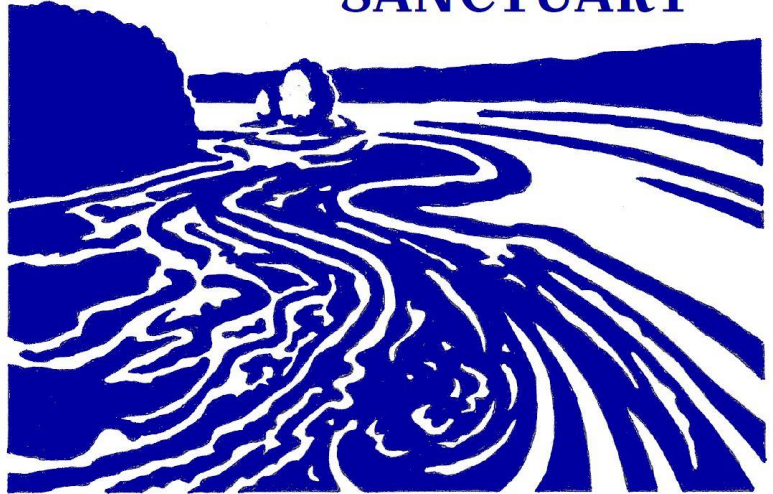


## *Ebb and Flow*

**Reversing Falls Sanctuary  
Newsletter  
January 2018**

# REVERSING FALLS SANCTUARY



Dear Friends of Reversing Falls  
Sanctuary,

For many of us the most beautiful  
event of each year at RFS is the  
Advent Spiral. This year Rob  
Shetterly has gifted the community  
with these reflections on the event:

“As usual yesterday was very moving to me. I chose not to walk early because I’m not ready. It always takes me a while to be in that place, quiet the mind I came in with and be present, listen to what metaphors are speaking. Here’s what I wrote when I got home:”

### ***Advent Spiral Walk, Reversing Falls, December 17, 2017***

*He was surprised how quickly he was able to walk to the center of the universe. Vastness is an illusion, he thought, a trick of perspective. Two concentric turns and there he was face to face with the eternal light. He took his flame in a modest way like the others had done, bending slightly forward, holding his candle with both hands. If this was ritual, the only elaborate thing was its simplicity. But then it seemed he had only got started back on his journey when it was time to set his light down. What a short distance, he said, that each of us carries our flame!*



*Later, from a distance, radiating from the spiral nebula where they had all been, where each left a light, the pattern was grand. It was beautiful. He'd be damned if he could tell which was his, but it didn't matter. The enormous spiral looked like the little coiled spring clocks used to have inside. Who kept this time. He had walked into and out of this mystery, been intimate with it, but was still baffled by it.*

*Every morning he walks in the woods to a large perfect spruce tree. He grasps the sides of the tree with his hands and leans his forehead against the scaled bark. For months he talked to the tree. Expressed gratitude. Expressed awe at its miracle of photosynthesis. Asked how to offer reciprocity. Tried each day to approach it differently. Then he realized the tree preferred silence. Like the silence of sunlight on its branches, the silence of water moving in its cambium, the silence of its slow growth. The tree was not questing, was not yearning. Did not struggle to formulate philosophy. The tree preferred being.*



*The man thought he would go again to the center of the universe. Bow awkwardly (he was old and his joints stiff) in front of the light and take a little flame again. He would shield it with one hand and try to journey out as far as the tree. He would stand with the tree, next to it, holding his light. As though in witness. As though in brotherhood. As in a declaration of solidarity. As though the solution to mystery was not understanding but allegiance.*

*He could hear music. Soft music. A flute and piano. He decided to drain out his blood and replace it with this music. The transfusion turned out to be easier than he thought.*

Rob Shetterly

Thank you to: Tony Ferrara and the forest elves who set up the tree and the spiral; Anne Ferrara for the profound and beautiful introduction to the spiral and for your gentle guidance to the walkers; Jackie Pike and Bobby Cleveland for lovely, meditative music which accompanied our journeys and our contemplations; Julie Cleveland and Anne Ferrara for the photos that accompany Rob's article; Anne Douglass for tutoring Gary in computer skills in editing newsletters.

## ***Coming Events***

Sunday, Jan. 7, 4 p.m. Women's Circle

Monday, Jan. 8, 4 p.m. Women's Healing Circle

Wednesday, Jan. 10, 4 p.m. Program Team meets at Elaine Hewes

Sunday, Jan. 14, 4 p.m. Martin Luther King Observance

Wednesday, Jan. 17, 4 p.m. Board of Directors meet

Sunday, Feb. 4, 4 p.m. Women's Circle

Monday, Feb. 5, 4 p.m. Women's Healing Circle

Fridays at 6 p.m., Feb. 9, 16, 23, and Mar. 2, LeCain Smith will present a series of documentary films. Details in the next newsletter.

## ***Martin Luther King Day Observance***

Ralph Chapman will give his first report to the community of his civil rights pilgrimage to the deep south in search of answers:

How do we come toward an understanding of racism-caused suffering, past and present? How do we interrogate privilege?

Who were the leaders then? Where are our leaders now?

Ralph Chapman, a research scientist by career, is in the second half of his final term as a State Representative to Maine's citizen Legislature. He lives in Brooksville, the birthplace of his mother-in-law, but far from the birthplace of his father-in-law: rural Alabama, fifty miles from Birmingham. Wanting to expand his understanding of the civil rights movement and also to fill the void of his appreciation for the culture of half his wife's family, and inspired by the music of Kim and Reggie Harris\* who performed Underground Railroad and Civil Rights Freedom Songs at Reversing Falls, he signed up to be a part of the Living Legacy Pilgrimage in November 2016. The emotional power of the trip made it impossible for him to speak about it before now as his voice disappears quickly when he cries. Hopefully, the time is ripe for giving it a try now.

Reversing Falls Sanctuary Logo created by Anne Poole

For information about RFS go to [www.reversingfalls.org](http://www.reversingfalls.org)

You can also visit Reversing Falls Sanctuary on Facebook