

# School for Christian Growth Classes

Classes are free and open to all. We serve a light vegetarian dinner before the class, for which we request a \$5 donation. We value the conversation and sense of community we share during the meal and clean-up and find it deepens our connection to the classes that follow. Dinner starts at 6:45 and classes begin at 7:30.

We generally offer two classes per term, which are now online. You need not be a member of Seekers Church to participate.

## Spring 2011 – First Term

Tuesdays, April 5 – May 10

7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Classes are free and all are welcome. A light dinner will be served at 7:00 (\$4 donation suggested), and the actual classes begin around 7:45 and end at 9:30.

### **A Reasonable Faith? Six Arguments for the Existence of God.**

**Led by John Morris and Deborah Sokolove**

During the first three weeks of this class, we will examine six arguments, both traditional and modern, for the existence of God.

Class members will be encouraged to offer their own arguments

as well, and these arguments will be discussed with interest and respect.

During the final three weeks, we will reflect on what it was like to argue for God's existence. With the help of several readings, we will ask ourselves these questions:

- 1) Does "proving" God's existence seem important to you?
- 2) Might reasonable people disagree about God's existence, without either side being labeled irrational?
- 3) What is the role of faith? Is faith irrational?

The goal of the class is to gain an understanding of how reason and faith intertwine in our Christian beliefs.

## **The End of the World as We Know It? The Book of Revelation.**

**Led by Dave Lloyd and Jacqie Wallen**

We will explore possible interpretations of the Book of Revelation, immerse ourselves in the richness of its symbols, and consider its eschatology. Through reading assignments, art, music, writing, and movement, we will journey through the strangest part of the New Testament.

### **TO REGISTER**

Sign up at Seekers or e-mail [Jacqie Wallen here](#).

## Spring 2010 – First Term

The first term of the semester runs for six weeks (through March 23), although the course on 12-step programs will continue through the second term (for a total of 12 weeks). [Click here](#) to sign up for either class by email.

Here are descriptions of the two courses offered:

### **The 12 Steps for Everyone**

Led by Jackie Wallen and John Morris

“The greatest contribution America has made to the world, a contribution that will be remembered for thousands of years, is the invention of A.A.”

–Kurt Vonnegut, *Mother Night*

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a spiritually based, peer-support program in which recovering alcoholics achieve and maintain sobriety through “working” the 12 steps of AA. Numerous other 12-step programs have since come into existence, all based on the AA model. They include AlAnon, Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Debtors Anonymous, Codependents Anonymous, Sex Addicts Anonymous, and many others. We believe that everyone can benefit from working the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous whether or not they have a specific addiction problem. We all suffer from the human condition, we all need help letting go of unhealthy attachments, we all have a “higher power,” and we can all benefit from sharing our experience, strength, and hope with one another. In this class, we will work on one step each week, using readings from the “big book” of AA, in-class assignments, and step-focused AA-style meetings.

This is a semester-long class, consisting of two consecutive 6-week terms. Participants are asked to commit for both terms (12 weeks).

## ***Silence*, by Shusaku Endo**

Led by Brenda Seat

I cannot think of a more powerful book to read during Lent than *Silence* by Shusaku Endo. Based on real events, the novel is set in sixteenth-century Japan and explores the Japanese feudal government's persecution of Japanese Christians and missionaries who the government felt were promoting ideas that threatened its authority. Eventually, the government felt so threatened by any Western ideas that it closed the doors to the West for 100 years until Commodore Perry arrived with his Black Ships in the 1860s. The book takes this small part of history and explores what happens from the perspective of two Portuguese priests, Sebastian Rodrigues and Francis Garpe, and the Japanese Christians who were a part of their flock. We follow the escalating persecution and the seeming silence of God in the midst of their suffering, and their sense of abandonment by the church, by their country, and by God.

Shusaku Endo, the author, has been compared to Graham Greene in his exploration of matters of faith as it pertains to our everyday lives, and yet because of his unique perspective as a Japanese Christian he allows us to look at our faith more deeply and to become aware of the ways culture and religion are entwined, allowing us to see the true essence of our faith more clearly. This is a very difficult book to read since it deals with failure, defeat, torture and a sense of abandonment, yet it is a powerful and profound book which makes us look deeper into what it means to be Christian. I think you will find that it explores deeply the very essence of Lent.

This is a one-term, six-week course with a possible additional session.

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