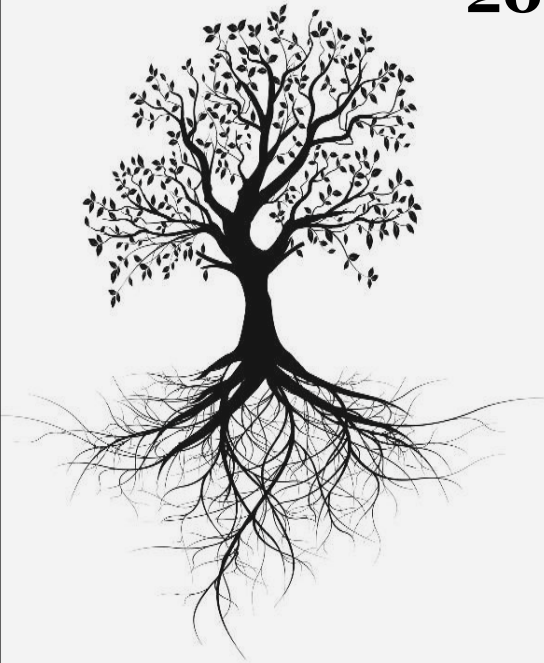




a ministry of prayer and learning devoted to  
*the School of the Spirit*

# ***On Being a Spiritual Nurturer***

**2015 - 2017**



## **PROGRAM GUIDE**

The School of the Spirit Ministry is under the care of  
the Worship and Care Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

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**For more information and to sign up for our listserv:**

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

# INTRODUCTION

## Who are spiritual nurturers?

Spiritual nurturers are discerners and listeners for how God is present and active in people's lives and in their faith communities—as well as in broader contexts such as family, neighborhood, workplace, and beyond. 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 being active in the world.

**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 give of their time to someone who needs a spiritual companion. 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.

**The *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* program** offers participants a structured way to learn about and grow in the practice of a spiritual nurture ministry—for individuals and for meetings or churches within the wider Religious Society of Friends. A significant aspect of the program addresses individual spiritual growth, with the development of gifts in spiritual nurture. Equally significant is a focus on how all the members of a faith community contribute to the spiritual growth of their community, particularly those called to serve as spiritual nurturers.

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 essential.

**Not a Quaker?** While the program is grounded in Quaker faith and practice, its content has applicability 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 the building up of 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 opened to the inward work of Christ 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*.

## 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 ministry of spiritual nurture, provide practical tools and knowledge related to spiritual nurture, and deepen their spiritual life and relationship with God, which is the place from which the ministry of spiritual nurture springs.

The content covered includes the following five thematic streams that flow and intersect throughout the two years.

### **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**

Ministry as spiritual nurturers is greatly influenced by personal spiritual development. 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**

As spiritual nurturers, it is important to be grounded in the theology of the Quaker tradition.

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**

This area focuses on historical examples of spiritual nurture. It covers an introduction to Desert, Monastic, and Anabaptist spiritualities as demonstrations of radical Christian faith, discipleship, and covenanting communities, which influence spiritual nurture today. The program also draws on the historical Quaker understanding of ministry and eldership.

## **5. Living with Others as a School of the Spirit: Corporate Life in Faith**

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

This area will cover: meeting dynamics, gifts and personality types in the context of community, experiences of feeling 'different' or 'other' in community, commitment and relationships. Specific 'tools' or skills, such as reflective listening, that are useful in spiritual nurture will be introduced.

# HOW PARTICIPANTS LEARN

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 exploration and reflection.

## 1. Residencies

All participants attend eight residencies over the two years of the program, with a total of 32 residential days. Each year begins and closes with a 5-day residency. Participants gather for two 3-day residencies in the middle of each year. 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	Corporate Worship
10:00	Meeting for Learning
12:00 p.m.	Lunch, followed by free time
2:30	Koinonia groups
5:00	Dinner
6:30	Meeting for Learning
8:45	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 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, 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 year, 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 program’s two years.

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.



## 2. Study and Integrative Work

Participants engage with the content of the *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* program during the residencies and 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 two reflection papers and two projects:

- 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 two projects provide opportunities 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 include a written paper, an outline for a retreat, creative writing, or artistic expression. A brief written discussion and annotated reference list would 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 to becoming more aware of God's loving and guiding presence and activity in our lives.

### **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 monthly 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.

## FEES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

**The fee for the two-year program is \$7,200.** 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.

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 and look under "Quick Links" on the front page. We can also work with you to arrange a payment plan that fits your situation. For other questions, contact Beckey Phipps, the program's coordinator, at [beckey@schoolofthespirit.org](mailto:beckey@schoolofthespirit.org) or at 781.718.9928.

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

## THE CORE TEACHING TEAM

**EVELYN JADIN**, Jamestown Friends Meeting (NC), North Carolina Yearly Meeting—FUM, is a graduate of Guilford College and the Earlham School of Religion. She has served among Friends as an elder, teacher (Adjunct Professor of Religion at Guilford College), and pastor (Youth Pastor at Jamestown Friends Meeting, Pastoral Intern at First Friends Meeting in Greensboro, and as Associate Campus Minister at Guilford College). Evelyn is especially interested in the theological diversity among Friends, spiritual practices, and creating communities of faithful deep listening.

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



**BECKEY PHIPPS**, Fresh Pond Friends Meeting (MA), New England Yearly Meeting, completed the *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* program in 1994 and received a graduate degree in Theology from Episcopal Divinity School soon after. She has served among Friends as a teacher, writer, workshop and retreat leader, and committee clerk for FGC's Committee for Nurturing Ministries and Traveling Ministries Program. She is called to foster the flourishing of faith communities by meeting their needs through the care/encouragement of gifts in ministry among their members.

**Contact:** 781.718.9928 / [beckey@schoolofthespirit.org](mailto:beckey@schoolofthespirit.org)

**RITA WILLETT**, Richmond Friends Meeting (VA), Baltimore Yearly Meeting, completed the *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* program in 2011 and is currently a student at Earlham School of Religion. Having practiced and taught primary care medicine for many years, Rita brings what she learned from her patients, colleagues and students about healing and care. She is called to work among communities of faith to encourage deeper conversations and the daily, embodied practices that invite God's love and grace into our lives.

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

## HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE?

- Contact a Core Teacher:

**evelyn@schoolofthespirit.org**

**beckey@schoolofthespirit.org**

**rita@schoolofthespirit.org**

- Go to our website and sign up for our listserv
- Attend an Information Session and/or a *Testing the Waters* retreat. Dates and locations will be announced via the listserv.

## 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 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 regular participant in a faith community.
- 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.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

The Application Form is available on our website at

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

Just follow the *Quick Links* on the front page.

## 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 2014):

Jan Blodgett (Davidson, NC)

Angi York Crane (Philadelphia, NJ)

Matt Drake, Clerk (Chapel Hill, NC)

Eric Evans (Philadelphia, PA)

Sharon Frame (Cambridge, MA)

Judy Geiser (Reading, PA)

Michael Green, *ex officio* Administrator (Durham, NC)

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

Tom Paxson (Kendal, PA)

Beckey Phipps, *ex officio* Core Teacher (Waltham, MA)

Judy Purvis, Recording Clerk (Greensboro, NC)

Rita Willett, *ex officio* Core Teacher (Richmond, VA)

Susan Wilson (Liberty, NC)

# NOTES

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# ***On Being a Spiritual Nurturer*** **2015 – 2017**

## **Important Dates**

**November 2014 – May 2015**

**Information Sessions and *Testing the Waters* Retreats  
tba**

**For information on these events, join our listserv at  
[www.schoolfothespirit.org](http://www.schoolfothespirit.org)**

**May 22, 2015**

First review of applications (recommendations by May 29)

### **Dates of the Residencies**

#### **Year 1**

Residency	1	Wed. Sept. 9 – Mon. Sept. 14, 2015
	2	Thurs. Nov. 5 – Sun. Nov. 8, 2015
	3	Thurs. Feb. 4 – Sun. Feb. 7, 2016
	4	Wed. May 11 – Mon. May 16, 2016

#### **Year 2**

Residency	5	Wed. Sept. 7 – Mon. Sept. 12, 2016
	6	Thurs. Nov. 3 – Sun. Nov. 6, 2016
	7	Thurs. Feb. 2 – Sun. Feb. 5, 2017
	8	Wed. May 10 – Mon. May 15, 2017

**For more information and to sign up for our listserv:**

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