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January - February Meditation Chapel Newsletter

1 message

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Meditation Chapel

An Online
Interspiritual
Meditation
Community

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2026

The Newsletter of the Meditation Chapel

The Meditation Chapel Vision

The Meditation Chapel offers an online space for every human being to be transformed through divine stillness, sacred sharing, and holy listening.

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

IN MEMORIAM, GEORGE WARRINER

BREATHE, SUBMITTED BY LAVON SHAPLAND

FEATURED GROUP, MID-WEEK MYSTICS

MEMBER AUTHORS

- STEPHANIE DELANEY
- ANNE M. PICARD

A SHARING FROM SARAH HENSELER

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Happy new year! As we move into 2026, our executive committee has been busy laying the groundwork for Meditation Chapel to last well into the future. Details will be shared over the coming months but it's important to note that your contributions to the financial health of our beloved MC are key to enabling MC to continue providing sacred space for our chapels.

As the world becomes more encased in technology, it has become apparent that we, at MC, need to step up our approach. As such, steps have been taken to ensure our security and protect the privacy of our members and our discussions. With the increasing attention on technology, we feel it is important to have support available as much as possible. Roger continues to look for members to volunteer to work in this capacity. If you have some level of technical expertise and would like to learn and understand the MC infrastructure and are willing to take on short stretches of support, please reach out to Roger.

Until next time,
 Melanie Brooks, editor

NEXT NEWSLETTER: March 2026

SUBMISSIONS REQUIRED BY: March 15, 2026

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

In November we welcomed **146** members and in December **104!** So happy to have you all. Please send us your comments or questions. It is always interesting to hear from our newest members.

February Welcome Gathering and Committee Meeting*February 26, 2026, 11:00 am ET in the [Conference Room](#) | MC*

All are welcome!

We can demonstrate the Groups, Chapels Calendar, and more.

Gathering together, you can meet some of our Welcome Committee members and ask questions.

*****If you need assistance before this gathering, please contact LaVon at laovnski1@gmial.com****OUR GEORGE**

We pause this month to remember **George Warriner**, who died on January 12, 2025, and whose quiet, steady presence shaped our organization in lasting ways.

George served for many years as a member of the Board of Directors and the Executive Team, taking on numerous roles, including Treasurer and Facilitator Liaison. He devoted countless hours to training, supporting facilitators, and strengthening the practical foundations that allow this work to continue. Long before many of us joined the organization, George was already offering his time, wisdom, and care with remarkable consistency.

Those who worked closely with him speak of his leadership, his practicality, and most of all his deep concern for others. He showed up not for recognition, but out of love and a sincere commitment to helping people find steadiness and support. His service was generous, thoughtful, and rooted in a belief in the value of this work and the people it serves.

George also loved deeply. He cherished his wife, Joy, whom he met in college, and their son, Jim. He also loved his friends here at the Online Meditation Chapel. His devotion and care were evident in the way he gave himself to this community.

I wish everyone reading this had the chance to know George personally, but even if you did not know him, you should know that our organization bears his imprint. We are grateful for the foundation he helped build, for the steadiness he offered, and for the example of service he leaves behind. We hold all who loved him in our hearts, and we remember George with gratitude and respect.

BREATHE, SUBMITTED BY LAVON SHAPLAND

Stress hooks its claws into the brain
creating false truths and unreal realities
to confuse, to assault, to breaking point
There's no refuge in the past or future
The only answer? Breathe.

When thoughts spiral out of control
like a jet plane on a fatal collision course
there's no respite and no saving grace.
When even sleep becomes a banned destination,
look to the place of salvation. Breathe.

Anxiety can build and surge in a flood
overwhelming rational ideas and calm.
Depression throws its hooks into the mind
and drags thoughts into the mud.
The perfect antidote? Breathe.

Focus. Not on the unchangeable past or on the unknown mist of the future
 but on the now. The moment. Your breath.
 Let it bring the calm that's desperately needed.
 The final answer? Breathe.

Alistair HMP Dumfreis

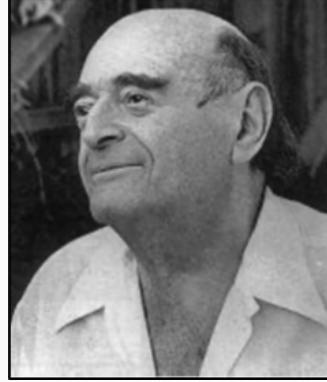
HM Prison Dumfreis is a male prison located in Dumfries, Scotland. Opened in 1883, it is one of Scotland's smaller operational prisons, with a capacity of approximately 200 inmates. Housed in single or double cells within compact, Victorian-era units, inmates follow a routine of education, work, and basic resettlement programs. Facilities include a small gym, library, and chapel, but time out of cells is often limited to 4–6 hours daily due to staffing constraints and the prison's small size.

Alistair was probably being held here when he wrote this poem. There is no access to individual records, but inmates were referred to by first name.

FEATURED GROUP, MID-WEEK MYSTICS – THE TEACHING OF THE ESSENES (G1154)



On 4 February 2026 Wednesday evening Group 1154 transitions from 16 months of work on The Hidden Gospel: Decoding the Spiritual Message of the Aramaic Jesus to commence work on The Teachings of the Essenes: From Enoch to the Dead Sea Scrolls.



Dr. Edmond Bordeaux Székely

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

- Edmond Bordeaux Székely was a Hungarian philologist and linguist. Fluent in many languages, he received his PhD from the University of Paris and other degrees from the universities of Vienna and Leipzig. His work predates the discovery of and does not address the dogmatic Essene Osseans of Qumran.
- Székely's work addresses the teachings of two Essene communities: one living near Alexandria, Egypt; the other at Mount Kharmel, Israel
- The Essenes of Egypt were known for their healing, and it was to them that Mary and Joseph fled with the infant Jesus. They were known as therapeutés: Worshippers of God.
- The Essenes of Mount Kharmel were Nazarenes belonging to the School of the Prophets and calling themselves Sons of God. This was the main branch of the Essenes in the Holy Land, living near the Cave of Elijah.
 - Here, men and women lived as equals
 - It was in this community that Jesus the Messiah appeared

WHAT JOYS AWAIT US?

Székely's work provides revelations for our lives, reconnecting us to what we really are and filling in the gaps of mainstream religious books, especially with regard to mysticism and our affinity with nature.

WHO'S INVITED? WHAT'S THE LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION?

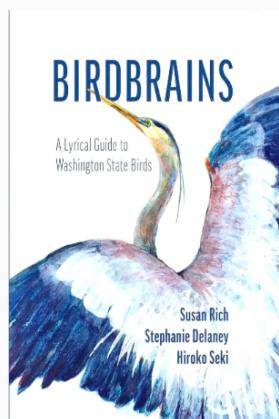
All are welcome to join. Your level of participation is up to you. We trust Spirit to call you as appropriate for your individual spiritual journey. There are no requirements, restrictions, or obligations of any kind. All are welcome to "just show up."

WHEN & WHERE

We gather weekly at 8pm Eastern Time Wednesday evenings beginning 4 February 2026 via Zoom in the Wisdom Chapel of MeditationChapel.org.



Cynthia is a seeker of wisdom guided by sacred teachings of mystics and saints and embraced through multiple contemplative practices that deepen her relationship with Divinity. Cynthia serves as a faith formation mentor, pastoral care chaplain, and prayer practices and chapel facilitator. Cynthia has degrees in mathematics, philosophy, international relations, and aerospace art and science and a certificate in theology; is a Yoga and Tai Ji practitioner, cyclist, and photographer. At her core, Cynthia is just a scribe who, guided by Spirit, gathers, breathes life into, brings good work to fruition, and shares sacred texts to provide opportunities for spiritual growth.

WORKS BY OUR MEMBERS**BIRDBRAINS: A LYRICAL GUIDE TO WASHINGTON STATE BIRDS**

[Birdbrains: A Lyrical Guide to Washington State Birds: Rich, Susan, Delaney, Dr. Stephanie, Seki, Hiroko, Valdez, Dr. Ursula: 9789991403269: Amazon.com: Books](#)

Birdbrains: A Lyrical Guide to Washington State Birds is a one-of-a-kind Washington State bird guide. The anthology includes original pen and ink sumi-e paintings by artist Hiroko Seki, bird fact notes, and short poems/stories/memoir. Poems/prose are bird-focused rather than human centered. The bird notes include information about song, call, mating rituals, habitat, migration, climate, dark comedy, and fun facts.

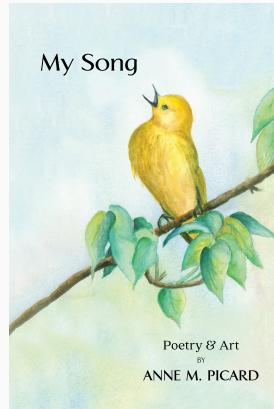
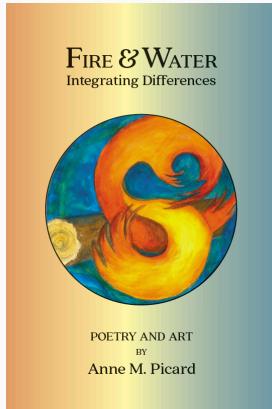
**MC Member/Author:**

Dr. Stephanie Delaney loves all things birds. She is studying birding through Birds Connect Seattle and has been birding seriously since the pandemic, submitting birds most

days in eBird, with over 1500 reports submitted to date. Stephanie is a lifelong learner and higher education administrator. She is especially interested in urban birding and teaching more diverse audiences the joys of the bird world.

Stephanie is a member of the Meditation Chapel's Executive Committee and is the leader of a contemplative meditation chapel on Wednesday mornings at 8 a.m. ET in the Mary of Magdalene Chapel. Her group is currently reading Howard Thurman's "Meditations of the Heart." In addition, on the first Wednesday of each month, they are reading "Me and White Supremacy" by Layla Saad. You can learn more about this group at <https://bit.ly/MCWednesday8am>.

ANNE M. PICARD



[FIRE AND WATER: INTEGRATING DIFFERENCES](#)

[Amazon.com : fire and water](#)

[MY SONG](#)

[Amazon.com : my.song.anne.m.picard](#)

Anne M. Picard is the author and illustrator of [My Song](#), a collection of heartfelt (and often amusing) poetry for all ages. In her latest book, [Fire and Water—Integrating Differences](#) (2024), Anne shares her art and poetry to reveal the beautiful discoveries in everyday living, making connections, finding grace in growing older and learning to laugh at its complexities.



MC Member/Author:

Poet, watercolor artist, and author, Anne Picard is a former education specialist of 35 years, and the author/illustrator of [Peace and Pancakes](#), the award-winning children's book. She believes art in all forms is a gift from the Divine.

Anne enjoys living in Minnesota and getting together with others who share her love of writing and creating art. She participates in Meditation Chapel with the St. Olaf Centering Prayer Community in the Wisdom Chapel.

A SHARING FROM SARAH HENSELER, TREASURER, MEDITATION CHAPEL



In these times of political unrest and uncertainty about the future, it is easy for me to adopt a "gloom and doom" stance.

Denise Levertov (1923-1997) in this poem, published in *This Great Unknowning: Last Poems* (1999), reminds me to open my eyes and heart to ...

CELEBRATION

Brilliant, this day – a young virtuoso of a day.
Morning shadows cut by sharpest scissors,
deft hands. And every prodigy of green –
whether it's ferns or lichen or needles
or impatient points of bud on spindly bushes –
greener than ever before.

And the way the conifers
hold new cones to the light for blessing,
a festive rite, and sing the oceanic chant the wind
transcribes for them!

A day that shines in the cold
like a first-prize brass band swinging along the street
of a coal-dusty village, wholly at odds
with the claims of reasonable gloom.

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Community of Meditators,

As we begin 2026, I am deeply moved by the continued growth and commitment of our global community. It is an honor to share our progress and our vision for the year ahead.

Our Financial Foundation

First, my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the 2025 Fund Drive. Together, we raised **\$16,446.08**. Combined with our existing balance, this provides roughly two years of operating expenses. If you haven't yet had a chance to support us, it is not too late. Extending our financial buffer by another six months would provide the Chapel with greater long-term security. You can offer your support at meditationchapel.org/donations/ or follow the instructions there to donate by check. Please know that if you are unable to donate, you are no less a vital part of this circle—we welcome everyone with open arms.

Leadership for 2026

I am pleased to introduce the Executive Committee for the coming year:

- **President:** Roger Sessions
- **Vice President:** Moira Novack
- **Treasurer:** Sarah Henseler
- **Secretary:** Stephanie Delaney
- **Members at Large:** LaVon Shapland
Christine Merritt
and our newest member, Melanie Brooks.

We also say a fond farewell to **Cindy Kuhn**, who is retiring from the Committee. Cindy has served for several years, contributing immensely to our foundation. We will miss her presence on the board, though she remains a cherished part of our community.

Strengthening Our Infrastructure

Finally, I am continuing the work of building a **Rapid Response Team** to support our chapels during technical or situational emergencies. We are specifically looking for volunteers in **European time zones** who are comfortable with technology and have some flexibility during their daylight hours. You can help ensure our digital doors stay open for everyone.

Thank you for your presence, your practice, and your support. As always, share the stillness, and hold the peace.

Namaste,

Roger Sessions President, Meditation Chapel

THE MEDITATION CHAPEL MISSION STATEMENT

The Meditation Chapel supports groups of all meditation and prayer traditions in sharing the contemplative experience through the sacramental use of technology. Each self-organizing group is empowered to experiment and evolve and all are welcome to join, practice, participate, co-create, and grow.

 Facebook  Website

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