



Women's Retreat — May 2nd Resting in God in Difficult Times

Have you ever had these thoughts: "I wish I could just make my thoughts stop." "I wish I was more peaceful; I'm so tired of churning worrisome thoughts." These and many more like them haunt all of us at some point, usually at low times in our lives.

But, have you ever wondered what it really means to rest or abide in God, to cast your cares on God, and plug into the peace that others seem to have, and that God offers and wants us to have? You are not alone. During these times, God wants us to rest in the security of His love and promises.

Come join us as we spend a day together connecting with each other and learning more about how to rest and abide in our wonderful heavenly Father. Guest speaker Yolanda Cohen Stith will walk us through these steps and offer her guidance and wisdom to "dig deeper" into our faith and know God's promises for these difficult times in our lives. Yolanda is a Messianic Jewish Believer who has taught Women's Bible studies, led a Women's Ministry, started and directed a Children's Ministry and is on staff with Grace Ministries in the metropolitan DC area. She is active in the Northern Virginia Tres Dias Community and is a speaker at women's retreats.

When: May 2, 2009
9:30—4:30 (beverages, light snacks and lunch provided)

Where: Manchester Lakes Community Center
6120 Manchester Lakes Drive
Alexandria, VA 22310

Cost: \$40 per person, due when registering
Sponsorships are available if money is a challenge.

Childcare is not planned at this time. If you have a special need please let us know.

This day of spiritual renewal promises great fellowship and inspiration to provide each of us a deeper relationship with our God, who knows and loves each one of us, and knows our hurts, concerns and struggles. With the inspiration Yolanda provides and the small group discussions that follow, this retreat is certain to renew our spirit, love for God, and deepen our trust in His peace.



Mark Your Calendar!

May 2: Women's Spring Retreat
9:30 am -4:30 pm at Manchester Lakes Community Center.

May 16: The Spirit's 1st Annual Trunk Sale
Bring your stuff and sell it in the church's parking lot (tables are available). Hot dogs, lemonade and more fun stuff will be available. Get more info at the Church's info booth.

May 30-31: COTS Celebrates 10 Years!
More info available in your Access newsletter and info both.

May 30: Springfield Days
COTS will host a booth, located in the Springfield Mall parking lot in front of Sports Authority, 11-5:00. Stop by and visit! Or, volunteer to represent us. See Pastor Christine for details.

May 31: Baptism Service

God allows us to experience the low points of life in order to teach us lessons we could not learn in any other way. The way we learn those lessons is not to deny the feelings but to find the meanings underlying them." Stanley Lindquist



A Word from Pastor Christine

*I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for. **Jeremiah 29:11 (MSG)***

In 2005, I left my full time job on Active Duty with the U.S. Army to go to work in ministry full-time. I loved my job working with small groups at the church and couldn't wait to really dig in and start working more with people in a one-on-one capacity. In December of 2008, due to budget constraints and a bad economy, my hours were cut back to part time. This was a huge hit for me emotionally, as well as financially. Fortunately my husband has several jobs, as well, so we have been able to make some big changes in our budget to tighten the purse strings, so to speak. But this left me with some nagging questions ... Did I make the right decision for my family by leaving my Active Duty position? Did God really call me to ministry in the church or did I misunderstand? What were God's plans, and how was I supposed to follow them?

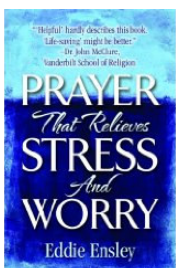
My life verse is Jeremiah 29:11, and the older I get the more I depend on the promise God has made for my life. It's at life's hardest times, the scariest times, the most difficult times, that God wants us to depend on Him the most, to trust in His plan, to rest in His arms, and to know that He is in control! While God doesn't cause the hurt, the illness, or the suffering, He knows what we are feeling; Jesus' life and painful, loving sacrifice assures us that there is NOTHING we can experience that God himself hasn't also lived through! As we face difficult situations- the loss of work, the breakdown of a marriage, personal illness or that of a friend or family, substance abuse, or even the loss of a child - sometimes holding on to and trusting in God's promises in the midst of these storms of life is all we can do to survive the moment. The only way we can get through life's storms is to go through them ... and trusting in God will deliver you through your circumstance, whatever it is ...

*I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Romans 15:13 (NLT)***

Did You Know?

- 8 children received their First Communion
- Zach Stutz was baptized on Easter Sunday, April 12
- Dale and Joanne Walker are moving to Suffolk, VA in May for Dale's new job opportunity
- Shad Glover is now a Certified Executive Chef!

Good Reads from the COTS Bookshelf



In *Prayer That Relieves Stress and Worry*, pastoral counselor Eddie Ensley tackles the spiritual component of stress and worry by offering practical, rock-solid advice based in Scripture and Christian practice. By learning methods of prayer that calm, your mind will stop racing and you'll soon be melting much of the irritability that often accompanies stress. Each chapter includes specially selected scriptures and stories drawn from people's lives to help you cope with the everyday pressures of life.

This book is available at the COTS Bookstore, located in the back of the sanctuary, and offered at a discounted price.

Women of the Spirit Leadership Team

Angela Bartreau, Director
Adanna Vardian, Event Planning
Esperanza La May, MultiMedia
Open position, Hospitality
Sharon Hammon, Marketing