



Living & Leading from Center

A one-year soul-shaping experience in community open to all who seek a Spirit-led life

Jesus showed us what it means to be fully alive, living in deep relationship with the Father, rooted in the gospel of the Kingdom and serving in the power of the Holy Spirit. We're invited into that kind of life - right here and now.

This twelve-month program includes five two-day retreats that are specifically designed for those who hunger for a holistic approach to the inner work that deepens their life with God as it equips and empowers them to love, live, and lead from within - wherever God may call, increasingly manifesting the character and power of Christ.

BEGINS | Saturday, July 20, 2019

The Inner Life of a Fruitful Disciple

A Walk in the Garden

Starrette Farm Retreat, Statesville NC

Why The Sacred Invitation?

In a culture competing for the passion and direction of our hearts, minds, and souls, and believing that Spirit-led people are the future of the church, *The Sacred Invitation* offers a vision of **vocation** - the uniting of one's gifts, interests, and concerns, fostering a life that loves and serves God and neighbor.

How does the program work?

This distinct 12-month curriculum focuses on three central ideas and is open to all who long to

- Deepen their relationship with God
- Respond to the Spirit's invitation to live out their sacred purpose
- Be part of a kindred community to nurture them in the process

At the deepest level, this work frees participants to identify and follow their God-given passion and fulfill their highest purpose.

Over the course of the year, students read books and articles, view life-changing documentaries, engage monthly in a variety of soul-forming activities, develop a spiritual community with a small group of co-learners, and experience five two-day retreats of teaching and formational activities built around time-tested concepts. A blend of intellect and experience, of individual and community, of social justice and contemplation, the program is deeply centered on Christ and rooted in the Gospel. The robust curriculum helps students become more open, receptive and responsive to God's transforming grace in their lives.



Little by little the fern unfurls the parts she once hid to the world (author unknown)

As participants renew their love relationship with the triune God, discover and develop their signature strengths and gifts, ground themselves in the vitality of a committed community to hold their journey, slowly over time, real growth takes place. Little by little participants, like the fern, unfurl the parts once hidden in loving service for the healing of the world.

Who should apply? If you are experiencing a void in your life that you can't fill with "stuff" from the secular world... If you are called to be a leader in your church but hesitate because you don't feel you have the right "tools"... If you are someone who wants to make a difference in the lives of those marginalized by society... If you are concerned about molding the spiritual lives of those you love... If you are looking to grow your relationship *with* Jesus in order to grow disciples *for* Jesus, then ***The Sacred Invitation*** journey might be for you.

Interested? A soul satisfying, God-glorifying experience awaits!

2019/2020 Retreat Dates, Themes, and Time

All retreats follow a similar format outlined below. In between retreats, you will have "Monthly Practice" assignments to help you prepare and put into practice your learnings. To further enhance your living a transformed life adequate to your calling, you are asked to reach out to one or more of your classmates via a monthly accountability relationship to nurture your covenant journey together.

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| July 20-21, 2019 | A Walk in the Garden: <i>seeking God within</i> |
| Sept. 7-8, 2019 | Nurturing Sabbath: <i>living sane in an insane world</i> |
| Nov. 16-17 2019 | Honoring Your God-Given Gifts: <i>called to contribute</i> |
| Feb. 1-2, 2020 | Rhythm & Ritual: <i>arranging your life for spiritual transformation</i> |
| April 18-19, 2020 | Hospitality: <i>practical skills for creating a compassionate community</i> |

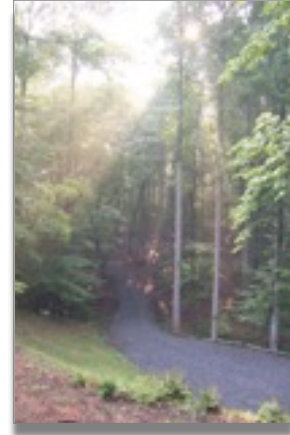
Each retreat begins on Saturday at 1pm (**except first retreat, which begins at 10am, and includes lunch**) until 8pm, and continues on Sunday from 9am until 3:30pm. Dinner on Saturday, lunch on Sunday, and refreshments throughout are provided.

Retreat Location



In an effort to keep cost to a minimum, retreats are held at the Starrette Farm Retreat in Statesville, NC. The private homestead (est. 1888) spans 50 acres of rolling woodland and walking trails. It is 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.* Numerous

Statesville hotels are only ten minutes (or less) from the retreat house.



View the Farm and spacious retreat house at www.TheLydiaGroup.com.

SAMPLE FORMAT

SATURDAY: 12:45pm arrival, check-in

- 1:00 Welcome - Introductions; SESSION 1
- 2:00 SESSION 2: Thematic formational topic with helpful applications
- 2:30 Break with refreshments
- 2:45 SESSION 3
- 3:30 Trust Circles (*spiritual direction groups of 4-6 with experienced facilitator/remains the same*)
- 6:00 Regather to celebrate what has been given
- 6:30 Dinner with guided group reflection
- 7:40 Night prayers
- 8:00 Depart in silence

SUNDAY: 8:45am ARRIVAL IN SILENCE

- 9:00 Centering / Morning Worship
- 9:45 Break
- 10:00 SESSION 4
- 10:45 Reflection assignment to help solidify and integrate your learning
- 11:45 Regather to celebrate what has been given
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Trust Circles
- 2:00 Break
- 2:15 SESSION 5: Equipping & Empowering
- 3:30 Closing ritual and departure

What are Trust Circles for group spiritual direction?

The purpose of a Trust Circle is to be companions and co-listeners for the voice of God in the story of each individual life. We help each other recognize and be more responsive to God's movement and invitations. Trust Circles use the Group Spiritual Direction model (used internationally) created by Rose Mary Dougherty, S.S.N.D. through her work at Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation.



In her book, *Group Spiritual Direction: Community for Discernment*, Sister Rose Mary writes of how her awareness for a “group” spiritual direction experience heightened through her reflection on John Wesley’s “class meetings,” the Society of Friends’ Clearness Committee, and Wesleyan scholar David Watson’s model of the Covenant Discipleship groups.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Frieda Farfour Brown is a licensed clinical psychologist with over 45 years of practice as a therapist, educator, supervisor, program director/manager, retreat leader, and writer. She has a PhD from the University of Louisville, a masters from UNC-Chapel Hill, a masters from Duke Divinity School, and has taught at four different universities. She established *The Rainbow Connection*, a church/mission-based preschool, which has served children for the last 40 years. Frieda has also helped create and nurture the Stephen Ministry at Davidson UMC, the Reimagining Health Collaborative at Duke Divinity School and the Kingstown initiative. Author of five books and numerous published articles, her participation in the first national training program for positive psychology sparked her interest in finding ways to help others find meaningful ways to use their God-given gifts in behalf of the greater community. She is a two-time graduate of *School of the Spirit*.

Roxanne Morgan is a founding member and elder at Warehouse 242 (a Presbyterian congregation) where she leads contemplative spiritual formation classes. She has a God-given artistic bent that delights in fostering creativity, and helping others discover and live out sacred rhythms in their lives. She has served as a facilitator for the Trust Circle for Discernment ministry at Davidson UMC, is a graduate of *School of the Spirit*, and also serves with The Lydia Group LLC for *School of the Spirit*, *The Inner Artist*, and *Into the Desert* retreats.

Tom Peckham earned his BS and MBA degrees in New England and served as I/T Director and CFO for a home health/hospice agency. Upon moving to North Carolina over 10 years ago, he joined Davidson UMC. He is a commissioned Stephen Minister and has served as a Stephen leader and trainer. He has taught several bible study programs, including all the Disciple curriculum, as well as many short studies. His desire for a deeper, personal relationship with God led him to *School of the Spirit*, and since then he has helped facilitate a number of spiritual formation classes as well as being a Trust Circle for Discernment facilitator at Davidson UMC. Tom is a member of the Wesleyan Contemplative Order and a member of Renovare's Fellowship of the Burning Heart pilot program.

Ann Starrette is Director of Spiritual Formation at Davidson UMC, founding director of *School of the Spirit* as well as The Lydia Group LLC retreat ministry which she founded in 1998. She earned her business degree from UNC-Charlotte, is a graduate of Renovaré Institute for Christian Spiritual Formation (two-year curriculum for Christlikeness), with further post-graduate studies at Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation and Pfeiffer University. As a spiritual director, teacher, and retreat leader, Ann views her role as quietly planting inner seeds of freedom, growth and change toward wholeness. Ann and husband Tom are stewards of the Starrette Farm Retreat.

The Rev. Dr. Jody Seymour, Senior Advisor: former Senior Pastor of Davidson United Methodist Church and co-creator and senior advisor of *School of the Spirit*.

Caroline Wood, Missional/Connectional Partner: Director of Missional Engagement and Connectional Ministries for the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

COST AND REGISTRATION

(value is \$1500 per student)

For those accepted into the program, generous financial support makes it possible to offer *The Sacred Invitation* for only \$400 per student. Upon applying,

- \$50 non-refundable deposit is due with your application.
- **\$350 payable upon acceptance**, due between May 1-31. If you need a payment plan, please speak with Ann Starrette (starrette@mindspring.com), co-director, or request assistance from your church or organization.
- CEU: Seven (7) Continuing Education Units will be awarded to participants meeting specific performance requirements.

Applications due April 1, 2019

- Participation is open to all denominations and limited to 24 people who seek a Spirit-led life.
- To apply, please submit the following application along with your \$50 fee for *The Sacred Invitation* to Ann Starrette (address at end of application.) You may submit your on-line application at <https://www.davidsonumc.org/sacred-invitation>
- Applicants will be notified of selection decisions by **May 1, 2019**.
- Accepted participants will receive a detailed agenda, reading and engagement list, directions to Starrette Farm and more in the weeks prior to our first retreat together.

PERSONAL DISCERNMENT

Because the program makes a significant financial investment in its participants, it is necessary for you to discern if *The Sacred Invitation* 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/your family know of your interest in The Sacred Invitation? Is there anyone with whom you need to have a conversation before beginning? What, if anything, would you need from others to participate fully and freely?
- Are there any current priorities you need to consider re-arranging, or special circumstances you need to consider to be able to fully participate?
- **Questions? Contact Ann Starrette at (704) 488-5825.**

APPLICATION

Please note retreat dates and check your calendar to confirm your availability before you apply

Name _____ Date _____

Church _____

District(if Methodist) _____

Mailing Address _____

_____ Zip Code _____

Email _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

Current Work and/or Life role: Please describe briefly the nature of your current position and the character of the organization and/or community you serve.

What has moved you to accept *The Sacred Invitation*?

What would God say to your soul today?

What are the spiritual practices you engage in regularly?

How do your spiritual practices address your spiritual needs?

What is your experience with spiritual direction (group and/or individual)?

How can your LOVE be a light in a dark world?

In what ways do you LIVE to do good in all the ways you can?

What passion drives you to LEAD (equip and empower) others in the way of Love?

How do you envision your life changing after completing this program?

How did you hear about the *The Sacred Invitation*?

Along with completed application (unless you registered on-line), please mail your non-refundable registration fee of \$50 (check or money-order* made payable to Davidson UMC with "*The Sacred Invitation*" on the memo line) to:

**Ann Starrette / registrar
PO Box 1288
Troutman, NC 28166**

If you have questions, please feel free to call Ann direct at (704) 488-5825.

**your check is your receipt*

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