

Natural Spirituality Program

Emmanuel's Natural Spirituality Program, begun in 1991, provides a context for incorporating inner work - attention to dreams and synchronicity (meaningful coincidence) - into Christian life. While this approach to spirituality is new for our time, it is not new for Christianity. In the Bible, dreams were crucial ingredients in the spiritual lives of men and women of faith, including Jacob, Joseph, and Daniel in the Old Testament, and Mary, Joseph, Peter, and Paul in the New Testament. In the Book of Acts there are numerous accounts of early Christians being guided both by dreams and by meaningful coincidence. Emmanuel's Natural Spirituality Program offers the modern tools of Jungian psychology for gaining awareness of this naturally occurring flow of the Holy Spirit through the ordinary life of every individual.

The Natural Spirituality Program is made up of five parts:

- 1) A seminar is offered once a year for people who are interested in finding out what the program is all about. The seminar teaches the basic concepts of Jungian psychology, which include consciousness and the unconscious, dreams, synchronicity, individuation, and the problem of reconciling life's opposites, especially our masculine and feminine natures. The course is centered around *Dreams, God's Forgotten Language*, by John Sanford. *Natural Spirituality, Recovering the Wisdom Tradition in Christianity* by Joyce Rockwood Hudson is used for reference. The format is lecture and group discussion.
- 2) The Journey Groups are dream groups for those who want to put theory into practice. There are currently three Journey Groups that meet: Sunday from noon (light lunch) until 2:30, Tuesday mornings from 10:00 until 12:30, and Friday afternoons from 1:00 to 3:30. Journey Group members help each other gain insight into their individual lives by unfolding the symbolic language of their dreams. The Journey Groups provide a rich experience of Christian community as their members undergo gradual transformation and healing and grow into an ever deepening relationship to God.
- 3) The Natural Spirituality program publishes *The Rose*: inviting Wisdom into our lives and churches, a semi-annual newsletter/magazine offered free of charge to help link together groups and individuals engaged in the integration of dream work and other authentic aspects of the inner journey into regular Christian life. *The Rose* publishes articles submitted by journeyers from any and all locales. It is a forum for the telling of personal stories; for the sharing of dreams with collective meanings; for the setting forth of new insights and understandings gained from the inner journey; for the sharing of relevant books; for the analysis of movies; for offerings of poetry and short reflections; for the publication of apt sermons, heard and submitted by people in the

pews; for the exchange of information about how natural spirituality programs are conducted in different places; and for the announcement of upcoming speakers, conferences, and retreats. One issue summarizes the lectures given at the Haden Summer Dream Conference at Kanuga each year.

4) The Altar of Thanksgiving (the Founder's Altar) is located in the left transept of the nave and is tended by those in the Natural Spirituality program. For many years it has been widely used by both children and adults, for placing mementos representing something one is thankful for or representing a difficulty one is passing through. The items are removed periodically, and once a year, between Easter and Ascension Day, they are disposed of in a prayerful ceremony.

5) A Natural Spirituality Regional Gathering convenes each year over the second weekend in February. The conference takes place at Mikell Conference Center in Toccoa, GA and will be held February 10-12, 2012. A Registration Form can be downloaded from this website before each conference. Sorry, we can't accept credit card. The Gathering contains a one-day conference embedded in the weekend event (Feb. 11, 2012). Its purpose is to offer the gifts and tools for the inner journey to those who may not have the time or the funds to attend a longer conference. Our goal is to keep the conference affordable. To that end keynote speakers offer their services at no charge, and the workshops are led from within our regional area.

To be added to the mailing list for *The Rose*, send your name and address to the Editor by email (receive.therose@gmail.com) or by snailmail (The Rose at Emmanuel Church, 498 Prince Avenue, Athens, GA 30601). Your free subscription will begin with the next issue of *The Rose*. If you would like a copy of the most recent issue, please send in \$1.50 for postage. Back issues of *The Rose* can be view and downloaded at www.seedwork.org.

We are excited to announce that we now have a website for our conference that has been developed by Sarah Norton. You can download a registration form and see other information about the conference. Check it out at naturalspiritualityregionalgathering.com.