Training in Spiritual Direction and Congregational Formation

Overview of Themes and Readings

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This overview offers you a brief map for our pilgrimage of learning together. Included are:

- Titles of each of the six training retreats, along with a brief description of the learning content.
- Lists of readings for each of the six training sessions.

Please note that reading guides will be made available, or specific chapters will be assigned, for some of the texts listed below, indicating what to read for specific training retreats.

**Important note:** As new books become available, some books included on these reading lists may be dropped and others added. Please pay close attention to the reading list of books and articles which will be included in each of the six training retreat course guides.

**Training Retreat I: Introduction to Spiritual Guidance.**

Grounded in the understanding that God in Jesus Christ is inviting us to be reconciled—to God, to ourselves, to each other, and to God’s creation—this first session of training in spiritual direction offers guidance for the intentional process of helping persons to pay attention to God’s presence and activity in their own lives and the lives of others. Lectures, readings, discussion, and the experience of group and one-on-one soul care form the basis for mutual learning and our hospitality to the redemptive and healing work of God through the Spirit of Christ.

**Readings:**


Guenther, Margaret. *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction.* Cowley Publications, 1992. (Chs. 1, 2 only)


____________. *Jesus, Our Spiritual Director: a pilgrimage through the gospels.* Upper Room Books, 2004. (See separate Reading Guide)

(See separate Reading Guide for selected readings from Bakke and Miller)
Training Retreat II: Journey of the Soul and the Ministry of Spiritual Direction

Building on the understandings of Training Retreat I, this second training retreat offers guidance for persons desiring to nurture spiritual formation of persons who are attracted to the community of faith and its varied ministries within and beyond the congregation. Attention will be paid to discerning God's presence and activity in the lives of persons exploring their belief in God, coming to faith in Christ, preparing for baptism/confirmation and church membership, and living in faithful response to the Gospel.

Readings:
Holt, Bradley P. Thirsty for God. Chs. 5, 6.
Mulholland, M. Robert Jr., Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation. Intervarsity Press, 1993. Chs. 1-4; 8-11

(See reading guide for selected readings from Bakke and Miller)

Training Retreat III: Tending the Soul during Dark Seasons of Impasse

In this third training retreat, we will continue to pay attention to the soul journey, stages of spiritual development. We will reflect on the work of spiritual direction in connection with discerning stages and growth, especially the Dark Night of the Soul.

Readings


Miller, Wendy. *Invitation to Presence*. Ch. 3.

(See reading guide for selected readings from Bakke and Miller)

**Training Retreat IV: Spiritual Discernment and the Contemplative Retreat**

In this fourth training retreat, we will be paying attention to spiritual discernment—within the life of the individual and the life of the congregation. We will also attend to the place of retreat in providing space for intentional reflection and discernment. Along with reflecting on the biblical background for time apart, we will also attend to the place of retreat within the Christian tradition. As part of this session we will be spending time in retreat.

**Readings**


(See reading guide for selected readings from Bakke and Miller)

**Training Retreat V: Spiritual Formation in the Congregation: Restoring the Soul of the Church**

In this fifth training retreat, we will be attending to sustaining the soul of the ministering person, and to renewing the soul of the church. Participants will be designing a ministry activity which attends to soul care within a ministry event. The practice of group spiritual direction will be also be addressed.

**Readings**


2-7

(See reading guide for selected readings from Bakke and Miller)

**Training Retreat VI: Integration and Healing within Spiritual Direction**
In this sixth training retreat, presentations, guided readings, reflection on life experience, and of issues arising out of the practice of giving spiritual direction provide a setting for mutual learning. Focus for this final training session will be healing and integration within spiritual direction—for the individual and the community.

**Readings**
Barry and Connolly. Chs. 8-11.
Guenther, Margaret. *Holy Listening*. Cowley Publications. Ch.4

(See reading guide for selected readings from Bakke and Miller)

**Note:** Other articles and some helpful bibliography for each training retreat will be made available during the course of the training.