

## *Creating Contemplative Community* from Rev. Glenn Mitchell

*Creating contemplative community* seems to be *the* catchy phrase these days in our Oasis Board meetings, on our web pages and in our interpretive materials. Besides great alliteration what are we claiming with these words?



### ***Contemplation Creates Community***

There is first of all in our claim an acknowledgement that contemplative prayer is never simply about the individual. To experience something of contemplation is to know the unity that Presence creates. Prayer is relational. Prayer moves us into a joined reality that can't help but create a spirit of community. That we join the One in prayer and that we know we are one in community are of one piece.

### ***Training “In” Not Simply “About” Contemplative Community.***

We are recognizing more and more that our training approach is not to teach about contemplation and direction, but to create a contemplative community within which the learning flows. In our evaluations each year participants often mention the strength and depth of the experience of community. For a time I thought this was more a by-product of our training than a goal, but I've come to believe it is part and parcel to what we seek to foster. We strive to be, to embody, what we teach. Wherever we host an educational event or training program we consciously attend to community. Contemplation springs from a prayerful community and the experience of that but deepens the community and the prayer.

### ***You “Graduate” a Program, but You Don’t Leave Community***

In recent years we've put a lot of energy into keeping the circles of connection and community alive as persons complete a program. Last spring the glow of the closing campfire for SDSG Year II, held the faces of not only the grads and staff, but Board members who were there to welcome them into the larger circle of Oasis community.

Wherever you are, Oasis joins you in our prayers and invites you to continue to join us in *Creating Contemplative Community*.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glenn Mitchell".

Glenn Mitchell, Director of Training and Program