# SEASONS OF OUR LIVES MONTH FOUR – DECEMBER 2023

Track Assignments
December 10, 2023 to January 12, 2024

## **NATURE QUEST**

Go out into nature, alone, prepared with what you need (i.e. water, appropriate clothing, journal, pen, blanket, snack, etc.). If it is not possible for you to be outside this month (due to weather, etc.) find a place beside a window where you can observe nature. Start with an open mind, an open heart, and an open spirit. Find a place where you can sit and 'just be'. This could be a favorite spot or perhaps somewhere you have not been before. Settle in, both with your body and your inner being. Be a quiet observer of what is happening around you — what you see, smell, feel and even taste — and notice what is taking place within you. Do not judge. Just be present, receptive, and aware. Stay here for one to three hours. Take your time. Before you leave, give thanks for what you have received during this time.

## **RESPONSE TO NATURE QUEST**

Reflect on your time in nature. You may decide to journal right away, or you may like to take some time to just reflect on your experience. When you are ready, creatively respond to your nature quest. You could write a poem or psalm, journal, create a picture or a painting, make something out of playdough or clay, create a collage from magazine photos and/or from things you collect in nature. Be creative!

Take a photo of what you create. This can be used to share with others, with your mentor and as a memory of this experience.

As you reflect on your experience, allow a Courageous Question to emerge in you.

Contact your mentor and share your response with them prior to the next webinar.

#### READING

Anam Cara, A Book of Celtic Wisdom (John O'Donohue). Chapter 4 – Work as Poetics of Growth

The Nest in the Stream: Lessons from Nature on Being with Pain (Michael Kearney, MD) Seven Stories of Nature: Story No 2 – The Other Side of the Road (Longing)

## **AUDIO**

Season of Winter, Circle of Life, Joyce Rupp and Macrina Weiderkehr (Megan Vacheresse, voice)

## **VIDEO**

Soul and Science – Being with Pain - Lesson Two: Wounded Healers – 10 min (Michael Kearney)

#### MUSIC

## Vivaldi: The Four Seasons Violin Concerto, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra

F Minor, Op.8 No3, RV 297 'Winter': I. Allegro non molto – (3.36 min) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EV7jahxn88">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EV7jahxn88</a>

F Minor, Op.8 No3, RV 297 'Winter': I. Largo (2.22 min) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2VGnvxs9c2g

George Winston: Solo Piano Pieces for Winter https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uohk02Ekbc4

## **GUIDED MEDITATION**

Nest in the Stream (24 minutes) (Michael Kearney)

#### **OPTIONS TO FURTHER ENRICH YOUR EXPERIENCE**

## **Articles**

Season of Winter, Circle of Life, Joyce Rupp and Macrina Wiederkehr How the Soul Matures, Ron Rolheiser Liminality and Transitions, Richard Rohr Everything Falls Away, Parker Palmer What Winter Can Teach Us About Solitude and Loneliness – RedCliff Ascent

## **Poems**

Keeping Quiet, Pablo Neruda Light, John Phillip Newell, Praying with the Earth Earth Meditation Poem – Albert Camus

## **Blessings and Psalms**

For Longing – John O'Donohue A Winter Solstice Blessing – Debbie Doornbos

## **Activity**

Write your own poem, blessing or psalm Color a nature mandala (see template below or design your own)

