

**SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2021**

## **Dance & Moving Spirit**

**Sarah Carlson, Cedar Crest College**

**Registration Cap: 48** *LIMITED REGISTRATION. INDIVIDUALS ONLY*

### **Workshop Overview:**

Dance and Moving Spirit will investigate the ideas of sacred dance and ritual expression. How do we define the sacred? What is ritual expression and what does it do for us? How can the body be used as a vehicle to connect with the divine? Participants will engage in lecture, discussion and movement exercises that help to answer these questions.

The word "sacred" has many meanings but the workshop will engage a very broad understanding: sacred = something highly valued or important, worthy of reverence or respect. (Merriam Webster)

Based on *The Magic of Ritual: Our Need for Liberating Rites that Transform Our Lives & Our Communities* by Tom Driver, this workshop understands ritual as a repeated behavior that reflects the basic human need for order. We will review the various functions of ritual (individual & communal) but also the inherent embodied nature of it.

Western Anglo-Saxon perspectives on the body in worship will be discussed and critically analyzed. A screen dance "Moving Spirit," will be shown as a commentary on bodies in worship in the West. Our discussion of the film will include the ways the film's depiction is limited or defined by the dominant culture which produced it.

### **Workshop Content:**

Participants will be led through a warm-up and improvisation exercises that will allow them to move their thought process around sacred expression. Later, participants will connect their own ideas of the sacred to movement using Liz Lerman's Atlas of Creative Tools. (Session One)

An analysis of sacred dance and ritual expression will be presented via powerpoint. Participants will have the opportunity to connect this information to experience of embodied spirituality in their own lives. This session will include a screening of "Moving Spirit", an 11 minute dance for the camera produced via a community collaboration between Moravian Seminary and DanceLink. (Session Two)

Two poems that deal with the embodied sacred will be presented, discussed and moved through: "How to Pray" by Jessica Jacobs. "The New Religion" by Chris Abani. (Session Three)

Breakout Rooms will be used for partner work in all three sessions of the workshop.

### **Schedule:**

<b>TIME</b> —all times are in Eastern Time	<b>SESSION</b>
12:15 - 1:30pm ET	<b>Session 1:</b> Warm-up and Improvisation
1:30 - 2:00pm ET	Break
2:00 - 3:15pm ET	<b>Session 2:</b> Analysis of Sacred Dance and Ritual Expression
3:15 - 3:45pm ET	Break
3:45 - 5:00pm ET	<b>Session 3:</b> The Embodied Sacred

### Space/ equipment requirements for participants:

Space requirement is minimal. Participants should be able to stand, swing a leg and reach into their kinesphere. Otherwise, the workshop movement will be easily adaptable to a variety of space conditions.

### Presenter Bio:

**Sarah Carlson** is the founding Artistic Director of DanceLink, a project-based company which seeks to bridge people, ideas & understanding through the power of movement. Sarah danced professionally for 10 years in NYC with numerous companies including Alexandra Beller/Dances, Brian Brooks Moving Company, Clare Byrne Dance, Paul Mosley Dance and the Metropolitan Opera Ballet. As an independent choreographer, her own work has been presented throughout the US at venues such as the Joyce Soho in NYC, On the Boards in Seattle, and The Yard on Martha's Vineyard as well as in Benin, Africa. Sarah is currently an Assistant Professor of Dance at Cedar Crest College and has been on the dance faculty at Lehigh University, Muhlenberg College, DeSales University, and the University of Southern Mississippi. In 2007, she completed a Fulbright Grant studying Vodou ritual dance in Benin, Africa furthering an on-going inquiry into sacred dance forms. In 2008, Sarah founded DanceLink to promote community and to use the wisdom of the body to unpack the big questions, often spiritual in nature. DanceLink's most recent project *Moving Spirit*, is a screen dance community collaboration with Moravian Seminary that addresses physical restraint vs freedom in worship. Sarah received a BA in French and European Studies from Connecticut College and an MFA in Dance from the University of Washington.

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