



# Spiritual Light Center

**Newsletter—March 2015**



## The Wearin' of the Green

March is the month of St. Patrick's Day, and the celebration of all things Irish or Green. Ireland, after all, is known as the Emerald Isle.

Where I grew up, people not only wore green on St. Patty's Day, they also dyed their hair green, drank green ale, and even threw green dye into our Mystic River.

But what does it mean to wear Green? Green is the color of Spring, of New Life, and of Hope. To don Green is to put on hope that the Winter is over—that the time of turning within will give way to a new attitude of light and openness, of fresh ideas and new beginnings. Seeds are sown in Spring, and babies were traditionally conceived in Spring.

Green is also the color of Healing. It's one of the colors of the Heart Chakra, whose energy flows from the heart down the arms and through the hands for transformation. I like to think of healing as "wholing" in the old meaning of the word – to make whole again. Green is also the color of Archangel Gabriel who oversees and intercedes in the process of healing and making whole again.

Green is the color of balance. It sits in the middle of the color (light) spectrum, midway between Red (Infra Red) and Violet (Ultra Violet). Green, the color of the Heart Chakra, is the fulcrum point between the three lower Chakras (Root, Sacral and Solar Plexus) and the three upper Chakras (Throat, Brow, and Crown).

It is the balance between the Earthly (earthy) and the Spiritual, between emotions

and cognition. It is the bridge between creative development and creative expression. It is the mediator between seeing with passion ("through a glass dimly") and seeing clearly.

Green has many hues. Think of the difference between "heavy-hearted" and "light-hearted" – perhaps the difference between Kelly Green and Spring Green.

We also can't forget that green is the color of the dollar. Why is that? Could it be that money is meant to be an instrument of healing, rather than "the root of all evil?" Actually, isn't money that is the root of all evil, it is the love of money, or greed, that is its root.

As I read over what I have written above, about all the many meanings and powers of Green, I can't help remembering the famous words of Kermit the Frog: "It ain't easy bein' Green!"

Happy Spring Everyone!  
Arthur Cataldo, President

### OUR VISION STATEMENT

**The Spiritual Light Center is a peaceful and joyful fellowship of individuals, centered in love, dedicated to the God within, and honoring the many paths to truth.**

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

**We seek to develop our highest selves by continuous sharing of spiritual ideas, in an environment of unconditional love and respect for others.**



## ONGOING EVENTS AT SLC

**Every Tuesday at 5:15 p.m.** - Join our group in the Hall as we watch a selected film of a spiritual nature, followed by discussion to develop our evolution. Afterward we choose a restaurant and go out to eat!

**Every other Wednesday, March 11 & 25 from 5:00 to 6:30p.m.** – Come to **The Sacred Circle/TEA**, an open group dedicated to spiritual sharing and growth, facilitated by Tina Wardell. Contact is 828-276-6557.

**Every other Thursday, March 5 & 19, at 5:15 p.m.** - Please join us for our meditation group in the Chapel led by Dr. Richard Kimball. We have an informative discussion followed by walking and sitting meditation. Call Richard at 371-3425 for further details.

**Every Thursday at 6:30 p.m.** - Come join us for our **book study**. We've recently begun **A New Earth** by Eckhart Tolle. He is fascinating, and this book is excellent!

## UPCOMING SPEAKERS

### March 1, 11 a.m.

**Nancy McGimsey** is a professional speaker and singer/songwriter who's produced four CD's. Nancy has inspired with her songs for over 20 years. She will share on "Gratitude: Our Best Friend in Times of Trial." Let's welcome her to SLC!

### March 8, 11 a.m.

**Bill Groves**, our Office Manager, addictions counselor and former priest will speak on "The Spirituality of Surrender".

### March 15, 11 a.m.

**Millard Deutsch**, author and futurist who has lectured internationally on *fascinating* topics, speaks on "The Clash of Cultures."

### March 22, 11a.m.

**J. Robin Whitley** is a poet, musician, and author of two books. Robin holds the M.Div. degree from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. She will be sharing with us on "Sacred Life, Sacred Death."

### March 29, 11 a.m.

**Rita deMaintenon**, a retired educator, speaker, and full-time fiber artist returns to speak on "Spiritual Refreshments."

### Friday, March 27, 6 p.m.

**Judy Stepp** will speak in the Fellowship Hall on "Welcoming Changes." Gain skills in embracing the value of changes we experience, especially when that benefit may be difficult to see.



## SPIRITUAL LIGHT CENTER INFORMATION

80 Heritage Hollow Drive, Franklin, NC 28734  
Right behind the Gazebo Restaurant in Heritage Hollow  
828-369-3065  
slcfranklin@ frontier.com [www.spirituallightcenter.com](http://www.spirituallightcenter.com)

# A Spring Potpourri of Inspiration

## *☞ Peter: A Symbol of Wobbling Strength* ~by John Shelby Spong

In Matthew's Gospel Jesus and his disciples arrive in the town of Caesarea Philippi, where he will focus their attention on his identity. Jesus inaugurates this crucial conversation by asking them to disclose the gossip they are hearing: "Who do people say that I am?" Tell me the speculation. The disciples give him their answers. Some people say you are John the Baptist, some say you are Elijah and some say you are Jeremiah or one of the prophets. It was all very flattering. Each of these people was a Jewish hero, but it was all still gossip, nothing more. Jesus then changes the dynamic by drawing the conversation to a level where commitment has to replace gossip: "But who do *you* say that I am?" The disciples were now being asked to put themselves on the line. Peter becomes their voice, which is a frequent pattern. To understand the role Matthew has assigned to Peter, let me lift Peter out of this gospel and see how Matthew has portrayed him.

Matthew first mentions Peter in chapter four. It is the story of when Jesus, walking along the Sea of Galilee, beckons two sets of brothers to become his disciples. Peter, quite characteristically, is the first one to be invited. He is then followed by his brother Andrew. Shortly thereafter on the same lake shore, Jesus calls James and John, the two sons of Zebedee. At this point, the disciples are four in number. All four are fishermen. To be a fisherman was a very low position in Jewish society. It did not require either the ability to read or to write. That is how Peter enters Matthew's story. He is not mentioned again until chapter 10, when Matthew simply gives us a list of the twelve disciples. His original order is still intact. Peter is first, then Andrew, followed by James and John. Only then do we learn the names of the other eight. In this gospel, Peter is always listed first. In chapter 14, Peter once again is lifted out of the pack and made to play a pivotal role. This is when the story of Jesus walking on the water is being related. It was Peter's test and as usual he failed it. Peter wanted confirmation that the ghostlike figure walking on the water was really Jesus. "If it is you, bid me come to you on the water." Jesus bids him to come. He steps out of the boat and begins to walk toward Jesus, but his courage quickly fails. Fear consumes him and he cries out in panic. Jesus, we are told, lifted him back to his feet and into the boat. Courage and fear are always coupled in Peter.

Next comes this Caesarea Philippi episode in which Peter is said to be the first to recognize messiah in Jesus. His words, Matthew said, were: "You, Jesus, are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." It is a significant moment in the story. Matthew has Jesus commend Peter on his insight. You have seen beyond the normal limits of human life, Peter. You have articulated a truth that flesh and blood could not have revealed to you. It is that kind of faith and commitment which must form the foundation of my movement. You, Peter, will, therefore, be the rock upon which I will build my church. You, Peter, will hold the keys to the Kingdom.

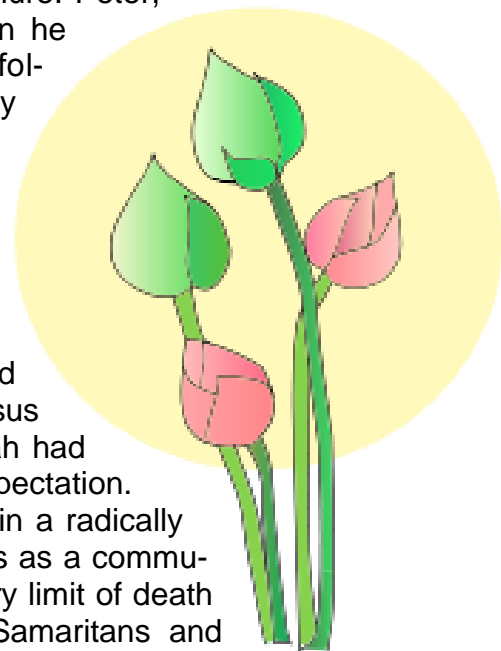


What you bind and loose on earth, shall be bound and loosed in heaven. You will act with my authority, as my surrogate. It was a powerful affirmation.

Peter, however, *immediately* wobbles. When Jesus begins to tell him what messiah means, his courage once again fails him. Matthew has Jesus say to him: "I must go to Jerusalem. I will suffer many things. I will be put to death and I will rise again." That is what being messiah requires. Horrified, Peter cries: "God forbid. This shall never happen to you!" The one, who moments earlier, was proclaimed to be the rock is now identified with Satan. So, Peter the man of courage, who sinks on the water, becomes Peter, the man of faith, who is now Satanic.

We meet Peter next in this gospel on the Mount of the Transfiguration (Matt. 17). He is once again the leader, who identifies Jesus with Moses and Elijah, in a trinity of Jewish heroes. He is then rebuked by a voice from heaven for his inability to understand the uniqueness of Jesus. Messiah is not one among equals. The pattern continues again and again in Matthew. Peter next will claim that he has left all to follow Jesus (Matt. 19:27), but then he will ask Jesus what his reward for doing so will be. He rises and falls on every wave. Next he becomes a braggart. "I will never forsake you" (Matt. 26:33), he claims. Quickly however, his braggadocio fades and his vow to defend Jesus turns first into being one who could not even stay awake in the Garden of Gethsemane, to being the one who denies Jesus three times. The last portrait of Peter in Matthew's gospel is not a picture of a rock, but of a broken man, defeated and weeping bitterly. After this episode Peter never appears again in Matthew's gospel. He is not mentioned in any of Matthew's stories of Easter. That surprises people. Nowhere in this gospel is the one called "The Rock" rehabilitated from his denial, collapse and failure. Peter, the classic flip-flopper, the man who always talked better than he acted, is in this gospel a symbol of the struggle that all of Jesus' followers were destined to have. They had to make sense not only of Jesus' death, but of what would later be their synagogue expulsion. Peter was the symbol of those who had to act before they could see or claim their future.

Messiah to most Jews meant vindication. Messiah embodied the Jewish hopes that the throne of David would someday be re-established and the nation of Judah would once again be recognized as a country of worth. In their dreams messiah would bring triumph not tragedy, victory not defeat. The disciples of Jesus had to deal with the hard facts that the one they called messiah had been crucified; that did not fit into any part of the traditional expectation. Despite that reality, something continued to drive his followers in a radically new direction. Something compelled them to re-form themselves as a community after the crucifixion. Something about him transcended every limit of death and defeat. Something about him transformed Canaanites, Samaritans and Gentiles into part of the same family. Something gave his disciples a new vision of who God is and that enabled them to step beyond their boundaries, to discover love without limits and to understand being without status. Something gave them a vision of wholeness. Something empowered them to go where they had never gone before. Something convinced them that everything they meant by the word "God" they had found in the human Jesus of Nazareth. Something enabled them to see that resurrection can come out of crucifixion, that life can emerge out of death and that being can be found, not in the quest for personal survival, but in the act of giving one's life away.



Something redefined “messiah” not as a victorious warrior, but as something that can be found in losing, in dying, in powerlessness and in living for another.

Peter stands for every man and every woman who has ever lived through this transition of consciousness. He stands for those who could glimpse the truth long before they could live on the basis of that truth, for those who waffled between faith and fear, between courage and cowardice, between strength and weakness. Peter was the symbol of all who struggle in faith, who must accept their imperfect, developing humanity.

Matthew was not writing history, he was chronicling the human response whenever the transcendent is engaged. Jesus did not predict his passion; those were rather the stages through which believers had to travel. Christianity was not born in a one-time conversion experience, but in the struggle to understand, to discover that God is not found in power, but in weakness, not in life but in death, not in separation but in unity. The Church of Jesus Christ was never built on solid rock; it was built on a compromised and weak humanity. The Christian life is not the life of victorious winners. It is like the unseen leaven in the loaf that causes the bread to rise; it is like the salt in the soup of life that gives life its flavor; it is like the pinpricks of light that penetrate the darkness. The Christian movement was never designed to dominate the world, or to rule with some claim of divine power. The concept of “Christendom” deeply distorts the gospel. We are rather weak, wobbly, compromised human beings in whom glimpses of the holy can occasionally be seen. God works through the ordinary, the powerless, the human and the broken to bring about the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, where unity overcomes all divisions, where love transcends all boundaries, where oneness in God creates a new humanity.

“You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” That is not a creed, that is a confession and into that confession we walk every day of our lives. That is Peter’s identity. He is the symbol of our humanity. With him we walk into a faith we will never capture, for the journey, not the destination, is the meaning of God.



### *Allowing Others to Walk Their Paths* by Madisyn Taylor

Everyone is entitled to seek out their own path leading from the darkness into the light. Watching a loved one or a peer traverse a path littered with stumbling blocks can be immensely painful. We instinctively want to guide them toward a safer track and share with them the wisdom we have acquired through experience. Yet all human beings have the right to carve their own paths without being unduly influenced by outside interference. To deny them that right is to deny them enlightenment, as true insight cannot be conveyed in words. Rather, each individual must gain illumination by making decisions and reflecting upon the consequences of each choice. In allowing others to walk their paths freely, you honor their right to express their humanity in whatever way they see fit. Though you may not agree with or identify with their choices, understand that each person must learn in their own way and at their own pace.

The events and circumstances that shape our lives are unique because each of us is unique. What touches one person deeply may do nothing more than irritate or confound another. Therefore, each of us is drawn to different paths—the paths that will have the most profound effects on our personal evolution. If you feel compelled to intervene when watching another human being make their way slowly and painfully down a difficult path, try to empathize with their need to grow autonomous and make their own way in the world. Should this person ask for your aid, give it freely. You can even tell them about your path or offer advice in a conscious loving way. Otherwise, give them the space they need to learn from their own mistakes, to enjoy the fruits of their labors, to revel in their own triumphs, and to discover their truths from their personal choices.

The temptation to direct the paths of others is a creature of many origins. Overactive egos can convince us that ours is the one true path or awaken a craving for control within us. But each person is entitled to seek out their path leading from the darkness into the light. When we celebrate those paths and encourage the people navigating them, we not only enjoy the privilege of watching others grow—we also reinforce our dedication to diversity, independence, and individuality.

## *What the "God Particle" Discovery Could Mean for Spirituality*

from [mindfueldaily.com](http://mindfueldaily.com)

The Higgs-Boson is a subatomic building block that gives mass to everything in the Universe. The confirmation of its existence in 2012 at the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland validated the Standard Model of Physics. But what does the discovery of the Higgs-Boson mean to humanity on a spiritual level?

Neither scientists nor theologians care for the Higgs-Boson's "God Particle" nickname, and yet the particle is so fundamental to all that exists, the moniker makes sense. Literally everything that we can see or experience has this particle at its foundation.

Many spiritual traditions have at their core the concept of Oneness -- that all is One, interconnected. Modern science already tells us we are all entangled at a quantum level due to our common origin from the Big Bang. The confirmation of the Higgs-Boson confirms that at the deepest levels, anything and everything here has a common building block, a common foundation.

In centuries past, "Oneness" was just theory, speculation. It was a compelling concept, yet it could not be proven scientifically. Today, the fact that "we are all connected" has been substantiated from a number of directions. The common origin point of All That Is (The Big Bang), the Higgs Field, the Unified Field, and the Higgs-Boson all point to the fact that everything has a common foundation.



We are all One. Everything any one of us does influences the whole, even if you're just having a thought. If you do something dishonest and think you've "gotten away with it," think again; it all registers in the Field, and it all matters.



Ultimately, it's up to each individual to decide how the finding of the Higgs-Boson influences their lives and spirituality. However, with its discovery, it's getting harder and harder to deny that we're truly all in this together.

☞ "You cannot manifest what you want; you can only manifest what you already have. Jesus gave the key to this creative use of mind when he said, 'Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours.'" *Eckhart Tolle*

☞ "I am a hole in a flute that the Christ's breath moves through. Listen to this music."  
*Hafiz, 14<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet*

## ☞ *What is Spiritual Growth?* by Remez Sasson

Spiritual growth is an inner process, not only for people seeking spiritual awakening and who live in monasteries, but for everyone. Actually, the term is misleading. The spirit is perfect and does not need to grow. It needs to 'awaken' and know itself. The spirit is already an inseparable part of the One Spirit, which is present everywhere. What you need to do is to remove everything that hides this awareness.

Spiritual growth is the process of getting rid of misguided concepts, thoughts and beliefs about who you are and about the world in which you live. Through this process you increase your awareness of your real essence, which is beyond the ego and the personality. By this process you drop negative and limiting habits and let the inner self within you shine. It is a process of looking inside, shedding your illusions and uncovering your true essence, which is always present, but hidden beyond the ego-personality. With these words I am not stating anything new or extraordinary.

Imagine a radiant bulb of light, hidden beneath layers of various materials. In order to let the light of the bulb shine out and illuminate the surroundings, you do not have to increase the light or change the bulb. All you have to do is to take away the layers that are covering it. As you remove layer after layer, the light becomes stronger and shines more radiantly. This requires some inner work. You can do this inner work without leaving your environment. You don't need to go and live in an ashram. All you need is desire, perseverance and planning your day right, so that you find time for the inner work.

## Spiritual growth tips:

- Learn to focus your mind and control thoughts through daily meditation.
- Read spiritual literature and gain spiritual support by associating with people who are going through this spiritual process.
- Developing a certain degree of emotional detachment so that outside conditions would have less effect on your mind and moods.
- Acknowledge the fact that you are a spirit with a physical body, not a physical body with a spirit. If you can accept this idea, it will change your attitude toward many things in your life.
- Maintain a lifestyle of gratitude. Your inner self is stronger than your circumstances. Don't let circumstances and situations dictate to you how to feel or think.
- Endeavor to focus your attention on everything you do, instead of letting your mind wander wherever it desires.
- Do your best to always be tolerant, patient, tactful and considerate.

## Growth by Anthony de Mello, SJ

"Calamities can bring growth and enlightenment," said the Master.


And he explained it thus:


"Each day a bird would shelter in the withered branches of a tree that stood in the middle of a vast deserted plain.


One day a whirlwind uprooted the tree, forcing the poor bird to fly a hundred miles in search of shelter--till it finally came to a forest of fruit-laden trees."


And he concluded:

"If the withered tree had survived, nothing would have induced the bird to give up its security and fly."

 "The sun does not radiate life and warmth today and darkness and chill tomorrow; it cannot, due to the nature of its being. Nor does God radiate love at one time, while at other times anger, wrath, and displeasure flow from His mind toward us. God is All Good, always love. He never changes, no matter what we do or have done. He is always trying to pour more of Himself through us into visibility so to make us grander, larger, fuller, freer individuals." ~H. Emilie Cady

 "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." ~Dr. Martin Luther King

 "Just as a candle cannot burn without fire, men cannot live without a spiritual life." ~The Buddha

 "Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate." ~ Dr. Carl Jung





~ March 2015 ~						
◀ February						April ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 11:00 Sunday Service <b>Nancy McGimsey</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 5:15 Movie Night	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 5:15 Meditation 6:30 Book Study	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 11:00 Sunday Service <b>Bill Groves</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 5:15 Movie Night	<b>11</b> 5pm TEA	<b>12</b> 6:30 Book Study	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 11:00 Sunday Service <b>Millard Deutsch</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 5:15 Movie Night	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 5:15 Meditation 6:30 Book Study	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 11:00 Sunday Service <b>J. Robin Whitley</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 5:15 Movie Night	<b>25</b> 5pm TEA	<b>26</b> 6:30 Book Study	<b>27</b> 6:30 in the Hall <b>Judy Stepp</b> on "Welcoming Changes."	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 11:00 Sunday Service <b>Rita deMaintenon</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 5:15 Movie Night	<b>Notes:</b>			