experience nature as a source for restoration and inspiration. We will also walk a cosmic time line back through 13 billion years. Julie is a tree rooted deeply in the forest of MorningStar.
Suggested donation, including lunch \$40

Writing Your Story

September 27, 10-5
with Marcia Perry
(See Description above)

Integrative Breathwork

October 25, 10-6 with Inie Bijkerk, Sylvia Kallenmeyn, 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. has been a dream therapist in Grand Rapids for over twenty years. She is also cherished member of our M* Sister's.

Sylvia Kallenmeyn is a certified massage therapist from Grand Rapids, and also owns land near M*.
Suggested donation: \$40 including lunch

Embracing Anger as Creative Ally

November 22 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 or physical illness. Our day will give us time to 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, silence, movement and creating a power stick will punctuate our circle dialogue. Suggested reading: Transforming Fire, by Kathleen Fischer. Julie has much experience with her own anger and in the ways of helping this creative energy be set free for empowering action.

Suggested donation: \$40, including lunch

To Register for a day long retreat:

Send registration form below to:

MorningStar Adventures

20564 MorningStar Trail

LeRoy, MI 49655

NOTE: Consider incorporating a personal retreat overnight with your retreat day for \$35 per person.

Check our Website for information on our facility and other resources at:

www.morningstarretreatcenter.net

or call, 231-768-4368 for more information

Personal Retreat and Spiritual Midwifery

If you are uncomfortable coming on retreat alone, yet want to experience the nurture and healing found in solitude and silence in a cozy cabin amidst nature, you can schedule a single or daily session of holistic spiritual midwifery with Julie Keefer for exploring what is surfacing in your awareness to bring greater understanding and integration for your journey. Suggested donation: One night and one session: \$75 Two nights and two sessions: \$140.

Or/and

Circles of Process Art, Conversation, music and fire light:

Consider a day or two of personal or small group retreat and incorporate an afternoon (3-5) circle or evening bon fire to explore creative process or dialogue around what is pertinent in our lives.

Sign up for these dates:

MAY 17, JULY 12 AND AUGUST 2, 3-5

Creative process with the medium of collage mandala with Sylvia Kallemeyn. Sylvia is also available for massage (\$45 per session) during this weekend as well as the week of July 7-13

JUNE 14, AUGUST 9, 3-5

Creative Expressions, or nature exploration with Becky Kirk, artist and naturalist.

JUNE 28, JULY 26, AUGUST 30, SEPTEMBER 27

Bon fire, music, poetry and storytelling with Becky Kirk and John Harper.... an invitation for all to come and share their gifts... or just enjoy the campfire. 7:30 - 9:30

NOTE: Please call to let us know if you will be coming to a circle. Free-will donation for the needs of MorningStar are welcomed for all gatherings, circles and bonfires

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

email _____

Retreat Title _____

Requesting extra retreat day:

Saturday night _____ @ \$35

Enclosed donation \$ _____

O Radiant Star of the morning dawn
come light our way, our hearts be drawn.
Take our minds, hearts and hands this day
that we might lead others
in Your most holy way.
May we stand firm and gently strong,
even when others say we are wrong.
Help us remember to always look to You
knowing Your illuminating Word
will surely see us through.
And may we never forget to give You praise,
that in the end, to You we bring glory
as You unfold our most sacred story.

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