

Upon Retirement As Core Teachers

*Patty and Mike have prayed, worshipped, and worked together as Core Teachers since 2006. Mike was a member of the 3rd class of *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* in 1995-97, was invited back as a visiting teacher in the 4th class, and became a Core Teacher for the 5th class in 2001. Patty joined Mike on the Core Teaching Team in 2006 with the 7th class after her participation in the 6th class. They are now completing their 3rd class together as Core Teachers.*



Mike: For 12 years now the *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* program has been a spiritual discipline for me, preparing for and being present to the quarterly residencies. When I complete this 9th class in May 2014, I will have completed 40 residencies—and I am still and always will be a student of the school of the spirit. Although the call to release this particular ministry of teaching is clear, the absence of the discipline will in itself be a practice of reliance on God.

Patty: Although I feel clearly led to return home, it has not been easy to choose to let go teaching in *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer*, where I have met so many wonderful people, enjoyed teaching on teams of great colleagues, and been so spiritually nurtured.

When Davidson Friends built and moved into our first and very own meetinghouse it stirred in me a yearning to return home, to be more regularly an attender at meeting for worship with Davidson Friends and a participant in the life of the meeting. Having our own space makes possible programs and opportunities we never had before. In January 2013 at the urging of a friend I started a contemplative practices-centering prayer group open to the Davidson community. We have been gathering weekly on Tuesday mornings since then, with as many as eight or nine people, from as many as six different churches in the area, and in rich spiritual fellowship. This gift has increased my desire to be open to what might be possible for our meeting while it is yet new.

In May 2013 my husband Ralph retired from teaching at Davidson College. Having more time to be with him now that he is available is important to me. The urgency of taking advantage of this gift has been impressed on us as we have watched dear friends lose spouses at a young age.

Mike: It is very satisfying to recognize after so many years the fruits of one's labor. The Religious Society of Friends is a different place today than it was 12 years ago. In that time, I have witnessed miracles both large and small. Healing and transformation has occurred in people's lives as a direct result of their participation in the *On Being a*

Spiritual Nurturer program. How cool is that! So why leave such a fruitful place and a teaching environment that is itself such a place of healing and fulfillment?

For me, there is a sense that other nudges have been damped down long enough. Anticipating another class and its 3-year cycle would mean delaying responding faithfully to these nudges. For example, there are other possibilities for programs within the School of the Spirit Ministry which I may be called to pursue. Also, SotS needs more of my time as its Administrator as SotS continues to stretch its wings. And my work with SotS would not be possible without the support in so many ways of my wife Marsha. She has her own yearnings which need their own space and we are being called to more deeply engage in enriching the lives of couples through the FGC Couple Enrichment program.

Patty: My decision comes with the desire to continue to follow God's leading, gratitude for the gifts I have received, and expectation that I will continue to be a part of the School of the Spirit Ministry from home.

Mike: As Patty says, it is matter of faithfulness. For those who are called to teach I would like them to know of the joy of working as one member of a team dedicated to listening, lifting up, supporting, and being accountable to one another. It has been a place of learning how to be completely honest with myself and with others. I am very aware of the work as a team member as a spiritual discipline. It has been a real gift and a place for healing and profound growth.

Teaching in teams for the *Spiritual Nurturer* program is one of the rare places in my life where I have had complete faith that I would be held accountable in a circle of unbreakable love.

Both Patty and Mike have offered their full support to Beckey as she continues as a Core Teacher in the On Being a Spiritual Nurturer program. The current curriculum is stronger for her presence and they have great confidence in her gifts and abilities to carry the program forward.