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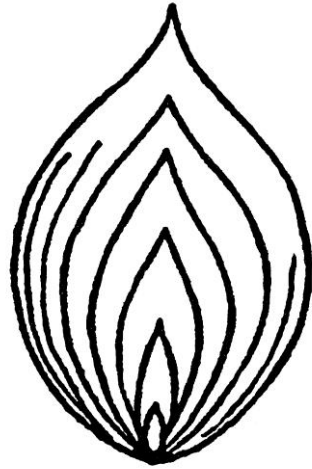
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*A Ministry of
Prayer and Learning
devoted to*

the School of the Spirit



**On Being a
Spiritual Nurturer**

2012 – 2014

a program of prayer and study

A Ministry of the Committee on Worship and Care
of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends

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A MINISTRY OF PRAYER AND LEARNING DEVOTED TO THE SCHOOL OF THE SPIRIT

The School of the Spirit Ministry (SotS) is dedicated to helping all who wish to be more faithful listeners and responders to the inward work of Christ. 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.

SOTS BOARD, 2011- 2012

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Michael Green (Chapel Hill, NC)
Patty Levering (Davidson, NC)
Becky Phipps (Fresh Pond, MA)

RETREAT LEADERS

Linda Chidsey (Housatonic, NY)
Carolyn Moon (Gwynedd, PA)

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Michael Green (Chapel Hill, NC)

ON BEING A SPIRITUAL NURTURER *a program of prayer and study*

PREFACE

We invite you to read this prospectus so that you may learn more about the purpose, structure and themes of the *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* program. We hope it will help you discern whether you are called to the ministry of spiritual nurture and whether you are led to apply to this program. The application forms for the program and for the scholarship funds are available on our website and from the Core Teachers. Please feel free to contact any of the Core Teachers for further information and discussion. Please also note on the inside back cover the informal and more formal opportunities to meet the teachers.

The Core Teachers (see also p. 5):



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Durham, NC 27707
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baphipps@earthlink.net

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS is May 25, 2012

All applications will be considered after this date, not as they are received.

For application materials, visit
◀ www.schoolofthespirit.org ▶

INTRODUCTION

The program ***On Being a Spiritual Nurturer*** invites participants 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 for persons who feel drawn to a deeper communion with God and the service that might arise. It is for persons who are concerned about the spiritual well-being of their faith community, and it is for persons who are called to the ministry of spiritual nurture. Elements of the program are designed to touch mind, heart, body, and spirit. The practice of prayer is essential.

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

- a more contemplative life with God, recognizing the importance of being a prayerful presence in a faith community;
- a deeper grounding in Quaker faith and practice which sustains a life of service both inside and outside a faith community, including teaching, group facilitation, traveling in the ministry, and spiritual companionship;
- delving more deeply into the creative space opened by a life centered in God, through art, music, writing, poetry, and the like;
- seeking further education, such as seminary, a counseling program, or other specific studies.

The ministry to which you are called will be uniquely shaped by your gifts and life situation.

OUR GOALS are that participants will:

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

Beyond these goals and the requirements of the program, it is our hope that participants will be opened to the inward work of Christ and be transformed by it. An opening such as this cannot be a goal or a requirement because it is an act of grace.

While the program is grounded in Quaker faith and practice, its content has applicability to all people of faith.

THE PROGRAM

The program has five components. Together and individually 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 study and reflection.

The components comprise: the **Residencies** and the **Curriculum** which is presented at the residencies; and between residencies, daily **Spiritual Practice**, meetings with a **Care Committee**, and **Study**.

1. RESIDENCIES

All participants attend eight residencies over the two years of the program. Each year begins and closes with a 5-day residency, with two 3-day residencies in the middle of each of the two years. There are a total of 32 residential days. The specific dates of these residencies can be found at the end of this prospectus.

The first day of each residency begins with worship at 4:00 p.m. and the residency closes with lunch at noon. A typical day in a residency follows a rhythm of solitary spiritual practice, corporate worship, teaching, free time and meetings in a *koinonia* or “k”-group.



7:30 a.m.
Solitary spiritual practice
8:00
Breakfast
8:45
Corporate worship
10:00
Teaching session
12:00 p.m.
Lunch, followed by free time
2:30
Koinonia groups
5:00
Dinner
6:30
Teaching session
8:45
Collection

The *koinonia* group, consisting of 5-8 persons, is an opportunity where deeper knowing and sharing occurs, and where each one can practice being church 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 as a venue for sharing, reflection, and prayer concerning each *koinonia* member’s relationship with God and the way the Spirit is at work in each one’s life. Participants remain together in the same group for the program’s two years.

Residencies are held at the **FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL CENTER** (www.fscaston.org) in Aston, PA, about 30 minutes from the Philadelphia International Airport. The center is under the heartfelt care of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Each participant is assigned to a single, furnished room. The Franciscan Spiritual Center is fully accessible. Directions and transport possibilities to the center will be sent upon acceptance into the program.



2. CURRICULUM

The curriculum that is presented at the residencies interweaves the **study** of spiritual nurture with its **spiritual practice**.

CURRICULUM AS STUDY

Teaching presentations, and the readings related to them, fall generally within the following five areas:

- Living the Judeo-Christian Narrative
Introduction to Desert, Monastic, and Anabaptist spiritualities as demonstrations of radical faith, discipleship, and covenanting communities, and as revelations of the inward work of Christ.
- Quaker Spirituality
Reflection on Quaker faith and practice, including Quaker Christology, interpretation of Scripture, the blessed community, and the offices of minister and elder.
- The Life of Faith
Exploration of the divine-human-divine relationship within the adult spiritual journey with focus on such topics as liminality, listening, stability and humility, living in the cross, dark night of the soul, love and joy, gifts and ministries.
- Living with Others as a School of the Spirit
Seeing human relationships as venues for Spirit-led learning and growth. This includes the dynamics of meeting life, committed relationships, and work; as well as experiences of loss and grief and of feeling different and set apart.
- Practicing the Presence
Introduction to distinctive Quaker approaches to the spiritual life, such as corporate worship based on waiting and listening, daily retirement, allowing the Bible to speak to us, the use of queries, and discernment, as well as varieties of prayer and spiritual disciplines.

CURRICULUM AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

The spiritual practices of the residencies follow a daily rhythm that draws us together in the presence of the living God and provides a model that can be adapted for our lives at home. They include:

- Solitary spiritual discipline at the beginning of each day.
- Corporate worship after breakfast.
- Daily reading from Scripture during lunch.
- Listening and praying for one another in small fellowship (*koinonia*) groups.
- Active communal silence and solitary silence in community as part of each five-day residency.
- A time each day for rest and recreation as needed to restore and refresh body and spirit.

The following components of the program are undertaken between the residencies.

3. SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

We believe in the daily need to set aside a time for stilling the body and mind for prayer and quiet reflection. Your practice may include private prayer, journaling, *lectio divina* or other disciplines. Such practices are not ends in themselves but means to becoming more aware of God's loving and guiding presence and activity in our lives. It can be helpful to reflect on your practice with a spiritual friend, your Care Committee and with your *koinonia* group.

4. CARE COMMITTEE

A Care Committee usually comprises members from your meeting or church. This committee provides an essential link between your participation in this program and your home faith community. It provides encouragement, guidance, discernment, and accountability for you, both as a program participant and as a nurturer exploring your call to ministry. You should plan to meet with this committee monthly. The committee is asked to submit a report to the core staff once each year. We strongly recommend that you establish this committee before the program begins. Our document on the Care Committee provides a more in-depth exploration of its purpose and should be read by participants and Care Committee members. A link to this document can be found on the "On Being a Spiritual Nurturer" page of our website.

5. STUDY

We approach study as a spiritual practice, similar to other contemplative traditions. Assigned readings average 100 pages per month. Participants also undertake four assignments during the program: two **reflection papers** and two **projects**. **Reflection papers** speak to your spiritual growth, insights, and developing sense of call as the program progresses. Reflection paper forms may include journal excerpts, spiritual autobiography, or artistic expression. The two **projects** provide the opportunity to research and delve more deeply into an aspect of spiritual nurture ministry of compelling interest to you. Participants may approach the second, final project in a creative form other than a paper, such as a detailed outline for a course you are led to teach, a retreat you might lead, or an artistic, expressive endeavor.

CORE TEACHERS

The teaching is undertaken under the guidance of three Core Teachers. Additionally, visiting teachers will facilitate one or two teaching sessions at each residency. Also present at each residency is a person-of-presence whose charge is to hold all those present in prayer, being aware of how the Spirit is flowing through the gathering and of how individuals are responding to that flow.

A brief introduction to each of the Core Teachers follows.

MICHAEL GREEN, of Chapel Hill (NC) Friends Meeting and of Piedmont Friends Fellowship, completed the Spiritual Nurturer program in 1997 and holds graduate degrees in music. He joined SotS as Administrator and as a Core Teacher in 2000. Mike is a pianist, spiritual director, and a released Friend with a concern for the spiritual care of men, and the nurture of family and communal life. He and his wife are leaders in the Couple Enrichment program of Friends General Conference.

PATTY LEVERING, of Davidson Friends Meeting, North Carolina Yearly Meeting Conservative and Piedmont Friends Fellowship, completed the Spiritual Nurturer program in 2006 and is a graduate of Earlham School of Religion. She was a chaplain in oncology for ten years and continues to serve as a spiritual director. She is especially interested in deep listening, spiritual disciplines, and Friends' interpretation of the Bible.

BECKEY PHIPPS, of Fresh Pond Friends Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting, completed the Spiritual Nurturer program in 1994 and has a graduate degree in Theology. She has served among Friends as a teacher, workshop and retreat leader, and committee clerk for FGC (Committee for Nurturing Ministries; Traveling Ministries Program). Her concerns include balancing continuing revelation with traditional Quaker experiences and understandings of the nature and activity of God/Christ in our meetings.

Visit our website for longer introductions to the Core Teachers.

FEES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The fee for the two-year program is \$6,900. This covers your tuition and room and board for the 32 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.

If you feel drawn to the program, please apply! We offer scholarships and celebrate their use by participants. To learn more about scholarships, please visit our website and look under "Quick Links" on the *Programs* page. We can also work with you to arrange a payment plan that fits your situation. For other questions, contact Becky Phipps, the program's coordinator, at admissions@schoolofthespirit.org or at 781.891.3783.

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.

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

DISCERNMENT TO APPLY

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

- I recognize and have already reflected on my life as a journey with and into 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 member of a meeting or church and have some knowledge and experience of its faith and practice.
- I have sought clarity in my leading to enter this program with the help of a group that includes 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.

If you are not a Quaker, you may be wondering whether you can participate. Although the majority of those in its classes have been Friends, the program has been blessed by participation of those from other faith traditions and we believe that the program will be of benefit to other faith communities.

IMPORTANT DATES

Do you have questions? Do you wish to meet the teachers? Here are several opportunities prior to the application deadline:

Audio call-in: Sun. Nov. 20 at 8:00 p.m. (details tba)

Information sessions (specific times tba):

December 4, 2011, at Durham Meeting, NC

April 15, 2012, at Central Philadelphia Meeting, PA

Testing the Waters daylong retreats:

February 11, 2012, at Richmond Meeting, VA

February 25, 2012, at Wellesley Meeting, MA

March 31, 2012, at Gwynedd Meeting, PA

April 28, 2012, at Lansing Meeting, MI

May 25, 2012: deadline for the receipt of applications, including recommendations

June 29, 2012: decisions of the Admissions Committee mailed to applicants

July 22, 2012: deadline to receive deposits from invited applicants

DATES OF THE RESIDENCIES

Year 1

I. Wed. Sept. 12 – Mon. Sept. 17, 2012

II. Thurs. Nov. 8 – Sun. Nov. 11, 2012

III. Thurs. Feb. 7 – Sun. Feb. 10, 2013

IV. Wed. May 22 – Mon. May 27, 2013

Year 2

V. Wed. Sept. 11 – Mon. Sept. 16, 2013

VI. Thurs. Nov. 7 – Sun. Nov. 10, 2013

VII. Thurs. Feb. 6 – Sun. Feb. 9, 2014

VIII. Wed. May 21 – Mon. May 26, 2014

For updates, more information, and application materials, please visit our website www.schoolofthespirit.org, where you can also subscribe to our listserv. You may also join us on facebook at www.facebook.com/theschoolofthespirit.