**CENTRE FOR CREATIVE LIVING**

**POSSIBLE WAYS OF ARTISTS’ INVOLVEMENT**

The *Centre for Creative Living* (CFCL) is a project initiated by St. Paul’s Anglican Church, Almonte, to benefit the whole community. The mission of the Centre is to awaken and nurture the natural ability inherent in everyone to live and work more creatively. To do this, the Centre offers contemplative practices that nurture personal growth in body, mind and spirit. It draws upon the talents of people in our local community to mentor practice circles in a creative, contemplative and caring way and to offer workshops for those interested in developing their skills. Membership in the Centre is $100 a year and entitles the member, for another $20, to participate in any of the practice circles. Workshops and program fees are paid for separately. Subsidies are available to ensure that the program is accessible to the whole community. Beginners are welcome.

The CFCL recognizes that people who pursue the arts or other creative activities such as cooking, gardening etc. with an intentionally contemplative approach, provide opportunities for society to reflect on the meaning of human life in symbolic or metaphorical ways. Together they draw attention to what is true, beautiful and good and also what is not. They cultivate a sense of identity and meaning that help to generate cohesiveness, moral integrity in a community and a sense of wonder and reverence for life. They open themselves to the possibility of receiving gifts of inspiration and insight. Thus many see pursuit of their art as a spiritual activity rather than simply production of products that will respond to market demand. Indeed, through their activity the human soul is nourished –both their own and others who benefit from experiencing such creative work.

For these reasons, the CFCL is drawing on artists in our community who understand their work in this way, to provide opportunities using artistic activity as creative practice to help us learn to live more creatively, contemplatively and caringly. We are committed to paying them a fair wage for presentations, workshops or retreats. Further we seek both to work in cooperation with others in the community who share our objective to increase the capacity of artists to thrive here and to respond particularly to the guiding principle of inclusivity and accessibility in Mississippi Mill’s Cultural Plan.

We also realize that artists are often not recognized for the insights that they offer because they tend to be counter cultural, to challenge conventional norms and to call for change. Further, we recognize that artistic expression and skill is often devalued and people who choose to respond to their calling to commit their lives to such activity, more often than not, struggle to generate sufficient income to meet their living needs.

Artists can be involved in the life and activities of the Centre in the following ways

* **As members of a practice circle.** The purpose of the practice circle is to help members stay motivated, focused and connected and to develop a sense of their own creative voice. It includes people of various skill levels who encourage and teach skills to one another.
* **As mentors for a practice circle.** Our intention is that the practice circles be peer led and participants contribute to the ongoing learning that occurs there. However, the mentor attends the circle as he/she is able to provide suggestions, comments, and encouragement. Mentors may also provide an introductory two hour workshop to the circle to share what their life as an artist has meant to them in their own lives and to help new participants understand the nature and process of the practice circle.
* **As workshop and/or program leaders.** The Centre will offer workshops from time to time of various lengths to help participants learn particular skills. Mentors will be given priority when the Centre is seeking someone to do this but may call on others from the community to do so if no mentor or other member of the Centre is available or qualified to provide such a workshop. In this situation, there will be no costs incurred by the workshop leader and these activities, being clearly an activity of the Centre will be covered by the insurance policy held by the St. Paul’s. Whether or not the workshop occurs on or off site, the fees will be handled by the centre and the leader paid through the church. The workshop leaders are paid $30 an hour and workshops will be held only if there is sufficient registration to cover the costs including materials.
* **As teachers committed to pursuing the arts as spiritual practice.** In this case, teachers will pay $15 an hour to the centre for the use of space and will provide their own materials. However, as members of the Centre, they will be covered by the church insurance policy.
* **As volunteer resource people to the centre.** For example, providing opportunity for people to visit their studio to learn something about the artist’s philosophy and intention and life experience as an artist.