

CIRCLE DANCING ON THE WEB

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Many dance camps and gatherings have been cancelled, postponed, or rescheduled for 2021 and beyond. Back In March, when the shelter-at-home response to the COVID-19 pandemic first was announced, the thought was that after a short period of limited activities, we would return to our normal lives. Instead, the restrictions continue. So many things that we all enjoyed as part of our everyday routines are no longer available. We all miss going to restaurants, getting together with friends and family, celebrating together, and mourning together. And, of course, dancing, too! Right now, so many things seem to be on “pause,” as we hold our breath and wait for the COVID-19 health crisis to resolve.

The thing I need the most during this pandemic is having things to look forward to. And Sundays at 2 p.m. is one of my favorite times, when I clear the stacks of papers and files off the floor of my very small home office, turn on my computer to Facebook video, and dance! Sundays I dance with Kevin Meyer, a circle dance facilitator out of Knoxville, Tennessee. (Kevin on Facebook: www.facebook.com/SacredCircle). For an hour, I move to the music, focused, grounded, and relaxed. When I tuned in today, I was dancing with thirty other dancers from around the world—from Adelaide, South Australia; Newcastle upon Tyne, U.K.; Fremont, California; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Pelotas, sul do Brasil; Winnepeg Beach, Manitoba, Canada; London, U.K.; San Leandro and Grass Valley, California; Cape Cod, Massachusetts; Cambridge, Ontario; Alberta, Canada; and myself, from Pacifica, California.

On Friday mornings, I dance via Zoom with Linda Rankin, a dance facilitator out of eastern Canada (www.lindarankin.com). Biweekly, I am part of The Centrepiece dance sessions from the U.K., organized by Brant Bambery (<https://brantbambery.com/the-centrepiece/>). And there are lots more online dance circles to choose from! Important to remember: be sure to convert whatever the event start time is, as announced, into your own local time!

Dancing online may not work for everyone, or for every type of folk dancing. I particularly enjoy circle dancing, also called sacred circle dancing, which happily still

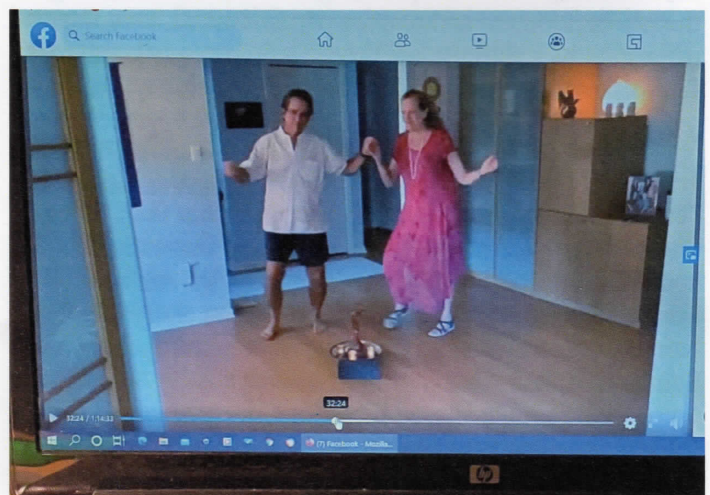
engages me in the moment, even online. Circle dancing is a style of simple folk dancing that came out of the Findhorn Community in the U.K. in the 1970s. It is based on older traditions, common to many cultures, for marking special occasions and rituals, strengthening community, and encouraging togetherness. In circle dance, no partners are needed. Each dance is taught before being danced. Steps and movements can be adapted to make them more accessible to people with physical limitations.

Typically, we would be dancing holding hands, which provides a lovely feeling of connection and unspoken cues that guide each other as to the direction and movements in the dance. However, dancing in my little home office, not holding hands as we normally would in the circle, I can improvise to my heart's content! Instead of always moving to the right starting on the right foot, how about going to the left starting on the left foot? Dancing in a small space, maybe I'll skip that turn, or make up my own variations. As long as the movement flows with the music, all is good!

And yet, I'm still dancing with friends, enjoying dancing some familiar favorite dances and learning new ones, as well as making new dance acquaintances. There's an opportunity to “chat”—to say hello to other participants, comment on the dance steps, or inform the dance facilitator of any problems or questions. I am very grateful to and appreciative of all of the wonderful teachers who put their time and efforts into making these circle dance sessions available over the Web in this challenging time.

Sources: Wikipedia, Aug-09-2020,

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circle_dance



Kevin and Diane Meyer