

# Living Openheartedly in Troubled Times: Invitation to Transformation and New Possibility

A soul and nature retreat at Rolling Ridge, October 14-16, 2022

*Make sustained contact with something undomestic, sacred, and tremendously powerful. Something for the good. Something filled with bone. Fall in love with it. This first covenant supplies energy, rapture, joy.*

*Less heaven, less hell, more luminous reality.*

-- Martin Shaw, in *The Age of Bear and Raven*

*If time is a circle, as the Indigenous world view presumes, the knowledge we need is already within the circle.*

-- Robin Wall Kimmerer in *Ancient Green*

How do we respond to this time when things come apart and fear grows? Do we sometimes slide into despair -- or denial?

Do we seek to somehow survive and find what solace we can until things change? Or maybe we see this as a time new creation, prelude to a beautiful new world our hearts know is possible? Is it a time filled with complaint, or one filled with gratitude for small acts of kindness and small wonders? In the midst of all this uncertainty do we grow more fearful, or do we see that embracing uncertainty and unknowing is a path that opens us to deep spiritual growth and wisdom?

In the midst of our struggles to respond we ask: what would it be like to open our hearts as wide as we can to both loss and possibility? To transformation?

On this retreat we will enter deeply into the solace that the natural world and our being together with one another offer us. We will explore the ways that this time invites us to deepen our relationship with nature, with the “undomestic, sacred, and powerful,” and with the ancient knowledge that is there. We will share stories of times when new energy has emerged out of stress and terror. We will open our hearts to hold together beauty and terror, loss and possibility. Indeed, opening our hearts to all of it is the great work of our time.



*Holy Ground [Collage]. Doug Van Houten©*

As in all our nature and soul retreats, invitations will be offered:

for wandering, in solitude, in this mystical sacred land;  
for encountering raven and hawk, turtle and deer, ancient rock and rushing brook;  
for opening to the mystery of our night-time dreams;  
for awakening creative soul through story and poetry, art, circle dance, ceremony and song.

Come and join us as we listen and honor the wisdom of each one's experience, and the ancient wisdom of the natural world.

This program is for people of all faiths and all those seeking to know the beauty and wisdom of the sacred Earth.

**Retreat Leaders: Jim Hall, Cheryl Hellner, and Lindsay McLaughlin**, longtime members of Rolling Ridge Study Retreat, have apprenticed nature-based soulwork through numerous programs for many years.

The retreat will be held at Rolling Ridge, a 1400-acre tract of wild forest near Harpers Ferry, WV. Access is by private vehicle only. The last mile is over a gravel mountain road. Accommodations are simple: a shared seven-bedroom retreat cabin or camping in the surrounding woods and field. Meals are homemade stews or soups or sandwiches.

The retreat begins at 5 pm on Friday and ends at noon on Sunday. Please arrive between 2 and 4 pm on Friday to allow time to set up camp and/or settle in before the program starts. You must be fully vaccinated to participate in this retreat.

Cost for program, lodging, and meals:

\$325 – individual room

\$275 – each, if two people register together and share a room (bunk or full)

\$200 – camping (experienced campers only; bring your own tent)

Spaces are limited. Register early. Non-refundable \$50 deposit required. To register, go to <https://friendsofsilence.net/living openheartedly>