

In the flurry of living life, building ministries, and caring for others, how do we cultivate intimacy with God?



And Jesus said, *Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me, drink. As the Scripture has said, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water."* John 7:37-38

As followers of the Way, we pour out our hearts for others—which is a good thing. However, if we are not intentional about replenishing our soul, we will become dry, drained, even parched. Do you long to fashion a life that flows from your truest self, that leads from your Divine center, then walks back into the world for the sake of others? Are you a pastor, priest, pastoral staff member, director of spiritual formation, director of discipleship, Christian educator, director of spiritual growth, denominational leader, elder, deacon, spiritual director, pastoral counselor, health care professional, or other ministry leader? If so, you are invited to explore the

School of the Spirit

a twelve-month, practice-based spiritual formation experience within a community of like-minded peers. The five two-day retreats are designed to help you reclaim the Christ-shaping practices and experiences that thirsty souls through the ages used to open themselves to God's transforming work.

School of the Spirit, embarking on its eleventh year, is a distinctive, intense, one-year journey into contemplative practices that bring the seeker closer to God. ***School of the Spirit*** is distinctive in at least three ways:

- the strength from diversity that comes from openness to seekers from all Christian denominations;
- a focus on Jesus' spiritual practices and other ancient disciplines - *not on 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. Our ministries are enlivened and our yoke becomes easy as we abide ever more deeply in the freedom, care and love of God.

~ Don Carroll, *Spiritual Director*

Program Description

Over the course of the year, students read books and articles, view life-changing documentaries, engage in and experiment with a variety of spiritual formation activities and practices, develop a spiritual community with a small group of co-learners, and experience ten days of teaching and formational activities built around time-tested concepts. This robust curriculum helps the student become more open, receptive, and responsive to God's transforming grace in our individual lives.

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.

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 own soul.
- In between times, you will have monthly practice assignments to further support your experimentation with the various practices and experiences.
- To further enhance your inner transformation, you are asked to reach out to one or more of your classmates via a monthly accountability relationship to nurture your covenant journey toward God.
- In addition, you are highly encouraged to seek out a soul friend or spiritual director to accompany you on this journey.
- In large group, small group, and solitary times, this work is about reclaiming the best gift you have to give, your God-self, your truest self.
- Our aim is, with your help, to create a safe space that fosters listening to how God is calling, empowering, and leading you to cultivate intimacy with God that manifest in compassionate service and missional impact for the sake of others.



Retreat Dates and Themes

May 4-5, 2020	<i>Longing for More</i>
July 27-28, 2020	<i>Leading from Within</i>
October 26-27, 2020	<i>Finding Grace at the Center</i>
January 25-26, 2021	<i>Cultivating Discernment</i>
April 26-27, 2021	<i>Creating Rhythms of Work & Rest</i>

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

Retreat Location

In an effort to keep cost to a minimum, retreats are held at the Starrette Farm Retreat. The retreat house is located at 204 Pecan Tree Lane, Statesville NC, 28625. Established in 1888, the private homestead spans 50 acres of rolling woodland and walking trails. Only five minutes from the intersection of I-40 and I-77 on Highway 64 East, the Farm is a “day apart” venue only. In a further effort to keep costs low, *lodging is on your own and not included in retreat cost.* Statesville has numerous hotel options only ten minutes or less from the retreat house.

View the Farm and spacious retreat house at: <https://www.thehydiagroup.com/starrette-farm-retreat>



Cost and Registration

The cost is \$950 for the twelve-month experience (*Valued at \$1500 per student*). Generous financial support from the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church Leadership Development Team makes it possible to offer *School of the Spirit* at this greatly reduced price.

- \$50 non-refundable deposit is due with your application.
- \$950 is payable upon acceptance - (\$79/month - does not include application fee)
 - * For WNCU United Methodist clergy and lay ministry professions, the cost is only \$450 for the twelve-month experience (does not include the \$50 non-refundable application fee). ** Please confirm with Rev. Kim Ingram (kingram@wncumc.org) that you are eligible for this significantly reduced tuition fee.

Time & Money

Participating in *School of the Spirit* is an investment of both your time and money. We are committed to helping eliminate the financial obstacle for those accepted into *School of the Spirit* who need financial assistance. Please contact Ann Starrette directly (starrette@mindspring.com) if you need financial assistance to support your desire to be a part of this significant journey to deepen your relationship *in God for the world*.

Retreat Facilitators

- Jody Seymour, Senior Advisor
- Ann Starrette, Program Director
- Don Carroll, Spiritual Director
- Nicole Greer, Leadership Coach
- Roxanne Morgan, Creative Director

“Nothing I have ever done in my twenty-eight years of ministry in the area of spiritual formation even comes close to this experience.”

WHAT OTHERS SAY: Visit our website for student comments, further information and a detailed description of retreat leadership at: www.SchooloftheSpirit.com, or contact Ann Starrette at 704-488-5825 or AStarrette@DavidsonUMC.org.

Applications are encouraged by February 1, 2020

- Participation is open to all denominations and limited to 24 clergy/ministry professionals (church staff, spiritual directors, health care professionals & leadership of Christian non-profits).
- To apply, please submit the following application by snail mail:

School of the Spirit
Ann Starrette, Program Director
PO Box 1288
Troutman, NC 28166

- Or you may submit your application online at <https://www.schoolofthespirit.com/program#application>
- Applicants will be notified of selection decisions by March 1, 2020. Accepted participants will receive a detailed agenda, reading and engagement list, directions to Starrette Farm, and more in the close weeks prior to our first retreat together.
- If you are reading this after the application due date, PLEASE contact Ann direct at Starrette@mindspring.com for availability. Often times, *life happens* and a spot or two opens up.



School of the Spirit Application / Cohort 11

Name _____ Date _____

Church _____ District (if Methodist) _____

Preferred Mailing Address (note home or church) _____

Zip _____ E-mail _____

Phone: Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell _____

• **Current Work/Life Role with 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 registration deposit of \$50 (check or money-order) **made payable to Davidson UMC** with “*School of the Spirit*” on the Memo line (your check is your receipt) along with
- Your application (unless you registered online)
- TO: *School of the Spirit*, Ann Starrette, Program Director, PO Box 1288 Troutman, NC 28166

Early Deadline for Registration is February 1, 2020
You can learn more about *School of the Spirit* at
www.SchooloftheSpirit.com

School of the Spirit exists to help fan the flames of authentic transformation into Christlikeness through the ancient spiritual disciplines.

Developed by Jody Seymour and a core team of seasoned facilitators and practitioners, Jody states, “*School of the Spirit* is one of the finest renewal experiences I know of for ministers. It provides needed respite and a manageable pattern for spiritual growth. I hope you will consider this opportunity as you ponder how you will care for your soul. I know first-hand how thirsty we ministers can get giving other people water. This is a great stop by the well.”

~ Rev. Dr. Jody Seymour, former Senior Pastor/ Davidson United Methodist Church, Davidson, NC