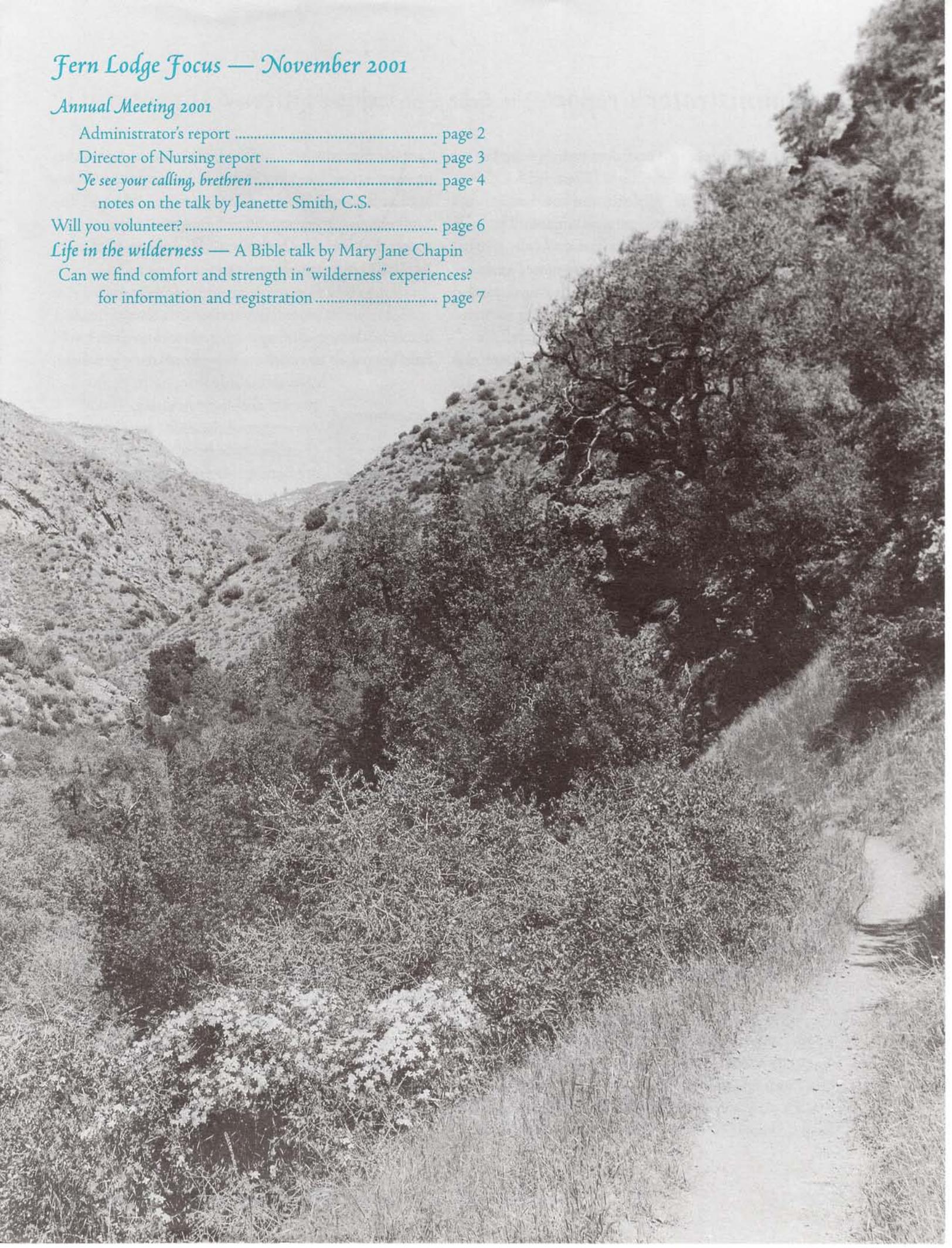


# *Fern Lodge Focus — November 2001*

## *Annual Meeting 2001*

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## *Administrator's report — George Strong*

This is an important and demanding time for Christian Scientists everywhere. The need for the expression of Christian qualities and the demonstration of Christian Science healing is urgent. The world is crying out in pain and fear, and only Christ can answer this call with comfort, assurance and healing. We need Christian Science in its practical applications, —healing the sick, comforting mourners, cleansing the wounded, sheltering the defenseless, meeting and mastering the claims of disease, sin and death.

We should never underestimate the value of Christian Science nursing as a vital aspect of the healing practice of Christian Science. I'm sure we all yearn to extend our healing practice at this time. We long to embrace with the touch of Christ those who struggle against the claims of sorrow, sickness and sin and to demonstrate the presence and power of divine Love, meeting every human need.

Fern Lodge helps to meet the needs of our world. Nurses at Fern Lodge care for those who need assistance while they pray for healing in demonstration of God's complete care for His children and of the natural wholeness of each individual. Dear and faithful students of Christian Science come to us for aid. Many of them have helped maintain our churches in communities, large and small. We're glad to have the opportunity to serve these dedicated workers.

Most of those who come to Fern Lodge for nursing do not have sufficient funds to pay for the care they need. It always has been part of our mission to ensure that a lack of funds not be a factor when a person needs Christian Science nursing. We have been able to do this because Church includes

care for one another, each individual seeing a brother or sister's need "and supplying it, seeking his own in another's good," as Mrs. Eddy puts it (*SC&H* p 518). On behalf of everyone who has received benevolence, thank you. This year we have given over \$450,000 in financial assistance.

The Christian Science movement always needs active healers, including nurses. Recent events have encouraged us to continue our efforts to help others learn to include nursing in their prayers and their practice. Our nursing workshops for branch churches have been well received and are continuing into next year. And as we are able, we welcome those who want to come to Fern Lodge to learn to nurse. These activities will continue as we receive funds for them.

We are deeply grateful for your support. We're grateful to everyone who remembers Fern Lodge with their prayers, encouragement, and contributions. For us to do our job well we need your ongoing help.

Our costs have risen steadily every year. But this year gifts received through September have been less than half of what we received in the same period for each of the last two years, and noticeably lower than in any year since 1994.

We are so grateful for every donation, each one helps us to continue our mission. These gifts represent the same tender love and care that characterize true nursing, and they show our Father-Mother's love and supply for the work He gives His children to do. Thank you!

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We are so grateful for additions to our staff. A mother and daughter came from the Philippines to join our nurses education program. Their love of Christian Science is precious, and they bring much joy and enthusiasm to their work. Robin Barben, who has been a part-time nurse on our staff, is now working full time, adding to her duties the post of part-time activities director. This addition is an inspiration for patients and nurses. Not only does she plan metaphysically-oriented activities, but she also helps get the patients to these activities!

Eight nurses participated in the ongoing nurses education program this year. Because of our small size, we tailor classes to meet the individual learning styles of the students. Nurses receive more advanced instruction as soon as they are ready. This provides better assistance to our seasoned workers by more equitably distributing an otherwise challenging work load. It also gives us more flexibility making daily schedules.

Fern Lodge has given Workshops on Care in four California branch churches, and others are planned for the near future. These workshops include the metaphysical aspects of care giving, discussion on how to assist church or family members with various mobility needs, using wheelchairs, and practicing lifts and transfers with each other. We answer LOTS of questions. These workshops last three hours and are fun and inspiring.

It's a great joy to see a growing number of Christian Scientists overcome fear of and resistance to caring for others. We are grateful to witness their realization that this unselfish activity is a natural part of their identity, as well as a foundational element of our church work. If your church would like to sponsor or participate in one of these workshops, please give us a call.

The Administrator's report speaks of financial needs at Fern Lodge, and I'd like to share some ideas on this issue. Some of the dear people who need financial aid also require a lot of nursing time. For many months we have scheduled two extra nurses each day to enable nurses to give proper care to all patients. All are receiving excellent care, but this is taking a toll on the budget.

Caring for others over a longer period of time has specific challenges. These challenges may take form in discouragement, frustration, self-doubt, impatience, willfulness. We are talking about chronic beliefs of life in matter, beliefs of a mind, an identity, an existence apart from God, aren't we? These beliefs may become so entrenched in consciousness that people come to accept their appearance as part of their identity, their body or their character. They may even learn to live with these limitations.

Nursing in these cases may be mentally, and often physically, demanding, and they require enduring patience and persistence. Nurses must bear witness to the facts of immortal Truth even while looking at the fables of mortal mind. "Truth is God's remedy for error of every kind,"

Mrs. Eddy reassures us, and this Truth-seeing and Truth-knowing is the most important element of a nurse's work. It's done moment by moment with joy and expectation of healing. And we have seen healing. We've seen sleepiness and lethargy give way to alertness and participation. Confusion has yielded to clarity, self-will to thoughtfulness for others, and fear replaced with confidence and hope.

I'd like to close with a sincere thank you to all the dedicated Christian Science practitioners who are working in our communities. Their prayerful support is vitally important to us. Thank you so much!

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## “Ye see your calling, brethren...”

The keynote speaker at our Annual Meeting was Jeanette Smith, C.S., of San Clemente, CA. She gave an inspiring talk entitled, “Ye see your calling, brethren.” Jeanette urged us all to acknowledge that God has called us to His service, and she urged us to rise and follow His call. This report is from notes by Betty Dempsey, C.S., a Fern Lodge Board member.

The central message shared grew out from the call to action found in *The Manual* bylaw governing Christian Science nurses. Our Leader describes each bylaw as “impelled by a power not one’s own”, and it was shared that each activity in *The Manual* is God impelled and God directed, to be expressed individually and collectively, moment by moment.

Jeanette shared that we had come together as Foot Soldiers, ready to serve. She reminded us that we are impelled by God, and that every member of The Mother Church embodies the offices of a Christian Science Nurse and a Christian Science Practitioner. We can discern our calling and know our response to the calling. It is to walk worthy, meekly, forbearing one another in love, doing our duty unselfishly and without timidity. God is our shepherd and a God of peace, so we love our enemies and desire to see God’s pure purpose demonstrated.

**W**e were asked to remember that when Paul said, “Ye see your calling, brethren,” he was addressing the church in Corinth, a Roman seaport for trade and defense, much like a modern industrial city. It was full of those with the lowest level of thinking, yet he expected the small band of Christians there to respond to the calling of God. Paul spoke bold words when he told the Corinthians that they all belonged to Christ. Paul’s work was always found “edifying” the body of members, building up the body of thought. “Ye” can be both individual and collective, all of us are called, individually and collectively, to accept the benefits of creation. None are left out, none overlooked. God is calling, inviting us to serve.

What sort of people are called to ponder and perceive their individual and collective importance? They are God’s chosen instruments. I loved the idea that the fishermen of Galilee were insignificant and unimportant in their society, yet they caught the signposts to newness of life, even with everything against them. They became the most important people on earth for their time. They were humble and committed, nothing stayed their redeeming work. They were obedient, and they won their victory. They knew what it meant to be called and to see their calling.

**T**hink about Saul, Jeanette asked. This man who had persecuted the early Christians became Paul, the greatest champion of Christianity. And it was good to reflect on the call that came to Ananias. When he heard the call to go and help Saul, his first response may have been, “You want me to go where?” We might imagine the answer from God to sound something like this, “Go see my child innocent, he is Mine, his work lies ahead. I need his abilities serving Me. He has work to do for Me that no one else can do. Go and heal him.”

Ananias saw his calling and faithfully obeyed. He nursed Saul, and he healed Saul’s blindness as he healed his enmity against God. He was able to say “Brother Saul.” It was an act of brotherly love when he laid aside cynicism and fear. He learned a Christian’s love and said “yes” to his calling. His example can be helpful to us all. He lifted the sinner by healing his own heart first. Saul regained his sight, answered God’s call, and led the young Christian churches by his example. So are we able to work in concert with God in our individual life and atmosphere of thought, governed by the Christ consciousness and constant watchfulness.

In addition to Ananias and Saul, who in service to God in Christ became Paul, Jeanette asked us to think about three other individuals in the Scriptures who heard and responded to God’s call. Moses was one, and I was touched by the idea that his mission didn’t appear until the last third of his life, yet he yielded and answered his call. He never gave up in spite of hatred and mutiny,

starvation, drought and floods. All these situations were overcome in his self-mastery, showing his strength, brotherly love and spiritual valor for God.

**S**amuel, as a boy, heard God call him four times. He answered, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth." He hears, using spiritual understanding, the essence of being, the hearing ear! We can learn from Samuel to affirm our spiritual understanding and to witness, one thought at a time, God's call. Then, childlike, we answer the call.

It was shared that when Isaiah prophesied, there was a great deal of materiality and individual impurity. We can learn from Isaiah when to be quiet, to cherish self-knowledge, and to work for all mankind. He experienced God's forgiveness, and learned to forgive. He offered no 'thunder or lightning,' but divine mercy. "Know forgiveness," he pled with his people. The result is a dedicated life. We can embrace the spirit of Isaiah's response. "Here am I, send me," (Isaiah 6:8). This is the motive power of a nurse; she is commissioned! God needs our unique response, and we are empowered to respond.

The talk moved forward to the time of Mary Baker Eddy. Jeanette related an example from our Leader, as told in a *Christian Science Sentinel* article of May 1913, of a Civil War veteran who had been wounded in the war. The case was not yielding to treatment and when asked what the error might be that prevented the healing, Mrs. Eddy "replied in effect, that the practitioner as well as the patient believed there had once been a war, and regarded it as a link in the man's history. How many of us have freed our thought entirely from the belief that error, evil, has had a history?" We can see that insisting instead that this man was forever a child of God, spiritual, whole, sound, complete, brought healing. We can see, too, that this is the foundation of Christian Science practice and nursing. Stand guard over spiritual consciousness; move compassionately; be willing to do what seems the smallest task. Each motive and thought resting behind this action heals.

Jeanette told a humorous and instructive story. A young man appeared to be dancing along the shore, in and out of the waves. He was tossing starfish back in the water so they wouldn't die from exposure. A wise man, seeing so many starfish along the beach, said to him, "There's too many, you can't make a difference." The young man tossed another one to safety, and said, "I made a difference for that one!" We are all gifted with ability to make a difference. Whether we are in the *Journal* or not we have a practice. "The preparations of the heart...and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord," (Proverbs 16:1). Let God's calling take root in your heart. This leads to action, and healing results. Fulfill your task!

**W**e heard a central theme expanded in this talk. This spirit of "Here am I. Send me," this "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth," is the same spirit that moves the heart of every Christian Science nurse and practitioner, working in concert to serve God and His perfection. They move with a willingness to listen, to yield to God's direction. With a childlike trust, they bring the Ananias qualities of clarity and compassion, to lift the atmosphere of thought. The Christian Science nurse knows the importance of staying on the watch, seeing every thought governed by the Christ, willing to dispel every suggestion of discord with the light of Truth. Moment by moment the Christian Science nurse demonstrates a conscious, constant watchfulness.

Right here we all were asked to unite in prayer for the world, to encompass the entire world in God's peace, to realize this peace cannot be invaded or reversed, no other suggestion can mesmerize. We cannot be made to see a "terrorist cell" anywhere, in the world or in the body. God is supreme.

There was a lot more that Jeanette shared, but these ideas stood out as highlights to me.



There is a story of a man who had a vision of the difference between heaven and hell. Looking at hell, he saw rows of long tables piled with food. Seated at these tables were people holding forks that were three feet long. The man sensed anguish and suffering as he watched each person trying to feed himself. Not one was able to partake of the splendor. They were unable to get the long forks to their mouths. When the vision of heaven appeared, the man was surprised to see the same tables piled high with food. But here he sensed joy, deep satisfaction, and a real sense of rejoicing. People had the same long forks, but they ate and enjoyed every good thing. How did they do it when the others could not? The difference was this: they were feeding each other.

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### God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.

Resistance to Truth often takes form in unwillingness or inability to help others. Overcoming a sense of apathy, lack of incentive, lack of time, or the false sense of having nothing to contribute, we gain a victory over limitation, the same limitation that would obscure healing in our own experience.

Here's an example from my volunteer work at Fern Lodge. I began holding Prison Fellowship meetings. Patients discovered a renewed sense of usefulness as we wrote letters to a Christian Scientist in prison. Wrestling to see more clearly the spiritual man who is innocent was challenging. It seemed that a serious crime had been committed. But as our correspondence continued, I gained the conviction that the true identity of this prisoner, who we came to cherish and love, was not a criminal, no matter what mortal mind claimed.

This deepened sense of man's innocence enlightened my spiritual sense at a whole new level. The higher spiritual viewpoint lifted me right out of some challenges in my own life and into a greater ability to hold onto peace in the midst of chaos. Most importantly, I was

able to put this new understanding into practice with a problem relationship that had plagued me for ten years. Immediately the deep heartbreak of that relationship vanished. I began to see possibility where I had never found it before, and this correct view brought much-needed relief and healing.

The simple act of donating a little love to someone in need brought out qualities in me that I didn't know I had. This experience led to my new position of Activities Director at Fern Lodge. Did I ever feel ready to answer my calling? NO! But I was reminded recently, God does not call the qualified, He qualifies the called. Through an increasing spiritual love and the continual letting go of ideas which limit how we define ourselves, and others, we find the capacity to face our deepest challenges. I've come to see that we do not gain the ability to heal until we express our ability to love. Love is the power that heals, and "Love is reflected in love."

Will you share your love with us? Could you make a weekly phone call to a patient at Fern Lodge, or read the *Monitor, Journal* or *Sentinel*? Come have lunch with us at 11:30, or supper at 5. Chat with some of the patients at Fern Lodge who would be comforted and nurtured by your gift during what may seem to them like a wilderness experience.

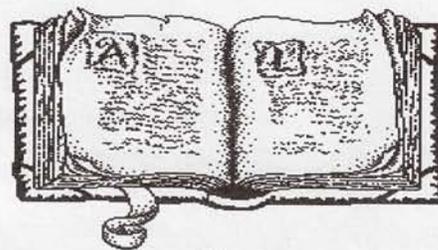
If you can't volunteer on a regular basis, maybe a few times a year you could conduct a Thursday afternoon testimony meeting, or read at one of our Sunday services? What about sharing your creativity with us? Can you play an instrument or sing hymns after supper? Perhaps you could read a few chapters from one of your favorites books on Christian Science. If you have been wanting to get out for a walk, Fern Lodge is in a beautiful country setting. You could share companionship while partaking of the beauty and fresh air accompanied by someone who enjoys getting out.

If people share a little of what they love, a great impetus for Christ is demonstrated. And Christ overcomes resistance to Truth in our own lives *and* in our world. Isn't this just what is needed right now?

# Life in the wilderness — a Bible program by Mary Jane Chapin

When: Saturday, February 16, 2002  
9:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

Where: Marines' Memorial Club, Crystal Ballroom  
609 Sutter Street at Mason Street  
San Francisco, CA



Speaker: **Mary Jane Chapin** received a Masters of Arts degree, majoring in the Old and New Testaments. As a class-taught Christian Scientist she brings special perspective to the Bible. Her series, *Experiencing the Gospel of Mark*, appeared monthly from June 1997 through October 1999 in *The Christian Science Journal*.

Fee: \$55.00 (includes lunch in the Crystal Ballroom)

## Parking near Marines' Memorial

<u>Where</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Price</u>
840 Sutter Street	Butterick Garage	\$12 all day
665 Sutter Street	California Parking	\$18 up to 10 hours
450 Sutter Street	450 Sutter Garage	\$17 all day
O'Farrell & Mason	Downtown Center Garage	\$11 if in by 10:00 & out by 7:00
333 Post Street	Union Square Garage	\$20 all day
310 Sutter Street	Stockton & Sutter Garage	\$20 all day

From BART, exit at Powell Street Station. Walk 4 blocks up Powell to Sutter Street, then 1 block west (left) on Sutter. The Marines' Memorial is near the corner of Sutter and Mason on the south (left) side of Sutter Street.

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Registration for *Life in the wilderness* — Please include the names of all who are registering.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please register me for \_\_\_\_\_ place(s) at \$55.00 each. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I cannot attend. Please use this donation to defray costs. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form with your check, payable to Fern Lodge, before **February 9, 2002**.

If you do not register in advance you still are welcome to attend, but we cannot guarantee a lunch.

If you have any questions please call the office at Fern Lodge, (510) 886-2448.

## *Life in the wilderness — a Bible program by Mary Jane Chapin*

Fern Lodge sponsors Bible programs because we know that a deeper understanding of the Scriptures will help us all to gain a truer, more practical idea of how to help and heal our neighbors, our fellow church members, and our world.

On Saturday, February 16 we will sponsor a talk in San Francisco by Mary Jane Chapin, a Bible scholar from Minnesota. Mary Jane has given several Bible talks for Fern Lodge. Each of these programs has been well received and has offered much food for thought for those who have attended.

Mary Jane Chapin is a class-taught Christian Scientist, and she brings the understanding gained from *Science and Health* and Mrs. Eddy's other writings to bear on her study of the Scriptures. The focus of her Bible talks, however, is not to teach Christian Science, but to seek the intent and original meaning of Bible accounts, and thereby help others to discover for themselves the spiritual interpretation of Scripture.

Mrs. Eddy writes, "Acquaintance with the original texts, and willingness to give up human beliefs...open the way for Christian Science to be understood, and make the Bible the chart of life, where the buoys and healing currents of Truth are pointed out," (*Science and Health* 24:4).

The topic of the 2002 program will be *Life in the Wilderness*. Mary Jane shared the following preview.

"Wilderness: rough country, wasteland, dry place. These are such foreboding terms, considering that the Israelites lived in the 'wilderness' for forty years. But can the wilderness also be a time of blessing, a time of proving God's care? Come join us as we study the wilderness traditions in Exodus and Numbers. Let us see what lessons the Israelites needed to learn and how we might find comfort and strength in our own 'wilderness' experiences."

We hope you will join us at this program. Look for information and the registration form on page 7.

### *The Fern Lodge Board of Directors thanks you for your support!*

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## *Fern Lodge Focus — November 2001*

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