



2022-2023 / cohort 13

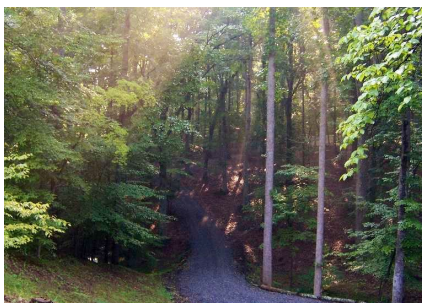
for Christian Spiritual Formation

Inner Awakening • Restoration • Transformation

OVERVIEW

School of the Spirit, embarking on its thirteenth year, is an online and in-person twelve-month journey into contemplative practices that bring the seeker closer to God. The distinctiveness of School of the Spirit, a retreat-based spiritual formation experience, is seen in at least three ways:

- ***the strength from the diversity*** that comes from openness to seekers from all Christian denominations who are searching for a heart-opening transformation into the mind of Christ;
- ***a focus on Jesus' spiritual practices*** and the centuries-old practices that spiritual seekers down through the ages used to open themselves to God's transforming work — and not to the latest fad or way to fix oneself; and
- ***a vital and committed community*** to hold each participant's journey. Through the living process of placing ourselves vulnerably before God and each other to be schooled by the Holy Spirit, God's love and grace renews our minds and revives our spirits — and our ministries are enlivened, too. At the same time, our yoke becomes an easy yoke as we abide ever more deeply in the interior freedom, care, and love of God.



In strategic partnership with the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina and The Lydia Group, a Christ-centered retreat ministry.

DESCRIPTION

Over the year, students engage in practical empowering content, experiment with the spiritual practices of Jesus and the early church, and develop a spiritual community that includes a small trusted circle of companions. Students attend five 2-day quarterly retreats of themed teaching and formational activities built around time-tested concepts—coupled with at-home learning and monthly online interaction. This robust curriculum helps students become more open, sensitive, and obedient to God’s voice and transforming grace in their individual lives and leadership. The program design is unapologetically centered on Christ and rooted in the gospel of the Kingdom.

- Because we know real growth happens slowly over time, each retreat invites you to engage in particular spiritual practices, giving you space over the quarter to practice what you learned at the retreat and integrate it into your life and leadership. You will have monthly practice/reading assignments to support your experimentation with the curriculum.
- To further enhance your inner-transformation, you’ll reach out to one of your peers (or soul friend and/or spiritual director) via a monthly accountability relationship to nurture your covenant journey toward wholeness in Christ.



*Don Carroll, Instructor
and Spiritual Director*



*Ann Starrette,
Program Director*



*Nicole Greer,
Leadership Coach*



*Roxanne Morgan,
Creative Director*

RETREAT DETAILS

DATES & THEMES

- June 27-28, 2022 *Longing for More*
- October 24-25, 2022 *Leading from Within*
- January 30-31, 2023 *Finding Grace at the Center*
- April 24-25, 2023 *Cultivating Discernment*
- May 29-30, 2023 *Creating a Rhythm of Work & Rest*

Each retreat begins on Monday at 1pm (except first retreat, which begins at 10 am), until 8pm and continues on Tuesday from 9am until 3:30 pm.

ALL RETREATS FOLLOW A SIMILAR FORMAT:

- There are times for learning, reflection, engagement, worship, and silence — silence so you can pay attention and give voice to what is going on in your soul and notice the Voice other than your own.
- In a large group, small group, and solitary times, this work is about reclaiming the best gift you have to give, your God-self, your true self.
- With your help, we aim to create a safe space that fosters listening to how God is calling, empowering, and leading you to cultivate intimacy with God that manifests in loving, compassionate service for others’ sake.

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

As we embark on a new year, 2022, God's people are tired from the world's harsh realities. They are hungry, too, for deeper communion with God and a spiritual community to support them in their longing to rise to the challenge of doing ministry and life differently. But here's the thing — those whom God has called to feed his tired, weary people are often the most hungry, the most depleted. School of the Spirit is designed for Christians from various backgrounds and traditions. Pastors, church staff, para-church ministry workers, and lay leaders from any denomination are encouraged to apply.

- Are you a Christian leader who longs to move from scurrying to wisdom and serenity — especially in such a time as this?
- Do you long to fashion a life that flows from your most authentic self, leads from your Divine center, then walks back into the world for the sake of others?
- Are you thirsty to learn, grow, and teach others? The most important criteria is a sense of calling to the study of Christian spiritual formation and personal growth, and bringing others along on this incredible journey of life in the Kingdom.

If you answer yes to any of the above, perhaps the Spirit is inviting you to consider *School of the Spirit*. Ecumenical and inclusive, participation is open to all denominations and limited to 24 clergy, church and para-church staff, business, health, and lay leader professionals.

INVESTMENT *(value is \$1500 per student)*

The tuition for *School of the Spirit's* twelve-month experience is only \$950 and includes meals, refreshments throughout, instructors, retreat facility, and supplies. Generous financial support makes it possible to offer School of the Spirit at this reduced price. Travel, lodging, books, and non-refundable application fee (\$50) is not included. *Refer to page five to learn more.*

TIMELINE

School of the Spirit 13 begins June 27-28, 2022, with an application deadline of April 1, 2022. Register by December 31, 2021 to save \$150. View details here: www.schoolofthespirit.com

Apply early and save money

Early registration deadline: December 31, 2021 (save \$150)

Regular registration deadline: January 31, 2022 (save \$100)

Late registration deadline: February 28, 2022 (save \$50)

Applications will continue to be reviewed until **April 1, 2022**, or until the entering class is full.

Please contact Ann Starrette, program director, with questions.

starrette@mindspring.com or (704) 488-5825

Covid-19 Response

We are aware of Covid-19's impact on our country and the world. As it currently stands, we intend to gather for our 2-day retreats in person. If you are interested in joining the School, don't delay applying! Cohorts typically fill quickly. We will communicate with our admitted students about next steps. Since the pandemic situation is fluid, we are closely monitoring this unprecedented situation and are prepared to adhere to the CDC's guidelines.

LOCATION

We will gather together for a total of five two-day retreats at the secluded sanctuary space of Starrette Farm Retreat in Statesville, NC. The private homestead, established in 1888, spans 25 acres of rolling woodland and walking trails. It is only five minutes from the intersection of I-40 and I-77 on Highway 64 East.

- The Farm is a “day apart” venue only. **Lodging is on your own** and not included in the program cost. View the Farm and spacious retreat house at <https://www.thelydiagroup.com/starrette-farm-retreat>.
- Local lodging options are abundant. We encourage you to consider coming on Sunday and spending Sunday and Monday night at one of the many local hotels. Make it a real “time apart.” Several people have told us that the Sleep Inn in Statesville is very comfortable and affordable. The Fairfield Inn is a little higher in price and standards. Hotel breakfast may not be as usual because of Covid restrictions but there are lots of breakfast places around! Both are about eight minutes from the Farm.

Graduates of School of the Spirit share their stories

Watch here: <https://www.schoolofthespirit.com/testimonials>

A few words from our School Missioner, Ashley Thomas:

Watch here: <https://www.schoolofthespirit.com/testimonials>

APPLY ONLINE:

<https://www.schoolofthespirit.com/application-form>

If you prefer to submit a written application, see pages 6-7.



Retreat Instructors

- Don Carroll, Spiritual Director
- Nicole Greer, Leadership Coach
- Roxanne Morgan, Creative Director
- Ann Starrette, Program Director
- Rev. Dr. Jody Seymour, Senior Advisor
- Rev. Ashley Thomas, Missioner
- Diane Browder-Boswell, PhD, Book Discussion Facilitator

For more information about *School of the Spirit* and a detailed description of retreat leadership, please visit <https://www.schoolofthespirit.com/leadership>.



WHAT IS PROVIDED?

Though we provide, it is your engagement that makes all the difference. For most of us, the program only requires letting go of some non-essentials to give ourselves some free space to be schooled by the Holy Spirit, both individually and in community. Often we have all the time we need to do what matters most to us.

- Monthly reading/spiritual practice at-home assignments to integrate learning personally and in community
- Curriculum enhancement via an optional “zoom room” book discussion group
- Five quarterly 2-day retreats with professional, seasoned facilitators with monthly connection throughout the one-year program
- Simply delicious, healthy meals and refreshments both Monday and Tuesday
- Five teaching sessions at each retreat
- Group Spiritual Direction (Trust Circles) with members who remain together through the one-year experience.
- Fixed-hour prayer worship experiences in community: morning and night, with liturgies and resources to use in your own setting
- Retreat materials and supplies (excluding books)
- A 90-Day Spiritual Practice Journal
- Note-taking Journal with appropriate quotes to be used at each of the five retreats
- Prayerful, written feedback on your reflection paper assignments
- Occasional virtual mini-retreats on seasonal content
- Additional helpful spiritual formation book/web resource list
- Guidance for meeting with a spiritual friend/spiritual director in-between retreats
- Faculty that is available for consultation at any time
- A final project that guides you in the process of articulating a personal Rule of Life
- Certificate of Completion awarded for those meeting requirements
- CEU certificate upon request and the completion of all requirements
- Academic Credit: If you would like to receive academic credit for your School of the Spirit experience from a university/seminary of your choice and you have confirmed their openness to this possibility, please email our Executive Director of Academic Partnerships, Frieda Farfour Brown, PhD, at farfour@bellsouth.net to inquire. We are prepared to work with academic institutions who are willing to work creatively with us!

What if you have other questions about the program?

We are here to help. Don't hesitate to contact School of the Spirit Missioner, Rev. Ashley Thomas, at (704) 408-4248 or ashleygpthomas@icloud.com. She is a program graduate and occasional faculty leader, and will be happy to talk with you further.

Candidate Application Cohort 13

Please be ready to pay a non-refundable \$50 administration fee upon submission of this application. Subsequent submissions are free.



Name _____

Today's date: _____

Church _____ District (if Methodist) _____

Preferred Mailing Address (*note home or church*) _____

Zip _____ E-mail _____

Cell Phone: _____ (Alternate) _____

Birth date: MM/DD/YY _____

Current Work/Life Role with a brief description: _____

PERSONAL DISCERNMENT

Because the program makes a significant financial investment in its participants, it is necessary for participants to discern if *School of the Spirit* is right for you at this time. Consider the following discernment questions before you apply:

- Are you able to attend all sessions?
- Do those you are responsible for (work, staff, members to whom you report) know of your interest in School of the Spirit? Is there anyone with whom you need to have a conversation before beginning? Any support staff/lay leadership you need to put in place should something arise? - *because it will!* What, if anything, would you need from them to participate fully and freely?
- Consider the same questions in regard to your family.
- Are there any current priorities you need to consider re-arranging, or special circumstances you need to consider to be able to fully participate?

(application continued)

Take some time to prayerfully respond to the following questions:

1. What draws you to participate in *School of the Spirit (SOS)* at this point in your life and ministry? How do you hope to benefit?

2. Briefly describe your prayer life and the spiritual practices you engage in regularly.

3. How do these practices address your spiritual needs, sustain and enliven you?

4. What is your experience with the ancient spiritual practices of: (a) Spiritual Direction - group and/or individual; (b) Centering Prayer; (c) Lectio Divina?

5. When was the last time you were part of a spiritual retreat in which you were not a leader?

6. In your life/ministry at this time, what feeds your soul? What drains or discourages you?

7. What are the biggest blocks you experience to living a life of peace, joy and freedom?

8. Fast forward to the end of your *School of the Spirit* one-year experience. Briefly describe how you hope your life/ministry will be different due to the soul strengthening wisdom received.

9. How did you hear about *School of the Spirit*?

Please mail:

- Your non-refundable application administrative fee of \$50. Two ways to pay:
 - PAY BY CHECK: Your check made payable to Davidson UMC with “School of the Spirit” on the memo line (your check is your receipt)
 - or -
 - PAY ONLINE by credit card here: <http://tinyurl.com/DUMC-Adult> (copy and paste link into your browser)
- Your application (unless you applied online)
 - SEND TO: School of the Spirit, Ann Starrette, Program Director, PO Box 1288 Troutman, NC 28166

Applications will continue to be reviewed until **April 1, 2022**, or until the entering class is full.

You can learn more about School of the Spirit at
www.SchooloftheSpirit.com

*In strategic partnership with the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina
and The Lydia Group, a Christ-centered retreat ministry.*