

# ADVENT MINI-RETREAT

## *Transitions*

**Saturday, December 3, 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**  
**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church**  
**Chicago, IL**



The season of Advent is about endings and beginnings. Often we find ourselves in times of transition, whether it involves jobs, careers, relationships, family, location, living situation, or retirement.

This retreat will provide a time for reflection and conversation around themes of change; waiting and preparation; endings and beginnings; spiritual resources for times of upheaval.

Leader: Pr. Craig M. Mueller.

Lunch plans will be made after registration closes.

Registration deadline: November 20. A minimum of 8 persons is needed to offer the retreat. Sign-up at the back of the church or email: [office@htchicago.org](mailto:office@htchicago.org)

### **PREPARATION**

It is recommended that participants obtain and read one of the following books before the retreat. The books won't be discussed at the retreat; however you may share insights from your reading during the discussion, if you choose.

Books are available through Amazon or possibly at some local bookstores.

***Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Transitions*** by William Bridges

Whether it is chosen or thrust upon you, change brings both opportunities and turmoil. Since first published 25 years ago, *Transitions* has helped hundreds of thousands of readers cope with these issues by providing an elegantly simple yet profoundly insightful roadmap of the transition process. With the understanding born of both personal and professional experience, William Bridges takes readers step by step through the three stages of any transition: The Ending, The Neutral Zone, and, in time, The New Beginning. Bridges explains how each stage can be understood and embraced, leading to meaningful and productive movement into a hopeful future. With a new introduction highlighting how the advice in the book continues to apply and is perhaps even more relevant today, and a new chapter devoted to change in the workplace, *Transitions* will remain the essential guide for coping with the one constant in life: change.

***Let Your Voice Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*** by Parker Palmer

The old Quaker adage, “Let your life speak,” spoke to author Parker J. Palmer when he was in his early 30s. It summoned him to a higher purpose, so he decided that henceforth he would live a nobler life. “I lined up the most elevated ideals I could find and set out to achieve them,” he writes. “The results were rarely admirable, often laughable, and sometimes grotesque.... I had simply found a 'noble' way of living a life that was not my own, a life spent imitating heroes instead of listening to my heart.”

Thirty years later, Palmer now understands that learning to let his life speak means “living the life that wants to live in me.” It involves creating the kind of quiet, trusting conditions that allow a soul to speak its truth. It also means tuning out the noisy preconceived ideas about what a vocation should and shouldn't be so that we can better hear the call of our wild souls. There are no how-to formulas in this extremely unpretentious and well-written book, just fireside wisdom from an elder who is willing to share his mistakes and stories as he learned to live a life worth speaking about.

***Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*** by Richard Rohr

In *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*, Fr. Richard Rohr helps us to understand the tasks of the two halves of life and teaches us that those who have failed, or gone down are the only ones who can really understand ‘up.’ Those who have somehow fallen, and fallen well, are the only ones who can grow spiritually and not misuse ‘up.’ What looks like falling down can largely be experienced as ‘falling upward!’

We are here to give back fully and freely what was first given to us – but now writ personally – by us! It is probably the most courageous and free act we will ever perform – and it takes both halves of our life to do it fully. The first half of life is discovering the script, and the second half is actually writing it and owning it.

***The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully*** by Joan Chittister

Well-known in Catholic circles for her willingness to take on anybody--even the pope--in defense of women's rights, Chittister, now in her 70s, examines how it feels “to be facing that time of life for which there is no career plan.” Clearly, getting older has not diminished the controversial nun, activist, lecturer and author of nearly 40 books on feminism, nonviolence and Benedictine wisdom. This collection of inspirational reflections, “not meant to be read in one sitting, or even in order, but one topic at a time,” abounds in gentle insights and arresting aphorisms: “‘Act your age’ can be useful advice when you're seventeen; it's a mistake when you're seventy-seven.” Beginning each short chapter with a trenchant quotation (“‘It takes a long time,’ Pablo Picasso wrote, ‘to become young’”), she ponders topics such as fear, mystery, forgiveness and legacy. Old age is rich for those who choose to thrive, not wither: “We can recreate ourselves in order to be creative in the world in a different way than the boundaries of our previous life allowed.”