

Dissolving Judgments

by Jim Gordon
President of ILM



When I was about nine years old, I fell and crushed my skull and as a result suffered from severe migraine headaches for nearly ten years. For many of those years I spent several days each week in bed, immobilized by pain. During the time when the migraines came on, I would do my best to keep very still and not get up, because if I tried to get up or moved too quickly, I would get very sick.

Although the experience was difficult, it was also a good teacher. I learned quite a lot about the levels inside myself. I learned, for example, how to separate the physical pain I was experiencing from my consciousness of what was happening. I learned not to judge the pain or get angry with it. I refused to let the pain become a judgment against myself. My attitude was, "Let me live with what is and see what I can do with it."

Although not all of us have experienced migraines, most of us from time to time experience physical or emotional distress. At these times, if we can move into a place of neutrality with our distress we can greatly enhance our physical and emotional healing. Unfortunately, our human tendency is to place a judgment against ourselves or others based on the distress, which tends to keep us anchored to our disturbance.

These judgments can keep us bound to our distress in several ways. For one, our consciousness can become focused on the distress to the point where we identify ourselves *as* the point of distress and not as a consciousness experiencing it. Also, our upsets, when allowed to fester, can anchor into the physical body, causing not only mental and emotional anxiety, but actual physical disease.

Although I learned about the power of judgments very early, I was reminded of their subtle influence a few years ago after an incident in which I hurt my knee. The incident occurred when I was living in Hawaii. Every day for exercise, I'd take a long walk along the beach. The most difficult part

of my walk was climbing across a stone wall that one of our neighbors had built that protruded from their property onto the beach. For me, the wall interrupted what otherwise would have been an easy walk along the ocean.

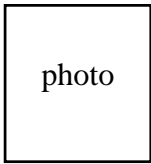
One day, when I was completing my walk, I climbed up the wall and jumped down to the other side and hurt my left knee pretty badly. I got really mad at my neighbor, the wall, and the people who built the wall. I placed a judgment against all three and walked home with an aching knee. As the months and years passed, I forgot about these judgments. The severe pain I felt lessened into a more manageable pain which I just learned to live with.

Two years later, I was sitting in meditation and practicing clearing techniques that centered on forgiveness. To my surprise, the whole memory of hurting my knee flooded back into my consciousness. I remembered placing a judgment against my neighbor, the wall, and the people who built the wall. I forgave each of them and asked their higher selves for forgiveness. I also forgave myself for placing the judgments in the first place. When I got up from my meditation, I noticed that the pain in my knee was gone. That was over a year ago and the pain has never returned.

A simple form of the forgiveness technique I used begins with centering yourself and getting in touch with the spirit inside. Then, from a place of loving, ask for the presence of the higher self of any one against whom you've placed a judgment. Talk to their higher self sincerely and share with it the incident that caused the judgment. Then, forgive the one you've judged and ask forgiveness for placing the judgment. Forgive yourself for placing the judgment and then release the incident and let it go. Once you've let it go, *really* let it go; don't go back and replay the incident and get involved with the judgment all over again.

You might want to repeat this technique often. Don't confine it just to incidents and judgments involving others, but also use it to forgive judgments against yourself - and even God.

The judgments we place on ourselves stay with us as blocks or barricades. When we go within and forgive ourselves and others, we dissolve those barricades; then we can more fully move into the energy of loving, freedom, and grace. ■



A Quiet Place

by Steven McAfee
ILM Midwest Coordinator

In the gospel of Mark 6:31, Jesus tells his disciples, who had been very busy with travels, teaching, and family, to “Come away with me to a quiet place and rest for awhile.” Such a nice thought! Especially for me, who, like some of you, has a life filled with activities that never seem to slow down: transporting children to and from three different schools, to parties, to friends, to libraries and malls; developing, planning, and presenting weekly classes, Sunday worship services, and monthly retreat programs; on-going telephone calls and meetings; traveling to and from events, financial accounting, reports, and bills....Not to mention trying to squeeze in “date time” once in a while for my wife and me. A quiet place sounds pretty inviting and soothing to me. A place away from the constant deadlines, obligations, and noise of the world.

But is that all that Jesus meant? Was he just talking about a place to get away from the crowds so the disciples could refresh themselves for awhile before beginning the hectic pace of their ministries again? Was he talking about a “place” at all? Or was he, as in so many other instances in the gospels, gently leading the apostles to understand the need of creating a quiet place *within themselves*, a place free from concerns about their life and service in the world, a place always available to them, no matter what their outer circumstances may be. Might he even have been helping them to realize that their ministry of service in the world would only be as strong as their inner spiritual connection? I believe that it is in our moments of solitude, of deep contemplation and reflection, of immersing ourselves in being inwardly absorbed with the glory of God, that our spiritual strength is built. It is then that our moments of inspiration, insight, and realization are born. To help illustrate this idea, imagine a fluorescent light bulb. When it is plugged in to an electrical outlet, it flickers, almost seems to sputter, and then becomes brightly illuminated, shedding light freely on all that surrounds it. When the bulb is unplugged, it immediately dims, but, it still continues to glow faintly for a time from the residual charge left in it. Some-

times, when we are asked to “plug in” – to pray, meditate, to do our personal spiritual disciplines – we flicker and sputter and wonder if we’re ever going to light. But we will. Then we can give of that light into the world. Only then *can* we. But if we fail to do those things which rejuvenate us, which keep us “plugged in” to our spiritual source, then we grow dim and become weary. We cast less and less light into the world and find less and less of it within ourselves.

Quiet places and times are not merely pleasant distractions from the activities of our everyday world, they are at the very heart of our true spiritual work. Quiet times are the times we consecrate ourselves through our devotion to our Lord. They are the times we can most fully turn our attention toward Him. Remember what the psalmist said? “Be still, and know that I am God.” (Psalms 46:10)

I find myself this year feeling a deeper appreciation of quietude and a stronger longing for it. So, the other day, I decided to look up “quiet” in the dictionary. I discovered that it comes from the Latin word, “quietare,” which literally means, “to set free.” What kind of quiet can possibly begin to free us from entanglement with all the pressures and illusions of the world? The kind of quiet that is focused on entering into the kingdom of God within us, through prayer, meditation, and study. A quiet in which we seek a more intimate communion with His living Spirit. That is the quiet I believe Jesus referred to, the one he encouraged his disciples of old to seek out. It is that same quiet which disciples today are asked to seek as well. Our outer structures, whether they are ministries, families, or livelihoods, can never be stronger than our inner foundation. This year, we could give ourselves a precious gift. We could decide to make time in our lives to: “Come away with me to a quiet place and rest for a while.” ■

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES MIDWEST RETREAT

with Jim Gordon, Laura Kesten-Beaver
and Steven McAfee

October 25-26-27, 1996

Fri. 7:30 PM - Sun. 12:00 Noon

at Potawatomi Inn, Pokagon State Pk, Angola, IN

*For details, contact Steven McAfee at
219: 485-2167*

photo

Circle of Maidens

Laura Kesten-Beaver
ILM Minister

In the early afternoon of the Winter Solstice, the young maidens come into the Circle, each with her gathering basket, her picture journal, her blanket, and her anticipation. As American Indian flute music plays liltily in the background, the maidens circle for the first prayer. Each of the maidens is smudged with the smoke from a cedar-and-sage smudge stick in order to release any negativity from the Circle. Today, a new maiden joins the Circle. While the rest of the maidens chant a welcoming song, she walks around the Circle and notices an empty place, one which is decorated with flower petals and a soft plush pillow. She knows she belongs here and is accepted as a fellow maiden of this special Circle.

An Iroquois story is told and the maidens draw in their journals about the story, expressing their feelings in their artwork. Then the maidens pour hot candle wax into molds and paint their own candle gardens, round flat bowls which were molded from water and coliche (a clayish material found in Texas) at a previous gathering, then dried in the sun.

After a snack, the maidens visit Mother Earth. Laying down on their blankets, feeling the support of the Great Mother beneath them, the maidens are guided into a meditation, their bodies becoming still, their minds becoming quiet, their senses heightening, and as peace unfolds them, visions from the meditation come forward. When the maidens are slowly brought back into the awareness of their bodies and their surroundings, they again draw their experiences in their journals.

The maidens again gather in the Circle for the last ceremony, the Blessing of the Candle Gardens. The maidens, one at a time, offer a candle and a blessing to each of the other maidens such as, "May this candle always remind you of the light within you." The maidens place their candle gifts in the Candle Garden, light them and then sing a song to complete the day's celebration.

This is a typical meeting of the Circle of Maidens, an Inner Light Ministries-sponsored girls group in Austin, TX. The Circle of Maidens arose out of a concern that had been growing in me over the

past ten years. During this time, I have been involved with groups of women, sharing about our girlhoods and transitions into womanhood. Often times there would be laughter about our childhood clumsiness. And often came tears of sadness as we recalled our childhood fears, embarrassments, and the lack of matriarchal guidance, and how that has influenced our lives as women. And although we understood that our own mothers had brought us through our childhoods as best they could, and that they themselves were perhaps given much less during their own childhoods, we knew that we wanted to give our own girls more. In our culture, children are not being given a sense of belonging to a community, a sense of their role in the community, and a sense of how that role changes as they transition from children to adults. And so children are often confused about where they belong or *if* they belong.

In our women's sharings, we began looking at our culture in comparison with the Native American culture. In the Native American culture, there is a strong sense of community. The symbol for this community is the Circle, the symbol for equality. The Circle perpetuates true belonging where each is seen as a vital member of the whole and none is viewed more importantly than another. Children are held sacred and are taught by their parents and by the tribal elders. They are taught the sacred connectedness of all life. They are taught that the roles and duties of all members of the tribe are important and need to be respected. Many of the teachings occur through ceremonies. For example, for the twelve year old children, the transition from childhood to adulthood involves the entire tribe as they prepare for ceremonies which last, sometimes, for days. These ceremonies help the young people in their transition, preparing them for their lives as men and women. When the ceremony is completed, they feel supported and blessed and they know their place of belonging as young adults within the tribe. The newly initiated young men and women attend to their duties with respect and honor.

My women friends and I wanted to recreate this Native American sense of belonging to a community for our own children - all of whom are girls. And so from our own personal experiences and our research of the Native Americans, the Circle of Maidens was formed; a place where our girls share a place of belonging within a group as they learn how to honor and support each other, themselves, and all of life, and to rely on the support and gifts of Great Mother. ■

THE HUMAN JOURNEY: IN SEARCH OF SELF

an ILM Weekend Retreat

April 26, 27, 28

at the Kellogg Biological Station
on Gull Lake at Hickory Corners, Michigan

with ILM Ministers, Jim Gordon, Steven McAfee, and Laura Kesten-Beaver

As children of God, each of us is on a unique personal journey of experience, adventure, and self-discovery. When we come into an inner realization of our spiritual identity, we can more creatively, more successfully, and more joyously pursue our individual callings.

This ILM weekend retreat will be practically oriented, with an emphasis on experiential techniques for coming into a greater knowing of ourselves as spiritual beings, and of our lives as rich and varied opportunities to explore and express our divine heritage.

This retreat will be held in the relaxing atmosphere of the Kellogg Biological Station on Gull Lake. To maximize personal interaction and individual attention, enrollment will be limited to 40 participants. Accommodations will be provided: double occupancy rooms. Wheelchair accessible rooms available upon special request. The registration fee of \$150 includes two nights lodging, and three meals on Saturday and one on Sunday.

Space will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Refunds can not be made for cancellations after April 15th. In the event that we receive more registrations than we can accommodate, names will be placed on a waiting list in the order received (any funds received will be refunded in full in the event that space does not permit attendance.)

ILM Retreat Registration Form

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

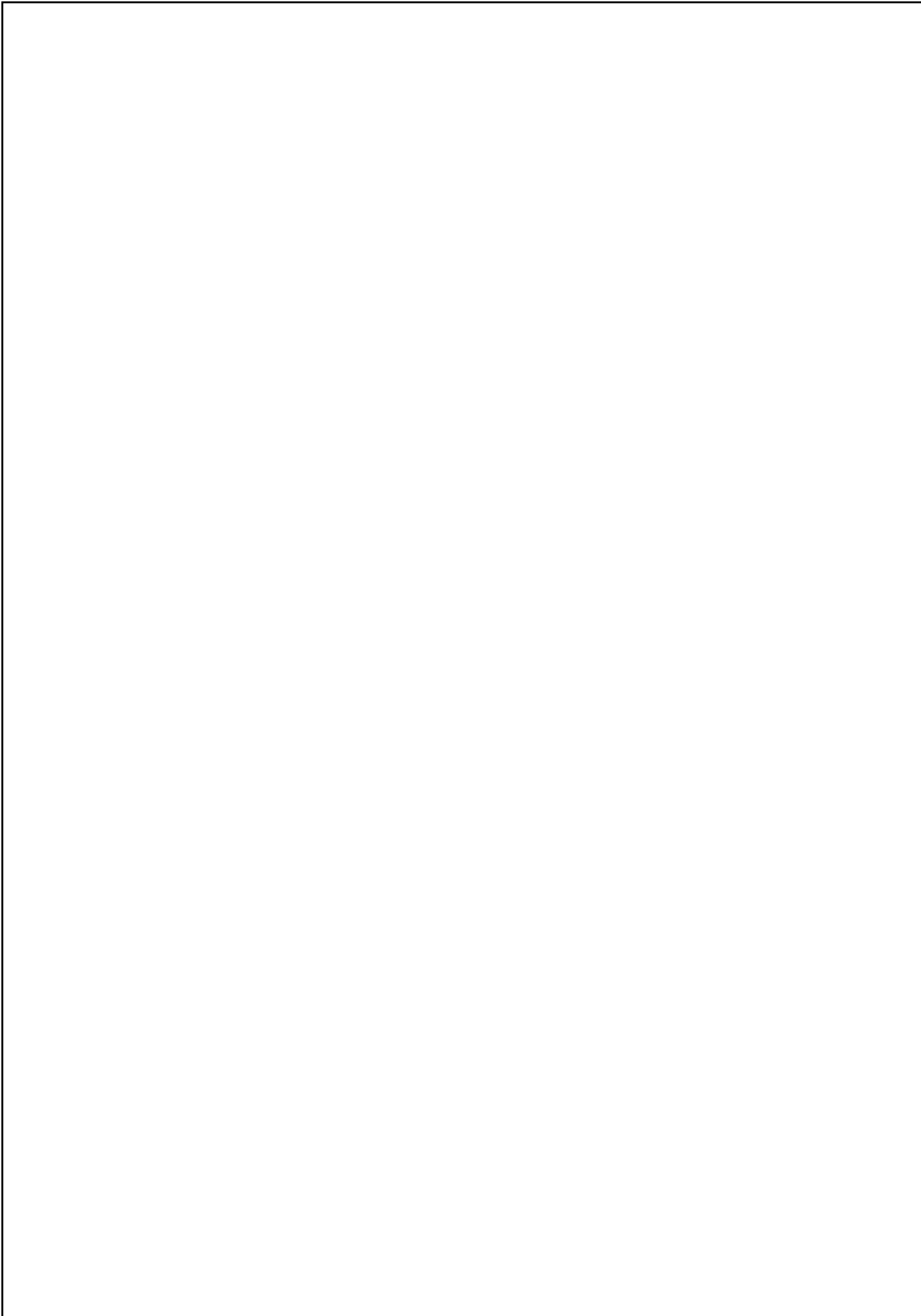
Home Phone: () _____ Work Phone: () _____

The retreat will begin at 7:00 PM Friday and close about 1:30 PM Sunday. Participants may check in anytime after 4:00 PM Friday. For optional meals on Friday evening and Sunday afternoon, please check below. Send check for registration fee (\$150.00 plus optional meals) along with registration form to Carolyn Dailey, 2485 Brahms Ave., Portage, MI 49002. For further information call Carolyn (616) 327-6851 or Bonnie Bell (616) 385-1979.

Double occupancy _____ Single occupancy (limited) _____ Wheelchair accessible _____

Friday meal (\$5.25) _____ Sunday meal (\$7.25) _____ Vegetarian (all meals) _____

Please make checks payable to *Inner Light Ministries*. Amount enclosed: _____



ABOUT ILM

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES (ILM) is a nonprofit outreach organization founded in the fundamental principles of ancient and esoteric Christianity. It is dedicated to the development and balancing of the fourfold nature of the individual. Towards this end, it provides education and services concerned with the integration of the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical aspects of the self, and also provides publications and materials that aid in this process.

Among its fundamental tenets is that we really are "temples of the Holy Spirit." As we seek and express this presence within, we find the peace, love, power, and wisdom we all so earnestly desire. The many services of ILM are geared towards this path of individual unfoldment—such as meditation, study, and prayer on an individual and group basis.

Service to humanity and the planet is its second major emphasis, and ILM encourages individual service, in any of a wide variety of possible forms, as a vital aspect of our daily experience. Please write or phone for more information.

ILM BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE

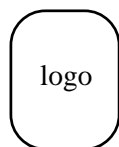
Love and Loving
The Knowing of God
The Staff of the Shepherd

These three books
by Jim Gordon
are available at \$6 each.
To order, call Tom Beaver
at 512: 894-0992.

A QUOTE

"Live one day at a time,
one breath at a time."

Jim Gordon



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THE INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CALENDAR

CLASSES AND SESSIONS WITH JIM GORDON

(Classes to be commenced in Austin, TX when Austin ILM Classroom Center is completed. For details, contact Tom or Laura Kesten-Beaver at 512-894-0992.)

March 5-9: Jim Gordon will be in **Honolulu, HI** for personal counseling sessions. To arrange an appointment call Jim at (512) 306-1056. There are a limited number of appointments available.

MIDWEST REGION'S CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, AND RETREATS

(for details, contact Steven McAfee in Ft. Wayne, IN at 219: 485-2167)

WEEKLY TUESDAY EVENING CLASSES: THE "MYSTICISM OF JESUS", 7:30 - 9:00 PM in "Fellowship Hall" of Unity Christ Church at 3232 Crescent Avenue in Fort Wayne. Facilitator: Steven McAfee.

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES: As scheduled at local churches and fellowships. Facilitator: Steven McAfee.

March 8-9-10: "Quiet Retreat #1", Fri. 8:00 PM - Sun. 2:00 PM, at Ulrich House, Camp Mack, Milford, IN. This retreat will provide the opportunity to focus on individual contemplation & study in a quiet atmosphere of spiritual devotion, as well as the opportunity for group fellowship & worship. Facilitator: Steven McAfee.

April 5: "The Jerusalem Table: a Passover Experience", a special dinner at FAITHFUL HEART in Sparta, MI. To register or for more information, call Mary Schuiling at 616-887-7841 for details.

12-13-14: "Celebrating Our Life Together: A Retreat for Couples", Fri., 7:30 PM - Sun. 3:00 PM at Becker Lodge, Camp Mack, Milford, IN. Facilitator: Steven McAfee.

26-27-28: "The Human Journey: In Search of Self", An INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES retreat Fri. 7:30 PM - Sun. 1:30 PM with Jim Gordon, Steven McAfee, Laura Kesten-Beaver at the Kellogg Biological Station, Battle Creek, MI (See page 2 for more information).

May 17-18-19: "Quiet Retreat #2", Fri. 8:00 PM - Sun. 2:00 PM at Ulrich House, Camp Mack, Milford, IN. This retreat will provide the opportunity to experience and then share together the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical benefits of silence. Facilitator: Steven McAfee.

June 7-8-9: "Taking Care of Yourself", Fri. 7:30 PM - Sun. 12:00 PM. A FAITHFUL HEART retreat at Ulrich House, Camp Mack, Milford, IN. This is a gentle retreat of helpful ideas, relaxation, massage, yoga, & meditation. Facilitator: Steven McAfee. To register or for more information, call Mary Schuiling at 616-887-7841 for details.

SOUTHWEST REGION'S CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

(for details, contact Laura Kesten-Beaver in Dripping Springs, TX at 512: 894-0992)

March 9: "Circle of Teen Girls" ages 13-17. In Austin, TX. Facilitator: Laura Kesten-Beaver.

May 24, 25, 26 "PeaceMaker" in Austin, TX. This a beautiful workshop based on Jean Houston's book, *Manuel for the PeaceMaker: An Iroquois Legend to Heal Self and Society*. Facilitator: Laura Kesten-Beaver.

June 21, 22 "Circle of Women: The Artful You" in Austin, TX. This workshop is designed to tap into our creativity using our bodies, minds, and hearts. Facilitator: Laura Kesten-Beaver.

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Address:

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Work Phone: ()

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Wheelchair accessible

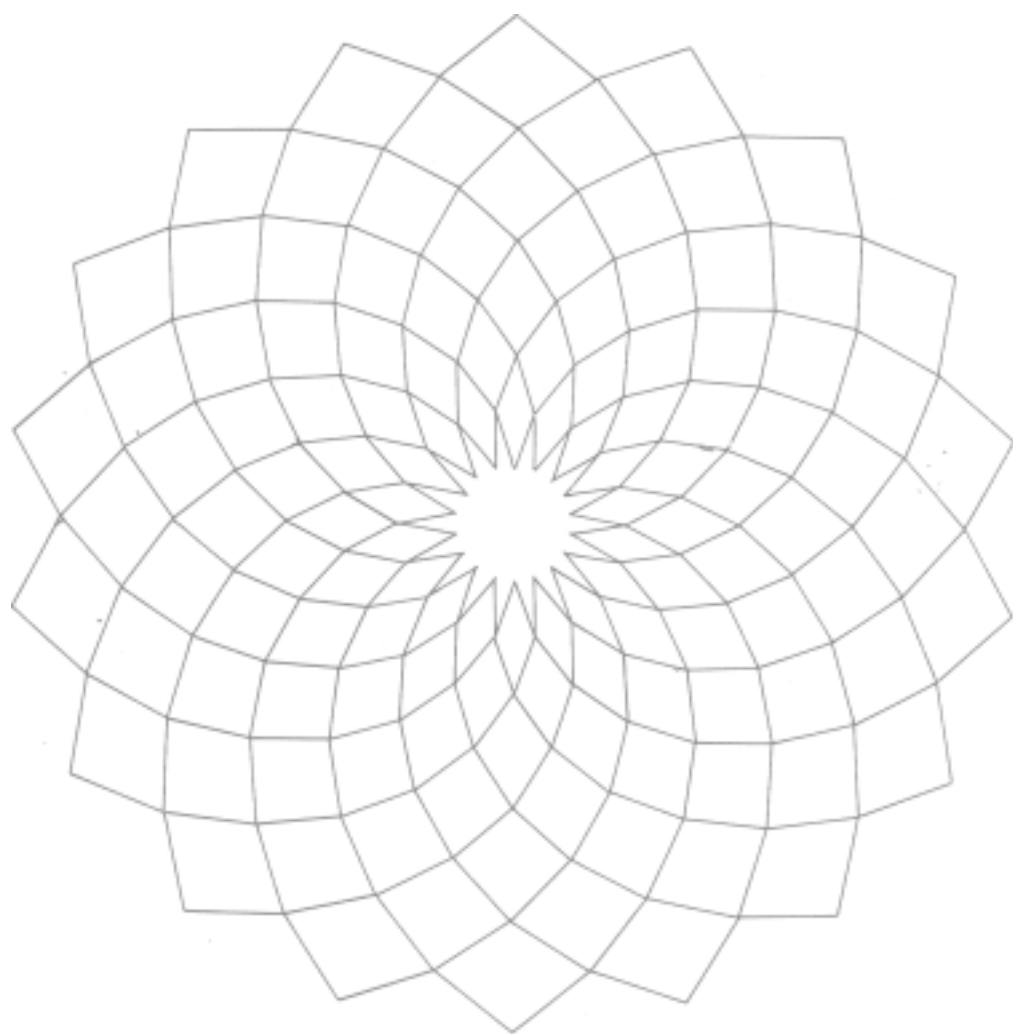
Friday meal (\$5.25)

Sunday meal (\$7.25)

Vegetarian (all meals)

Please make checks payable to *Inner Light Ministries*.

Amount enclosed:



Inner Light Ministries presents
A WOMAN'S WORKSHOP
"A CIRCLE OF WOMEN"
AWARENESS - GRATITUDE - WISDOM

Come spend a Saturday in a supportive, nurturing female environment. Through one-on-one processes, ceremony, meditation, and writing, you will experience yourself with new depth, appreciation, and love as we focus in the heart of woman. This is an experiential workshop with an emphasis on Native American ceremony which assists in connecting with our inner selves, with other women, and with our feminine spirit.

Join us in the celebration of woman spirit.

\$45

For more information, write or call:
Laura Kesten-Beaver
Inner Light Ministries
P.O. Box 1086
Dripping Springs, TX 78620
512-894-0992

Facilitator: Laura Kesten-Beaver

Laura has a degree in Education and is presently a minister on the ILM staff. Her interests are in women and children's issues. Laura's own life experiences and healing has brought insight to many women over the past ten years. She has brought circles of both women and children together to experience greater levels of knowing and healing within. Laura's greatest contribution to a group is her loving dedication to hers and other's healing and growth.