



## We've launched!

It was a wild and beautiful day for our very first Church of the Wild ~ Two Rivers Gathering on Sunday, May 5. Eighteen courageous souls braved the pouring rain, swollen creeks, and flooded roads to join together at Shepherd's Spring Outdoor Retreat Ministry. The trees were brilliant in their many greens of spring, their trunks black with the rain. It was a time of walking, talking, sharing and silence. We are so grateful to those who came and to those who supported this gathering from afar. What a blessing!

*"The breezes at dawn have secrets to tell you. Don't go back to sleep!" ~ Rumi*

## June 2 Gathering: Tuning to Earth's Rhythm

Our next Gathering will be held on Sunday, June 2, 3-5pm. We hope you will join us as we gather among the trees and along the waters of Shepherd's Spring. Our intention will be to tune our hearts to the rhythm of Earth's ebb and flow, listening to and aligning with the heartbeat of Creation. Our time together will follow a spacious rhythm of readings, chants, and sharing; walking in silence will serve as our "sermon." We will close with a brief time of conversation, light snacks, and fellowship. More information and free registration is available on our [event page](#). Come and bring a friend!

*Are not lost. .... Stand still. The forest knows  
Where you are. You must let it find you."  
~ From Lost by David Wagoner:*



"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making  
a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19

## Spring's Invitation: Awaken

**What is the point of a Church of the Wild? Why choose to gather outdoors on a cool and rainy day, sitting around on camp chairs, instead of meeting indoors in climate-controlled comfort? What invites us to venture out and risk the unknown to participate in the experiment of this gathering? Could it be that we risk being here because the risk of not doing so is greater? Our hearts know wholeness when we are deeply aware of and connected to the Sacred around and within us.**

My hope is that the Church of the Wild reminds us vividly and regularly that we are inextricably connected to all life, not just the life that takes human form. I hope that together we reclaim greater awareness of the diverse, abundant, and beautiful

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gratefully receiving the gifts of Holy Presence. And I long for each of us to allow nature to help open the space for our shy souls to receive the sacred Wisdom of our spiritual hearts.

We might say that in Church of the Wild we're doing soul work, or spiritual work, or heart work, or Holy work. That work has a language, and it's the universal language of silence. Our intention is to create a spaciousness that will allow this landscape to speak to us, to invite silence to open and soften our hearts to compassion and Wisdom.

In the process of slowing down and lingering over moments of beauty, we cultivate sacred seeing, deepen our ability to see the world beneath the surface appearance of things. What is longing to happen? What is Wisdom inviting? What is the Holy One bringing forth?

This is not new. We have a history of taking time in nature to awaken to the present. The native peoples, mystics and sages have known and shared the importance of living connected to nature. Jesus took time apart in the desert; the desert fathers and mothers removed themselves from living in the city to be closer to God. The Celtic Christians spoke of two books that guided their lives: the smaller book of Bible and the larger book of Creation through which Wisdom is shining.

And we have known this personally. We knew it as children. It is written in the stardust from which we are made. We are one. We know that in our deepest, truest selves. We are one, we are part of the whole, we matter.

We respond to spring's invitation for us: Awaken! Be here now.

(The above is an excerpt from remarks by Leah Rampy at the May 5 gathering.)

**We couldn't have done it without you!!**

Thanks to Frederick, Elizabeth and Sandy for serving as our greeters; to David and Ed for the music; to Elizabeth for Notes from Nature; to Ana, Leslie and Sandy for communications support; to Elizabeth and Leah for snacks; and to Sandy, Rebecca, Elizabeth and Ed for their advice and ongoing support.

**Would you like to volunteer? Let us know; we do need you!**

**Congratulations** to The Center for Spirituality in Nature on five years of offering intimate experiences in nature that deepen spirituality! The Center is also home to Church of the Wild in the DC area and an inspiration and mentor to us. Thank you for your many gifts. You will find many wonderful practices on their [website](#).

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