

Welcome to Centering Prayer at St. Benedict's:

1. Centering Prayer is a silent contemplative practice.

2. We begin with an introduction to our time:

This contemplative practice isn't about emptying the mind, or pushing thoughts or ideas away, instead it's about practicing nonattachment to our thoughts, letting them pass right through without engaging with them; it's a practice of being present to God without our thinking getting in the way.

Inevitably though, we will get snagged on a thought or two, so before we begin, choose a sacred word for this time of prayer, a short word that can bring you back to the practice, that will affirm your consent to God's presence and action within. A word like peace, love, grace... have a think about that now so you don't find yourself choosing a word once the practice has started.

5. For this practice, find a comfortable sitting position, and either close your eyes or keep a soft gaze on the ground ahead of you.

6. The practice will start and end with the sound of the bell.

7. Our time of silence and stillness will be 20 minutes.

8. At the end of the practice we'll take a little bit of time to come back fully into the room.

9. Once we have 'returned' to the space the facilitator will offer a short reading, which you'll also have as a handout. We'll spend the next 10 minutes or so in contemplative silence.

10. About 10 minutes before the end of our time, the facilitator will open the space for any reflections anyone may wish to make *from your own experience*. There is no pressure to speak, keeping the silence is just fine...

We'll end our time together at 6:30pm.