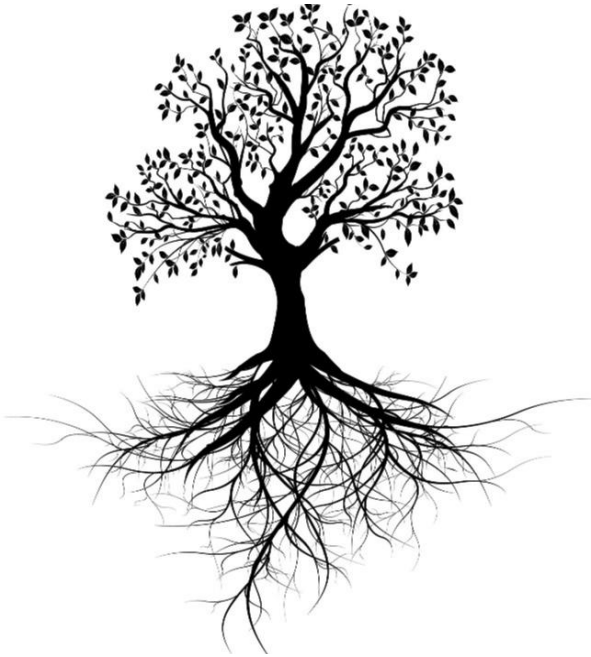




a ministry of prayer and learning devoted to  
*the School of the Spirit*

***On Being a  
Spiritual Nurturer***  
**2018 - 2019**



**PROGRAM GUIDE**

The School of the Spirit Ministry is an independent  
501(c)3 not-for-profit organization



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A NOTE ON TRANSLATION: While School of the Spirit uses God and Christ centered language we recognize and respect the wide theological and spiritual backgrounds participants bring to the program. Please translate the language used here to one which speaks to you.

**For more information please visit our website:**

**[www.schoolofthespirit.org](http://www.schoolofthespirit.org)**

# INTRODUCTION

## **What is the *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* program?**

The program provides a structured way for participants to discern and discover gifts for--and grow into--forms of spiritual nurture ministry as informed by the Quaker tradition. Over the course of 18 months, students in the program gain knowledge, skills, and a community of support to help deepen their spiritual lives, grow in wisdom, and be more capable and faithful ministers in their home Meetings, faith communities, and beyond.

## **Who are spiritual nurturers?**

Spiritual nurturers are discerners and listeners for how God is present and active across the spectrum of people's lives. Spiritual nurturers demonstrate a clear hospitality of the heart that touches the lives of others and is evidence to us of God's love and care.

**Within the Quaker context** spiritual nurturers help individuals and faith communities discern and answer the call to be faithful. They name and lift up spiritual gifts in others. They invite people to listen and respond to leadings from God. Spiritual nurturers notice the need for and offer spiritual

companionship. They hold up a mirror to help people see themselves as beloved children of God, with ordinary human strengths and fragility. Spiritual nurturers provide encouragement and loving, honest accountability for those seeking to be faithful. They serve those who are growing in spiritual maturity and those experiencing transition and crisis. They

accompany people who are struggling with God's movement in their lives, especially when it may appear that God is silent or absent. Spiritual nurturers introduce people to spiritual practices that can help them perceive and experience God's presence and guidance. They invite people into a contemplative life and the active life of faithful service.



**The ministry of spiritual nurture** takes many forms and may change over a lifetime. Past program participants have been drawn to:

- act as a prayerful presence in a faith community, living a more contemplative life with God;
- serve inside and outside a faith community through teaching, group facilitation, traveling in the ministry, and spiritual companionship;
- delve deeply into the creative capacities opened by a life centered in God, such as visual arts, music, writing, poetry, and performance;
- seek further education, such as seminary, a counseling or pastoral care program, or other studies.

**Not a Quaker?** While the program is grounded in Quaker faith and practice, its content applies to all people of faith. We encourage any interested person to contact one of the core teachers for help with discernment.

**OUR GOALS are that through the program participants will:**

- experience an expanded capacity to love and be compassionate toward others, thereby residing in a deeper awareness of the blessed community;\*
- be encouraged to live out the gifts of spiritual nurture given by God for building up the blessed community;
- gain a deeper appreciation for the distinctive Quaker expression of Christianity and the Judeo-Christian story from which it emerged;
- become more able and desirous of living in a contemplative rhythm, with a deepened faith that God is at work in the world.

Beyond these goals and the requirements of the program (detailed in this Program Guide), it is our hope that participants will be increasingly opened to the inward work of God and be transformed by it. Such a transformation, of course, cannot be a goal or a program requirement, because such transformation is an act of grace.

\* One definition on the Blessed Community is an understanding of a faith community “as it is and how it could be in the fullness of time” (Carole Treadway, “Blessed Community,” [http://www.quakerinfo.com/blessed\\_community.pdf](http://www.quakerinfo.com/blessed_community.pdf))

# WHAT PARTICIPANTS LEARN

Exercising the gifts and ministry of spiritual nurture within communities is enhanced and strengthened through learning certain content. The *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* program focuses on content:

- designed to ground participants in the historical context of the Christian and Quaker tradition of spiritual nurture,
- provide practical tools and knowledge related to spiritual nurture, and
- deepen their spiritual lives and relationships with God.

The content covered includes the following **five thematic streams** that flow and intersect throughout the program.

## **1. Practicing the Presence: Spiritual Development, Prayer, and Worship**

In prayer and worship the connection with the Divine is experienced – it is a time of listening and responding to the Inward Teacher. While forms of prayer and worship vary, they provide an essential grounding for the ministry of spiritual nurture.

Exploration of this theme includes: Quaker traditions of prayer and worship, daily retirement, allowing the Bible to speak to us, the use of queries, and individual and corporate discernment. Other forms of prayer and spiritual practices from the Christian tradition are explored.

## **2. The Life of Faith within the Individual Spiritual Journey**

The program will include themes that often arise within adult spiritual journeys and that inform both personal spiritual work and the support of others within our communities.

Content explored includes: liminality (“in-between” experiences), commitment, humility, suffering, dark night of the soul, love and joy, gifts in ministry.

### 3. Quaker Theology

An understanding of Quaker history, theology, and Biblical interpretation allows participants to better appreciate the particular vision of Quaker ministry. The program will help ground participants in these traditions.

Topics covered include: Quaker Christology (ways people/Quakers view Christ), interpretation of Scripture, the blessed community, and incarnation and embodiment.

### 4. Living within the Judeo-Christian Narrative: Corporate Spiritual Nurture

Spiritual Nurture has a long history within Christian communities. The program will explore historical examples and how these influence Spiritual Nurture today.

Content includes: an introduction to Desert, Monastic, and Anabaptist spiritualities as demonstrations of radical Christian faith, discipleships, covenant communities, and historical Quaker understandings of ministry and eldership.



Participant contributing to a collective weaving project

### 5. Corporate Life in Faith

Gifts of spiritual nurture are given by God so they can be lived out in community. In the program, we explore how faith communities function and how specific gifts can be used in a community.

Content explored includes: meeting dynamics, gifts and personality types in the context of community, and conflict within community. Specific tools and skills useful in spiritual nurture, such as reflective listening, will be introduced.

# PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Through the varied elements of the program, participants are invited to seek and respond to the guidance, teaching, and activity of the Light of Christ at work in all; to be grounded in the Life and Power of God; and to be more deeply and fully attuned to the Spirit. The program is designed to touch mind, heart, body, and spirit. Prayer and study are both essential.

The program has four interrelated components: Residencies; Study and Integrative Work; daily Spiritual Practice; and meetings with a Care Committee. These components are designed to establish a contemplative rhythm that invites the participant into a deeper relationship with God. This rhythm includes the movement between home and the residencies, between times of solitude and with community, and between explorations and reflection.

## 1. Residencies

All participants attend six residencies over the eighteen months of the program, with a total of 26 residential days. Two of the residencies are 5 days and four are 4-day residencies. Each residency begins with worship at 4:00 PM on the first day. The final day ends with lunch. (See the back cover for specific dates.) A typical day in a residency follows a rhythm of spiritual practice, meeting for learning, small fellowship (koinonia) groups (see below), and free time.

7:30 a.m.	Solitary Spiritual Practice
8:00	Breakfast
8:45	Cporate Worship
10:00	Meeting for Learning
12:00 p.m.	Lunch, followed by free time
2:30	Koinonia groups
5:00	Dinner
6:15	Meeting for Learning
8:15	Collection



The **spiritual practices** of the residencies follow a rhythm that draws us together in the presence of the living God and provides a model that can be adapted for lives at home. They include solitary spiritual discipline at the beginning of each day, corporate worship after breakfast, daily reading from Scripture during lunch, praying for one another in the koinonia groups, times of communal silence, and time each day for rest and recreation.

At **meeting for learning sessions**, program content is presented and then explored through discussion and activities. Presenters include the core teachers of the program and visiting teachers. During the second half of the program participants also serve the community as presenters.

In the **koinonia group**, consisting of up to eight participants, deeper knowing and sharing occurs. There, each person can practice being “church” (faith community/meeting) for one another. “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20). Under the guidance of a core teacher, each group meets at least twice in each residency for sharing, reflection, and prayer concerning the koinonia members’ relationship with God, their home meetings/churches, and the ways the Spirit is at work in their lives. Participants remain in the same group for the entirety of the program.

A Koinonia group from the  
2009-2011 class



**Residencies** are held at the Franciscan Spiritual Center ([www.fscaston.org](http://www.fscaston.org)) in Aston, PA, about 30 minutes from the Philadelphia International Airport and easily reached by rail. The fully accessible center is under the heartfelt care of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Each participant has a single room with a private bathroom.

## 2. Study and Integrative Work

Participants also engage with the content of the program during their time at home. Between residencies, each person studies assigned readings that average 100 pages per month. This study is an essential aspect of the program, conveying content and preparing participants to fully engage in residency experiences. The program regards study as a contemplative practice, rather than an academic exercise.

Participants complete four integrative assignments during the program, including a regular journal practice, two reflection papers and one project:

- A regular journal practice provides the opportunity to integrate and reflect upon the various components of the program and can be helpful in writing the reflection papers. The journal can take many forms such as a traditional diary, an online blog, or an art journal. Participants may choose to share aspects of their journal, but it is not required.
- Reflection papers provide the opportunity to integrate insights, spiritual growth, and a developing sense of call as the program progresses. Reflection papers may incorporate journal excerpts, spiritual autobiography, and artistic expressions.
- The project provides an opportunity to research and delve more deeply into an aspect of spiritual nurture ministry of compelling interest to the individual participant. The presentation of this work may take different forms. Examples of topics explored by past participants include the desert mothers and fathers, icons, retreat planning and the spirituality of marriage. Formats have included a research paper, an outline for a retreat, scrapbooks and other artistic expression. A brief written discussion and annotated reference list accompany creative work.

### 3. Spiritual Practice

Participants learn about and practice spiritual disciplines throughout the *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* program. This includes daily spiritual practice -- a time set aside for stilling the body and mind -- for prayer and quiet reflection. This practice might include private prayer, journaling, lectio divina or other disciplines. For some it is an opportunity to explore new practices; for others a time to settle into a rhythm of consistency. Such practices are not ends in themselves. Rather, they are means of becoming more aware of God’s loving and guiding presence and activity in our lives.



Large group learning session on the topic “Serving with Creativity and Joy”

### 4. Care Committee

The Care Committee provides an essential link between participation in this program and the home faith community. It is usually drawn from members of the participant’s meeting or church, but can include others. This committee meets regularly to provide encouragement, guidance, discernment, and accountability for the individual—both as a program participant and as a nurturer exploring a call to ministry. The committee also serves as a conduit that brings the participant’s program experience into the life of the home meeting or church. Establishing and convening the committee before the first residency is strongly recommended. The committee submits an annual report to the core teachers. The *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* program offers [guidelines and support](#) to Care Committees.

## SHOULD I APPLY?

Applicants to the program should be able to respond affirmatively to the following statements:

- I recognize and have already reflected on my Spiritual Journey and seek to deepen my relationship with God.
- I sense a nudge or call to a ministry of spiritual nurture.
- I am willing to be taught by the ongoing Judeo-Christian narrative.
- I am a regular participant in a faith community.
- I have sought clarity in my leading to enter this program with the help of people including members of my meeting or church.
- I am able to make the space and time in my life to undertake the components of this program.
- I am of sufficient maturity and at a place in my life where I can listen to and pray for others.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

The Application Form is available on our website at

[www.schoolofthespirit.org](http://www.schoolofthespirit.org)



Participants on a walk during free time

## FEES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

**The fee for the whole program is \$7,000.** This covers your tuition and room and board for all of the residential days. The fee also includes a \$400 non-refundable payment that is due on acceptance into the program. The fee does not include the application fee (\$45), books (up to \$200), and your travel to and from the Franciscan Spiritual Center.

The fee covers approximately 80% of the actual cost of your participation in the program. The generous support of donors and grantors\* make up the balance. Their support and prayers accompany you through this program.

**If you feel drawn to the program, please apply!** We offer scholarships and celebrate their use by participants. No applicant, once accepted, has withdrawn for lack of funding. To learn more about scholarships, please visit our website. We can also work with you to arrange a payment plan that fits your situation. Please contact Evelyn Jadin, the program's coordinator, at [evelyn@schoolofthespirit.org](mailto:evelyn@schoolofthespirit.org) with questions or to set up a time to talk by phone.

*\* The Shoemaker Fund, the Tyson Memorial Fund, the Legacy Granting Group, and the Obadiah Brown Fund*

## HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE?

Contact a Core Teacher:

[evelyn@schoolofthespirit.org](mailto:evelyn@schoolofthespirit.org)

[erika@schoolofthespirit.org](mailto:erika@schoolofthespirit.org)

[susan@schoolofthespirit.org](mailto:susan@schoolofthespirit.org)

Speak with a graduate of the program.

Email the School of the Spirit Administrator,

[info@schoolofthespirit.org](mailto:info@schoolofthespirit.org), who can put you in touch with alumni.

Attend an Information Session and/or a Testing the Waters retreat.

Dates and locations will be announced on the website.

## THE CORE TEACHING TEAM

**ERIKA FITZ**, Lancaster Monthly Meeting (PA), Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, has an eclectic background that includes a love of poetry, knitting, and art, a childhood in a Brethren farm family in rural Pennsylvania, and an education that runs from Haverford College (first encounter with Quakerism), to seminary in New York City (M.Div., Union Theological Seminary), to a doctorate in Hebrew Bible (Emory University). She has also lived for extended periods in Central and South America. Having taught both college and seminary students, she especially appreciates how learning in the School of the Spirit engages the heart, spirit, and body along with the mind, and that community is such an important part of experience. As a member of Lancaster Monthly Meeting she serves on Worship and Ministry and works with the Young Friends. She lives with her husband Andrew, two dogs, sometimes two stepchildren, and countless unfinished knitting projects.

**Contact:** [erika@schoolofthespirit.org](mailto:erika@schoolofthespirit.org)

**EVELYN JADIN**, Jamestown Friends Meeting (NC), North Carolina Yearly Meeting—FUM, is a graduate of Guilford College and the Earlham School of Religion (M.Div.). She has served among Friends as an elder, teacher, and pastor. Evelyn is especially interested in the theological diversity among Friends, spiritual practices, and creating communities of faithful deep listening. For fun Evelyn enjoys quilting, playing with her wonderful nieces and nephews, and exploring the mountains and river surrounding her home with her wife Mary and dog Gracie.

**Contact:** [evelyn@schoolofthespirit.org](mailto:evelyn@schoolofthespirit.org)



The Core Teachers for the *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* program.

Left to right: Erika Fitz, Evelyn Jadin, Susan Kight

**SUSAN KIGHT**, Camden Friends Meeting (DE), Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, completed the *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* in 2017. She holds multiple degrees, which bring together her love of art, languages, and teaching. She has served among Friends as elder, teacher, committee clerk, and meeting clerk. Susan is called to accompany the spiritual journeyer and to foster faithful listening on the part of the individual and the faith community. She is a lover of books, crafts, and corny jokes. She lives with her husband Bill.

**Contact** Susan with questions or to set a time to talk at [susan@schoolofthespirit.org](mailto:susan@schoolofthespirit.org)

# ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF THE SPIRIT MINISTRY

A Ministry of Prayer and Learning Devoted to the School of the Spirit is dedicated to helping all who wish to be more faithful listeners and responders to the inward work of Christ.

The Ministry, given to its founding mothers Sandra Cronk and Kathryn Damiano in the late 1980s, has offered many programs to nurture the spiritual life. Rooted in the traditional meetings of ministers and elders, its programs offer opportunities for Friends to learn to discern the movement of the Inward Teacher and test that discernment with one another.

The Ministry in its conduct and programming has these Core Characteristics:

- Is rooted, grounded, and lived out in prayer and expectant waiting upon Divine guidance.
- Understands our spirituality and spiritual journeys in the context of the ongoing Judeo-Christian story.
- Combines a clear Christian grounding with the ability to listen and recognize spiritual openings and committed journeys in whatever form they appear. This rare combination helps to lead one into deeper spiritual understanding and brings forth a greater tenderness with each other.
- Fosters a deeper appreciation of the rhythms of the contemplative life as lived out within a faith community.
- Strengthens understanding and appreciation of the roots of Quakerism, its theology, practices, and traditions.
- Enhances the understanding of the life of a faith community grounded in God and the service of members within it, thereby building up the Religious Society of Friends.



**Board Members** (as of August 2017):

April Allison (Okemos, MI)

Jan Blodgett (Davidson, NC)

Catherine Cox (Burkittsville, MD)

Angi York Crane (Philadelphia, PA)

Erika Fitz, ex officio Core Teacher (Lancaster, PA)

Sharon Frame (Cambridge, MA)

Judy Geiser (Kendal, PA)

Jim Herr, ex officio Administrator (Lancaster, PA)

Evelyn Jadin, ex officio Core Teacher (Jamestown, NC)

Susan Kight, ex officio Core Teacher (Smyrna, DE)

Mary Linda McKinney (Nashville, TN)

Joann Neuroth, Clerk (Lansing, MI)

Tom Paxson (Kendal, PA)

Judy Purvis, Recording Clerk (Greensboro, NC)

Barbarajene Williams (Kendal, PA)



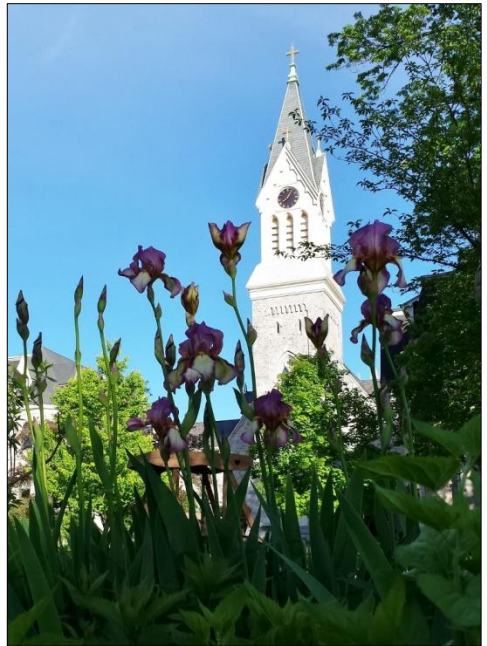
Labyrinth at the Franciscan Spiritual Center

# NOTES



Participants working on creative projects

**NOTES:**



# ***On Being a Spiritual Nurturer*** **2018-2019**

## **Important Dates**

November 2017– May 2018  
Information Sessions and Testing the Waters Retreats

For information on these events go to our website:  
[www.schoolofthespirit.org](http://www.schoolofthespirit.org)

**May 21, 2018**  
**First review of applications (recommendations by May 28)**

## **Dates of Residencies**

Residency	1	September 5 – 10, 2018
	2	November 7 – 11, 2018
	3	February 6 – 10, 2019
	4	May 8 – 13, 2019
	5	September 4 – 8, 2019
	6	November 6 – 10, 2019

**NOTE:** The formation of the *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* class of 2018-2019 is dependent on enrollment. The School of the Spirit Ministry reserves the right to reschedule the class as necessary.

**[www.schoolofthespirit.org](http://www.schoolofthespirit.org)**