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# Living in the Balance

## November and December 2018

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I woke in the night to find myself again in Dante's dark wood. A dark, dark wood where the path was lost. Ok. Those "I'm lost" thoughts are tempting. The middle of the night "hour of the wolf" visitations with the usual intrusions into sleep....What's the point? Why am I doing this? It's useless. Futile. I can just stay here in my bed or binge watch something. Or wander around seeking comfort and sweetness in the refrigerator or the pantry. Years ago after I quit smoking, I found a cigarette in a glass case that said, "break in case of emergency." Now I have chocolate and can always chew through the bag opening if I need to.

Anne Lamott says that the road to enlightenment is long and difficult, and you should try not to forget snacks and magazines. In that regard I feel totally prepared. But they don't keep the wolf out.

I recently met a young woman who is working hard....and so are her friends....to make a difference. She has her own business and she works magic as that generation can with social media. She can help you structure all of your online communications so that your message....and you.... come across as you desire. Her day is screen time. Our conversation was rich. She talked about all the political work that she and her friends are doing. Canvassing. Calling. Showing up. Walking the talk. She confided that there was a struggle a lot of the time. "We struggle to stay in the party. Many times, we are half in and half out." I replied, "I get it." I spent our time listening and asking, "What do you need from me and women my age?" "We need for you to listen and help us stay focused. We need community. We want dialogues." Boy howdy, I thought. I can do that. Having ears to hear is one of my best tools.

I did tell her one story about "keeping on when you think you can't keep on keeping on." Last spring, I was at a downtown meeting of Greenville's community and business leaders and the topic was "teacher recruitment and retention." I attended to keep myself up to speed on the issue, but honestly, as I sat there I found myself quietly rolling my eyes and thinking, "I could give this talk." "There is nothing new here." "Salaries suck." "No administrative support." "Lack of parent support." "Not seen as professionals." The entire committee in my head paraded through with their well-worn "been here, done it." And then the Universe sent me a message in the person of former Governor and Secretary of Education, Dick Riley. I am butter in the palm of his hands. Greeting him is always a hug and a chat about what is happening in the world. His eyes twinkle and his spark blazes bright. And after our hug and chat he sits down in the chair directly in front of me and I realize that I will be looking at the back of his head for the entire presentation. Message received. I know that as long as I have been trying to make a difference carrying my own grain of sand that it pales in comparison to all the train loads of sand that Dick Riley has carried. And he's been at it for sixty years. And he's still at it. Showing up. Making a difference. Carrying on. Still. A light comes into my dark wood.

*"God has not called me to be successful. He has called me to be faithful." – Mother Teresa*

*"Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up." Anne Lamott*



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## *Calendar considerations.....*

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### **Center for Spiritual Wisdom**

Living the Spiritual Life Retreat

November 5 – 8

Lake Logan Center, NC

<https://mailchi.mp/0fec389a3651/ctr-for-spiritual-wisdom-sept-e-news?e=26bb397730>

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### **Valle Crucis Conference Center**

Advanced Centering Prayer Retreat, November 25 – December 2

<https://vcconferences.org/programs>

Information is also available now for registering for one of the hermitages for personal retreat.

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### **Awakening Soul**

Justice is the Body of Love, Love is the Soul of Justice

Lutheridge Conference Center, November 8 – 11

<https://www.awakeningsoulpresents.org/>

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### **Southern Dharma Center**

Awakening Intuition: An Insight Meditation Retreat, November 15 – 18

Knowing for Yourself What is True: A Meditation and Dharma Study Retreat, December 7 – 12

Leading with an Open Heart: A Radical Dharma Vision of Using Our Broken Hearts to Get Free, December 17 – 20

[www.southerndharma.org](http://www.southerndharma.org)

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### **Lake Junaluska**

Interfaith Peace Conference, November 21 – 24, 2019

Lake Junaluska, North Carolina

<http://www.firstlightproductions.org/new-events/>

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### **Greenville Friends of Jung**

Offering several discussions at Coffee Underground.

Full day workshop from 9:00 until 3:00 with Dr. Jerry Wright

Grounded Mysticism, Jung and the Experience of the Numinous

Saturday, February 9 at the Sears Shelter in Greenville

<https://www.greenvillefriendsofjung.org/about/>

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### **Kanuga Conference Center**

Icon Writing, November 10 – 16

[www.kanuga.org](http://www.kanuga.org)

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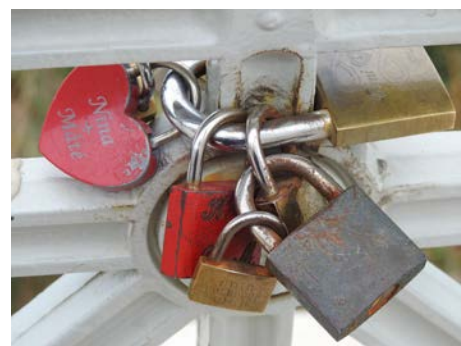
### **Silent Retreat Weekends**

November 30 – December 2, 2018

Order of Saint Helena, North Augusta, South Carolina

<https://www.osh.org/events.html>

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## *Calendar considerations.....*

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### **The Sophia Institute, Charleston, SC**

Mindfulness Training with Hank Brandt, November 14

See the website for these and other one day events.

[www.thesophiainstitute.org](http://www.thesophiainstitute.org)

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### **St. Mary's Sewanee**

Meaning Making: Mixed Media Artwork Inspired by Poetry, November 16 – 18

One River Wisdom Retreat, November 30 – December 2 with Rami Shapiro and Gordon Peerman

Mindfulness on the Mountain, December 7 – 9

Three Day Centering Prayer Retreat, December 14 – 16 with Tom Ward

St. Mary's Retreat Center, Sewanee, TN

<http://www.stmaryssewanee.org/about/events>

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### **Cathedral of St. Philip**

Spirituality Conference with Rev. Becca Stevens

Saturday, November 3, 2018

<https://www.stphilipscathedral.org/learn/spirituality/spirituality-conference/>

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### **Anderson Forum for Progressive Theology**

Roger Ray

April 7, 2019

Anderson, SC

[www.afptonline.org](http://www.afptonline.org)

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### **The Anchorage**

Offering local "desert days"

21<sup>st</sup> Annual Beach Retreat: Finding God in Poetry

February 8 – 10, 2019

<http://www.theanchorage.org/events.htm>

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The holidays can be hectic and stressful. Take a breath.  
Find a quiet moment. Be present to the sky and the earth.

Anne Lamott reminds us....

Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a  
few moments, including you....





## About Spiritual Direction —

- Offers a space and time for you to explore, reflect upon, and deepen your relationship with God.
- Provides a haven from the daily busyness of the outer world and opens a time to be still and to reflect on your inner journey.
- Is a companioning relationship grounded in dialogue and discernment.
- Explores ways you may integrate spirituality into your daily life.
- Is not limited to any one spiritual practice or tradition.
- May involve one or two meetings or multiple meetings over time.

## You may wish to consider spiritual companioning if you are —

- Longing for a deeper relationship with the Divine
- Looking for a place to dialogue about spiritual questions
- Seeking ways to connect with the Spirit in a more intentional way
- Discerning ways to live in a more integrated and whole way
- Standing at a crossroads in your life
- Exploring new or fresh ways to be in relationship with God

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For more information about Spiritual Direction, please feel free to contact me by phone  
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*The photos in this journal are my work and were taken this September  
in Austria and Germany.*

