Center for Spiritual Living™ Olympia

Happenings

A Celebration of Light

December 2026

December is, in some ways, my favorite month of the year. It's a time that nature slows down and rests from the busyness of growing, fruiting, and sowing for the coming year. It's also the time that humans, for millennia, choose to bring light to the darkest of times. It speaks to the nature of our human and divine self that we, as Howard Thurman called for us to walk with our "footsteps guided by the light of remembered radiance." This is the season where we practice not judging by appearances, but by that inner radiance and then shine that remembered radiance out to light the world.

What a great way to approach life all the time. We are constantly illuminated by the Light within, the Light of the Infinite oneness. It's what we remember when we begin our Sunday services with the lighting of a candle. It's how we're called to live during dark nights of the soul, trips through the "valley of the shadow of death." This month we get to dive in, explore, and practice living this way.

We'll have talks and experiences based on several of the festivals of light from this time of year, including the spiral walk on Sunday the 20th, to honor the winter solstice. We'll remember the Source of Light, and let go of worrying about the darkness not understanding the light.

Sunday Mornings

Meet in person at:
3437 Libby Road NE
Meditation: 10:30 a.m.
Service: 11 a.m.
Or On YouTube:
https://bit.ly/YouTubeCSLO

Senior Minister
Rev. David Robinson

And we'll move into carrying our Light forward and outward.

Additionally, you'll have a chance to be supported with daily Advent messages, to support the birth of Light and newness within you, and an opportunity to launch the New year with a 12-week class called "Unapologetic Manifestation." It's the most wonderful time of the year. Join in and celebrate and let the Light get all over you!
Happiest of Decembers!

~ Rev David Robinson



Sunday Talk Titles: *A Celebration of Light*

December 6: The Source of Light (Hanukkah)

External circumstances may seem to squelch the light, but the True Source of Light is ever-present.

December 13: A Light Shines in the Darkness

Darkness doesn't understand Light. That's okay!

December 20: A Solstice Walk

We'll walk the spiral into the light, then share our light.

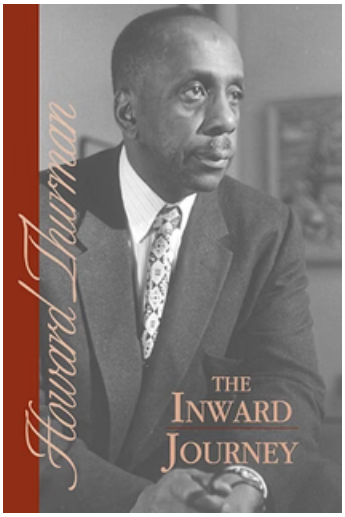
December 24: Christmas Eve Service

A deep, sacred experience of the essence of Christmas, honoring the Christ within us at its birth.



December 27: I Carry My Light Forward
Rev. Carrie speaking
Bring all of your Light into the New Year.

Book of the Month: *The Inward Journey by Howard Thurman*



The Inward Journey is a classic collection of spiritual meditations written by Howard Thurman (1900–1981), an influential African American theologian, philosopher, educator, and civil rights mentor.

The book explores the inner landscape of the human spirit, guiding readers through quiet introspection and Thurman's trademark philosophy of radical love, nonviolence, and deep interior grounding.

Key themes include:

- The Quest for Meaning
- The Quest for Understanding
- The Quest for Fulfillment
- The Quest for Love
- The Quest for Peace
- The Quest for God
- Reflections on Psalm 139

Thurman was a pioneer in interfaith and interracial ministry—co-founding the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples in San Francisco and serving as dean of Marsh Chapel at Boston University.

December Classes, Events & Opportunities



Rap with the Rev
Sunday, December 6, 12:30 to 1:30 pm

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



Community Gathering
Sunday, December 13 at 1:00 pm

Come together to learn about what's happening around the Center and to lend your voice to co-creating our future.



Mid-Century Christmas Party
Friday, December 18 at 6 to 9 pm

You're invited to a vintage Christmas party with a 1950s feel! Come dressed in your mid-century finest. We'll spend the evening celebrating the season the old-fashioned way.



Christmas Eve service
Thursday, December 24, 7:00 - 8:00 pm

A deep, sacred experience of the essence of Christmas, honoring the Christ within us at its birth. A simple, quiet, contemplative service. No announcements, slides or youth program.

Coming January 13: Unapologetic Manifestation Course

Spiritual Partners Sharing-Our-Center Events

Monday Chair Yoga with Deniece, Dec. 7, 14, 21, and 28, 5:30 to 6:15 pm
Community Meditation Sound Bath with Hillary Myers, Fri., Dec. 11 , 6—7 pm
Dances of Peace Spiral Walk with Marti Dimock, Sunday, Dec. 20, 12:30 pm

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

December YOUTH PROGRAM:

The Gift of Understanding

December invites our youth and teens to explore the freedom that comes with not having all the answers. Through curiosity, conversation, creative activities, and connection, we'll discover The Gift of Understanding—learning to listen with an open mind, consider different perspectives, question our assumptions, and embrace the opportunity to grow when we're wrong. Throughout the month, we'll also celebrate the spirit of Christmas by discovering how understanding, acceptance, forgiveness, and kindness are gifts we can share all year long.



December 6 — The Gift of Not Knowing
Value: Curiosity & Openness

Youth explore the idea that not knowing everything is an opportunity rather than something to fear. A Question Quest, and creative reflection, will encourage practicing asking questions, welcoming uncertainty, and discovering the possibilities that come with an open mind. A fun Mystery Box Challenge will challenge youth to take turns exploring a mystery object using clues and questions before making their best guess.

December 13 — Right or Happy?
Value: Connection & Compassion

Youth explore how the need to be right can sometimes get in the way of understanding and healthy relationships. Through Two Sides to Every Story and interactive relationship scenarios, they'll practice listening without interrupting, considering another person's perspective, and choosing connection over winning an argument. Youth play a game of Switch Sides! and receive a playful debate topic, take a position, and then switch sides, making the best case for the opposite perspective.

December 20 — Assumptions, Biases, and Judgments, Oh My!
Value: Awareness & Acceptance

Youth explore how assumptions and judgments influence the way we see others and the world around us. Through a First Impressions Experiment and the What's the Missing Piece? challenge, they'll discover how learning more about someone or a situation can change our perspective and help us respond with greater fairness, empathy, and understanding. The Assumption Detective game will allow youth to examine mystery character profiles, make predictions based on limited clues, and then uncover additional information that challenges their first impressions.

December 27 — The Art of Being Wrong
Value: Courage & Personal Responsibility

Youth explore how making mistakes can become opportunities to learn, grow, and make things right. Through the Wrong Answer Challenge and peer-pressure scenarios, they'll practice thinking independently, admitting when they're wrong, and finding the courage to apologize and move forward. To celebrate Christmas, we'll also experience The Gift of Understanding, where youth and teens create and exchange thoughtful holiday messages of kindness, appreciation, forgiveness, and encouragement, celebrating the idea that some of the greatest gifts we give are the ways we treat one another.

Center for Spiritual Living Olympia
Youth & Family Program

Council Informational Corner with Hillary Myers



Greetings, CSLO community!

Here are a few highlights from Council as we head into the holidays.

Last month we mentioned welcoming teens as members, and that idea is now moving forward. Rev. David has rewritten the membership section of our bylaws so that youth 16 and older can join with parental consent, and parents don't need to be members themselves. *Please join us for a Special Community Meeting on Sunday, December 13, where members will hear this bylaw change and vote. We need 51% of members present for a quorum*, and official notice will be shared in Sunday announcements and by email. That same Sunday, we're planning to gather after service to honor Tiffany and thank her for her years with us.

Thank you to everyone who brought a pledge card forward on November 1st and joined us for the Prosperity Tea. Your pledges are now shaping next year's budget, which will come to Council for approval. If you've had trouble pledging online as a couple with different last names, or registering two people at once for a class, we hear you and are looking into a fix. Council is also considering adding the "Sharing Our Joy" symbol to members' name tags each year when they renew.

We're pleased to welcome Christi Johnson to our Investment Committee. We're also building the framework for our Benevolence Fund so it's ready to launch. The current proposal calls for a team of three to five people, including a Council member, a Finance Team member, a minister, and members at large, to review requests for support.

Our One Parish, One Prisoner team is now exchanging letters with the person they support. Team members take a monthly online training, beginning with "The Ancient Art of Letter Writing," and the incarcerated individual completes the same curriculum. Watch for a possible Sunday presentation from the team.

In other updates, draft pages for our new website have been presented to Council, David Dickinson is checking with the County about adding CSLO signs to nearby street signs, and Greg Laura is preparing our annual staff evaluations. As a friendly reminder, the front table is reserved for flyers about Center events, while information from beyond our walls is welcome in the flyer holder by the entrance.

We're grateful to share this journey with you. Wishing you a bright and joyful holiday season!

~ Hillary Myers, Council Secretary

Practitioner Corner with Tim Robinson



I and the other CSL Olympia Practitioners recently attended a regional Practitioner gathering at CSL Tacoma. This happens about once a year, and since I was unable to attend last year, this was my first opportunity in a couple of years to gather with these like-minded people. It was rejuvenating to be in the presence of people who have devoted their lives to consciously and intentionally embodying these qualities of God, and to know, both for themselves and for their chosen spiritual communities, the truth of who they are beyond the circumstances that present themselves. Doing this with intention means navigating between perceived light and dark.

We often treat our inner light as though it depends on favorable circumstances. If our external life is going well, we feel generous, hopeful, peaceful, and connected. However, when circumstances become difficult, it can feel as though those qualities have disappeared. It becomes vital, then, to recognize that although moods, circumstances, and experiences fluctuate, the deeper Presence beneath them is not diminished by those changes. Light doesn't need to argue with darkness. It simply illuminates.

Perhaps the invitation isn't to make the coming year brighter by controlling everything around us. It's to become more conscious of the light that is already ours to express.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." John 1:5

To that end, light doesn't need permission from darkness to shine. There is no need to postpone joy or happiness until the problem is resolved or uncertainty passes. When I recognize that my source is Infinite Life, it doesn't matter whether perfect conditions present themselves. This doesn't mean that challenging circumstances don't exist or that I must ignore injustice, grief, or difficulties. It means that I refuse to let those things have the final word about who I AM. Light is not passive. It can take the form of boundaries, action, truth-telling, and compassion. What might change if we stopped waiting for the world to give us permission to express the best and highest of ourselves?

~Tim Robinson, RScP



Practitioners

Rev. Buffie Finkel
Linda Villegas Bremer

Sandy Dell
Susan Einhorn

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.

Your Christmas

And it came to pass, as it must at some time for all people, that there is sent out a decree from the heart that all the world of effects be examined. All must go, each into his or her own city, where none other may enter; the realm of the human mind, which is Bethlehem (place of birth the beginning) crowded with random thoughts, confusion and questions, where there has been no peace and no room to give birth to the Christ Consciousness.

And so, with Joseph, your inner strength, and Mary, your soul of Love, carrying the infant knowing of your Christ potential, you enter the din of Bethlehem, and seek shelter in the stable, your Center of Light. In this holy place of complete Light, you bring forth the firstborn knowing of your Christ Potential and your heart becomes a manger to nurture the power of Truth born for you this night.

And there in the same country of your mind are shepherds, your intuition and feelings, which keep watch over your thoughts in the darkness of unknowing. And lo, the angel of the Lord, your inner guidance, speaks unto you, and the Glory and the Truth of your Being shines as a Great Light all around.

And your guidance speaks to your intuition saying be not afraid! Be not afraid of your intuition, for it speaks of great joy that shall be to all people, for into your conscious awareness this day is born a Savior, your Christ Consciousness, the awakened awareness of God within you. And it is to be a sign unto you that forever you shall find this Consciousness cradled within the manger of your heart. Your intuition and your whole being shall sing Glory to the power of Truth in your Highest Knowing and in the earth of your daily affairs you shall know Peace, Compassion and Godwill toward all.

And when this inner Guidance seems to leave you and you enter again the business of Bethlehem, make haste to seek the soul of love, and the inner strength and ask them to again guide you to the infant knowing of your Christ Consciousness.
And when Herod, that part of your ego which is opposed to the new and still clings to the old beliefs, hears these things it will become troubled and seek to kill your Christ within by gathering evidence that this Christ light in you does not exist. But follow the star the light of Truth within you and come again to the stable the center of Light. And present those gifts which are Of Spirit: Gold, the richness of life, Frankincense the Beauty of Life, and Myrrh the eternity of life. And be reminded by your conviction, that when you leave this center of light even for a moment, you depart into the world of effects by a different door of awareness. For when you have experienced the Birth of Christ within, there is no returning to your previous levels of consciousness. For the REAL you has been birthed - YOU have taken your first Breath!

~ Anonymous

COMMUNITY PROGRAM CORNER

OPOP Update

Why am I participating in the One Parish, One Prisoner(OPOP) program?

I've chosen to be part of a two-year journey to get to know and support an incarcerated felon in a State of Washington prison through letter writing. I'm building this relationship with longevity in mind. I'm learning who Chris is, his hopes and dreams as I share mine. With multiple decades of being in 12-step recovery programs, I find myself sharing my experience, strength, and hope. I'm also sharing what I like to cook for my family, how fun our CSL Harvest Festival was this year, and that I live with my Mom and my dog, whom I jokingly call Sir Bark-a-Lot.

I'm engaged in this journey with many others, starting with Underground Ministries. Underground Ministries provided training to introduce us to the details of the One Parish One Prisoner program, help us form as a group, and start writing letters to Chris. Our CSL Olympia team agreed to meet monthly to share what we're learning, complete monthly learning modules, write at least one letter to Chris each month, make plans for the next month, and eventually create a re-entry plan for our new friend. He expects to be released in late 2027. If we have questions, Candice, our Parish Mobilizer, is always available to help. Candice also hosts an OPOP office hours where we can learn from other teams in other parishes and ask questions. I'm feeling very supported as I learn and venture into this unknown territory.

I'm doing this to deepen my spiritual growth and explore spiritual principles in practice. I find myself exploring how I co-create a world that works for everyone. How do I develop a connection with others I don't know very well or who are different from me? What does it really take to do this and live this way? *(Continued ...)*

I'm so grateful for this opportunity to grow and expand my awareness. I'm so grateful I get to do this with mutually supportive people.

Link to Underground Ministries One Parish One Prisoner program: One Parish One Prisoner — Underground Ministries
Reading Consideration: Tattooes on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion by Gregory Boyle, Founder of Homeboy Industries

By Christi Johnson, OPOP Team Bard

Outdoor Adventures



Threats of wind and rain didn't stop them! Thanks to their fearless leader, Jeremy, these outdoor adventurers logged another 5-mile hike at Millersylvania Park in November. Want to hear more about what they are up to? Check out the January Newsletter. They can't wait to share more and to have you join them outdoors in 2027.



WOMEN'S GROUP NEWS

The Women's Coffee group meets Tuesdays at 11 at Haagen's.

The Women's Circle meets the third Saturday of the Month.
Contact Carol Kautzmann for more info.

MEN'S GATHERING NEWS

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

The **Prayer Shawl Ministry** meet the first Monday of every month.
Contact Caroline Fenn for more info.

Core Council

President: Carrie Barrett
Vice-President: Greg Laura
Secretary: Hillary Myers
Treasurer: Craig Francis
Member at Large: David Dickinson
Spiritual Leader: Rev. David Robinson

December Birthdays

December 12 - Kathy Gilliam
December 26 - Christi Johnson
December 28 - Karyn Lindberg

STAFF

Brent Pendleton
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Shani Banai & Kefa Crow
A/V TEAM

Adrienne Cherry
YOUTH DIRECTOR

Marlisa Johnson
BOOKKEEPER

Tiffany Merkel
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Sandy Dell
WEBSITE, NEWSLETTER, ONLINE MARKETING

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CUSTODIAN & GROUNDSKEEPER

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