



• Inner Awakening • Restoration • Transformation •

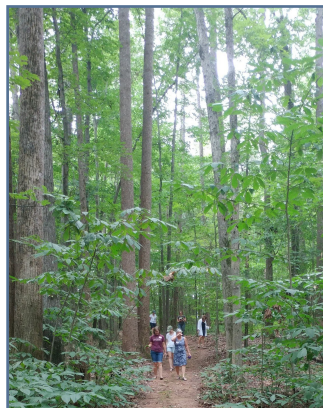
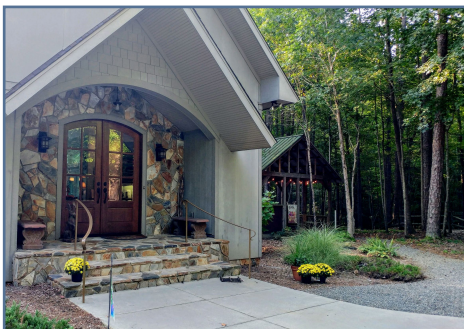
2024-2025 / cohort 15

for Christian Spiritual Formation

OVERVIEW

School of the Spirit, embarking on its 15th year, is a twelve-month retreat-based spiritual formation journey into contemplative practices that bring the seeker closer to God. The program includes both in-person and online elements. The School's distinctiveness is seen in at least three ways:

- ***The strength of 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. Simultaneously, our yoke becomes easy as we abide ever more deeply in the interior freedom, care, and love of God.



*School of the Spirit is a Christian spiritual formation experiential practicum of Deeper Journey Ministries
In partnership with the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina
and The Lydia Group LLC 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 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.



*Ann Starrette,
Program Director*

RETREAT DETAILS

DATES & THEMES

- July 29-30, 2024 *Longing for More*
- October 28-29, 2024 *Leading from Within*
- January 27-28, 2025 *Finding Grace at the Center*
- April 28-29, 2025 *Cultivating Discernment*
- June 2-3, 2025 *Living in Rhythm*



*Don Carroll, Instructor
and Spiritual Director*



*Nicole Greer,
Leadership Coach*

Each retreat begins on Monday at 1:00 pm (except first retreat, which begins at 10:00 am), until 8pm and continues on Tuesday from 9:00 am until 3:30 pm.

ALL RETREATS FOLLOW A SIMILAR FORMAT

- There are times for learning, reflection, engagement, worship, and 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.



*Roxanne Morgan,
Creative Director*



*Craig Sefa,
Worship Arts*

WHO SHOULD APPLY? *School of the Spirit is designed for those who thirst.*

As we turn the corner into a new year, 2024, we continue to notice that the people who apply to *School of the Spirit* do so for three reasons: one, they are hungry - even ache - for a more intimate experiential relationship with God; two, they long for deep-down transformation and know a spiritual community is needed to support them in their longing; and three, they want to be transformed for the sake of the world. They want to rise to the challenge of responding to life and ministry differently - from a holy, healthy, *Mind of Christ* place. But here's the thing - those whom God has called to be agents of transformation are often depleted "thirsty water-givers" in need of a deep and sustaining drink from the Spirit's well.

- Are you a Christian leader who longs to move from scurrying to keen interior wisdom and serenity — one who longs to rest deeper, live fuller, and lead better?
- Do you long to fashion a life that flows outward from your Divine center, serving others?
- Are you thirsty to cooperate with the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, letting it shape your way of life and work — making you an agent of transforming grace in your little corner of the world? The most important criterion is a sense of calling to Christian spiritual (*trans*)formation.

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, para-church staff, business, health, and lay leader professionals.

INVESTMENT: \$950 (*value is \$1500 per student*)

Apply early and save.

The tuition for *School of the Spirit's* twelve-month experience 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. Please refer to page five to learn more.

School of the Spirit 15 on-boarding begins in early June 2024, with an application deadline of April 30, 2024. View details here: www.schoolofthespirit.com

Apply early and save money

EXTRA early registration deadline: December 31, 2023 (save \$150) = tuition \$800

Early registration deadline: January 31, 2024 (save \$100) = Tuition \$850

Regular registration deadline: April 30, 2024 = Tuition \$950

Late registration: May 1 and after, 2024 = Tuition \$1,050

Applications will continue to be reviewed until the entering cohort is full.

Please contact Ann Starrette, program director, with questions at

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

Financial Assistance

NOTE: If you are a WNCN United Methodist clergy, local pastor, or staff/lay ministry professional, this program qualifies for Spiritual Renewal Fund support. Reach out to Marsha Patton for grant application details (February 2024 cycle) at MPatton@wncnmc.org. Further assistance is available. If you are currently in a season of needing financial assistance, reach out to Don Carroll at carroll.williamdon@gmail.com, SOS Scholarship Fund Chair, to apply.

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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. **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>.
- **Lodging Partnerships:** Starrette Farm Retreat is in partnership with two hotels only seven minutes from Starrette Farm. This partnership provides participants with quality hotel amenities, complimentary breakfast, and discounted rooms! Just mention our name (Starrette Farm Retreat) when you book your stay. **Fairfield Inn & Suites** (a little higher in price and amenities) -1243 Tonewood St, Statesville, NC; phone: 704-818-2850 (must call local number, not 800 number) and **The Sleep Inn** (comfortable and affordable) -1212 Tonewood St, Statesville, NC; phone: 704-878-2400. We encourage you to consider coming on Sunday and spending Sunday and Monday nights at one of the many local hotels to make it a real “time apart.”

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
- Craig Sefa, Pastor / Worship Arts
- 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
- 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 (Rhythm) 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 who is happy to talk with you further.



Candidate Application Cohort 15

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

Name _____

Today's date: _____

Church _____ District (if Methodist) _____

Home Mailing Address _____

Zip _____ Email _____

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? **[See dates on page 2]**
- 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?

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, (d) Examen Prayer?

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*?

PAYMENTS:

- Your non-refundable application administrative fee of \$50. Two ways to pay:
 - PAY BY CHECK: Your check made payable to **Deeper Journey Ministries** with “SOS15” on the memo line (your check is your receipt) - or -
 - PAY ONLINE by credit card here: <https://www.schoolofthespirit.com/payments>
- Your application and/or check (unless you applied online)
 - SEND TO: SOS: Ann Starrette, Program Director, PO Box 1288 Troutman, NC 28166

Applications will continue to be reviewed until the entering class is full.

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