We embrace the process of transformation in Christ, both in ourselves and in others, through the practice of Centering Prayer.

Theologial Principles with Commentary

1. Contemplative Outreach is a network of communities and individuals seeking the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit and to contribute to the renewal of the Christian contemplative tradition through the practice of Centering Prayer.

2. A commitment to the practice of Centering Prayer is the primary expression of belonging.

3. The theological foundation of Centering Prayer is the Divine Presence in every member of the human family. The presence of the Divine in us is the permanent self-giving of God to every human person. The Word of God and Source of all creation sustains everything that exists and relates to each human being in a personal way. The primary call of the Spirit is to consent to this intimate relationship.

4. Consenting to the Divine Presence and action within us is the heart and soul of Centering Prayer. To respond to the call of the Spirit is to consent to God's presence and action within us to the transformative process initiated by the Spirit, which enables us to participate in the divine nature and to become one family in Christ.

5. The indwelling Divine Presence affirms our innate core of goodness and is expressed fully in the theology of the Most Holy Trinity.

6. The Divine action is the healing process of transformation in Christ, enabling us to experience an ever-deepening intimacy with God and the practical caring for others that flows from this relationship.

7. The conceptual background of Centering Prayer grounds and supports the growing silence and stillness of contemplation.

8. Listening to the word of God through the practice of Lectio Divina is encouraged, particularly its movement into contemplation which the daily practice of Centering Prayer facilitates.

9. We believe that the Christian contemplative tradition and its expression in service is the common ground for Christian unity.

10. While formed by our respective denominations, we are united in our common search for God, we respect and honor other religions and sacred traditions and those committed to them. We engage in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue and work together in areas of social justice, ecological concerns, and contemplative initiatives.

11. We affirm our solidarity with the contemplative dimension of other religions and sacred traditions.

12. The practice of Centering Prayer deepens our awareness of the oneness of all creation and our compassion for the whole human family.

13. Following the teaching of Jesus, we endeavor to exercise leadership in a spirit of service, utmost charity, and unity.

14. The good accomplished through Contemplative Outreach is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- To cooperate with grace is to co-create and co-redeem the world with Christ from its beginning to its consummation.
- At the same time, divine transformation is the gratuitous gift of the Holy Spirit and the Source of all the good that God may accomplish through us.
4. Those who serve in leadership ordinarily do so in a
3. We share Centering Prayer by appealing to interior
2. The integrity of the teaching of the method of Centering
Prayer is contained in the Four Guidelines and their
corporeal background as described in the Method of
Centering Prayer brochure.

Additional practices offered by Contemplative Outreach are
drilled means to bring the fruits of Centering Prayer into daily
life, but are not part of the integrity of the teaching of the method.
Similarly, resources such as books, videos, and articles are not
part of the integrity of the teaching of the method, but provide
vital support for the ongoing practice of Centering Prayer.

3. We share Centering Prayer by appealing to interior
attraction rather than proselytizing.
The practice of Centering Prayer enables us to bring
dispositions of humility and attentive listening into our
service. We offer the method of Centering Prayer and
its corporeal background in a pastoral way and avoid
emphasizing strict policies, rigid rules or proselytizing.

4. Those who serve in leadership ordinarily do so in a
voluntary capacity. We employ staff and contractors as needed.
We depend on the enormous generosity of those serving
Contemplative Outreach and performing innumerable tasks
without remuneration. We invite members of the community to
serve in ways best suited to their call and special qualifications.
All who serve seek to be attuned to the needs and concerns of the whole community, whether individuals,
small prayer groups, or local chapters. We may employ staff
and contractors with special or necessary skills as needed.

5. All who provide Contemplative Outreach services do so in consideration of their personal, family, and
professional responsibilities, which come first.
Those in leadership carry out their service by first taking into consideration their own personal, family, and professional responsibilities.

6. Contemplative Outreach avoids indebtedness and owning real estate in order to be free to devote all its resources to sharing the gift of Centering Prayer.
Contemplative Outreach avoids indebtedness and owning real estate, which can burden persons in leadership who want to devote as much of their time and energy as possible to the spiritual welfare and changing needs of the community.

7. We reach decisions through prayerful discernment, aiming toward consensus especially in matters of major
importance.
In view of the prayerful discernment process, consensus for us does not require unanimity, but all members in the group need to have a voice in the discussion. If consensus cannot be reached after adequate consultation in the group as well as with those who will be directly affected, a simple majority can decide. When time is of the essence a person or small team may be entrusted to resolve the impasse. Once decided, all honor the decision in the spirit of unity. For ordinary matters, those to whom a particular responsibility has been delegated do what is necessary to fulfill their appointed task.

8. We collaborate with our respective church authorities, but do not seek to become a religious or lay institute.
Contemplative Outreach is designed to make available to Christian communities the method of Centering Prayer as a means of furthering the renewal of our common contemplative tradition.

9. To remain accessible to everyone, Contemplative Outreach does not endorse particular causes or take part in public controversies, whether religious, political, or social. As private individuals, we act according to our conscience.
We avoid taking part in particular causes or engaging in public controversies because these might alienate from Contemplative Outreach persons committed to one side or the other. Our purpose is to make Centering Prayer available to everyone without taking sides. As private individuals, we act according to our conscience.

10. We maintain a spiritual relationship with St. Benedict’s Monastery in Snowmass, CO.
Saint Benedict’s Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado is our spiritual home and a place of retreat and renewal where new insights for our spiritual journey may be revealed.