

Celebrating the Light and Dark

December 2025

December is one of my favorite months of the year! (Along with March because of all the spring blossoming - and, well, my birthday - and October for all the beautiful leaves - and Halloween, of course!) If you've ever wondered why it's "Decem" - which means 10 - it's because it used to be the tenth and final month in the ancient Roman calendar, which began in March. The winter days after December were not assigned to any month until centuries later when January and February were added. (And, I think some of us would agree that the two months after December are dark and not worth talking about. Head for sunnier climes!)

December is a month where we celebrate the light and the dark, the birth and the death. It's a month in which we stand in darkness proclaiming light. We celebrate the enlightenment of the Buddha on Bodhi Day, (Dec. 8th) Hanukkah beginning at sundown on the 14th, the winter Solstice on the 21st, with a fabulous earth-based Sunday ceremony, Christmas on the 25th and Kwanzaa beginning on the 26th.

We will also journey through the Advent season - a time of going deep to prepare for the birth/



Sunday Mornings

Meet in person at:

3437 Libby Road NE

Meditation: 10:30 a.m.

Service: 11 a.m.

Or on Zoom: 789 699 326

Senior Minister

Rev. David Robinson

rebirth of the new Light. You can sign up to receive a weekly email to support this deepening at <https://cslolympia.org/advent-2025/>

I look forward to sharing this closing of the year to open a New Year with each of you! Blessings of Light and Love!

"...light has the power to overcome darkness; not by combating darkness, but by being exactly what it is: LIGHT." ~ SOM p. 183.2

Sunday Talk Titles: *Celebrating the Light and Dark*

Book of the Month: *Wild Mercy*

December 7: Enlightenment

As we honor the enlightenment of the Buddha, let us explore enlightenment and what it means to us.

December 14: Living in the Dark

Darkness is often feared. But, in many cultures, especially ones more earth based, more feminine based, darkness is recognized as part of the Creative Process.

December 21: Finding the Light in the Darkness/Solstice Sunday

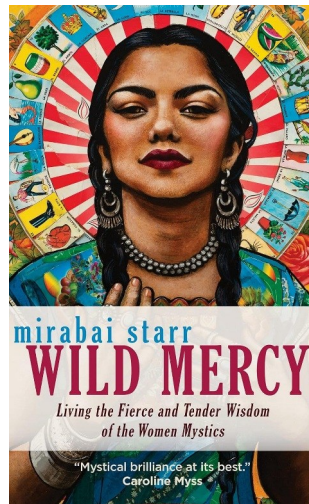
We'll experience the Solstice, as we ceremonially move from dark to light together.

Join our Special Solstice Service:

- ♦ *Winter Solstice Spiral Walk, led by Dances of Universal Peace, a walking meditation that begins in darkness.*
- ♦ *Dances of Universal Peace will hold their spiral at the usual time slot, after the service*
- ♦ *Soluna Soundworks, leads a special Winter Solstice Sound Bath & Celebration*

December 28: Birthing the New Light

We celebrate the birth/rebirth of new light within us. This will be a Christmas themed service, albeit from a New Thought perspective. (I.e., not your grandparent's Christmas)



With *Wild Mercy*, Mirabai Starr shares the subversive wisdom and fierce compassion of the feminine mystic across cultural boundaries and throughout history. From saints and sages, to goddesses and archetypal energies, to contemporary teachers and seekers - you'll meet women who blazed a path that will illuminate your own.

Each chapter explores a different facet of feminine mysticism through a tapestry of teachings, reflections, and stories, along with a practice for integrating the chapter's themes into your own life. As you journey through this book, you'll explore: taking refuge in contemplative practice with St. Teresa of Avila and the Shekinah; longing, embodiment, and union as the heart of feminine spiritual practice with the Hindu poet Mirabai and Mary Magdalene; and your relationship with the Earth, motherhood in all its forms, and a loving call to action alongside Gaia and Ix Chel.

You'll also learn about community and the web of life with Indra, the Beguines, and female prophets throughout history; wild, playful, and compassionate mercy with Tara and Kuan Yin; and finding joy in creativity and the arts with Saraswati and Chiyo-ni; and gain more inspiration from archetypal goddesses and amazing women past and present - Julian of Norwich, the Sufi saint Rabia, Pachamama, Sophia, Old Spider Woman, Hildegard of Bingen, and more.



December Classes, Events & Opportunities



QI GONG
Beginner Friendly w/ Kent
Tickets: \$15
5:30-6:30pm | Thursdays

[Qi Gong with Kent](#)

Two Thursdays in December:
December 4, and 18.

If your spirit has been asking for a little more calm, breath, and presence in your week, you are warmly invited to Qi Gong with Kent.



Rap with the Rev
December 7th
After Service (12:30 to 1:30 pm PT)
At the Center and on Zoom
Open Discussion with Rev. David
on the first Sunday of the month.
Centers for Spiritual Living
CSLOlympia.org

[Rap with the Rev](#)

Sunday, December 7th
12:30 to 1:30 pm PT

A great way for new and old members to connect, share stories of their spiritual path, & ask questions. In Person and on Zoom!



Community SOUND BATH
with Hillary
Every 2nd Friday
Oct, Nov, & Dec
6 - 7 PM
Center for Spiritual Living Olympia
CSLOlympia.org
SOLUNA SOUNDWORKS
SolunaSoundworks.com

[Community Sound Bath](#)

Friday, December 12th, 6 to 7:00 pm
Hillary Myers, with Soluna Soundworks, hosts the Community Sound Bath! Enjoy a guided meditation and wonderfully immersive sonic experience.



Community Gathering
Sunday, December 14th,
Join the Potluck Prior to the
1:00 pm Meeting
(Meeting also on Zoom!)
Please plan to attend and participate!
YOUR VOICE MATTERS
Center for Spiritual Living Olympia

[Community Gathering](#)

Sunday, December 14th, 1:00 - 2 pm
Our bimonthly community check-in and update is December 14th. Enjoy the potluck before the meeting.



Listening Circles
Monday, Dec. 15,
7:00 - 8:30 pm PT
At the Center and
On Zoom!
FOR MORE DETAILS:
Check with Buffie Finkel
Center for Spiritual Living Olympia
CSLOlympia.org

Monday, December 15th, 7:00 - 8:30 pm

December's Topic: Grief

Join us for a safe and sacred Listening Circle at CSLO and allow yourself to be heard and held, in love and grace.

Find all the scheduled events: <https://cslolympia.org/>

DECEMBER YOUTH PROGRAM: Shedding, Shining & Stepping Into Newness

This month, our youth and teens explore the sacred rhythm of release and renewal that marks the winter season. Through rituals of letting go, creative arts, movement, and music, we honor the spiritual truth that newness unfolds when we surrender what no longer serves



December 7 – Surrendering into Newness

Youth explore what it means to trust Spirit enough to release fear, doubt, and old stories. As Ernest Holmes teaches in *The Great Surrender*, we discuss how surrender isn't losing anything worthwhile, but clearing away what blocks our inner light.

Youth will create “**Release Papers**” – written intentions of what they're ready to let go of – and transform them into beautiful folded origami stars to symbolize their willingness to step into newness.

December 14 – From Crackly to Supple

Just like dry winter skin needs attention, our inner life needs nourishment to stay soft, flexible, and growing. Inspired by Ernest Holmes' teaching on evolution, youth reflect on the natural life cycle – new to old, bloom to rest – and how we too evolve into more seasoned, compassionate versions of ourselves.

Youth will make “**Nurture Jars**” – filled with handwritten messages about the qualities they want to grow. Teen's design **mixed-media panels** inspired by themes of growth, softness, and evolution.

[More Youth Information on Page 7](#)

December 21 – Slither and Slime to Sublime

What if transformation could be joyful and even playful? This week, youth learn from the snail – steady, unique, and moving at its own pace. We discuss how physical movement clears stuck energy and how joy lifts us into our next expression of greatness.

Youth participate in a “**Sacred Spiral Dance**” inspired by Sufi turning and indigenous circular movement, followed by a reflective journaling moment about where they feel joy calling them next.

December 28 – Release, Refresh & Renew

Youth explore Holmes' teaching on the “renewing of the mind,” learning how releasing old thoughts creates room for freedom, health, harmony, and success. Youth will take part in a **New Year's Release Ritual**, writing what they are ready to let go of and safely dissolving it in water, followed by creating “**Renewal Candles**” wrapped with affirmations of what they are opening to in the new year.

Holiday Weekend Sharing:

Youth and teens will be invited to share in musical performances, creative art and a renewal light display.





Council Informational Corner with Carrie Barrett

As we move toward the close of this year, the Core Council is joyfully preparing the way for what lies ahead. This is a season of reflection, gratitude, and visioning – a time to honor the work we’ve accomplished together and to set intentions for the future of the Center for Spiritual Living Olympia.

One of our important responsibilities right now is conducting staff reviews and renewing contracts for the coming year. Each staff member contributes in unique and meaningful ways to the smooth running of our center. Their dedication ensures that our services are offered with care, consistency, and love. We are deeply grateful for their commitment, which directly supports the wellbeing and enjoyment of our community.

At the same time, a subcommittee of the finance team is hard at work creating our budget for next year. This process is guided by the pledges received during our recent prosperity campaign – a beautiful reflection of the generosity and faith of our members. With this foundation, we look forward to continuing the programs that nourish us and remaining open to new opportunities that may emerge.

The Council is also laying the groundwork for our strategic plan. We are contemplating our highest vision for CSLO five years from now, creating a timeline for the months ahead, and exploring workshops that will help us deepen our practice of Compassionate Communication. This builds upon the Communication and Confidentiality

Agreement introduced at our September community meeting, ensuring that our growth is guided by respect, clarity, and shared vision.

As we step into the turning of the year, we honor the spirit of community that makes CSL Olympia a true home of connection, inspiration, and transformation. The season ahead is filled with opportunities to gather in joy and reflection – from bright and festive holiday services that uplift our hearts, to thoughtful classes that invite us to explore new ways of being and deepen our spiritual practice. Together, we welcome both celebration and introspection, creating space for renewal as we move into the year to come.



DON'T MISS ...

[Deepening with the Divine Retreat](#)



Join our deepening retreat December 6th, 9 am to 4 pm PT at the Center. Move from liking God to loving God. **Early bird pricing good til November 30!**

Practitioner Corner with Buffie Finkel



Thought as Phenomenon

I read this today in the Science of Mind magazine and was completely taken with the idea! “Thought is not the enemy, nor is it the truth. Thought is a phenomenon, like wind passing through leaves.” (thank you, Rev. Dr. David Ault)

Our thoughts have no substance, but they certainly have power. We teach this all the time. Once we grab one of those thoughts as it wafts through our internal landscape and hold on to it, it *becomes* something more. We begin to build structures on the thought (just like I am now, as I write this!).

We’ll have a feeling about the thought, such as sadness, anger, joy, or even, as I am feeling as I explore this idea further, excitement. We then begin, possibly without even noticing this, to judge our feelings as good or bad, right or wrong, or whatever. This chain of ‘thinking’ happens almost instantly, and most of us rarely even notice we are doing it. When we find ourselves dwelling on these judgments, a cycle of further feelings and judgments churns inside us. “I should not be feeling these feelings, there must be something wrong with

me...” or even “what am I calling forth with these feelings?”

This latter question often stems from the understanding that, as I mentioned earlier, our thoughts have the power to influence our lives. So, let us take a deep breath and allow these ideas to blow through our leaves, like the wind. Yes, our thoughts have power, but we can and do harvest this power every time we redirect a critical thought.

This redirection is simple—choose gratitude instead of criticism. There is always something to be grateful for—you are breathing, after all. You can read (right? Are you grateful for the teachers who taught you?!), and you can see (wow, such a wonderful thing, vision!)? Be grateful for this, and allow the power of this amazing tool to bring more good into your life. You can speak affirmations about the good in your life into the room—more gratitude, out loud!

You can also ask for Affirmative Prayer or practice it yourself. Call a Practitioner, click on the Prayers button on our website, visit one of us after Service on Sundays, and invite a new and wonderful experience into your life through the power of your own thinking.



Practitioners

Teresa Bielenberg
Linda Villegas Bremer

Sandy Dell
Susan Einhorn
Buffie Finkel

Rev. Carrie Masters
Tim Robinson

Call the message phone: (360) 255-7878, ext. 4 to listen to a prayer recorded each week by a Practitioner.

COMMUNITY EVENTS CORNER

2026 Intentions Retreat

Beyond Our Wildest Dreams! *2026 Intentions Retreat*

Friday evening, Jan. 2nd, from 6 – 9 and
Saturday, Jan 3rd from 9 to 4
\$60 through Dec. 28th, \$80 after.
At the Center, with Rev. David facilitating



Take time to let go of what you no longer want to carry forward - and make peace with it - then set clear, powerful intentions for the New Year. Consciousness works on intention. What are yours? What are your values that you want to bring forward more fully this year? And are you willing to say yes to going Beyond Our Wildest Dreams?

Friday evening, Jan. 2nd, from 6 - 9
and Saturday, Jan 3rd from 9 to 4.

\$60 through Dec. 28th, \$80 after. At the Center, with Rev. David facilitating.



Youth Corner



Our youth had a joyful month—enjoying CSL’s Annual Pumpkin Patch, creating vibrant Rangoli art for Diwali, and exploring the beautiful ways nature connects us all.



See more Community Images on the website:

<https://csiolympia.org/our-community-in-pictures/>



WOMEN'S GROUP NEWS

The Women's Coffee group meets Tuesdays at 11 at Haagen's. For more information, contact Jennifer: Jennifer@cslolympia.org

The Women's Circle is on the third Saturday of the month. Contact [Carol Kautzmann](#) for more info.

MEN'S GATHERING NEWS

The Men's Gathering meets on the second Saturday of each month, beginning with a potluck at noon, typically at the Center. Contact [Denny Kautzmann](#) for more info.

The **Prayer Shawl Ministry** meets on the first Monday of the month. Contact [Caroline Fenn](#) for more info.

Core Council

President: Carrie Barrett
Vice-President: Kathy Gilliam
Secretary: Cherie Gordon
Treasurer: Craig Francis
Spiritual Leader: Rev. David Robinson

December Birthdays

Dec. 12 - Kathy Gilliam

Dec. 26 - Christi Johnson

Dec. 28 - Karyn Lindberg

STAFF

Brent Pendleton &
Heather Matthews
MUSIC TEAM

Shani Banai & Kefa Crow
A/V TEAM

Adrienne Cherry
YOUTH DIRECTOR

Marlisa Johnson
BOOKKEEPER

Tiffany Merkel
Rev. Carrie Masters
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Sandy Dell
WEBSITE, NEWSLETTER,
ONLINE MARKETING

Darshan Gregory
CUSTODIAN &
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